

Ecce Mater Tua

A Journal of Mariology

Vol. 7

January 1, 2023
Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Mother of God

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Ecce Mater Tua: A Journal of Mariology

ISSN: 2573-5799

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Table of Contents

January 1, 2023

Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God

Introduction to *Ecce Mater Tua* Vol. 7.....iv
THE EDITORS

Commentario

Marian Coredeemption at Vatican II.....2
ROBERT FASTIGGI, PH.D.

Maria Corredentrice, un Quinto Dogma Mariano18
FR. JÁN KOŠIAR

Articles

Luther's Revolution and the Contemporary Denial of Mary Co-redemptrix.....65
MARK MIRAVALLE

The Contribution of Fr. Leonardo Maria Bello to Mariology.....76
FR. STEFANO CECCHIN, OFM

Marian Coredeemption in the Light of Christian Philosophy.....101
FR. JOAQUÍN FERRER ARELLANO

Sine Labe Originali Concepta: The Debitum Peccati in Scotus, Aquinas,
and Bonaventure post-*Ineffabilis Deus*.....139
PETER COELHO-KOSTOLNY

"*Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away*": The Use of Scripture
and the Fathers in *Munificentissimus Deus*.....159
ANDREW L. OUELLETTE

Introduction to *Ecce Mater Tua* Vol. 6

THE EDITORS

This issue of *Ecce Mater Tua* coincides with the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, who cooperated and still cooperates in the work of redemption with and under her Divine Son.

The *Commentario* section begins with an essay by Robert Fastiggi that commemorates the 60th anniversary of the opening of Vatican II. There was much interest in Mariology between the solemn definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 and the opening of the Council in 1962. Although many bishops prior to the council hoped for a solemn definition or affirmation of Mary as co-redemptrix and/or Mediatrix of all graces, St. John XXIII made it clear that he did not want any new dogmas proclaimed. This wish of the Holy Father, however, did not prevent the 1962 Marian draft from referring to the Blessed Mother as the Mediatrix of all graces in the text and Co-redemptrix in two footnotes. Resistance to the 1962 draft, however, emerged at a conference held in Fulda, Germany in the summer of 1963 attended by bishops and theologians—mostly from northern Europe. The 1962 Marian draft, nevertheless, formed the basis for chapter VIII of Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*. As Fastiggi shows, this chapter affirms Mary's coredemptive role and her mediation of grace even though the titles of Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix of *all* Graces are avoided.

The second *Commenatio* essay is an article by Fr. Ján Košiar that originally appeared on the Italian site, *Stilum Curiae*. Fr. Košiar provides an account of his studies in Mariology in Rome and how his interest in Marian coredemption grew during his years working for Vatican Radio. His doctoral thesis at the Marianum eventually was developed into a book published in English as *Could Holy Mary Be Called Coredemptrix?* (Lulu Publishing, 2017). In his Italian essay, Fr. Ján Košiar not only defends Mary as Co-redemptrix, but he also explains the various ways the Roman Pontiff can make a solemn proclamation of the Virgin Mary as Co-redemptrix.

The five articles in this issue offer significant historical, theological, and philosophical insights. In his article on “Luther’s Revolution and the Contemporary Denial of Mary-Co-redemptrix,” Mark Miravalle explains how Luther’s understanding of human corruption prevents human cooperation and participation in the work of redemption. Lutheran soteriology ultimately undermines the very basis for Marian coredeemption in a rather dramatic way.

The article on “The Contribution of Fr. Leonardo Maria Bello to Mariology” is written by Fr. Stefano Cecchin, OFM, who is presently the President of the Pontifical Marian Academy International. The article originally appeared in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross-IX* published by the Academy of the Immaculate in 2010. In this article, Fr. Cecchin shows how Fr. Bello (1882–1944)—who served as the Minister General of the Franciscans for 11 years—moved the Franciscans under his leadership to the Scotist position of the absolute primacy of Christ and to the recognition of Mary as Mediatrix of all graces and Co-redemptrix.

Fr. Cecchin’s article is followed by one written by Fr. Joaquin Ferrer Arellano, which originally was published in 2001 by the Academy of the Immaculate in the initial volume of *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*. Fr. Ferrer’s article provides important philosophical support for the insights of Mark Miravalle. Luther’s version of Nominalism undermined the very possibility of human cooperation and participation in the work of redemption. As Fr. Ferrer explains, Luther’s philosophical errors resulted in theological resistance to Our Lady’s coredemptive role.

In his article, “*Sine Labe Concepta*: the *Debitum Peccati* in Scotus, Aquinas, and Bonaventure,” Peter Coehlo-Kostolny provides a careful exposition of how these three great medieval theologians understood original sin and the Virgin Mary’s relation to it. Following the definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, a strong case can be made that it was the Scotist position that the Church eventually embraced.

The final article in this issue is by the Managing Editor of *Ecce Mater Tua*, Andrew L. Ouellette. While some Protestants claim that the dogma of Mary's Assumption is not rooted in Scripture, Ouellette demonstrates that the opposite is the case—especially if one carefully reads Pius XII's 1950 apostolic constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, which defined the dogma of Mary's Assumption. As Ouellette makes clear, a proper typological reading of the Old and New Testaments—informed by Patristic Sources—illuminates the Scriptural support for Mary's bodily Assumption into heaven and her status as the new Ark of the Covenant, the Spotless Bride, and the Queen Mother.

Commentario

Marian Coredemption and Mediation at Vatican II

ROBERT FASTIGGI, PhD

October 11, 2022 marked the 60th anniversary of the formal opening of Vatican II. In light of this anniversary, it seems opportune to reflect on how Marian coredemption and mediation were treated at the Council.

Between the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 and Vatican II, there was great interest in Mariology. After the definition of the Immaculate Conception, “the minds of the faithful were filled with a stronger hope that the day might soon come when the dogma of the Virgin Mary’s bodily Assumption into heaven would also be defined by the Church’s supreme teaching authority.”¹ According to Fr. Michael O’Carroll, C.S.S.p, between 1849 and 1950, petitions for the dogmatic proclamation of Mary’s Assumption “came from 113 Cardinals, eighteen Patriarchs, 2,505 archbishops and bishops, 32,000 priests and men religious, 50,000 religious women, 8,000, 000 lay people.”² At Vatican I (1869–1870) about 200 bishops asked for a solemn definition of the Assumption, but the shortening of the council because of the Franco-Prussian War prevented consideration of this request.³ At Vatican I, the French bishop, Jean Laurent, also presented a petition for Mary to be defined as Co-redemptrix. This doctrine, though, was judged in need of further maturation.⁴

In addition to petitions for the solemn proclamation of Mary’s Assumption, there were also petitions for a dogmatic definition of Mary’s “universal mediation of grace.”⁵ Mary’s role as the universal Mediatrix of grace was seen as rooted in her co-redemption or

¹ Pius XII, apostolic constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus* (November 1, 1950), no 6.

² Michael O’Carroll, C.S.S.p., *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 56.

³ See Manfred Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, translated by Richard Chonak (Washington, D.C. The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 280–281.

⁴ Mark Miravalle, *“With Jesus” The Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix* (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing, 2003), 142.

⁵ Manfred Hauke, *Mary, Mediatrix of Grace: Mary at the Foot of the Cross-IV: Supplement* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2004), 10.

cooperation in the redemption.⁶ The petitions, though, were for a dogmatic definition of Mary's universal mediation of grace rather than her co-redemptive role. In 1896, René-Marie de la Boïse, S.J. published an article in *Études* that proposed a dogmatic definition on Mary's universal mediation of all graces.⁷ At the second international Marian Congress held in Fribourg, Switzerland, in 1902, three papers were presented on Mary's universal mediation of grace, and the idea emerged to ask the pope to survey the bishops on the definability of this doctrine.⁸ Influenced by the articles by de la Boïse, the Belgian Redemptorist, François Xavier Godts (1839–1928), published a 451 page book on the definability of the universal mediation of Mary according to the doctrine of St. Alphonsus Liguori.⁹ Marian congresses during the early decades of the 20th century also began to manifest increased support for the doctrine of Mary's universal mediation of grace. After the Fribourg congress of 1902, there were Marian congresses held in Rome (1904), Einsiedeln (1906), and Trier (1912).¹⁰ The Fourth Breton Marian Congress of 1913 formulated a resolution addressed to Pius X in favor of a definition of Mary, Mother of Grace as “a truth of the faith.”¹¹

Mother Magdalen of Jesus (1862–1946), the prioress of the Carmel of Uccle in Belgium claimed that the Lord had spoken to her in prayer. Christ expressed his wish for a dogmatic proclamation of the universal

⁶ See Hauke, *Mary, Mediatrix*, 49, where he cites the view of Canon Jacques Bittrmieux (1878–1950) who maintained that Mary's cooperation in the Redemption “is the basis for the distribution of graces.”

⁷ René-Marie de la Boïse, “Sur cette proposition: Toutes les graces nous viennent par la Sainte Vierge,” *Études* 68 (1896): 5–31; see Gloria Falcão Dodd, (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2012) *The Virgin Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace: History and Theology of the Movement for a Dogmatic Definition from 1896–1964* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2012), 51–52.

⁸ Dodd, 54–55.

⁹ F.X. Godts, *De definibilitate mediationis universalis Deiparae: disquisitio theologica juxta doctrinam S. Alphonsi occasione jubilei semisaecularis definitionis Immaculati B.M.V. Conceptus* (Bruxellis: Missionum Exter. Prov. Belg. C.S.S.R. 1904); see Dodd, 57 and Hauke, *Mediatrix of Grace*, 11.

¹⁰ Hauke, *Mary, Mediatrix*, 10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

mediation of Mary.¹² Mother Magdalen later claimed that the Blessed Virgin appeared to her and communicated to her “the full meaning of her universal mediation.”¹³

Mother Magdalen of Jesus developed a close relationship with Cardinal Désiré Joseph Mercier (1851–1926), who was the Archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels and the Primate of Belgium from 1906 until his death in 1926. During their very first meeting, Mother Magdalen revealed to Mercier her conviction that it was will of the Lord for the universal mediation of the Mother of God to be proclaimed a dogma.¹⁴ Mercier was persuaded to make an informal request for the dogma to Pius X in 1906.¹⁵ He later became more active in promoting the dogma. In a pastoral letter of April 25, 1915, he “announced for the first time in printed form his desire for a definition of Mary’s universal mediation.”¹⁶ Cardinal Mercier subsequently organized petitions from the Belgian bishops, clergy, religious, and theological faculty of Louvain University.¹⁷

The petitions organized by Mercier were examined by the Holy Office with Fr. Alberto Lepidi, O.P. as the expert consultant. Lepidi did not believe it was opportune to pursue such a dogmatic proclamation. Moreover, he noted that the title, co-redemptrix—which was used in the petitions along with Mediatrix of all graces—had not been approved by the Holy Office in 1747 when the Bishop of Ascoli, Italy asked permission to refer to Mary as “the co-redemptrix of the entire human race (*Coredemptrix totius generis humani*).¹⁸ This might have played a role in persuading Mercier to focus on Mary as the Mediatrix of all graces “without the title of *coredemptrix*.”¹⁹ It is clear, though, that he

¹² Hauke, *Mediatress of Grace*, 17–18; see also Dodd, 77.

¹³ Hauke, *Mediatress of Grace*, 19–20

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

¹⁵ Dodd, 448.

¹⁶ Hauke, *Mary, Mediatress*, 39.

¹⁷ Dodd, 82–88.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 90

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 91. According to Fr. Hauke, Cardinal Mercier accepted the title of “Coredemptrix,” and he gave it high prominence in his concluding remarks to a Mariological Congress held in Brussels in 1921. Mercier might have been

believed Mary's mediation of all grace was rooted in her role as co-redemptrix.

Cardinal Lepidi's resistance to the title co-redemptrix was not well-informed. Apparently he was unaware that prayers invoking Mary as co-redemptrix had already been approved by the Church. On July 18, 1885, Pope Leo XIII approved a prayer of praises (*laudes*) to Jesus and Mary with an indulgence of 100 days granted by the Congregation for Indulgences and Sacred Relics. In the Italian version of the praises to Mary, she is referred to as "coredemptrix of the world" (*corredentrica del mondo*). In the Latin version, she is referred to as the "*mundo redimendo coadiutrix*." Leo XIII approved both the Italian and Latin versions of the prayer (*Acta Sanctae Sedis* [ASS] 18 [1885] p. 93). During the pontificate of Pius X, the Holy See three times gave approval to prayers invoking Mary as co-redemptrix (cf. *Acta Sanctae Sedis* [ASS] 41 [1908], p. 409); *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* [AAS] 5 [1913], p. 364; AAS 6 [1914], pp. 108–109).

The resistance of the Holy Office to the petitions did not stop Cardinal Mercier from his efforts to promote the dogma of Mary's universal mediation of grace. He was able to persuade Pope Benedict XV to approve a Mass and Office for a feast in honor Mary, Mediatrix of all graces in 1921.²⁰ The Holy Father granted the Office and the Feast to all the dioceses of Belgium and all other dioceses that request it.²¹

After Pius XI became pope in 1922, Cardinal Mercier spoke with him about the possibility of a dogmatic definition of Mary's universal mediation of grace. Pius XI agreed to set up three papal commissions to investigate this possibility: one in Belgium, one in Spain, and one in Rome.²² The commissions in Belgium and Spain supported the definition, but the one in Rome seems to have been less supportive—

influenced by a book by Fr. Godts with the title, *La Corrémptrice*, published in Brussels in 1920. See Hauke, *Mediatress of Grace*, 63–65.

²⁰ Dodd, 102–104; Hauke, *Mediatress of Grace* 54–59.

²¹ Dodd, 102.

²² *Ibid.*, 449.

though the actual position of the commission remains a mystery.²³ Cardinal Mercier died in 1926, but others, including Mother Magdalen of Jesus continued to work for the dogma.²⁴

Even though Pius XI did not act on the petitions to define Mary as the Mediatrix of all grace, he provided support for Mary as co-redemptrix by becoming the first pope to publicly use the title: once on November 30, 1933 (*Discorsi di Pio XI*, 2, p. 1013); again on March 23, 1934 (*L'Osservatore Romano* [OR] 25 March 1934, p. 1); and once again on April 28, 1935 (OR 29–30 April 1935 p. 1).

After the solemn definition of Mary's Assumption in 1950, many Mariologists continued to work for a subsequent definition of the Blessed Virgin as Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix of all graces. In the antepreparatory phase of Vatican II, a good number of bishops asked for a conciliar statement or definition of Mary as Mediatrix of all graces and/or Co-redemptrix. Fr. Michael O'Carroll states that 382 bishops asked for a conciliar statement on Marian mediation, with 266 wanting a dogmatic definition. He also notes that 54 bishops wanted a conciliar statement on Mary as Co-redemptrix, with 36 seeking a dogmatic definition.²⁵ Fr. G.M. Besutti believes that the numbers were higher, and he states that over 500 bishops wanted a definition on Mary's mediation of grace.²⁶ In a study on the views of the Italian bishops prior to the Council, Fr. Salvatore Perrella, OSM, shows that, out of 311 bishops in Italy, 100 wished for an affirmation of Mary as the Mediatrix of all graces, with 84 of these in favor of a solemn dogmatic definition.²⁷

²³ See Hauke, *Mediatress of Grace*, 97–110 and Dodd, 144–151 (on the Belgian Commission); 152–166 (on the Spanish Commission); and 166–184 (on the Roman Commission).

²⁴ Hauke, *Mediatress of Grace*, 21–22.

²⁵ O'Carroll, 308.

²⁶ G.M. Besutti, O.S.M. *Lo Schema Mariano al Concilio Vaticano II* (Rome: Edizioni Marianum, 1966), 17.

²⁷ Salvatore M. Perrella, OSM, *I "Vota" R I "Consilia" Dei Vescovi Italiani Sulla Mariologia E Sulla Corredenzione Nella Fase Antepreparatoria Del Concilio Vaticano II* (Rome: Edizioni "Marianum," 1994), 208.

Although these petitions for new Marian dogma manifested the concerns of many bishops, Pope John XXIII made it clear that, because of the pastoral orientation of the council, there would not be any new dogmatic definitions.²⁸ The treatment of Mariology at the council, however, shows a concern for Marian co-redemption and Marian mediation.

Originally the plan was to integrate the treatment of Mariology into the dogmatic constitution on the Church. This plan was in force from October, 1960 until January, 1962. The theological commission, however, opted for a separate document after receiving the *schema* from the drafting committee in Jan., 1962. The theological commission approved the *schema* as a separate document on Nov. 23, 1962. It is generally believed that the chief author the 1962 Marian *schema* was the Franciscan, Carlo Balić (1899–1977), the founder of the Pontifical Marian Academy International.

In the *praenotanda* or explanatory note that accompanied the Marian *schema* of 1962, we are told that: “Certain terms and expressions used by Roman Pontiffs have been omitted, which, although most true in themselves (*in se verissima*), may be difficult for the separated brethren (as in the case of the Protestants) to understand. Among such words the following may be enumerated: ‘Coredemptrix of the human race’ [St. Pius X, Pius XI]; ‘Reparatrix of the whole world’ [Leo XIII], etc.,”²⁹ The 1962 schema, however, affirms Mary as “co-redemptrix” in footnote 11, which reads:

Speaking of Mary beneath the Cross, the Supreme Pontiffs say that Mary was exercising the acts of faith, hope and charity, so united by love to the pains of Christ that there is a connection between the compassion of Mary and the redemption; she renounces her maternal rights and offers a maternal

²⁸ Miravalle, 168.

²⁹ *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen I, Periodus Prima, Pars IV* [Vatican City, 1971], p. 99.

sacrifice and becomes our spiritual mother. In brief: the compassion of Mary has a connection to the redemption in such a way that she therefore deserves to be called *co-redemptrix* and the effects are considered to be at once the fruits of the redemption of Christ and of the compassion of Mary.³⁰

The 1962 schema also has a long footnote (no. 16) on the historical development of the term *co-redemptrix*.³¹ It also refers to Mary as the “mediatrix of all graces” (*omnium gratiarum mediatrix*),³² but it does not define her as such. Footnote 16 reads as follows:

In Christian antiquity it was customary to refer to Mary as Eve, a title which seems to be taken from the principle of “re-circulation” or parallelism between Mary and Eve. Witness in this regard is found already in St. Justin’s Dialogue with Trypho: “And since we read that he is the Son of God... and made man from the Virgin, so that in the way that the disobedience spawned by the serpent took its beginning, it would receive its dissolution in the say way” Based on the same principle, St. Irenaeus (Against Heresies) explicitly calls Mary the cause of salvation for the entire human race. After the Council of Ephesus, the very title of Mediatrix, or as the Greeks say, Mesites or Mesetria, is attributed to Mary. In a work of a quite ancient author (some say of the 5th century but certainly before the 8th century) we read: “For she is the Mediatrix of heaven and earth, who naturally accomplishes their union.” This title became more common day by day, as can be seen in the writings of St. Andrew of Crete, St. Germanus of Constantinople,

³⁰ Ibid., 104. Translation by Fr. Joseph A. Komonchak, available at: <https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/draft-on-the-blessed-virgin-1962.pdf> (accessed November 30, 2021).

³¹ Ibid., 107–108.

³² Ibid., 94.

St. John Damascene, etc. Nor are there lacking Fathers who greet Mary as “Helper of the Redeemer” or “Mother of the living” in reference to Gn 3:15.

All these have been further developed by theologians and Supreme Pontiffs, and a nomenclature was created in which Mary is at different times called the Spiritual Mother of Men, the Queen of Heaven and Earth, and at other times the New Eve, the Mediatrix and Dispenser of All Graces, and even, in fact, the Co-redemptrix. With regard to the title “Queen”, cf. Note 14; with regard to the title Spiritual Mother, cf. Note 12. With regard to the title, Co-redemptrix”, and “Companion of Christ the Redeemer”, some explanations need to be added here:

The title Redemptrix occurs already in the 10th century: “Holy Redemptrix of the world, pray for us.” When this title came into use in the 15th and 16th centuries and the immediate co-operation of the Blessed Virgin in the work of our redemption was already perceived, “con” [cum] was added to “redemptrix,” so that the Mother of God was called “corredemptrix,” [Co-redemptrix] whereas Christ continued to be called “Redemptor” [Redeemer]. Accordingly, from the 17th century onward, the title of “Co-redemptrix” was in common use not only in works geared to piety and devotion, but also in very many theological treatises [cf. Carol J., *The Co-redemption of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Rome, 1950, p. 482].

With regard to the Roman Pontiffs, the word occurs in certain texts of St. Pius X et Pius XI in contexts of lesser importance. Pius XII purposely wished to avoid this expression by frequently using formulas such as “Companion of the Redeemer,” “Eminent companion

of the Redeemer,” “Loving companion of the Redeemer,” “Companion in the work of the Divine Redeemer.”

The cooperation of Mary with Jesus in the economy of our salvation is very, very often extolled by Supreme Pontiffs. Leo XIII: “The great Mother of God and likewise the companion in repairing the human race.” Pius XI: “The Redeemer was not able, due to the necessity of the work, to not associate his Mother with his work, and that is the reason why we invoke her with the title of Co-redemptrix.” Pius XII: “Mary, in procuring spiritual salvation with Jesus Christ, from the very beginning of salvation, was associated by God’s will...”

In addition to the titles mentioned, there are many others with which Mary is greeted by the faithful of Christ.

Leo XIII: “The Catholic people greet her as Help of Christians,” “Helper,” etc.

Pius VI: “Likewise [a teaching] which forbids images, especially of the Blessed Virgin, to be distinguished by any title, besides the designations, which are analogous to mysteries which are expressly mentioned in Scripture, as if other pious designations cannot be ascribed to images which are approved and commended even in the public prayers of the Church: temerarious, offensive to pious ears, especially injurious to the veneration due to the Virgin.”³³

This footnote provides a marvelous summary of the history and eventual papal approval of the title, co-redemptrix. It is regrettable that

³³ Translation from Komonchak as noted above.

it was not included in what later came to be chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium*.

Pope John XXIII died on June 3, 1963, and on June 21, 1963, Cardinal Montini was elected Pope Paul VI. Although John XXIII had approved the 1962 *schema* for discussion for the fall 1963 session of the council, opposition to the draft was growing. The second session of Vatican II was set to open on September 29, 1963. From August 26–29, 1963, a meeting took place in Fulda, Germany which was attended by 4 cardinals and seventy archbishops and bishops representing 10 countries, mostly from northern Europe.³⁴ During this meeting, theologians such as the Jesuit, Karl Rahner, raised objections to the 1962 *schema* on the Blessed Virgin Mary. These objections were based on fears of negative ecumenical reactions, especially to the *schema*'s reference to Mary as the “Mediatrice of all graces.”³⁵

How can we explain the attitude of Fr. Rahner and others at the Fulda conference? In the decades just before Vatican II, some theologians focused on what some call a “Christo-typical Mariology,” which emphasizes Mary’s intimate association with Christ in the work of redemption and the mediation of grace. The titles of “co-redemptrix” and “Mediatrice of all graces” were used by these theologians in reference to Mary. Other theologians focused on an “Ecclesial-typical Mariology,” which highlights Mary’s role as a member and type (or model) of the Church. Still other theologians stressed the importance of ecumenical sensitivity in Mariology, and they wanted to downplay aspects of Catholic Mariology that might be difficult for the separated brethren to understand. All of these trends influenced the Mariology of Vatican II.

Because of the concerns raised by Fr. Rahner and others at the Fulda conference, the 1962 Marian *schema* was rejected. The next question was this: whether the council should have a separate document on the Virgin Mary or integrate it into the dogmatic constitution on the

³⁴ Rev. Ralph M. Wiltgen, SVD, *The Inside Story of Vatican II*—formally titled *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber*—(Charlotte, NC: Tan Books, 2014), 107.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

Church (as was the plan from October, 1960 until January, 1962). A vote was taken on October 29, 1963 with the option for inclusion being adopted by a vote of 1,114 to 1,074.³⁶

Prior to the vote for inclusion of October 29, 1963, two Cardinals were chosen to present the respective arguments in favor of a separate Marian document and in favor of integrating the Marian *schema* into the Constitution on the Church. Cardinal Santos of Manila argued in favor of a separate document and Cardinal König of Vienna argued for integration.

Both Cardinals agreed that there was a very close connection between Mary and the Church. Cardinal Santos, however, citing St. Bernard of Clairvaux, argued that Mary is not merely a member of the Church, but one who freely cooperated in the establishment of the very existence of the Body of the Church. Mariology, moreover, pertains not only to ecclesiology but also to Christology and soteriology. To include the treatment of Mary in the constitution on the Church could give the impression that the council was opting for “Ecclesio-typical” Mariology over “Christo-typical” Mariology. Cardinal König said he had no disagreement with the points made by Cardinal Santos (*Non contradico iis quae in hac materia ab alio eminentissimo Patre exponuntur*). He noted, though, that the Church was a central theme of the council and integrating Mariology into the constitution on the Church would highlight Mary’s role as “the most sublime cooperatrix of Christ in both the accomplishment and the propagation of the work of salvation through his grace” (*Beata Maria Virgo potest in tali capite vel schemate integrato optimi proponi tamquam sublimissima Christi ex eius gratia cooperatrix in opere salutis et perficiendo et propaganda*). The integration of the Marian schema into the constitution of the Church would not, therefore, be an option in favor of an “ecclesio-typical Mariology, in which the Blessed Virgin is only shown as a member of the Church among other members passively receiving the fruits of the Redeemer” (*Et ne dicas tale schema vel caput redintegratum exhibere posse tantum Mariologiam ad modum alicuius sic dictae Mariologiae ecclesiologicae, in qua scilicet Beata Virgo non*

³⁶ See O’Carroll, 352-353.

exhibetur nisi ut membrum inter caetera membra Ecclesiae passive recipiens beneficia redemptoris). Rather, Mary, with the Church, actively cooperates with Christ in the distribution of the fruits of redemption (*sed instrumentum redemptionis in manu Christi ad salutem active cooperans*). The arguments presented by both Cardinal Santos and Cardinal König manifest general agreement. At no point do they ever argue that Mariology should be reduced to ecclesiology. In fact, they both resist this view.³⁷

The integration of the Marian schema into chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium* should not be seen as a rejection of either Marian coredeemption or Our Lady's mediation of grace. In *Lumen Gentium*, 53, we are told that the council "does not, however, have it in mind to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified. Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and yet very close to us." This means that Vatican II in no way wished to stop theologians from doing further research on Marian coredeemption and mediation of grace.

It is also important to note that a number of theologians, including Jean Galot, S.J and Georges Cottier, O.P. (the former theologian of the papal household), believe Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* affirms the doctrine of Mary as Coredeptrix without using the term (cf. Galot in *La Civiltà Cattolica* [1994] III: 236-237 and Cottier, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 4, 2002).

³⁷ See *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* Vol. II Periodus Secunda, Pars III [Vatican City, 1972], 338-345. A very good summary of the addresses of Cardinals Santos and König can be found in Frederick Jelly, O.P. "The Theological Context of and Introduction to Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*" in *Marian Studies* Vol. XXXVII (1986): 50-60.

Lumen Gentium, 56 affirms Marian coredeemtion when, quoting St. Irenaeus, it points to Mary as “the cause of salvation” for herself and the whole human race:

Embracing God's salvific will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son, under Him and with Him, by the grace of almighty God, serving the mystery of redemption. Rightly therefore the holy Fathers see her as used by God not merely in a passive way, but as freely cooperating in the work of human salvation through faith and obedience. For, as St. Irenaeus says, she "being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race." Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert in their preaching, "The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience; what the virgin Eve bound through her unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosened by her faith." Comparing Mary with Eve, they call her "the Mother of the living," and still more often they say: "death through Eve, life through Mary (LG, 56).

The affirmation of Mary as the New Eve goes to the heart of Marian coredeemtion. The great Mariologist, Gabriele Roschini (1900-1977) understood the title Co-redemptrix this way: “The title Co-redemptrix of the human race means that the most holy Virgin cooperated with Christ in our reparation as Eve cooperated with Adam in our ruin.”³⁸ Moreover, LG, 56, points to Mary’s fiat as an active cause of human salvation. Thus, in a subordinate but essential way, the Virgin Mary participated actively in our redemption.

³⁸ “Il titolo *Corredentrica del genere umano* significa che la Virgine SS. ha cooperato con Cristo alla nostra riparazione, come Eva aveva cooperato con Adamo alla nostra rovina.” Padre Gabriele Maria Roschini, *Chi è Maria? Catechismo Mariano* a cura di Carlo DiPietro (Pignola: Sursum Corda, 2017) domanda 83, p. 47).

Lumen Gentium, 58 points to another key moment in Marian coredeemtion: namely, the union with her divine Son's sufferings under the cross:

After this manner the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, grieving exceedingly with her only begotten Son, uniting herself with a maternal heart with His sacrifice, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth. (LG, 58).

In his General Audience of Feb. 16, 2022, Pope Francis invoked LG, 58 and said:

In the plan of salvation, the Son cannot be separated from the Mother, from the one who "advanced in the pilgrimage of faith and faithfully preserved her union with her Son even to the Cross" (*Lumen Gentium*, 58), as the Second Vatican Council reminds us.

To say that the Son cannot be separated from the Mother in the plan of salvation is a clear affirmation of Mary's coredeemtion role.

Lumen Gentium, 61 likewise affirms Mary's coredeemtion role as the predestined Mother of God who cooperated in a singular way with the saving work of her Son:

Predestined from eternity by that decree of divine providence which determined the incarnation of the Word to be the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin was on this earth the virgin Mother of the Redeemer, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth and nourished Christ. She

presented Him to the Father in the temple, and was united with Him by compassion as He died on the Cross. In this singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore, she is our mother in the order of grace. (LG, 61).

Mary's participation in the mediation of grace is clearly taught in *Lumen Gentium*, 62 when it affirms her salvific duty (*munus*) in bringing us the gifts of eternal salvation by her constant intercession:

This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, and lasts until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties until they are led into the happiness of their true home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator (LG, 62)

Although Vatican II did not explicitly refer to Mary as the co-redemptrix or the Mediatrix of *all* graces, it did affirm the key elements of Marian coredeemption and mediation of grace. It's important to remember that Vatican II never intended to give a complete doctrine on the Virgin Mary or prevent further doctrinal developments. This, as we have seen, is explicitly stated in LG, 53. St. John Paul II was a bishop at Vatican II, and, as pope, he provided us with a profound understanding and development of what the council taught about the

Blessed Virgin Mary. It is noteworthy that he did not understand the council as prohibiting the invocation of Mary as co-redemptrix. In fact, he publicly used the title at least six times during his pontificate.³⁹ Likewise, St. John Paul II explicitly referred to the Virgin Mary as the “Mediatrice of all graces” at least nine times.⁴⁰

We need to be grateful for the clear affirmations of Mary’s coredeemptive role at the Second Vatican Council. We also should be grateful for the council’s clear affirmation of Mary’s heavenly intercession as Mother and Mediatrice of grace. Vatican II must be understood within the continuity of the papal Marian teachings that preceded it and those that followed it. In this regard, the Marian teachings of St. John Paul II are of special importance.

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³⁹ See John Paul II’s General Audience, 10 December 1980 (*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* [Inseg] III/2 [1980], p. 1646); General Audience 8 September 1982 (*Inseg* V/3 [1982], p. 404); Angelus Address 4 November, 1984 (*Inseg* VII/2 [1984], p. 1151); Discourse at World Youth Day 31 March 1985 (*Inseg* VIII/1 [1985], p. 889–890); Address to the Sick 24 March, 1990 (*Inseg* XIII/1 [1990], p. 743); Discourse of 6 October, 1991 (*Inseg* XIV/2 [1991], p. 756). Moreover, in a homily in Guayaquil, Ecuador on January 31, 1985, John Paul II spoke of the “co-redemptive role of Mary —*el papel corredentor de María* (*Inseg* VIII [1985], p. 319).which was translated as “Mary’s role as co-redemptrix” in the English edition of *L’Osservatore Romano* March 11, 1985, p. 7.

⁴⁰ See article by Msgr. Arthur Calkins, S.T.D.: <http://www.motherofallpeoples.com/2010/11/mary-mediatrice-of-all-graces-in-the-papal-magisterium-of-pope-john-paul-ii/> (accessed Dec. 22, 2022).

Pope Francis Affirms the Essence of Marian Co-redemption and Mediation

FR. JÁN KOŠIAR

Negli ultimi dieci anni mi sono interessato molto al titolo di Maria Corredentrice. Il mio interesse per la mariologia, tuttavia, è iniziato molto prima, nel 1986, quando ho incontrato il compianto Prof. Salvatore Meo, OSM, allora decano della Pontificia Facoltà Teologica Marianum.

Questo felice incontro mi ha ispirato a iniziare il corso di mariologia presso la Pontificia Facoltà Teologica Marianum, che ho frequentato nel 1984-1986 come parte della mia formazione teologica. Nel 1987 ho ricevuto l'ordinazione sacerdotale dal papa San Giovanni Paolo II.

Due anni dopo accadde l'imprevisto. Il 1989 è stato l'anno della caduta del muro di Berlino e della conseguente fine del regime comunista in Europa centrale. Questi eventi portarono con sé nuove sfide e nuove chiamate di apostolato. Ho dovuto lasciare Roma e sono tornato nella mia patria, la Slovacchia. Lì ero impegnato soprattutto nel campo dei mass media. Il lavoro era talmente impegnativo e richiedeva molto tempo, che riuscii a consegnare la tesi di licenza solo nel 1994. La tesi, preparata sotto la guida e la supervisione del Prof. Giorgio Eldarov, aveva come titolo *L'Addolorata Madre di Dio nella venerazione del popolo slovacco* (in italiano).

Nel 1999 sono stato chiamato a Roma per lavorare con la sezione slovacca della Radio Vaticana, preparando trasmissioni quotidiane in lingua slovacca. Questo incarico è durato quasi sei anni (1999-2005).

Durante la permanenza a Roma mi sono interessato molto al tema del ruolo di Maria nella nostra redenzione e al suo titolo di Corredentrice, poiché, più o meno in quel periodo, il tema è emerso come materia di disputa teologica tra due vescovi slovacchi, miei connazionali. Ho quindi pensato che questa insolita disputa sarebbe stata un argomento adatto per la mia tesi di laurea. Ho potuto seguire

da vicino la disputa e raccogliere una notevole quantità di materiale documentario, compresa la corrispondenza che questi vescovi slovacchi si erano scambiati tra loro. Sulla base di queste prove documentali ho scritto la mia tesi, che è stata poi pubblicata in forma di libro con il titolo *Could Holy Mary Be Called Co-redemptrix?* Le diverse opinioni dei vescovi slovacchi.

Applicando il metodo analitico-comparativo ho suddiviso la mia tesi in quattro capitoli:

1. Considerazioni generali
2. Magistero della Chiesa su Maria Corredentrice nel XX secolo
3. Il problema di Maria Corredentrice nella Chiesa cattolica in Slovacchia
4. Maria Corredentrice nella situazione attuale e Conclusione.

Il significato del titolo di Corredentrice secondo me: La cosa essenziale è capire che la parola Corredentrice deriva dal sostantivo „redentore“ con il prefisso „co-“, che significa „insieme“, „con“. Pertanto, come chi collabora con un'altra persona è chiamato „collaboratore“, colui che collabora alla redenzione dovrebbe essere Corredentore/Co-redentrice. Di conseguenza, direi che il problema è più etimologico-linguistico che teologico-dogmatico. Tutti, o quasi, gli autori teologici e mariologici concordano sul fatto che la Vergine Maria ha collaborato all'opera di redenzione del suo Figlio divino. Tuttavia, quando viene chiamata Corredentrice, sorgono controversie che - in casi estremi - possono sfociare in accuse di eresia.

Sono d'accordo con quei teologi che propongono che la storia della corredenzione di Maria (o la sua collaborazione all'opera della nostra redenzione) sia iniziata a Nazareth al momento dell'Incarnazione, quando Maria rispose all'Angelo: *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum* (Lc 1,38).

La mia fede nel titolo di Corredentrice è ulteriormente rafforzata dalla profonda devozione a Maria come Avvocata e Mediatrice nel Paese in cui sono nato. È degno di nota osservare che il testo slovacco, polacco, bielorusso e russo della nota e antica preghiera Sub

tuum presidium dopo la prima parte: „Sub tuum praesidium confugimus, Sancta Dei Genetrix. Nostras deprecationes ne despicias in necessitatibus, sed a periculis cunctis libera nos semper, Virgo gloriosa et benedicta“ è seguita da queste parole: „Nostra Signora, nostra Mediatrix, nostra Avvocata, riconciliaci con tuo Figlio, raccomandaci a Lui e presentaci a Lui“. In questa preghiera sono quindi inclusi i titoli di Mediatrix e Avvocata. Il titolo di Avvocata si trova anche nell'antifona mariana *Salve Regina*.

Quindi, nessun cattolico a nord del Danubio ha dubbi su questi due titoli. Allo stesso modo, troviamo un riferimento a questi titoli in uno dei documenti chiave del Concilio Vaticano II: „Perciò la Beata Vergine è invocata dalla Chiesa con i titoli di Avvocata, Ausiliatrice, Aggiustatrice e Mediatrix“ (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 62).

È anche noto che il Santo Papa Giovanni Paolo II, nelle sue omelie e nei suoi discorsi, ha usato il titolo di Maria Corredentrice almeno sette volte.

Nessuno sa quando, e se mai, sarà definito il quinto dogma mariano sulla Madonna Corredentrice, Mediatrix e Avvocata. Tuttavia, una delle conclusioni della mia tesi è che è corretto e legittimo parlare di questo argomento. In effetti, ci sono diversi teologi famosi che sono di questa opinione. Uno di questi è mons. Brunero Gherardini, che è stato mio professore di Ecclesiologia alla Pontificia Università Lateranense. E vorrei citare altri due devoti che ho conosciuto personalmente: il vescovo Paul M. Hnilica e il cardinale Tomáš Špidlík, noto esperto di spiritualità orientale.

La domanda sorge spontanea: Come sarebbe possibile promulgare la dichiarazione del quinto dogma mariano? Ci sono almeno tre modi:

1. Il Santo Padre lo fa da solo, dopo aver riflettuto ed esaminato i testi pertinenti e le ricerche che ha già fatto.
2. Il Papa lo fa dopo aver consultato l'episcopato di tutto il mondo, compreso quello ortodosso.

3. Il Santo Padre convoca un Sinodo speciale per trattare questo tema, che considero la via più possibile.

Videant consules.

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Ecce Mater Tua

Articles

Luther's Revolution and the Contemporary Denial of Mary Co-redemptrix

MARK MIRAVALLE, STD

Christian Unity must be a committed goal for every Catholic.¹ How can a member of Christ's Church rest content when the Heart of Christ remains wounded by the scandal of Christian division?² And yet, unity of faith presupposes unity of doctrine,² hence divergences in doctrine must be honestly discussed. Compromise of truth is the enemy of authentic ecumenism, not its friend.

In the spirit of authentic intra-Christian dialogue, one would never consider it anti-ecumenical for a Protestant theologian to voice his critique of the Catholic doctrine of the papacy, for example, for such is an essential notion of his denominational stance. In the same way, it should not be deemed against authentic ecumenism for a Catholic theologian to critique Protestant doctrine which runs contrary to an essential Catholic truth. Moreover, when a Protestant error begins to creep into contemporary Catholic thought and seems to find its expression, even if unconsciously, within statements of Catholic theology or even hierarchy, then the error itself must be identified and remedied.

It is within this context of authentic Catholic ecumenism and contemporary Catholic clarity that we must examine anew the theological and anthropological doctrines of Martin Luther. We do so without of any judgment of heart, but rather to examine historically and theologically how Luther's ecclesiastical revolution regarding the nature of the human person, grace, God, and redemption could, a half-millennium later, contribute to the present misunderstanding of Mary's unique role with Jesus in human redemption.

¹ Cf. St. John Paul II, encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*, 1995, nn.7-8; Second Vatican Council, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 2-4, 7-8, 11.

² Cf. St. John Paul II, encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, 1987, n. 30; *Ut Unum Sint*, 18; Second Vatican Council, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 11.

Protestant biographers commonly grant that Martin Luther as a young Augustinian monk experienced severe struggles of extreme scrupulosity.³ His confessor, Fr. Staupitz, conveyed the fact of Luther's excessively long and detailed confessions, which, once finished, only began again with the same content.⁴ Whether his scrupulosity led to his image of God, or whether his image of God led to his scrupulosity, we cannot be certain. In either case, the young Augustinian's crushing concept of God's woeful wrath, coupled with his own subjective disposition towards despair, eventually led Luther to change Church doctrine in order to correspond to his own feelings, rather than vice versa. A tragic historical and theological chain reaction would result.

According to Luther, the human person is no longer basically good though fallen, but essentially corrupt. Grace can no longer transform the human recipient due to his total anthropological depravity, but can only "cover." Even though the often-quoted Lutheran analogy for grace and the human person as "snow falling on a dung heap" still lacks a definitive source, certainly his extended writings on man's total corruption conveys the same thought; for example:

Conceived in sorrow and corruption, the child sins in his mother's womb. As he grows older, the innate element of corruption develops. Man has said to sin: 'Thou art my father'—and every act he performs is an offense against God; and to the worms: 'You are my brothers'—and he crawls like them in mire and corruption. He is a bad tree and cannot produce good fruit; a **dunghill** and can only exhale foul odors. He is so thoroughly corrupted that it is absolutely impossible for him to produce good actions. Sin is his nature; he cannot help committing it. Man may do his best to be

³ Cf. for example, "Martin Luther: Passionate Reformer", *Christian History, Christianity Today*,

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/theologians/martin-luther.html>, October 11, 2022.

⁴ *Ibid.*

good, still his every action is unavoidably bad; he commits a sin as often as he draws his breath.⁵

The Lutheran God, moreover, is incompatibly other, in ways far beyond the proper Dionysian distinctions of greater “dissimilitude” than similitude between Creator and creature confirmed at IV Lateran.⁶ For Luther, God is so essentially and existentially removed from the corrupt creature who is man that no sharing or participation between Creator and creature is possible. Thus, the analogy of being between the Divine and human is rejected and human participation in divine nature or activity is rendered impossible.

Voluntarism becomes another foundational pillar of Luther’s philosophy-theology, where God’s volitional whim, rather than a divine or natural law and order found within his creatures, becomes the providential determinant of right and wrong. Nominalism joins Volunterism in Lutheran “metaphysics,” where universal essences do not exist, and hence neither is it feasible for an inferior being to share in the essence-nature of a superior being.

In short, one bad human self-image would lead to a metaphysical-revelational deconstruction, and the consequent elimination of a Christian’s ability to cooperate with his God. This ontological divide between God and man would tragically lead to Luther’s litany of “alones”: *solus Christus, sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura*, etc. Navarre metaphysician, Fr. Joachim Ferrer Arellano, well articulates the essential divergence between Lutheran assertions and authentic Catholic doctrine:

According to Protestantism, *the only possible mediation is that of Christ*, only one limited to his Person, according to St. Paul’s dictum: For there is one God and one

⁵ Martin Luther, *Martin Luther*, #8: “*Werke (Wittenberg Edition)*, Vol. III, p. 518.” This refers to the edition of Luther’s works, published in Wittenberg: 12 volumes in German (1539-1559) and seven volumes in Latin (1545-1558).

⁶ IV Lateran, chapter II; Denzinger-Hünemann, 806.

mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus...(1 Tim 2:5-6). Assuming that to be so, *neither Mary, nor the Church, nor the priesthood can participate in any mediatory action....*In his writing and preaching, Luther intends to place in relief the absolute sovereignty of God and the gratuitousness of grace. Problems arise when one falsely thinks that the gratuitousness of grace entails the impossibility of man's collaboration. A more heartfelt sense of the sovereignty of God, of his omnipotence, reveals quite a different solution: Grace is gratuitous and, at the same time, efficacious, that is to say, capable of regenerating man so as to cause him to become truly good and, consequently, capable of collaborating with God's grace in his own salvation.⁷

The contemporary continuation of the Lutheran rejection of the analogy of being and its consequent rejection of human participation in theandric acts is manifest, for example, by the renowned Protestant theologian, Karl Barth, who identified Marian doctrine to be the "one great heresy" of the Catholic Church from which all other Catholic heresies followed, and singles out Marian coredemption as its worst manifestation:

In the doctrine and worship of Mary there is disclosed the one heresy of the Roman Catholic Church which explains all the rest."⁸ "The 'mother of God' of Roman Catholic Marian dogma is quite simply the principle, type and essence of the human creature co-operating servant-like in its own redemption on the basis of

⁷ Fr. Joachim Ferrer Arellano, "Marian Coredemption in Light of Christian Philosophy" *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, Vol II, Academy of the Immaculate, 2001, pp. 132-133.

⁸ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God, Part 2*, edited by G.W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2004) p.143.

prevenient grace, and to that extent the principle, type and essence of the Church.”⁹

That a contemporary Protestant theologian rejects Catholic teaching on Mary and her human cooperation in Redemption based upon the Lutheran *solus Christus* premise should be of little surprise. But when contemporary Catholic theological or even hierarchical circles present statements that explicitly or implicitly reject Our Lady’s unique role with Jesus in Redemption and/or the legitimacy of overall Christian participation in Christ’s saving work, this requires identification, correction, and an immediate theological conversion to fundamental Catholic truth.

This is why the understanding and defense of Mary Co-redemptrix goes well beyond Mariological importance. Ultimately, the rejection of human participation, with its erroneous basis in man’s radical incompatibility with God due to the former’s absolute corruption, coupled with philosophical nominalism and theological voluntarism, dismisses the very possibility, of a salvific, sacerdotal and sacramental Church. If Luther is right and human participation is wrong, then the Church becomes nothing more than a communal agent for preparing potential members to make a one-time act of faith, after which human acts lose their free and salvific meaning. It is no wonder that Luther, soon after his Catholic departure, eliminated five sacraments, reducing the sacraments to only Baptism and “the Lord’s Supper” albeit, bereft of any necessity for ministerial priesthood.¹⁰

Authentic Christian participation must, therefore, not only be safeguarded but *championed both philosophically and theologically*, not only for the proper understanding of Marian coredemption, but also as an *essential dogmatic foundation*¹¹ *which is absolutely necessary for the Church to*

⁹ Ibid., p. 139.

¹⁰ Cf. Martin Luther, *The Address to the Christian Nobility, 1520; The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, 1520; On the Freedom of a Christian, 1520.*

¹¹ Cf. for example, the necessity of human cooperation with grace in adult baptism, Council of Trent, *On Justification*, Decree 1, Chapter 5.

uphold its divinely instituted identity and to fulfill its divinely ordained mission in human redemption.

Ferrer identifies two essential philosophical principles required for a proper understanding of participation:

1. That every perfection found in the being that participates in that perfection proceeds from the being which is the source of its participation.
2. That the perfection of the being which participates taken together with the perfection of the being which is the source of participation is not superior to the perfection of the latter considered alone or in itself. To participate does not mean *to be part of* (as quantitative or qualitative part of a whole or predicamental participation), but *to take part in its being* (metaphysically or qualitative participation in reflecting partially the full perfection of its source).¹²

Participation takes place when an inferior being sharing in the qualities of a superior being, but without the inferior being taking anything away, adding to, or competing in equality with the qualities of the superior being. Dr. John-Mark Miravalle offers the example of a college freshman attending a lecture on Astrophysics by a world expert. As a result of the lecture, the college freshman will hopefully share in a greater knowledge of Astrophysics, but has taken nothing away from the world expert, added nothing to the expert, nor is now on a level of competing equality with the expert.¹³ Moreover, participation is an immaterial, spiritual process of sharing or cooperation by the participant, which does not lead to a lessening of

¹² Ferrer, op cit., p. 136. On the metaphysics of participation, see seminal work of C. Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo San Tommaso d'Aquino* 3rd ed. (Torino: SEI, 1963).

¹³ Dr. John-Mark Miravalle, "Reasonability of Mary in the Redemption" International Marian Association Symposium, *Mary in the Redemption*, 2017, Dr. John-Mark Miravalle, Youtube Conference 444, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Btaa80p1mvc>.

the material possession by the superior being. We must further guard against any type of “pizza pie” participation mentality, whereby if one participant takes a piece, the result is a lessening for all other participants, let alone for the host.¹⁴

The New Testament teaches that all Christians are to be “partakers in the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4); to be “co-workers with God” (1 Cor. 3:9); and are called through St. Paul’s example to “make up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, which is the Church”(Col. 1:24).” The very fact that Jesus Christ established a saving Church founded on humans and angels, upon whose free creaturely actions of subordinate mediation depend an infinity of souls, this should make unambiguously clear the desire of the divine Founder for human participation in his ongoing work of Redemption.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church testifies to the reality of human cooperation in God’s providential plan, not as an indication of weakness, but of God’s goodness:

God is the sovereign master of his plan. But to carry it out, he also makes use of his creatures’ co-operation. This use is not a sign of weakness, but rather a token of Almighty God’s greatness and goodness. For God grants his creatures not only their existence, but also the dignity of acting on their own, of being causes and principles for each other, and thus co-operating in the accomplishment of his plan.¹⁵

“God created us without us, but he did not will to save us without us.”¹⁶ From St. Augustine to Vatican II, human participation in Christ’s one mediation is not an option for members of Christ’s Church. This mandate for human cooperation in the one Mediation of the Redeemer is uniquely and most profoundly manifest in the coredemptive mission of the Mother of Christ. Let us revisit the full treatment by the Council on the legitimacy of human participation in the work of the one

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 306.

¹⁶ St. Augustine, *Sermo* 169, 11, 13: PL 38, 923.

Mediator, and its unparalleled realization in the salvific office of Mary Mediatrix:

There is but one Mediator as we know from the words of the apostle, "for there is one God and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all"(1 Tim. 2:5). The maternal duty of Mary toward men in no wise obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows His power. For all the salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. In no way does it impede, but rather does it foster the immediate union of the faithful with Christ.

Predestined from eternity by that decree of divine providence which determined the incarnation of the Word to be the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin was on this earth the virgin Mother of the Redeemer, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth and nourished Christ. She presented Him to the Father in the temple, and was united with Him by compassion as He died on the Cross. In this singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace.

This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, and lasts until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did

not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her manifold intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into the happiness of their true home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator.

For no creature could ever be counted as equal with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer. Just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by the ministers and by the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is really communicated in different ways to His creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source.

The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary. It knows it through unfailing experience of it and commends it to the hearts of the faithful, so that encouraged by this maternal help they may the more intimately adhere to the Mediator and Redeemer. [LG 60-62].

Note that the Latin text of *Lumen Gentium* 62 twice uses forms of the verb, *participare* (“to participate”) to denote the various modes of participation by both clergy and faithful in the one Priesthood of Christ (*participatur*), and to indicate the diverse cooperation in which creatures participate (*participatam*) in the unique mediation of the Redeemer. While the official Vatican Italian and Spanish translations use participation terminology (*partecipato*, *partecipata* and *participado*,

participada, respectively), unfortunately the Vatican English translation does not.¹⁷

In the final analysis, it is God himself who wanted a human woman to participate in the greatest divine act of human history.¹⁸ The Heavenly Father always prefers, in his perfect providence, to include his free human creatures wherever possible in his greatest activities, which includes human redemption. God does so because it leads to more glory for Him, and more sanctification for us.

We cannot deprive the Immaculate Virgin Mother of the coredemptive role assigned to her by Father of all mankind, and sublimely fulfilled by her with perfect human participation. We must avoid historical and theological aberrations founded upon false concepts of God, man, and grace that would lead anyone in the Church to do so.

Yes, participation must be defended for the validity of the Church, the sacraments, the priesthood, the intercession of the saints, the mediation of the angels, and beyond. But even if only for the Mother herself, participation merits our absolute and spirited defense. To do so is to manifest our personal filial gratitude for the heroic and efficacious co-suffering of the Mother of all peoples for each one of us and for all humanity.

¹⁷ An accurate alternative English translation from the Latin of Lumen Gentium 62 would read:

“For no creature could ever be counted as equal with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer. But just as both the ministers and the faithful **participate** in the priesthood of Christ in various ways, and as the one goodness of God is really spread out in different ways in His creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a **diverse cooperation participated** by creatures from this one source.” Special thanks to Dr. Robert Fastiggi for translations and commentary.

¹⁸ For an extended treatment of the doctrine of Marian Coredemption, see *The Role of Mary in Redemption: Document of the Theological Commission* of the International Marian Association, *Ecce Mater Tua* Journal, Vol. 1, eccematertua.com, January 1, 2018.

May the Immaculate Co-redemptrix soon be solemnly acknowledged for her heroic participation with the divine Redeemer, the New Eve with the New Adam, in human redemption—a cooperation recognized, in its essential seed form, by second century Church Doctor, St. Irenaeus, who rightly declared her the “cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race.”¹⁹

¹⁹ St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*. III, 22, 4: PG 7, 9S9 A; Harvey, 2, 123.

The Contribution of Fr. Leonardo Maria Bello to Mariology¹

FR. STEFANO MARIA CECCHIN, OFM

Brief Biography

Fr. Leonardo was born on August 16, 1882, at Motta di Livenza, Italy, and received the name of Pietro Antonio Maria at his Baptism. His birth is connected to a vow made by his mother, who was still without child after six years of marriage.² He was so steeped in Franciscan and Marian spirituality from his infancy at the local shrine, Madonna dei Miracoli (Our Lady of Miracles) that, very early, he wanted to enter the Seraphic College of the Venetian Province [OFM] and, at the age of 15, began his novitiate. Ordained a priest when only 23 years old, he was outstanding for his devout life and for his missionary zeal. He became Master of novices and then, of major seminarians. Subsequently, he served as Guardian and Provincial. In 1933, he was elected Minister General, an office he held until his death on November 28, 1944.

I. Marian Life

Fr. Leonardo's spiritual life was sustained by three devotions in particular: the Eucharist, the Crucified Lord, and the Immaculate Virgin.³

He was convinced that it was necessary to love the Mother of Jesus, because all graces come from God by means of devotion to her. He entrusted all his resolutions to her:

Blessed Virgin, Mary, my Mother, I place my
resolutions into your hands. Help me to faithfully

¹ Cf. P. Prodomi, *Seminando Pace e Bene. P. Leonardo M. Bello*, Venezia 1959; E.M. De Rossi, *Cuore di padre. Profilo spirituale del Rev.mo P. Leonardo M. Bello*, Roma 1951.

² *Ibid.*, 15-16.

³ Cf. E. De Rossi, *Cuore di Padre. Profilo spirituale del rev.mo P. Leonardo M. Bello ministro generale dei Frati Minori*, Roma 1951, 20.

maintain them, and on the day of the great Judgment you will lead me to the Throne of your divine Son and obtain mercy for me.⁴

He wanted to entrust everything to God through Mary:

All of my spiritual and physical actions...will be offered to the Lord through the hands of Mary Most Holy...⁵

His resolutions included a commitment to recite the Franciscan Crown of Seven Joys and the Angelus daily.⁶ During recreation he resolved to speak “with devotion about the glories of Mary.”⁷ As the clock sounded each hour, he would recite the Hail Mary.⁸ After lunch he promised to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to Mary,⁹ and in the morning and evening he recited the prayer, “O amabilissimo Cuore di M aria...” (O most lovable Heart of Mary).¹⁰

Bello also resolved to make a novena before each of the principal Marian feast days, to honor the Virgin in the month of May, to make some mortification every Saturday and on the vigils of Marian feast days, and to venerate Marian images, saluting them with a Hail Mary and kissing them if possible.¹¹ He wished to entrust all his studies to her:

Before studying each subject I will ask help of the Blessed Virgin and often repeat the usual ejaculations to her and to the Lord, raising my glance to the Crucified Lord (which I will often do during study as well).¹²

⁴ Ibid., 213.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 212.

⁷ Ibid., 214.

⁸ Ibid., 213.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 214.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 211.

He also entrusted his growth in Christian perfection to her, asking for her daily help in observing the Rule and the religious vows, for the grace against temptations and of final perseverance.¹³

When he became Novice Master, he invited the young candidates for Franciscan life to add the name “Mary” to their religious name, as a sign of entrustment to her, to help them to faithfully live a life consecrated to the Lord. He taught the novices to fix their gazes heavenward:

Do you see the first star in the tail of Ursa Minor (the little bear)? It is the pole star! It constantly points north and serves as a guide for navigators. It is a symbol of Our Lady’s role in our existence.¹⁴

In February 1912, at St. Pancratius, he instituted the feast of “Our Lady of the Novitiate,” still celebrated today. As Provincial, he composed a prayer for the consecration of priests as “Knights of Our Lady.”¹⁵ True

¹³ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁵ "O Mary, heavenly Lady and our Mother, powerful Mediatrix of graces, O Arbiter and Queen of miracles, turn thy kind gaze on us. From that happy place where Thou placest thy immaculate foot and made flourish the miracle, where our Fathers offered Thee their fervent, ingenuous services, where from age to age Thou received the homage of the sons of the Poverello; to us, the last of these, kindly listen. our only hope, we beseech Thee in the very words of Anthony of Padua: enlighten our souls with the light of thy grace, purify them with the heat of thy purity, inflame them with the fire of thy charity. We pray Thee, Mary, to make us worthy to praise thy divine Son, our Lord, every day, and to serve Him faithfully. Let us have the consolation of chanting every day thy sweet name, cause of our joy. And to obtain this, most sweet Mother, we today feel the need to renew to Thee the offer and consecration of all of us. Guard our minds and hearts, our wills, and our freedom. We entrust to Thee our spiritual gains, our studies and the countless needs which will accompany us to the holy Altar. Care for us, O caring Minister of divine Providence. We feel ourselves secure. Permit us, O Mother, to renew the ardent resolutions of our youth. We wish to honor and serve Thee every day as humble pages, as devout knights, living the love of thy divine Son and of thyself, O noblest Sovereign of our hearts. We will come every day to visit Thee and offer Thee the homage of our special services. Accept them, O our Lady, and deign to cover thy poor sons with graces and aids. Move the heart and hand of our dear

devotion to Mary cannot be separated from life or from theological study. His entire life was lived “for the glory of God and Mary.”¹⁶

II. Mariology

II.1. The Scotistic Foundation: The Absolute Primacy of Christ

On August 11, 1933, only two months after his election as Minister General, Fr. Leonard was a pilgrim at the tomb of Blessed John Duns Scotus in Cologne, Germany. On October 29th of the same year, he issued his first encyclical letter addressed to the entire Order¹⁷ on the absolute primacy and kingship of Christ in scotistic thought. The encyclical’s author wanted to reawaken within the Franciscan Order a desire to rediscover scotistic doctrine as key to the organization of philosophical and theological research. This was the approach to be adopted at the new Pontifical Atheneum “Antonianum” established shortly before.

On July 14, 1933, he initiated a movement whose aim was to make better known the figure of Scotus and to obtain universal recognition for his title of “Blessed.”¹⁸ This was the frame of reference for his wish, in 1936, to visit the Subtle Doctor’s town of birth in Scotland and, in 1938, for his transferring the Scotistic Commission from Quaracchi to the Antonianum in Rome, entrusting its presidency to Fr. Carlo Balić.

benefactors to support us. Make them efficacious instruments of thy Maternal care for us. On them, O munificent Dispensatrix of divine favors, pour out thy royal bounty. Help them, comfort them. Protect them, make them dear to thy divine Son, hasten the entry of their beloved deceased into Paradise. O Mary, to Thee and for Thee our youth of today, our apostolate of tomorrow, our life forever: this is the CONSECRATION OF THY KNIGHTS": De Rossi, *Cuore di Padre. Profiio spirituale del rev.mo P. Leonardo M. Bello ministro generale dei Frati Minori*, 23-25.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁷ *Litterae encyclicae Hoc extraordinarii et maximi, in Enchiridion vitae franciscanae I* (Quaracchi 1957) 241-281; *Acta Ordinis* 52 (1933) 283-311.

¹⁸ Prodomi, *Seminando Pace e Bene. P. Leonardo M. Bello*, 121.

His encyclical letter is a veritable anthology of Franciscan authors who, beginning with St. Francis, have placed all their attention upon the centrality of Christ and Mary, His Mother. Among these authors, the figure of Blessed John Duns Scotus, the Subtle and Marian Doctor, stands out in particular. As a true son of St. Francis, he provided a solid, theological foundation for the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Word in the womb of the Virgin Mary. “First among the Scholastic Masters”, writes Bello, “at both Paris and Oxford, Scotus proved the immunity of Mary from original sin. With his great genius, he demonstrated the plausibility of ascribing to Mary what is most excellent, because the maximal excellence—an excellence which is none other than that of her Son as Redeemer, Reconciler and Mediator—pertains to her.”¹⁹

II.2. Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces

Bello’s first major Marian writing was the encyclical letter addressed to the whole Order, entitled *De Beata Maria Virgine omnium gratiarum Mediatrix*.²⁰ By means of this letter, the Minister General desired to promote the feast of the “Blessed Virgin Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces” (January 9, 1937), whose celebration Pope Pius XI had granted to the Franciscan Order, and to exhort the friars to celebrate the feast. This grant was in response to the request made at the General Chapter held at the Portiuncula in 1927.²¹

The letter, therefore, was an opportunity to explain the theological and devotional considerations underlying the Order’s request to celebrate the feast. Never had enough been done, contends the author of the letter, to publicize this doctrine of the Franciscan

¹⁹ Litterae encyclicae *Hoc extraordinarii et maximi*, 244-245.

²⁰ Litterae encyclicae *De 8. Maria Virgine omnium gratiarum mediatrix*, in *Enchiridion vitae franciscanae* I, 334-390. It also appeared in an Italian edition: *Maria mediatrix di tutte le grazie*, Milan 1939.

²¹ Cf. *Acta Capituli Generalis 1927* (Ad Claras Aquas 1927) 40.

School,²² a doctrine which allows us to best understand the true nature of Marian mediation. One must note that the Franciscan family was born and grew under the protection of this heavenly Mother, so much so that Francis of Assisi named her “Advocate” of the Order. Thereafter, Franciscan saints and doctors dedicated themselves to expounding the most sublime truths that could be said about her, to the glory of Christ her Son.²³

Mary’s honor was defended, above all, by John Duns Scotus. Leonardo presents him as the banner waved by the friars during the centuries-long fight in which they were the protagonists, a fight ending with the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. To this must be added their noteworthy contribution, especially that of Anthony of Padua and Bernardine of Siena, regarding the truth of the Assumption. In addition, the Franciscan School was also renowned for its study of the link between the divine Maternity, the holiness of the Immaculate Heart, and the fruits of the Passion in which the Sorrowful Mother participated.

With regard to Mary’s universal mediation, the Minister General recalls that the doctors and saints of the Order have always most devoutly taught that the Virgin is our Advocate, Mother and

²² Fr. Bello notes that there has always been and always will be a lively participation of Franciscan scholars in the schools, academies, and congresses; and, hence, the erection of a chair of Mariology in the Athenaeum Antonianum by Fr. Carlo Balic has been a cause of great joy. He was convinced that the study of Franciscan Mariology had been, without doubt, the basis for the preaching and devotion which the friars spread in the midst of the people of God; cf. *Litterae encyclicae Hoc extraordinarii et maximi*, 337.

²³ On this point, he cites Bernardino de Bustis in a note where he says: "Our Order always studied how to magnify its good Advocate, the Blessed Mother of God, herself, seeing this placed her dowry in this world under the care and administration of our Order, namely, the shrines of the Holy Land. This means that she must be especially magnified by our Order, and her honor, and that of her Son, must be defended." (Bustis, *Mariale*, sermo 3, cit., f. 310b): *Litterae encyclicae Hoc extraordinarii et maximi*, 335, nota 3

Mediatrice, and that this doctrine is one of the chief truths of the faith of the Church.²⁴

Franciscan theology has Christ as its focal point, for whom the Father issued the divine decree of the Incarnation. In this decree the Mother is seen, together with her Son, jointly predestined with Him and, therefore, associated in His work of salvation.

Bello reminds his readers of the three fundamental points upon which Marian mediation is based in Franciscan theology:

1. Mary was “absolutely” predestined God to be the Mother of his Son and, therefore, also to be his first-born Daughter in Christ and subordinated to Christ. This joint predestination with Christ, in one and the same decree, establishes the Virgin as the “secondary head” of the entire mystical Body which is the Church.²⁵

The reason is evident precisely because of the “uniqueness” of her election. Mary is predestined in one and the same decree of predestination as her Son. Therefore, she is placed before all other creatures, precisely because she is conjoined with Christ.

This priority, with respect to all other creatures and her full “conformity” to Christ, means that Mary, “completely dependent upon the Mediator Christ,” receives from Him that fullness which makes her both “secondary head,” therefore, the motive and final goal of the economy of salvation, and with the Man Jesus, “Mediatrice” between God and created things. From His fullness she gives to all, for which reason she is regarded as the Neck through which all of the benefits of Christ the Head pass into the Body.²⁶

²⁴ Cf. *Litterae encyclicae De B. Maria Virgine omnium gratiarum mediatrice*, 338.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 340.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 342-344.

Sacred Scripture, the Church Fathers, and the great theologians testify to this doctrine. Making reference to Pope Pius X, Fr. Bello writes:

Whenever Sacred Scripture addresses the institution of the spiritual economy and of the sanctification of the elect, the Blessed Virgin Mary is ordinarily associated with Christ, Head and universal Mediator.²⁷

It is, therefore, in the Bible where the doctrine of mediation is, above all, found in these passages:

Revelations 12:1-2: The *great sign* appearing in Heaven is Mary, and was the cause of the war between the good and bad angels. The sanctification of the good angels is due to the merits of Christ and Mary. The Virgin, therefore, is shown to have been established in Christ and through Christ, the Mediatrix of grace and of glory for the angels.²⁸

Genesis 3:15: The *enmity between the woman and the serpent* is the prophecy of Mary as the “New Eve,” indissolubly united to Christ the Redeemer. In the order of regeneration, she plays a role in the Redemption exactly parallel to that played by Eve in the original transgression, but in view of the opposite outcome. Whereas sin came through Eve, salvation comes through Mary, who cooperated fully in the work of the Redemption. By reason of this cooperation in a manner subordinate to Christ, she enjoys the dignity of head and universal Mediatrix.²⁹

John 19:26: When he offered Himself up on the Cross, Christ entrusted the whole human race to the Sorrowful Mother. In

²⁷ Ibid., 346; Pius X, *Ad diem illum*, in *Pii X P.M. Acta I* (Roma 1905) 150.

²⁸ Litterae encyclicae *De B. Maria Virgine omnium gratiarum mediatrix*, 346-347.

²⁹ Ibid., 347-349.

that solemn hour, the Son of God proclaimed the spiritual Maternity of Mary.³⁰

These three scriptural passages show us how the Mother is always associated with her Son at the most important moments in the work of the Redemption. Thus, they realize that this “firstborn Daughter,” by reason of an absolutely first divine decree, has been made the secondary head of the mystical Body and that her mediation extends to all the Church.³¹

This truth is supported by three theological considerations:

a) Mary participates in the nature of *secondary headship of the Mystical Body*, because she enjoys priority with respect to the other members, the fullness of grace and of merit, and exercises on them an efficacious moral influence on the other members.

b) Her *union with Christ* was so intimate that she was “preordained by divine decrees” to be, with Christ and for Him, the diabolical serpent’s eternal enemy. United to her Son in the battle against the enemy, she is also strictly united to Him in the office of mediation on behalf of other creatures.

c) An act of faith in this mediation gives *praise and glory to Christ and to the Virgin*. If they are united in everything, what pertains to the Son also pertains to the Mother. Because, according to the golden principle of Blessed John Duns Scotus, it is necessary to attribute that which is most excellent to the Virgin Mary, therefore, it follows that, in the absolutely first divine decree of the Trinity regarding the Word Incarnate, the Virgin Mary has been preordained, in union with Christ, to be the secondary head of the whole Church and, thus, the glorious Mediatrix of all graces and of every single grace.³²

³⁰ Ibid., 349.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 357-358.

2. Associated from the beginning in the whole work of the Redemption by divine decree, Mary's mediation is revealed in the Coredemption:

Chosen and predestined to be the head of our race and to be our Advocate, the Blessed Virgin Mary is rightly proclaimed the universal Mediatrix because, from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, she truly acquired, as Coredemptrix, every single grace flowing into the Mystical Body of Christ, this, both by reason of her cooperation in the Incarnation of the Word and of her association with the whole work of Christ our Savior.³³

This association implies that Mary,

...by her most ardent desires, not only merited *de congruo* the hastening of the Incarnation and, after the Annunciation, merited the title of Mother of Christ, but she also gave her free consent to the supreme decree of the Trinity by which she was foreordained to be the Mother and Associate of Christ the Redeemer.³⁴

Citing St. Bernardine of Siena, Bello shows that the Virgin, receiving the Word into her womb, became conformed to Him and to His mission and, therefore, to His mediation.³⁵ She welcomed her vocation, "fully aware" of her role and aware also that her whole life would be an offering, united to that of her Son, for our salvation.

³³ Ibid., 358-359.

³⁴ Ibid., 359.

³⁵ Ibid., 359-360.

“Conceiving and giving birth to the Truth, she merited the reconciliation of the whole human race”³⁶ and became “the effective instrument for the distribution of the gifts of sanctification,” as St. Bonaventure teaches.³⁷

By her close union with the Redeemer, the Virgin, *directly and positively acquired the graces* of the supernatural economy. In the Temple of God [of Jerusalem] and on the Altar of the Cross, she offered the Savior to the Most Holy Trinity, from which depends, by reason of merit and of the bloody Passion, the conferral of all graces and glory. Moreover, she participated in a most eminent way in His sufferings and in His offering *in which consisted the principal offering to God* (Duns Scotus).³⁸

At the Presentation in the Temple,

She commenced her offering of Christ; therefore, the sacramental offering finds its origin and foundation in the Virgin’s offering.³⁹

The Minister General interprets this Gospel passage [of the Presentation], in the light of the Franciscan masters, as an offering made at the hands of the Virgin who, at that very moment, acts as the Mother of the Savior and of the elect on behalf of the human race and of the Church. In Mary, therefore, both mankind and the Church received the gift of Christ, the Savior and Redeemer.

³⁶ Bonaventure, III *Sent*, d 4, a 3, q 3, in *Opera Omnia* III, 1156.

³⁷ Cf. *Litterae encyclicae De B. Maria Virgine omnium gratiarum mediatrice*, 351; Bonaventure, *Sermo 2 de Purificatione*, in *Opera Omnia* IX, 642.

³⁸ Cf. *Litterae encyclicae De B. Maria Virgine omnium gratiarum mediatrice*, 362; Scotus, *Ox.* IV, d. 2 q. 1 n. 10.

³⁹ Bello cites a homily attributed to Bonaventure: *Sermo V de Purificatione*, *Opera Omnia* IX, 654-655.

And Simeon, on behalf of the world as its authentic, legitimate representative,⁴⁰ prophesied that Mary would be associated with the sufferings of Christ:

He announced that martyrdom of Maternal compassion, to which the Virgin Mary gave her consent, offering herself with her Son as the Coredeptrix of all.⁴¹

Her compassion at the foot of the Cross makes her an active Associate in the Redemption worked by her Son, just as it had made her Mediatrix at the Incarnation. Her assent at the Incarnation was repeated at the hour of Sacrifice, an assent in which she offered up her Son:

This offering, without doubt, was a work without parallel and meritorious in the highest degree. Therefore, God willed the Blessed Virgin, jointly with her Crucified Son, to be Reparatrix of the angelic nature and the Salvatrix and Redemptrix of the whole human race.⁴²

The Franciscan masters pause to contemplate how Christ, on the Altar of the Cross, conferred the primacy of “compassion” on His Mother,⁴³ a compassion by which she experienced in herself the same sorrows that Christ underwent. She became “co-martyr beside the Martyr,” the “wounded beside the Wounded,” the “con-crucified with the Crucified,” the “transpierced beside the One who was pierced.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid., 362.

⁴¹ Ibid., 363.

⁴² Ibid., 365. Cf. Carlo del Moral, *Fons illimis theologiae Scotisticae*, n. 41, p. 372-373. [Ed. note: Fr. Bello consistently used the title *Redemptrix* without the "co."]

⁴³ Litterae encyclicae *De B. Maria Virgine omnium gratiarum mediatrice*, 365.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 366. Cf. Bonaventure: *Sermo in dominica oct. Epiph*, in *Opera Omnia IX*, 172.

The immensity of this sorrow, together with that of her Son, was not an end in itself, but is offered by the Mother, in union with the offering of her Son, for the salvation of all. For this reason the Virgin is “fittingly called the Coredemptrix of all.”⁴⁵

At this point Bello provides the reasons given by the pontifical Magisterium in support of his conclusion:

- In the Apostolic Letter, *Inter sodalicia*, Pope Benedict XV clearly affirms that Mary “redeemed the human race” with Christ.⁴⁶
 - In the Letter *Explorata res est*, Pope Pius XI affirms that the Virgin was chosen as Mother of God “to participate in the Redemption of the human race.”⁴⁷
 - In the Encyclical, *Ad diem illum*, Pope Pius X taught that, by the communion of sorrow and of wills between Mother and Son, the Virgin merited all graces and favors for the Mystical Body,⁴⁹ in such wise that if Christ merited these graces *de condigno*, Mary merited them *de congruo*. Therefore, one may conclude that the Mother of God is, without doubt, recognized by the Church as “universal Mediatrix.”⁴⁸
3. In the third part of the letter, Fr. Leonardo demonstrates, by means of Gospel texts and the Franciscan tradition, that the Virgin fulfills her mission as *Dispensatrix of all graces* because, in the mission of the Holy Spirit, she has been made responsible for the distribution of graces.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Litterae encyclicae *De B. Maria Virgine omnium gratiarum mediatrice*, 367.

⁴⁶ Cf. Benedict XV, Litterae apostolicae *Inter sodalicia*, in *Acta Ordinis* 37 (1918) 102.

⁴⁷ Pius XI, Litterae *Explorata res est*, in *Acta Ordinis* 42 (1923) 98.

⁴⁸ Cf. Pius X, Litterae encyclicae *Ad diem illum*, Feb. 2, 1904, in *Enchiridion delle encicliche* 4, Bologna 1998, 51.

⁴⁹ **Litterae encyclicae *De B. Maria Virgine omnium gratiarum mediatrice*, 370.**

He demonstrates the acceptance of this doctrine by the pontifical Magisterium, which has drawn upon the masters of the Franciscan Order.⁵⁰

The Minister General concludes by recalling that the title of “Mary Mediatrix” is part of Church doctrine and is especially supported by the whole Franciscan tradition. For this reason, he entrusts the entire Franciscan family to Mary Mediatrix.⁵¹

II.3. The Immaculate Heart of Mary

Laying the cornerstone for the new church of the General Curia, Santa Maria Mediatrix (St. Mary Mediatrix, May 31, 1943), provided the occasion for promulgating another letter to the Order on the *Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary*.⁵²

This letter was preceded by the consecration of the entire Franciscan Order to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the part of Fr. Leonardo on December 6, 1942, at the conclusion of the spiritual exercises he preached at the Antonianum. Two days later, on December 8th, he renewed the consecration with the faithful who were present in the basilica church of St. Anthony, Rome.

In imitation of St. Francis, who had chosen Mary as “Advocate of the Order,” Fr. Bello wanted to place the Order under the care of her mediation.

In this second letter dedicated to the Virgin, the Minister General seeks to explain the nature of devotion to the Heart of hearts in the light of the Franciscan masters.

He writes:

⁵⁰ **Ibid., 386-389.**

⁵¹ **Ibid., 389.**

⁵² Litterae encyclicae *Cor Immaculatum*, in *Enchiridion vitae franciscanae* I, 422-466. A year after Fr. Bello's death Fr. Agostino Gemelli published an Italian version of the letter: L. Bello, *Il Cuore Immacolato di Maria*, Milan 1945.

The devotion we practice toward the Immaculate Heart of Mary is addressed in the first place to her human Heart as worthy of veneration in itself because, from the first instant of its formation, it was the Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit and because, by its beating for nine months, by its beating, it dispensed—so to speak—life itself to the Word Incarnate. Moreover, we venerate this human Heart because we believe that it was formed directly by God in the image of the Heart of Jesus.⁵³

This argument of the image is founded in Colossians, 1:15-16, where the Apostle affirms that all creatures are created in Christ, who is the image of the invisible God.

If, therefore, all things were created in Him, that is, according to this model, how much more was the Blessed Virgin Mary [created in Him] who, together with Him, was predestined in one and the same decree.⁵⁴

The Mother whom God chose was made in the image of her Son so as to have a Heart similar to His and to be able to love God and man as He does. The Heart, in fact, is the seat and symbol by which,

Our devotion to the Heart of Mary goes well beyond her human Heart: it is directed principally to those virtues of which it is a living symbol and of which it is regarded as the seat— to the undying love with which the Mother of Christ was aflame.⁵⁵

This devotion, therefore, is directed to the Heart of that Woman who was intimately united to the Word Incarnate in holiness and purity, in

⁵³ **Litterae encyclicae** *Cor Immaculatum*, 425.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 425-426.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 426-427.

her profound humility by which she found grace with God, in her proximity to Jesus in all the joyful and sorrowful events in His life, culminating with the anxieties of the Passion. The Heart of Mary is perfectly conformed to that of her Son. Therefore, devotion to this Heart is an honor paid to her virtues and, therefore, to her person. But the honor paid to Mary does not stop at her; it is indirectly addressed to that God who has filled her with his graces.

1. Marys love for God

According to Fr. Leonardo, God has placed three loves in human nature:

- The love of children toward their parents,
- The love of parents for their children,
- The mutual love between husband and wife.⁵⁶

These three forms of love can be found,

...united and elevated, by the providence of God, to the highest degree in the Virgin Mary, where they express the relation between the Mother of God and the Three Divine Persons.⁵⁷

She is the Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

a. *Mary, beloved Daughter of the Father*

By her election— before all other creatures— in one and the same decree with the Word Incarnate, Mary is the Daughter of the Father to such an eminent degree that she can be called “only Daughter of God” and “first-born

⁵⁶ Ibid., 427.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Daughter of the Father.”⁵⁸ Conceived in the divine mind inseparably from the Word of God who is the origin of all things, she, herself, participates in his fullness to such a degree that she becomes a second origin of all things. All creatures thus find their origin in Christ and Mary, the model after which they have been created by God. This is why the heavenly Father willed the Virgin to be the “Lady” and “Queen of all creatures.”⁵⁹

As for Mary, she renders more thanks to the Lord than allover creatures together possibly can. There is no creature like Mary who can offer the Creator something not already received from Him, from whom all things come. Therefore, if the Virgin is the Mother of God, it is because the Father freely willed to associate her with himself, granting her the privilege to become, in time, the “Mother” of Him whom he begets eternally:

On the other hand, when she gave her totally free consent, she performed a completely human act, by which she merited and accepted the consequent obligations...Therefore, through the unique and free cooperation of the Virgin, that eternal generation, by which the Father communicates his entire self to the Son is, in a certain way, renewed in time.⁶⁰

When she welcomed the divine Word, the Immaculate Virgin could offer the Father,

...the Servant chosen by the Father himself and the perfect worshipper of the divine Majesty. We can, therefore, rightly say that

⁵⁸ Ibid., 429.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 431.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 433.

the Incarnation was also a gift of the Virgin Mary to God the Father.⁶¹

There is a relation of mutual giving between the Father and Mary. Here is found the essence of Trinitarian love itself, in which each divine Person lives in the total giving of himself to the other. Therefore:

No other love can be compared to the one in which Mary has blessed and loved God the Father, because, as our own Bernardine of Siena teaches, gratuitous love is measured according to the measure of grace. But [Mary] was full of grace, surpassing all creatures; therefore, she superabounded in love.⁶²

b. Mary, the Most Loving Mother of Her Son

Fr. Leonardo calls attention to the fact that, beginning with St. Bonaventure and Blessed John Duns Scotus, the Franciscan School has defended Mary's actual Maternity as a "true Maternity" against the opinions of other eminent doctors. For the Franciscan masters, divine grace did not alter the Virgin's nature in any way and, when she conceived, she gave the entirety of her humanity to her Son. For this reason, only to Mary and to no other woman can so real a Maternity be ascribed (given that the humanity of her Son found its origin entirely in her). This is why Mary is said to have possessed a "truly Maternal love" so immense that no other Mother has ever loved her child as much as Mary loved hers.⁶³

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 434.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 434. Bernardine of Siena, *De glorioso nomine Virginis Mariae, sermo 1, in Opera Omnia IV, 72.*

⁶³ *Litterae encyclicae Cor Immaculatum, 435.*

Franciscan anthropology has always been careful to point out that, because He had no biological father, Christ took his human nature solely from Mary:

What a marvel! The Creator of all things, who formed man in His image, has deigned to be made in time in the image of one of His creatures.⁶⁴

Drawing upon the consideration of this event rather than relying upon the theories of philosophers, the Franciscan masters concluded that what happened in Christ must be duplicated in all other men, created on the model of Christ. Hence, if, in Christ, animation is simultaneous with conception, one must believe it to be so for Mary and for all other men. It is the mystery of Christ that sheds light on the mystery of man.

c. Mary, Faithful Spouse of the Holy Spirit

The Church has always believed that Christ was “conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is also given the mission of filling the hearts of the faithful with grace (Rom 5:5), according to the invocation found in the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*. Clearly, the human heart that received the greatest outpouring of this grace was that of the man Jesus, to which is added the Heart of Mary, the Full of Grace. Therefore,

The love of the Holy Spirit was aflame in a particular way in the Heart of Mary, so that the power of the Holy Spirit worked wonders in her flesh.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ibid., 436.

⁶⁵ Bonaventure, *De Assumptione*, Sermo 3, in *Opera Omnia* IX, 661 .

Basing himself on Bernardine of Siena, Fr. Bello writes,

*When the Virgin Mary conceived the Word of God, she obtained such responsibility or authority in every temporal action of the Holy Spirit that no other creature could obtain grace from God except through the Mother of God.*⁶⁶ By this double association with the work of the Holy Spirit—the conception of the Word of God and the regeneration of the elect to grace and glory—the Virgin Mary is rightly called the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, who wished to bestow upon her such fruitfulness.⁶⁷

Mary's love of the Paraclete is evidenced by her prompt obedience and by her docility in receiving his inspirations. Her dispositions are verified by the Gospel events in which she is described as “keeping these things in her Heart.” Nothing escaped her; she missed nothing concerning the preciousness of her Child.

The Spirit consoled and guided her in the path of wisdom, allowing her to receive her Son's word and put it into practice throughout her life.

2. Mary's Love of Neighbor

⁶⁶ Bernardine of Siena, *De nativitate B. Mariae Virginis*, sermo 6, in *Opera Omnia* IV, 92.

⁶⁷ *Litterae encyclicae Cor Immaculatum*, 440.

Transfigured entirely by Trinitarian love, Mary became the form of perfect love to which one must become conformed in order to live fully in Christ Jesus.⁶⁸

a. *Mary's Spiritual Children*

Mary's spiritual Maternity extends to all who are part of the Mystical Body of Christ, as well as to the angels.⁶⁹ Her Mother's love does not reject anyone, and it reveals itself in an even greater measure in her most unworthy children, who become the object of greater attention on her part in order that they may return to the right way.⁷⁰

b. *The Love of Mary for Her Children*

Mary demonstrated her love for her spiritual children throughout her whole life. All of her labors and her sorrows were borne for the good of her children:

First of all, she is the Teacher of salvation for each one of us. She invites us to imitate her diligence and her example... Her words and her examples comprise a perennial source of life and holiness for everyone who piously meditates upon them.⁷¹

When she set out in haste to Elizabeth, what drove her to go in haste to fulfill an office of charity other than the love burning in her heart?⁷²

But her love reached its apex when, she generously took upon herself, together with her Son, the dolours of

⁶⁸ Ibid., 442-444.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 445.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 448.

⁷¹ Ibid., 449.

⁷² Ibid., 450.

the Passion and the Cross in order to blot out and expiate our sins, making propitiation and obtaining blessing. This action commenced when she gave her virginal consent to become the Mother of God.

But at the hour of the Cross

Seeing her Son abandoned by nearly everyone, Mary had to undertake their sorrows upon herself and, thus, in a certain way, she shared more intensely in her Son's sorrows. "There can be no doubt whatsoever," states the Seraphic Doctor, "that she, with intrepid soul and unshakeable reason, never hesitated in offering up her Son for the salvation of the human race, because the Mother had to be completely assimilated to the Father, who loved the world so much that he gave his Only-Begotten Son (Jn 3: 16). It is, therefore, necessary to praise and love her precisely because she consented to the Sacrifice of her Son for the salvation of the human race. After the Most High Trinity and her most blessed Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord, Mary must be loved and venerated above all others."⁷³ This is the love Christ Himself recommended to us when, turning to the Apostle John at the Foot of the Cross, He said to him, "Behold your mother." It is the love of a Mother who gave us a new birth to supernatural life by such great suffering. At that moment Christ announced her spiritual maternity, mystically signified by her entrustment to the Apostle and, with His supreme authority, He commanded the children of so wonderful a Mother in the order of grace to love and venerate her. Let us, therefore, with the greatest confidence, draw close to the Maternal Heart of Mary, the merciful help of us pilgrims.⁷⁴

⁷³ Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, in *Opera Omnia* I, 861.

⁷⁴ Litterae encyclicae *Cor Immaculatum*, 453.

c. Mary Our Help

The duty of any mother not only consists in having children but in raising and educating them. Similarly, Mary, our spiritual Mother, constantly cares for our spiritual formation and growth. Therefore, if

“...all fatherhood in Heaven and on earth takes its name from the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, then every maternity on earth must be considered a vestige of the kindly, supernatural motherhood of the Virgin Mary who, by her intercession provides actual grace to her spiritual children and sustains them in every good thing.”⁷⁵

“God, the sole Dispenser of graces, has willed to entrust this distribution to His Son Incarnate. For His part, Jesus has willed that His Mother participate in this distribution, to such an extent that, according to St. Bernardine of Siena, Mary administers grace “to whom she wants, when she wants, how she wants, and in the measure she wants.”⁷⁶

The Seraphic Doctor bases this power of Mary on an intimate bond between the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.⁷⁷

Fr. Bello cites the example of King Solomon, who had a throne for his mother placed besides his. Likewise, Christ, the true Solomon, shows His love as a Child to His Mother when, at her Assumption, He leads her

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Bernardine of Siena, *De Nativitate B. Mariae Virginis*, **sermo 5**, in *Opera Omnia IV*, 93.

⁷⁷ Cf. Bonaventure, *De Assumptione B. V. Mariae*, **sermo 3**, in *Opera Omnia IX*, 695.

into Heaven and places her beside Him as Queen and Dispensatrix of all graces.⁷⁸ Therefore, Mary continues her mission of spiritual Mother in Heaven.

The last part of the letter is dedicated to devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the Franciscan Order.

Conclusion

Fr. Leonardo Bello lived a life entirely dedicated to Jesus and Mary. It was neither simply a life of devotion nor solely of intellectual erudition.

According to the will of the Seraphic Patriarch, he lived a life of prayer and devotion illuminated by a wisdom which came to him by way of a culture rooted in the Franciscan masters. All of his writings are a compendium of Franciscan doctrine and indicate a vast knowledge of the great minds of the Order. It is difficult today to find a Franciscan like Fr. Bello who can support any theme with an abundance of citations from Franciscan authors.

Therefore, he still remains an example today for every Franciscan and for the Ministers General of how to fully live the Marian-Christocentric charism proper to the theological, spiritual, and evangelical tradition of the followers of the Poverello of Assisi.

The doctrine contained in his writings reminds us that, according to the centuries-old Tradition of the Church and of the Franciscan Order, Mary is the true Mother of God, predestined to be the Cooperatrix of the Son of God Made-Man for the salvation and Redemption of the human race. For the Franciscan school, there is no doubt that Mary has been elected, in union with Jesus, as “universal Mediatrix” of all grace and, therefore, the “Coredemptrix” of mankind. In Franciscan anthropology there is no separating the Woman, Mary, from the Man,

⁷⁸ Cf. *Litterae encyclicae Cor Immaculatum*, 454.

Jesus, intimately united in the divine plan of creation and, therefore also of the re-creation of fallen man.

As Minister General, Fr. Bello invited the Franciscan Order not to neglect this doctrine, because he beheld in it the very essence of the Franciscan vocation— the vocation by which Francis was called by God to “repair his Church.”

Marian Coredemption in Light of Christian Philosophy

FR. JOAQUÍN FERRER ARELLANO

“Let us go forward in hope!” So begins the conclusion of his Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio ineunte*, signed by Pope John Paul II while closing the Jubilee in St. Peter’s Square on the Epiphany of the Lord. Christ, whose countenance we have contemplated and loved during this Jubilee Year, “invites us, once again, to recommence our journey. The Holy Door closed behind us on January 6th; but in such wise as to leave ever more open the living door which is Christ.” “The most Holy Virgin is accompanying us in this journey, she to whom I have entrusted the third millennium in union with the many Bishops who came to Rome from every part of the world a few months ago.”

The Holy Father’s exhortation to that “hope which does not deceive” came to mind while reading recently a work of Fr. Stefano M. Manelli, Founder of the Franciscans of the Immaculate, a work which I had received from my friend Fr. Alessandro Maria Apollonio.¹ Citing the title of John Paul II’s book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, Fr. Manelli presents Marian Coredemption as an “open window onto the third millennium.” From that open window shall shine forth with salvific power “the light of the true faith concerning the maternal Mediation of Mary in its threefold aspect: dogmatic, pastoral, and ecumenical, a truth to shine upon this world so much in need of divine mercy.” “This is precisely the work of the Coredemptrix,” writes Fr. Manelli, “to restore supernatural life to souls’. If it is true that we are in extreme need of this restoration, then she, the universal Coredemptrix, our ‘Mother in the order of grace’, as *Lumen Gentium* 61 reaffirms, will once again obtain for us the divine mercy of forgiveness and reconciliation; she will indeed bring it to pass that the present generation and future generations experience the prophetic words of the Magnificat: ‘His mercy is from generation unto generations’ (Lk 1:50).” It is truly urgent, in view of the state of the world and so many souls in

¹ Fr. Stefano M. Manelli, *Una finestra aperta sul Terzo Millennio; la “Mediazione materna”*, in AA.VV; *“La Corredentrice in Cristo e nella chiesa”*, Castelpetroso 1998, 18-28.

pilgrimage, that the maternal Mediation of the most sweet Heart of Mary, as at Cana of Galilea, intervene, a mediation indissolubly bound up with the most Sacred and Merciful Heart of the Redeemer - the Mediatrix in the Mediator - as Bl. Josemaría Escrivá believed with increasing conviction to the very day of his holy death in 1975. I personally had the great fortune of being close to him throughout the last 25 years of his life, and it is to him that I owe my vocation.

Fr. Manelli rightly observes, moreover, that “Pope John Paul II has restored the theme of Mary’s maternal Mediation to center stage with His Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*. Unfortunately, however, the revival of discussion about the Mediation of Mary Most Holy occurred at a moment of near general depression of mariology. If mariology up to Vatican Council II gripped hearts, even if in markedly abstract fashion at times, mariology since the Council has followed a course tending to distance hearts from Our Lady. For, as Laurentin already noticed in 1966, mariology has been reduced to a skeleton of its former self, as it were, a mere ectoplasm, by the abuses of theological and biblical criticism.”

As another much younger mariologist, Stukas, also cited by Manelli, has noted, “a good part of the most recent, post-conciliar mariological research, too often infected by a kind of cerebral ‘elephantiasis’ caused by use of the ‘historical-critical’ method in the biblical-patristic field, constitutes a force subtly and pervasively undermining the simplicity and solidity of the perennial faith in the mystery of Mary cultivated by the People of God over these two millennia of Christianity, a perennial faith sustained by the insight and spirit of the *sensus fidei*, a patrimony of grace for Christian life.” The same author lucidly diagnoses “the ‘fraudulent character’ of much modern mariology in opting to bury the deductive method, substituting for it a ‘triumphalistic’ historico-salvific method,’ as though this latter method could do away with the former without ‘abasing and abusing’ the human mind.”²

² *Ibid.*, 107ff.

In this paper I propose to treat that dimension of theological study to be conducted *in lumine fide sub ductu Ecclesiae* (in the light of faith under the guidance of the Church), to which I have just alluded. I am referring to the importance, not only of the *sensus fidei* - which is given connaturally with the revealed truth -, but also of Christian philosophy for the *intellectus fidei* (understanding of faith) in general and, in a very special way, for the understanding of Marian Coredemption.

It is pointless to place the historico-salvific method in opposition to the metaphysical or ontological perspective of pre-conciliar mariology, unjustly accused of being aprioristic. In the biblical, historico-salvific, anthropological, and ecclesial review of the classic theme of maternal Mediation as developed in *Redemptoris Mater*, both the ontological and historico-salvific dimensions appear perfectly integrated. Some seem to ignore the complementarity of these methods. In his teachings, John Paul II, that great defender of human reason and distinguished student of philosophy, offers us an exemplary synthesis of the historico-salvific and speculative dimensions of theology with a balance conspicuously lacking in the research of a certain party of mariologists, a party not taking adequate account of the directives of the Magisterium regarding the importance of Christian philosophy for sound theological work. Let us recall, then, in summary fashion, some of the highlights of John Paul II's brilliant Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, September 14th, 1998.

1. The importance of Christian philosophy for a sound understanding of faith according to *Fides et Ratio*

One of the gravest consequences of contemporary indifference to the sapiential character of philosophy is the tendency to favor a simplistic and erroneous interpretation of Vatican Council II, namely, that theology can dispense with the support of metaphysical and anthropological reasoning. This is one of the reasons that the Pope considered it so urgent to reaffirm the necessary cooperation between philosophy and theology, this in order to correctly advance the yearning for truth found, not only in every Christian, but in every man. "I cannot fail to note, with surprise and pain," writes John Paul II, "that this lack of interest in the study of philosophy is shared by not a

few theologians.” (n. 61). “It is an indifference which has notoriously grave formative and pastoral effects.” For this reason, the Pope insists categorically: “I wish to repeat clearly that the study of philosophy is fundamental and indispensable to the structure of theological studies and to the formation of candidates for the priesthood” (n. 62).³

Reason and faith, philosophy and theology... present themselves in *Fides et Ratio* and in reality, not as rival forces, but as mutually supportive and, even more so, as closely, fraternally related: attitudes and knowledge stimulating each other in a single work, as if they were two wings for flying. This is true in virtue of their circular character which is not, in the final analysis, a mere expression of the unity of the human spirit, or the oneness of the universe insofar as it has arisen and is propelled by the creative and saving design of God. Faith is a gift of God, and in spite of not being founded upon reason, it cannot dispense with reason; at the same time, reason needs to be strengthened by faith so as to discover horizons which it could not reach in and of itself.

The expression “Christian philosophy” came into use in France during the 1930’s on the occasion of the famous dispute between E. Gilson and Emile Brehier. It certainly is not, as Heidegger describes it in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, a useless, wooden tool. John Paul II tells us that, “In itself, the term {Christian philosophy} is valid, but it should not be misunderstood. It in no way should suggest that there exists an

³ “Dogmatic theology must be capable of articulating that universal sense of the mystery of the One and Triune God and of the economy of salvation, not only in expository form, but in argumentative or deductive form as well. It must articulate this by way of concepts and verbal expressions formulated critically and universally communicable... To do this it is necessary that the mind of the believer acquire a natural knowledge, true and coherent of created things, of the world and of man, which are also objects of divine revelation. But above all the human mind must be able to articulate such knowledge in conceptual and argumentative form. Speculative dogmatic theology therefore presupposes and implies a philosophy of man, of the world, and still more radically of being, based on objective truth.” (n. 66) Further, reason is elevated by all these truths to recognize the existence of a propedeutic, a way really leading to faith and to reflection on Revelation, without, however, losing its own first principles and autonomy. This is a subordinate part of fundamental theology (apologetics).

official philosophy of the Church, since the faith as such is not a philosophy. The term rather strives to indicate a Christian way of philosophizing, a philosophical speculation conceived in dynamic union with faith. It does not therefore refer simply to a philosophy developed by Christian philosophers who have striven in their research not to contradict the faith. The term Christian philosophy includes those important developments of philosophical thinking which would not have happened without the direct or indirect contribution of Christian faith..." It is in this "sense that faith purifies (man's fallen) reason," that "faith liberates reason from presumption," and this, furthermore, inasmuch as faith facilitates the search for the truth as the guiding star doubly: first, by a negative control, so as not to err, and secondly, by a positive impulse of progress permitting reason, in its investigation of truth, to discover that Revelation proposes what reason perhaps, though theoretically capable of discovering it, might never have grasped, except for having been unveiled by Revelation. In other words, reason inspired by faith can discover truths that, when left to its own devices, it would never have known. (cf. n. 76).

Since theology is a work of critical reason in the light of faith, all of its research presupposes and requires a mind formed and educated to think conceptually and critically. From the time of the Fathers it "has always needed, and still needs philosophy's (noble) contribution" which leaves intact "philosophy's autonomy" as rational knowing. But this rational knowledge has to be purified and motivated by faith and Revelation; and this so as to be placed at the service of theology (preserving its autonomy, more than as 'the handmaid of theology' in the strict sense), so as to be able to enter more profoundly into the understanding of faith.

John Paul II notes, "It might be objected that the theologian should nowadays rely less on philosophy than on the help of other kinds of human knowledge, such as history and above all the sciences, whose extraordinary advances in recent times stir such admiration." (n.69). He himself responds, "Reference to the sciences is often helpful, allowing as it does a more thorough

knowledge of the subject under study; but it should not mean the rejection of a typically philosophical and critical thinking which is concerned with the universal. Indeed, this kind of thinking is required for a fruitful exchange between cultures,” with “the prime task of demonstrating the universality of faith’s content.” (n. 69)

“Others still, prompted by a mistaken notion of cultural pluralism, simply deny the universal value of the Church’s philosophical heritage,” of its Greek origin and Eurocentric character. He responds to this by saying that, “the specific contribution of philosophical enquiry enables us to discern in different world-views and different cultures ‘not what people think but what the objective truth is.’ It is not an array of human opinions, but truth alone which can be of help to theology” (n.69). “With the richness of the salvation wrought by Christ, the walls separating the different cultures collapsed.” (n. 70). “Lying deep in every culture, there appears this impulse towards a fulfillment. We may say, then, that culture itself has an intrinsic capacity to receive divine Revelation... Time and again, therefore, in the course of the centuries, we have seen repeated the event” of the inculturation which began “on the day of Pentecost... While the Gospel demands of all who hear it the adherence of faith, its proclamation in different cultures allows people to preserve their own cultural identity. This in no way creates division, because the community of the baptized is marked by a universality which can embrace every culture and help to foster {and purify} whatever is implicit in them to the point where it will be fully explicit in the light of truth.” (n.71).

It is unthinkable that one might aspire to give an account of what one believes, if this account is not organized by engaging all the believer’s intellectual power. Revelation contains an undeniable metaphysical dimension. Theology can only develop by taking conscious account of this, and, even more, by making metaphysical reflection one of its constitutive elements. To reflect on truth and what faith implies involves theology, necessarily, with philosophy. Hence, concludes

Fides et Ratio, “theology has recourse to philosophy,” for “theology has always needed, and still needs philosophy’s contribution.” Theology shapes itself as theology precisely by philosophizing, and in no other way.⁴

In this Encyclical, John Paul II wants to put an end to the antimetaphysical relativism so prevalent in current philosophy. In contrast with the past, so overconfident in reason alone, the current danger, a consequence of the crisis of post-cartesian, modernistic rationalism, is not an excessive trust in reason tending to discount Revelation altogether, but rather an excessive mistrust of the power of reason to grasp the truth, particularly fine-tuned in nihilistic skepticism and in the flaccid thought of so-called post-modernism.⁵

Interestingly, in a panorama tinged with relativism, the Catholic Church is today the only Institution that upholds the essential, sapiential function of a philosophy making claims to final and universal validity. “A philosophy which no longer asks the question of the

⁴ Cf. J.L. Illanes, “Los estados de la filosofía”, in *Simposio internacional sobre la “Fides et Ratio”*, Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 1999, p. 391; J. Ferrer, “Objeto y metodo de la teología fundamental en la Fides et Ratio”, *ibid*, pp 79-134.

⁵ Cf. Llano, “Audacia de la razón y obediencia de la fe”, in *Simposio sobre la “Fides et Ratio”*; V. Posenti, “Pensamiento moderno y nihilismo en la “Fides et Ratio”, in *Ibid.*, pp 181-200. Posenti has correctly described the characteristics of nihilistic relativism: a) a profound existential fracture between man and reality, whose clearest theoretical reflection is an anti-realistic gnoseology; b) indifference to/obscuring of being, such that knowledge of being no longer constitutes the permanent object of philosophy, precisely because hidden (eventually the place of this knowledge beyond the range of philosophy may be filled by empirical science or the will to power); c) the victory of nominalism over realism, to become so influential, that for purposes of certainty the natural reference in thought to being is replaced by a reference to a text. Thus, abandoning its sapiential character the fundamental language of philosophy ceases to be metaphysical and becomes that of the sciences or of hermeneutics, orientated to the interpretation of texts. This critique of metaphysics and analogy, become a commonplace of many schools of philosophy, under the inspiration of Heidegger has become widespread – for example in K. Barth who has exercised a potent influence over not a few Catholic theologians.

meaning of life,” adds the Holy Father, “would be in grave danger of reducing reason to merely accessory functions, with no real passion for the search for truth” (n. 81). “Deprived of reason, faith has stressed feeling and experience, and so runs the risk of no longer being a universal proposition. It is an illusion to think that faith, tied to weak reasoning, might be more penetrating; on the contrary, faith then runs the grave risk of withering into myth or superstition. By the same token, reason which is unrelated to an adult faith is not prompted to turn its gaze to the newness and radicality of being. This is why I make this strong and insistent appeal—not, I trust, untimely—that faith and philosophy recover the profound unity which allows them to stand in harmony with their nature without compromising their mutual autonomy” (n. 48).

Here is what essentially lies behind the Magisterium of the Catholic Church in rightly emphasizing the perennial novelty and freshness of St. Thomas Aquinas’ thought (cf. nn. 43-48) as a serene expression of a mode of thinking based on faith, in which philosophy and theology are harmonized without confusion and without dissonance.

2. Mariology and Philosophy

It is urgent, therefore, that theology once again acknowledge its sapiential, contemplative, and dogmatic function, precisely at a time when, on account of a variety of factors, this role is being discounted. Among these factors are: the influence of nominalism, still a major factor; especially in the post-metaphysical impact of Heidegger on theology itself; and the influence of that exegetical-philosophical positivism commonly utilized for the study of the Bible, which employed unilaterally without taking into account the directives of the Pontifical Biblical Commission of 1993 on the interpretation of Scripture in the Church, good intentions notwithstanding, disrupts the understanding of the divine plan.

To effect any improvement, a restoration of the dialogue between philosophy and Revelation is highly desirable. To this dialogue the

Encyclical *Fides et Ratio* invites us, a dialogue largely interrupted, laments the Pope, as a consequence of the nominalist crisis of the late medieval period, and the decadence of 14th century scholasticism, which so influenced the theology of Luther and the other reformers and which conditioned all of post-cartesian modernism.

Brunero Gherardini, in his brilliant and profound volume *La Corredentrice*, very wisely comments that “within Catholic circles silence, ostracism, and disinterest with regard to the doctrine of Marian Coredemption may very well be a condition reflecting much more Protestant theological tradition than any homage to the prudence of Vatican II.” Fr. Apollonio in the preface of this book notes that this is a “truly important affirmation, coming as it does from Gherardini, among Catholic commentators the best informed today on Lutheran theology among. That being so, we are here close to the heart of the ecumenical problem. According to Vatican II, it is not licit to obscure revealed truth: in our case Marian Coredemption, for ecumenical reasons. And so we believe it obligatory to point out how after careful analysis of biblical, patristic, and magisterial texts, Gherardini concludes that ‘even in the absence of an ex cathedra proclamation, the Coredemption not now forms a recognized part of the doctrinal patrimony of the Church, but is in the true and proper sense a doctrine of the ecclesiastical Magisterium,’ (p.382) to be qualified as *proxima fidei* or capable of definition” (cf. *ibid.* 15), and so not to be passed over in silence for ecumenical reasons.

Gherardini has also probed the possible influence of Jansenism (which has been rightly considered as a ‘semi-Lutheranism’) reflected in the habitual objection to the doctrine of Marian Coredemption. “From the patristic times to our own day there has been continuous growth in interest for the Marian Coredemption, an interest in part arrested in the 18th century because of Jansenist influence. To this influence, perhaps unwittingly, a large number of contemporary theologians are partly indebted for their aversion to the title. The similarities between the anti-Marian jibes of the Jansenist, Adam Widenfeld, in his venomous *Monita Salutaria* (1673) and the caricatures of Marian

Coredemption in many prominent contemporary authors are surprising.”⁶

I believe that the principal obstacle to a recognition of Marian Coredemption – so fully attested by the sources of theology as to be considered by anyone who has studied these without prejudice *sub lumine fidei sub ductu Ecclesiae*, as *proxima fidei*, and by not a few scholars as *proxime definibilis* - consists in the mental habits adopted as the intellectual premises of faith.

In my judgment, Karl Barth is in full accord with this: witness his well-known affirmation that the primary reason why the churches of the Reformation cannot consider themselves Catholic is the analogia entis, that is to say, the analogy of being. In view of this, the primary and fundamental obstacle conditioning correct access to the mystery of Mary and of the Church is, effectively, more in the realm of philosophy than theology. This obviously affects the preambles of faith which condition the very conception which forms of theology, whether this be subjective faith (*fides qua*), whereby we have access to the revealed mysteries, or dogmatic belief, (*fides quae*), whereby one articulates the content of faith. It is the philosophy of nominalism undergirding the Reformation which impedes intellectual acceptance to the notion of participation, upon which is founded the analogy of being. Without this notion of participation, the Catholic concept of Marian Mediation is unintelligible.

For a mind, then, imbued with nominalistic presuppositions (Luther indeed affirmed “ego sum factionis occamiana” – “I belong to the Occamist camp”)⁷ – and once embarked on the ways of empiricism,

⁶ B. Gherardini, *La Corredentrice nel mistero di Cristo e della Chiesa*, (Roma 1998) 9ss.

⁷ Cf. K. Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik I*, 1 (Zurich 1964 – 8th ed.) VIII-IX. For the current state of ecumenical dialogue with the heirs of the Reformation re the Church cf. A. Gonzalez Montes (ed.), *Enchiridion oecumenicum*, vo. 2 (Salamanca 1993), Introduccion general, XXXIV ss. A pastor of the Swiss Reformed Church, H. Chavannes in his article “La Mediation de Marie et la doctrine de la

of cartesian rationalism, of kantianism (a synthesis of both), of post-kantianism (idealistic and materialistic), with its triple, so-called modernist, thrust toward immanentism – deadening to the mind – being cannot be grasped as analogical because within this erroneous perspective it is impossible – for lack of mental flexibility – to subscribe to the concept of participation, participation being the true foundation of the *analogia entis*.⁸

By one of these frequent paradoxes of the human psyche, radical pessimism, which tragically led Luther to equate man in virtue of his fall with his corruption, also gave rise to the idea that man is saved, not by works - they being now impossible – relying on a passive trust that God confers salvation on a person extrinsically. All is resolved, then, by the subjective certainty of having been justified thanks to the imputation of the merits of Christ.

participation”, in *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 24 (1974) 29-38, blames *nominalism* for many ecumenical obstacles, and affirms the possibility of cooperation in the work of salvation in an analogical sense. A non-catholic voice in favor of the coredemption is that of John MacQuarrie, *Mary for All Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1991). An annotated bibliography on the ecumenical dialogue among Evangelicals, Anglicans and Orthodox is found in A. Escudero, “Aprocci attuati sul tema de la cooperazione mariana”, in *Marianum* 61 (1999) 200-211. In the same number there appeared an extensive bibliography on the mediation of Mary – in my opinion not organized in the best fashion – by I.M. Calabuig, “Riflessione sulla richiesta della definizione dogmatica de Maria Corredentrice, Mediatrice, Avvocata”, pp. 135-175.

⁸ The *analogia entis* (analogy of being) intended as a form of conciliation, in the sense of proximity via likeness between finite and infinite (*similitudo dissimilis* – likeness in dissimilarity, based on the creative causality of God, which reflects his perfection in the work of his hands), instead of unsavable difference. Analogy of being takes account of the affirmation of Lateran Council IV (1215): “*Between Creator and creature there can never be noted so much likeness that there cannot be noted even greater dissimilitude*” (Denz., n. 432). This implies that knowledge of God though possible is indirect, bound up in mystery (in riddles), always incomplete and incapable of comprehending the divine essence. On these points there exists continuity from St. Augustine to St. Anselm, from St. Bonaventure to St. Thomas, until one meets the modern thought of the believer who is saved by forgetting being, the beginning of scholastic decadence with nominalism that so influenced Luther.

In this way subjectivity is converted into the point of departure for interpreting the whole of Christian Revelation. The introspective lurch towards subjectivity, the primacy of the subjective conscience with respect to being, negating its transcendence (principle of immanence) so characteristic of the thought of these last centuries – of the so-called “modernism”, parent of the superficial, “flaccid thought” of the so-called “post-modernism” – finds in Luther one of its most radical inspirers. Indeed Kant, Hegel, and Marx too, were profoundly influenced by him, above all by his subjectivism as the basic norm of truth.

Biblical,⁹ creationist, relational and personal metaphysics, however, are implicit in that prescientific, spontaneous use of the intellect, open to the mystery of being, whose correct exposition entails the notion of participation within being. This opens for us the way to grasp the analogy of being, leading us to the discovery of the Transcendent Being and Creator, supreme analogue of the analogy of being. If we deny this, however, how is it possible to avoid a fideism without dogmatic content? How can one speak of God without falling into a radical agnosticism, consequent on the equivocal use of human language to express divine realities, an impossible “*analogía fidei*” (analogy of faith), as postulated by Barth?¹⁰

3. Mary’s spiritual Maternity and maternal Mediation from Vatican Council II to John Paul II

It has rightly been said that Vatican Council II was the Council of Mary’s spiritual Maternity, as that of Ephesus was the Council of the divine Maternity, because with the concept of ‘maternal influence’ it summarizes all the bonds which unite Mary to the Church: to Mary

⁹ Cf., e.g., the study of C. Trestmontant, *Essai de Métaphysique Biblique* (Paris 1974), and J. Ferrer, *Metafísica de la relación y de la alteridad* (Pamplona 1998).

¹⁰ For example with the methodological girations of his work *Fides quaerens intellectum. Anselms Beweis der Existenz Gottes* (Munich 1931).

who is so intimately united to her Son, not only in His being the God-Man, but in His salvific work: “in the restoration of the spiritual life in souls” (L.G. 61).

This insistence of the Council upon the spiritual Maternity had its natural complement in Paul VI’s proclamation of Our Lady as Mother of the Church at the end of the third session of the Council on Mary, a title which marvelously synthesizes the singular place of the Virgin Mary in the Church. The title makes explicit the harmonious integration of two mariological tendencies (christotypical and ecclesiotypical) achieved in the 8th chapter of *Lumen Gentium*. This is also clear from the title of the chapter, not incorporated into the text of the Conciliar Constitution because of minimalist opposition rooted in the prejudice of the ecclesiotypical school. The minimalists would not admit a transcendence of Mary with respect to the Church because such was not considered by them compatible with and inherent in her condition of being the most eminent member of the Church. In the Mariological Congress of Lourdes in 1958 this current clashed with its opposite, the christotypical which, in order to underline her relation to Christ, saw in Mary, before all else, her association in His salvific work. This point of view, therefore, postulates a Marian transcendence with respect to the Church. Mary is not only the exemplary cause of the Church, but also its efficient cause, always subordinate to Christ, as the Mother of the Church. *Lumen Gentium* is thus in part a compromise between the two opposing systems.¹¹

The great advance, however, for a profounder understanding of the title maternal Coredemptrix and Mediatrix as the foundation of Mary’s spiritual Motherhood with regard to the Church, the sacrament of salvation, lies in the perspectives opened by John Paul II’s Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* in 1987. The appearance of this Encyclical is most timely in our day, after twenty years of hard, post-conciliar trial in the form of mariological silence, all within the context of a serious

¹¹ Cf. R. Laurentin, *La question mariale*, Paris 1963.

theological crisis especially affecting mariology.¹²

The ecclesial perspective of John Paul II's theological reflection is present throughout his Encyclical, in accord with the title of Section I: Mary in the life of the pilgrim Church. Section I, therefore, presents her as the exemplar of the pilgrimage of faith in terms of her fiat to the Cross. This constitutes the formal reason of her cooperation in her Son's salvific work. In Section II, he treats of her presence among the pilgrim people. This ecclesial perspective is also present in his third and final reflection regarding her maternal, exemplary and effective influence over the Church, precisely in the exercise of her maternal Mediation. In this work the Pope expounds his personal reflection – continued in His subsequent Marian catechesis - in full harmony with the doctrine of Vatican II, so making explicit the potential of the Council. In it he returns the term Mediation to center stage, overcoming the hesitancy of Stefano de Fiores' verbal complex theory regarding *Lumen Gentium* (Mediatrice is cited only in passing in n. 62). The Pope places both her ontological and operative dimension in full relief – so brilliantly studied by mariologists thereafter – in their biblical, historical-salvific, anthropological and ecclesial context. The Pope further develops this theme of the marian cooperation in the work of the Redemption in his catechesis of April 9th, 1997. He does this with such precision that, according to Garrigues, “This theme is today very close to being qualified as definable, viz., capable of dogmatic formulation.”¹³

Mary's relation to the Church is that of exemplar or archetype-figure (R.M. n.41-44). But “Mary is not only the model and figure of the Church; she is much more (R.M. n.44): she is the Mother of the Church and with the Church.” The Church, in fact, receives from Our Lady the unceasing maternal cooperation of her intercession and distribution of graces which Our Lady by her cooperation, or contribution to the work of Redemption helped to acquire. Her

¹² J.L. Bastero, *La mediación materna de María*, in *Scripta Theologica* 32 (2000) 149ss.

¹³ J. Miguel, *María, coöperatrice singulière du Redempteur*, cited by J.L. Bastero, *op. cit.*, 156.

maternal Mediation makes this cooperation concrete and vital. This motherly influence extends to every man called to salvation, precisely because she is Mother of the entire Church as a mystical person who reflects the Church's image.¹⁴

In the first two parts of the Encyclical, John Paul II sees in Mary's faith – beyond the narrow perspective of Luther who sees in her the supreme model of faith which justifies the sinner who trusts in Christ the Savior, covering over one's corruption – the exemplar and active, subordinate cause of the infusion of the Paraclete and of the faith of Christ's members. She, as the Mother of the Church, transforms them who are united in Christ the Son of God by way of charity. The foundation of her divine Maternity and her spiritual Maternity with regards to man is, in effect, none other than her obedience of faith which – with experience and ardent charity – is the formal reason of her entirely unique and singular association as maternal Mediatrix united to Christ in His theandric existence and in His salvific work – Unus Mediator – of the restoration of supernatural life lost by original sin. We are dealing with a participated Mediation wholly subordinate to that of Christ which adds nothing to its exceeding fullness. Her Mediation participates in that of Christ and manifests its necessity. It is the mystery of Mary's spiritual Maternity which is derived, in a radical sense, from Mary's faith; her faith is the permanent foundation of the grace of sonship which is inseparable from that charity which increases in a joint manner by progressively divinizing the person receiving grace.

The third section of *Redemptoris Mater* – whose extraordinary theological depth has not so far been matched in the theological world by students of mariology – takes up that theme on which the Encyclical basically turns; namely the “maternal presence of Mary in the mystery of Christ and of the Church” (cf. R.M. 38 ff.) – already treated in the other two sections from the perspective of Mary's faith, the root and

¹⁴ Cf. J. Ferrer, *La persona mística de la Iglesia esposa del nuevo Adán*. Anthropological and mariological foundations for the traditional image of the Church as the New Eve. RE: its ecumenical value see *Scripta Theologica*, 27 (1995) 789-856.

foundation of that presence. He treats here of the vaster and more comprehensive perspective of Mary's Mediation, which "is the Mediation of Christ," intimately united with the mystery of her Motherhood in its double source, divine and spiritual.

The universal, maternal Mediation of Mary is one of the key concepts of Mariology. It has great ecumenical value, precisely in view of its scriptural foundation. Correctly interpreted *in lumine fidei sub ductu Ecclesiae*, it grounds completely, in the full sense, the position of Mary and of the Church in the economy of salvation. It is truly the title-synthesis of Mary's entire personality and function in the salvific designs of God. That is why it has been repeatedly utilized by the Magisterium to make explicit its coredemptive value placed in relief by Catholic theology – a term not used expressly by Popes after Pius XI until John Paul II.¹⁵ The term was consecrated by the Magisterium preceding Pius XII, but for ecumenical reasons and in order to conciliate the fears of the so-called "minimalist ecclesiotypology" was not used by Vatican II. Nonetheless, Mary is Mediatrix, the connecting link between the Creator and creatures in the effecting of whose reconciliation she cooperated. She has – by virtue of this – true power over the entire universe as universal Queen in the proper sense, and not merely metaphorically.

This dynamic function of Mediatrix, in its twofold source of ascending (the Coredemption acquired) and descending (the Coredemption applied, or the dispensation of grace), is the true foundation of her spiritual Motherhood: that is, of her presence in the life of the Church and of each Christian within the Church. Towards this end, the Encyclical studies Mary's spiritual Motherhood in its twofold source: personal – it is essential to maternity to have reference to the mother's

¹⁵ A. B. Calkins, "Il mistero di Maria Corredentrica nel Magistero Pontificio", in *Maria Corredentrica, Storia e Teologia* I, 131-220. For devotion to the two hearts of Jesus and Mary and coredemptive doctrine in the teachings of the Pope to John Paul II, and other essays collected by the founder of the international movement *Vox populi Mariae Mediatrix*, M.I.Miravalle, cf. the volumes *Mary Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate. Theological Foundations*. (Santa Barbara, CA, 1995 ss.) Cf. also Gherardini, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-146.

person (R.M. n.45) - and social, evoking the title Mother of the Church, not explicitly affirmed in the constitution *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican Council II, but proclaimed by Paul VI at the close of its third session and so a part of the Council teaching.¹⁶

Indeed Mary's title, Mother of the Church, evokes the social dimension of her spiritual Maternity, in such wise as to enable her faithful members to grasp how profoundly she is the Mother of the entire Church, how she exercises her Motherhood in and by means of the Church.¹⁷

In the maternal womb of Mary, the Holy Spirit forms each one of the redeemed – with the concurrence of her free will – to the likeness to Christ with whom she stands properly in a personal, irrepeatable Mother-Son relationship. Yet she ‘moulds’ them “in the measure of the gift proper to each one through the power of Christ’s Spirit” (R.M. 45), that is to say, according to the peculiar, personal vocation and consequent place in the Church which each occupies, each member complementing the others by virtue of the gifts postulated by each one’s proper participation in the salvific mission of the Church (since she has a “diversity of ministries and unity of mission” (AA 2)), and as a consequence of her essential link to the entire People of God, constituted a priestly community, organically structured by hierarchical and charismatic gifts. These gifts, too, stem from Mary’s maternal Mediation, the Mediation of her who is the “means” of salvation, that is, of that communion between God and men, fruit of a charity in whose service all are dedicated.¹⁸ Hence, the sacramental maternity of

¹⁶ Ample comment on both aspects in my studies “La persona mística de la Iglesia”, in *Scripta Theologica* 27 (1995), and “Dios Padre y la maternidad de María”, in *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 49 (1999) 53-125.

¹⁷ P. Galot, “Mere de l’Eglise”, in *Nouvelle Revue Theologique* 86 (1964), p.180 ss.

¹⁸ Very significantly Paul VI underscores that the maternity of Mary refers not only to the grace which sanctifies each one personally as the “fruit of salvation”, but also refers to “hierarchical and charismatic” gifts (LG 4a) which constitute the Church as a sacerdotal community organically structured (LG 11), as a “means of salvation” – that is to say that the whole Church includes the institutional dimension – when

the Church flows out of maternal Mediation of Mary, in whom by virtue of an inseparable, dynamic symbiosis, the Church exercises her maternity in the Spirit.

4. Mary's divine Maternity is the foundation of her maternal Mediation which, in turn, is the foundation of her spiritual Maternity, not vice versa.

Christ, the Man, is constituted Mediator in virtue of the anointing of the Holy Spirit who effects the hypostatic union of the Word with the human nature of Christ in Mary's womb precisely at her fiat to the Incarnation – summit of the salvific self-communication of God to mankind. It is this which enabled Him to exercise His redemptive mission as Priest, Prophet and King, with the consequent plenitude of created grace which the Incarnation postulates and from which that created grace stems. In an analogous manner, Mary is constituted our Mediatrix because of her insertion into the order of the hypostatic union in virtue of her divine Maternity, taken in the adequate sense. In this regard, keeping in mind the salvific end of the redemptive Incarnation, to which Mary consented with her full freedom from Nazareth to Calvary, we see that Mary comes to be constituted our Coredemptrix, with a fullness of grace to cooperate in the restoration of supernatural life to mankind, precisely and intimately united as New Eve to the salvific work of her Son. "If she was the first to experience within herself the supernatural consequences of this one mediation" (a clear allusion to the preservative Redemption) "–in the Annunciation she had been greeted as 'full of grace'¹⁹ –then we must say that through

he solemnly proclaimed Mary Mother of the Church qua Church or reduplicatively, viz., Mother of the Pastors "qua Pastors"; this is a very clear allusion to the hierarchical gifts which configure the Church as sacrament of salvation "in relation to the figure of this world which is passing away" (LG 48c).

¹⁹ According to H.M.Manteau Bonamy, *op. cit.*, 334 "as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit over Jesus also implies his same presence and inward work from the very first moment of the Incarnation, so in the same form the manifestation of the Holy Spirit by the overshadowing or *shekinah* at the Annunciation implies his presence and inward work in that first moment when the Virgin herself was created and conceived in the fullness of grace. The Immaculate Conception of Mary",

this fullness of grace and supernatural life she was especially predisposed to cooperation with Christ, the one Mediator of human salvation. Such cooperation is exactly what is meant by mediation subordinated to the mediation of Christ” (R.M. 39). “Her plenitude of grace”... increasingly prepared her to be “the Mother in the order of grace” for mankind. This Motherhood is the fruit of that Redemption with which she cooperated by divine election and predestination whose goal is our liberation. This is indicated, at least in an indirect manner, by several noteworthy details of the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Lk 11:28; 8:20-21; Mk 3:32-35; Mt 12:47-50) and even more by the Gospel of John (cf. 2:1-12; 19:25-27). (cf. R.M. 39 ff.).

Regarding all this, St. Thomas says that God gives grace to each one according to the end for which the person is chosen (*Summa Theo.* q. 27, a. 5, ad 1 ff.). And the grace of being Mediatrix and Coredemptrix would truly be a contradiction if it were not ordained by God to merit grace and to satisfy for the sin of others. According to the Pauline principle (cf. I Cor 12:4) that for every specific function within the Mystical Body of Christ there is also a specific corresponding grace, Mary – in a way similar to Christ – would have a fullness of grace not only for her own sanctification, but also for the sanctification of everyone else. Continuing the analogy with Christ, if His grace is called “grace of headship” – which is an absolute fullness of grace– (since, by virtue of His being ordained by God to merit grace for the redeemed and to satisfy for sin by way of His divine life, He who is the Head of the Church, of all the members of the Mystical Body), then the specific

continues this author, “is not merely the preventive effect of the Redemption realized by Christ her Son, the one Mediator. It is positively that which constitutes the Virgin, thanks to the Holy Spirit, the Mother created to be the Mother of Christ who will come into her flesh at the moment of the Incarnation and who is in the Spirit her Son, qua only Begotten of the Father, conceived in her by the Holy Spirit in person, who formed her for this very work, that the divine person of Christ, preexisting time and space, should come to her and be received by her in her spirit from her Immaculate Conception. The eternal plan of the Father which envisioned the sending of his only Begotten Son conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Woman to restore the covenant with men (cf. Gen. 3, 15), began to be realized from the first moment in which the Virgin began to exist.

grace of Mary has rightly been entitled “maternal grace” or the “grace of motherhood” - which is a relative and derived fullness of grace – making her able to exercise, as maternal Mediatrix, her singular missionary influence in the regeneration of the human race. As Christ in everything and for everything is Mediator, Head and lifegiving origin of humanity, so Mary in all and for all is maternal Mediatrix and Mother in the order of grace,²⁰ Mediatrix in the Mediator within the order of the restoration of supernatural life. The foundation of Mary’s spiritual Maternity with respect to the Church is precisely the exercise of her maternal Mediation from Nazareth up to Calvary in an intimate and indissoluble union with her Son. She is the spiritual Mother of men because she is the Coredemptrix and maternal Mediatrix in the Mediator, and not vice versa. I am not in agreement with those who (like Laurentin, Galot, G. Calvo, J.L. Bastero, Esquerda Bifet) see in Mary’s Mediation the exercise of her Motherhood with respect to the redeemed.²¹ It is just the opposite: she is the spiritual Mother of men – in and by means of the Church – by virtue of her ontological and dynamic association in the Mediation of Christ the Redeemer under the title of Coredemptrix.

²⁰ From this divine ordination of the grace of Mary to merit and satisfy for the sin of others Fr. Cuervo deduces the presence of a condign value in her coredemptive acts, both as merit in relation to grace and as satisfaction in relation to sin, less than that of Jesus Christ, which is in strict justice, but superior to ours, which in relation to others can only be a congruent merit. For the Virgin belongs to an order far superior to ours, the hypostatic – relatively, however and below Jesus Christ, who constitutes this order substantially. Cf. Cuervo, *Maternidad divina y corredentora mariana* (Pamplona 1967); B. Llamera, “El merito corredentivo de Maria”, in *Estudios Marianos* 1955, pp 83 ss.; Ibanez-Mendoza, *La Madre del Redentor* (Madrid 1984).

²¹ J.L.Bastero, for example, writes that the spiritual maternity includes all those aspects which the preconciliar theology saw in Mary’s maternal mediation (*op. cit.*, p. 158). And Fr. Gaspar Calvo, President of the International Pontifical Marian Academy holds that “those who contrary to the mind and teaching of the Church insist on proposing the definition of the Virgin as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate must keep ever in mind that the full sense of the spiritual maternity already includes them. There is no need to formulate them ambiguously... when the Church already proposes the spiritual maternity as doctrine of faith, and so also her maternal cooperation”. G. Calvo, “La maternidad espiritual de Maria”, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, Aug. 26, 1977, 9.

The fiat of the Incarnation – whereby she comes to be immersed in the hypostatic order and participates in the headship of the Mediator, of the God-Man, as maternal Mediatrix (in the Mediator)²² – is the beginning of a process of cooperation in the redemptive work which reaches its culmination on Calvary. At the Cross, her life of faith and maternal love reaches its complete consummation, giving coredeemptive value to all and each of Mary's actions and sufferings undergone in intimate association with her Son (cf. R.M. n.39). On the heights of Calvary there is consummated and brought to completion the *ecce venio* – “Behold I come” (Heb 10:7) with which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, began His mortal career, and the *ecce ancilla* – “Behold the handmaid” (Lk 1:38) with which Mary submitted to the redemptive designs of the Most High. The scene at Nazareth sets Son and Mother in motion towards Golgotha, intimately associated in the pangs of bringing forth supernatural life now restored.²³ Consequently on these grounds Mary comes to be fully Mother in the order of grace in and by means of her Motherhood over the Church.

5. The subordinate and participated character of the Mediation of Mary and of the Church

According to the Protestants, the only possible Mediation is that of Christ, one limited to His Person, according to St. Paul's dictum: “For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a Redemption for all” (I Tim 2:5-6). Assuming that to be so, neither Mary, nor the Church, nor the Priesthood can participate in any mediatory action. This assumption means that all these are but extrinsic aspects of the mystery of Mediation, that they do not have any other function but that of being a pure sign, good for understanding and shedding light on the one Mediation: that of Christ²⁴ (it is known, however, that several

²² Cf. B. Gherardini, *La corredentrice...*, 373

²³ Cf. García Garcés, “Asociación de María con Cristo”, in *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 8 (1958), 471

²⁴ Such is the position, for example, of the celebrated Calvinist theologian Karl Barth, *Die kirchliche Dogmatik*, t.I, 3

contemporary Protestant theologians, like Cavannes, Asmussen, Basilea Schlink, and not a few Anglicans, are taking note of their remoteness from the position of the first Protestant reformers who denied the efficacy of Mary's intercession for our salvation, and this in so vivid a manner, as is reflected in Karl Barth, and their nearness to the Catholic position).

In his writings and preaching,²⁵ Luther intends to place in relief the absolute sovereignty of God and the gratuitousness of grace. Problems arise when one falsely thinks that the gratuitousness of grace entails the impossibility of man's collaboration. A more heartfelt sense of the sovereignty of God, of His omnipotence, reveals a quite different solution: grace is gratuitous and, at the same time, efficacious, that is to say, capable of regenerating man so as to cause him to become truly good and, consequently, capable of collaborating with God's grace in his own salvation.

Luther invokes the "theology of the Cross" as his form of doing theology, to which he opposes what he calls the "theology of glory" – theology that glories in the power of human reason (which he considers the prostitute of the devil) – namely, scholastic theology. The Cross does manifest the gravity of human sin. Yet, at the same time and before all else, it is the sign of God's love on this earth, of God's fidelity to His Fatherhood over man. In fact, the Gospel is the Good News precisely because it preaches the love of God for men, who so loved the world as to send His Son that we might recover our divine sonship through communication of His life by the work of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the saving Cross.

Notwithstanding, Luther interprets the Sacrifice of the Cross as a ransoming of the world, which he considers entirely corrupted by sin. Between the wicked world and the justice of God there is placed the Humanity of Christ which, laden with man's sin, so as not to burden us, but Him only in our place. This is the false theory of "penal

²⁵ Cf. J. Ferrer Arellano, *Lutero y la reforma protestante*, Madrid, 1996 (Palabra).

substitution” by which Christ is the object of malediction and suffers the pains of hell due to our sins, as such these will not be imputed to us, if we trust in Him, because then He covers them, without however destroying them, until the eschatological advent of the Kingdom of God, with the “cloak” of the Cross. This justifies us, then, by covering, and not destroying, sin. (This is the Lutheran theory of the two Kingdoms of God and of Satan, completely separated, in dialectic opposition, up to the full eschatological Kingdom of God at the end of history).

The true sense of the Cross of salvation, however, does not consist in this. Christ, the New Adam in solidarity with mankind by virtue of the “yes” of Mary, the New Eve, at the Incarnation, forms but one “mystical Person” with sinful humanity and destroys our death by His death in order to restore – in the triumph of His Resurrection – the splendor of the new life of the children of God in Christ. Of His fullness we have all received, by virtue of His loving obedience to the salvific will of the Father in being delivered up willingly in propitiation for our sins.

The Father sends His Son to the Cross in order to establish the Cross as His “triumphal throne,” in the hour of the glorification of the Son of Man, when “He draws to Himself” (Jn 12:32) all things, sending the Holy Spirit – as the fruit of the Cross – poured out upon humanity so as to vivify it completely. The cry, “Why hast Thou abandoned me?” (Mt 27:46), does not express desperation on the part of the condemned, but the filial prayer of the One who abandons Himself in obscurity and in the most profound interior desolation to the loving will of God (Ps 21) who manifests His justice in the fullness of merciful Love, who conquers death, since Love is stronger than death.

The Kingdom of God is not, then, purely eschatological as Luther maintains, but is already present “in mystery” (cf. L.G. n.3) in the historical hour of the pilgrim Church, even though it will not reach its consummation until the end of time when the Lord will come again to hand over the Kingdom to the Father. At that time He will have placed

all His enemies under His feet, and God shall be all in all (I Cor 15:24-28).

In Luther, however, “the theology of the Cross” is essentially characterized by simultaneous opposition and incompatibility between God and the corrupt world, in all of its dimensions. This is evident, for example, in the opposition between natural intelligence – “prostitute of the devil” – and revelation, as Luther himself systematically notes in the Heidelberg Disputation, where there appear brash contradictions so characteristic of Luther. For him the following are radically incompatible: God and the world, Scripture and Tradition, Christ and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, faith and works, the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Mass, the Mediation of the Redeemer and that of the Coredemptrix and of the redeemed. Normally, where Luther puts an “or”, Catholic theology places an “and”: Scripture and Tradition, God and the world, Christ and the Church, faith and works, liberty and grace, reason and faith.

Following the Council, the Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* does not limit itself simply to teaching Mary’s cooperation in the work of salvation, both in the order of acquisition of the supernatural life and in that of subjective dispensation within the history of salvation, but strives in every way to make this doctrine intelligible, considering, above all, the difficulty which Protestants encounter in this doctrine. There is a repeated insistence that in this doctrine the figure of Mary does not obscure for us the figure of Christ, a doctrine which fails in this precisely when it repudiates the notion – truly a key one – of participation (and the *analogía entis* founded upon it). Naturally, this idea is of supreme importance in order to rightly understand the sense of the particular “and” (und) in the Catholic formulas. Hence, the idea is illustrated in a variety of ways in *Lumen Gentium* (nn. 60 and 62), the objects of sober comment in the Encyclical (R.M. n. 38), in order to demonstrate that the cooperation proper to Mary’s maternal mission does not obscure nor diminish in any way this one Mediation of Christ, but rather, serves to manifest its power; it is Mediation in Christ (R.M. n. 38).

“For all the salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. In no way does it impede, but rather does it foster the immediate union of the faithful with Christ” (L.G. n.60). Such is the sense of the dispositive mediation (as it was in the old covenant) and the ministerial mediation (of the priesthood in the new covenant).

C. Pozo underscores the speculative importance of participation to which the Council appeals in order to explain that Mary, as creature, does not take anything away from Christ, nor does her participation add anything to that of Christ’s. From this arises the phrase manifold cooperation (L.G. n. 62; cited in R.M. 38), and not as it is habitually translated: likening itself, placing itself on equal standing, etc.; these usual translations are incorrect, not only because they simply trivialize the Council’s thought, but because our translation is the only one which accurately reflects the concept of participation central to this paragraph of the Council.

The metaphysical notion of participation implies two characteristics:

1. That every perfection found in the being that participates in that perfection proceeds from the being which is the source of its participation.
2. That the perfection of the being which participates taken together with the perfection of the being which is the source of participation is not superior to the perfection of the latter considered alone or in itself.²⁶ To participate does not mean to be part of (as quantitative part of a whole or predicamental participation), but to take part in its being (metaphysically or qualitative participation in reflecting partially the full perfection of its source).

²⁶ Cf. L. Be. Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas d’Aquin*, 2nd edition, Paris 1953, 226.

Being, of absolute, necessary and unique value, (transcendental), includes in itself the perfections of all beings united simply, whereas each one of these beings according to the limited measure proper its peculiar mode of being (categorical essence) is partly being, so distinguishing it from all others. Thus finite being is said to participate in being, but not in the sense that it would make up a “part of infinite being”. For each one of these as a total subsistence is an effect of infinite being. To participate means “to take part in its being”, but not totally to exhaust the reality of being as such, as each one of them, in however a limited manner, really is so distinct from the others.

Each being “is”, but each one actualizes its being in a particular “manner”, different from the others. It participates in being according to the mode that is proper to it (in the measure of its essence). The ontological order is, then, a relative unity of participation which is referred to that Being which is for its own sake (YHWE). It finds, moreover, the indispensable unity of the transcendental idea of being, actually representing, even though implicitly and confusedly, all finite beings in one conceptual, relative unity. This is not a univocal, but an analogical idea,²⁷ whose principal analogue is God the Creator, that Other whose essence is being, upon whom depends the entire finite order without restriction, that is, created beings, which take nothing away from the exceeding fullness of unrestricted Being, Truth, and Good.

²⁷ *De Potentia* 7,7. On the subject of participation cf. above all the fundamental work of C. Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione* (Turin 1960). In addition cf. A.L.Gonzalez, *Ser y participacion. Estudio sobre la cuarta via de Santo Tomas de Aquino* (Pamplona 1988); C. Cardona, *Metafisica del bien y del mal* (Pamplona 1987) pp. 75 ss.; J. Ferrer Arellano, “Sobre el origen de la nocion de Dios y las pruebras de la teodicea”, in *Anuario Filosofico* 5 (1972) 173-208, and by the same author *El misterio de los origenes* (Madrid 1998, p. III, cc. 1 & 2. There is an experience of ontological participation and of the divine “Thou” via connaturality in interpersonal love with the relation “I – Thou” described by Levinas, G. Marcel, M. Buber, etc... Cf. J. Ferrer Arellano, “Amor y apertura a la trascendencia”, in *Anuario Filosofico* 2 (1969) 125-136.

Yet God has not only willed us to be partakers of the being which He Himself is in all fullness, but of His provident work so as to cooperate with Him as secondary causes. “God not only gives existence to His creatures, but He also gives them the dignity to operate in themselves,” states the Catechism of the Catholic Church (n. 306), “by being the causes and principles for one another and by cooperating as such in the realization of His design,” under the title: ministers of His providence (cf. n. 1884). St. Thomas has said rightly that “one who does not recognize in creatures their proper activity, a participation in that of God, is sinning against the Goodness of God.”²⁸

In the conciliar text, the proper, transcendental participation found in the relation between creatures and God is applied to the relation between the priestly Mediation of Christ and the various forms of ecclesial mediation, in the double participation of the priesthood of the faithful and in the ministerial priesthood, and the participation in the goodness of God in creatures by creation. At the creation there begin to be additional beings, but not additional being; that is, at the creation there is an increase of beings with perfections, but not an increase of Perfection itself. This concept of participation must be applied explicitly to the Mediation of Mary. Christ and Mary are additional mediatory persons, both in that one, single Mediation which is in Christ as in a fountain and in Mary by way of participation, but not as a power of mediation added to that of Christ. The whole remains His alone.²⁹

I agree with the assessment of K. Barth when he states that “the motive” – all others appear to him as “shortsighted and lacking in seriousness” – for which the Reformation “cannot be Catholic” is found precisely in a presupposition of the Catholic faith: namely, the “*analogía entis*,” the diabolical larva of the Antichrist. I believe that philosophical nominalism underlies the Reformation – as admitted by Luther himself. It is this nominalism which impedes the understanding

²⁸ *Contra Gentes*, 3,6,9.

²⁹ C. Pozo, *Maria en la obra de la salvación*, Madrid 1974, 116 ff.

of the notion of participation, at the root of this analogy of being, (without which no “analogy of faith” is possible).³⁰ However, without this analogy of being as a privileged method, the true sense of Mary’s maternal Mediation – and the Church as a priestly community, a concept derived from this analogy – is impossible to understand. “Unus Mediator”, yes; but that participated mediation takes nothing away from the fontal fullness of Christ’s Mediation and of His grace of headship, as creation takes nothing away from Being (it does not make “more being, but many beings”). That “pleroma” (or fullness) of the Head “does not exclude, but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source” (L.G. 62).

We are continually dealing with the divine will to save men, but not without associating them, by way of free instruments, in the work of salvation of oneself and of others so that all might cooperate with Him – in accord with the celebrated formulation of Pius XII’s Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (AAS, 1943, 217) – in mutually communicating to each other the fruits of the Redemption, “not out of need, but to the greater glory of His immaculate Spouse.” Such is the law of the nuptial covenant of God with man, prepared and prophetically prefigured in the old covenant with Israel, realized in the new and definitive covenant of Jesus Christ in its three phases or moments as indicated by the Fathers: espousals in the Incarnation, marriage on Calvary, and consummation of the marriage in the Eucharistic Mystery, source of all supernatural life for the Mystical Body (cf. I Cor 10:7; S.C. 9), as the pledge and sacramental anticipation of the wedding feast of the Lamb with the Bride who descends from Heaven, the new and eschatological Jerusalem of the Kingdom perfected (cf. Apoc 21:2).

The initiative is on the part of the Bridegroom. Yet the function of the Bride is not merely passive. The active “contribution of the Bride” is necessary, and does not, properly speaking, detract from the salvific work of the Unus Mediator. Rather that contribution participates in it and shows forth its necessity. There arises, from the Redeemer’s sacrifice, a participation in the fullness of His Mediation and Life

³⁰ K. Barth, *ibid.*, II-1, sec.27, p.253.

within the Bride who acquires this on the triumphal throne of the Cross, making her capable of participation, by enriching her with hierarchical and charismatic gifts in order to take part in the work of Redemption. From this comes the association of Mary as the New Eve in the work of salvation; and in a derived manner. Through her in turn comes the association of the Church in the same mystery. The Church in participating the mystery of Mary Mediatrix, reflects the transcendent image of Mary's maternal Mediation and immaculate sanctity.

The image of the Woman, Bride, Mother and Virgin (the biblical "Daughter of Zion") alludes precisely to the "mystery" (Eph 5:32) of Mary, and so therefore to that deep mystery of the Church, as the culmination of the "covenant", the true, formal reason for its existence. From this is derived the importance of the biblical notion of the Woman, of the Mother of the Christ, according to whose image the Church, Bride of the New Adam, cooperates – as New Eve – with the New Adam in the restoration of the supernatural life once lost (Gen 3:15; Apoc 12). The three "ands" (und) – which, according to K. Barth, distance Catholic dogma from Reformation doctrine (namely, separating the doctrine of grace "and" cooperation from sola gratia; faith "and" works from sola fide; Scripture "and ecclesial cooperation by way of Tradition and the Magisterium from sola Scriptura)³¹ – are nothing else but three dimensions of the same mystery of participation in the fullness of the Mediation and grace of Christ, the one Mediator. The "pleroma" (or fullness) of the Head in its Paschal consummation "does not exclude, but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source," as the dogmatic Constitution of the Church says in Vatican Council II (L.G. 62), alluding to the maternal Mediation of Mary and the priestly mediation of the Church, both common and ministerial, which differ not only in degree, but in essence. (Luther admitted a common priesthood of the faithful alone – which is not properly a salvific mediation – and he denied the ministerial priesthood.)

³¹ K. Barth, *Kirch. Dogm.*, I,I; Zürich 1964, 8 ed., VIII-IX.

We repeat once again, this is the law of the nuptial covenant which has rightly been qualified as a synthesis of the entire history of salvation, expressed in the contribution of the Bride, Mediatrix by participation in the fullness of the Mediation of the Bridegroom, in the salvific communication of the history of that fullness of truth and life which has been merited for us in the Cross. A plenitude of grace and Mediation on the part of Christ the Head is participated by Mary via the mystery of her maternal Mediation. It is participated by the Church via the mystery of priestly mediation whereby that maternal Mediation ultimately rooted in the solidarity of Christ is exercised in virtue of the fiat of the Incarnation. Thus are all men called to be children of God, partakers of the Sonship of the Only-Begotten Son of the Father, the Firstborn among many brothers (Rm 8:29), within the maternal womb of the New Eve.

Given this doctrine, it is possible to respond in a convincing manner to the question; why we may have recourse to Mary's Mediation if it does not add anything of value to that of Christ. The answer is clear – as C. Pozo has rightly stated: out of respect for just that reality as we discover it in the revelation of the salvific plan of God who has willed to include in His plan the cooperation of His creatures in order to accomplish the work of salvation. Man has to draw near to Christ in and through the Church, even if the Church does not add anything whatsoever to the value of Christ; or more radically, man has to be included with creation, even if creation adds no perfection whatsoever to the infinite perfection of God.

God delights in the exaltation of His creatures by making of them partakers of His creative causality and of the realization of His salvific plan. This perspective shows us the fascinating beauty of God's salvific plan expressed in the classic formula “nobody has God for Father, who has not Mary for Mother” (so opposed today by an exaggerated rationalistic theology) and – in a derived way – who has not the Church for Mother. The maternal Mediation of Mary is, then, a mediation “to better being” (“ad melius esse”), fostering union with Christ the

Redeemer, making such union more sweet and attractive:

By means of His Humanity, the Mediation of Christ shines forth in the Virgin's Heart, in her who in Heaven still continues her maternal activity conjointly with that of her glorious Son, reaching in this way all of humanity even to the ends of the world. Thus any man whosoever can feel himself present in her Heart united to Christ, her Redeemer Son, who delights in sweetening all His salvific designs with the sweetness of a Mother's Heart.³²

Thus, when we concentrate on these intermediaries, it is not for lack of respect or trust in God, or in Christ, but rather to recognize and wisely respect His plan of governing the world, He who delights in bestowing dignity upon His creatures by making them participate as secondary causes in the execution of His providential plan, a plan which "does not exclude, but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source" (L.G. 62) (cf. R.M. 38).

6. Mary is the most eminent member of the whole of Christ's Church, whose Head is the New Adam; yet she transcends the Church as Bride of Christ in the mystery of the New Eve, the sacrament of universal salvation

Vatican II teaches that Mary is the most eminent member of the Church (cf. L.G. 53), yet always on the supposition that this eminence is bound up with the order of the hypostatic union both as to its being and operation. Mary is, insofar as she is preredeemed, immanent to the Church, the Mystical Body of the one Head who is Christ, Unus Mediator. Yet, the fullness of immaculate sanctity – a supernatural effect of the one Mediation of Christ – was granted to her in order to dispose her to be the worthy Mother of the Redeemer, associating her in the constitution of His theandric being – in virtue of which He is

³² P. Parente, *Maria con Cristo, en el designio de Dios*, Madrid 1987, 92.

potential Mediator and Head of the Church – and in His salvific work, to its very Paschal consummation. As the Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* states: “If she was the first to experience within herself the supernatural consequences of this one mediation... {the preservative Redemption} ...then we must say that through this fullness of grace and supernatural life she was especially predisposed to cooperation with Christ, the one Mediator of human salvation. And such cooperation is precisely this mediation subordinated to the mediation of Christ” (as Coredemptrix of the rest of the descendants of Adam in the liberative Redemption) (R.M. n.39). She, therefore, is such a singular and eminent member that – in as much as she was associated with Christ by the will of God in the work of salvation, in the order of the acquisition of Redemption – she transcends the Church when the Church is considered, not as the whole Christ – Head and members – (since all Mary’s plenitude of grace and her maternal Mediation derive from that of Christ), but as the Bride who, Christ, Head of the new humanity as the New Adam, won in the sleep of the death of the Cross, at the price of His Blood, with the cooperation of Mary, His Mother, the Woman of Genesis and the Apocalypse, the title by which she is addressed by Christ on the Cross.

Behold why it can and must be said that the Church was born, in as much as Bride and mystical Person distinct from that of Christ, her Bridegroom and Head – from His opened side “and” from the sword of the Woman’s sorrow. We are dealing here with an “and” of transcendent participation which – as distinguished from predicamental participation – takes nothing from the fullness of Christ’s Mediation and grace of headship, from which this Marian participation derives – by the free will of God, whose supreme appropriateness is evident – and demonstrates its necessity, making the path of the Christian life more amiable. The reason is none other than supreme appropriateness - with all the attractive tenderness of a Mother’s Heart which reflects the mercy of the Father who so loved the world as to send His Only-Begotten Son in the Spirit (cf. L.G. 62).

As F. Ocáriz shows in his study “La mediación materna de María en la

Redemptoris Mater,” the participation in the transcendent order of the Mediation of Christ as Head, which affects all the members of the Church – at least the universal priesthood of the faithful –, in the case of the maternal Mediation of Mary: Mediatrix in the Mediator, implies a fullness of communion and participation. In the eschatological consummation to follow in her Assumption that communion reaches such intimacy and intensity (“*cor unum et anima una*” [one mind and heart]), as to form with Christ (and it goes without saying, always subordinately to Him) but a single “dual” instrument for the donation of the Spirit (in the proper and not merely appropriated sense), as the uncreated Gift, by whose participation in charity we are made other christ: adopted sons of the Father in the Only-Begotten to the Church. Not only is she Mother of “divine grace” which sanctifies each member of the Church considered individually (as C. Pozo and P. Galot point out), but of the “hierarchical and charismatic gifts” (L.G. 4) proper to the personal vocation of each member with an essential connection to the “we” of the Church, the community of salvation. That Church, insofar as “its members complement each other and are ordered to each other mutually” – is constituted as a priestly community, an “organic structure” (L.G. 11), a social institution at the service of the salvific communion wrought by charity; that is to say, of the entire Church, whose maternity is derived from that of Mary. Mary is her Mother, and for this reason Mary transcends the Church. And as F. Ocariz rightly notes, Our Lady is so intimately united to Christ the Head that the traditional images of “neck or canal” seem – in the light of what we have said above – extremely weak.³³

³³ In other theological studies, such as “La persona mística de la Iglesia esposa del nuevo Adán”, in *Scripta Theologica* 27 (1995) 789-860, I have sought to show how *the Church of Christ subsists as a person*, in the proper sense, not merely metaphorical (a sense quite distinct from that of H. Muehlen’s “One Person, the Spirit, in many persons, Christ and us, his faithful”, a purely metaphorical construct), *in the Church founded firmly on the rock of Peter in virtue of the maternal mediation of Mary*, “Mother of the living” (the new Eve), as *sacrament and ark of salvation*, the “*Catholica*”, *which by work of the Holy Spirit draws to her maternal womb all men of good will, forming them spiritual as the spiritual offspring of the Woman*, foretold in the Protogospel and typified in the rest of the Bible in the form of a feminine messianic current under the title of Daughter of Sion, none other than “the messianic People whose head is Christ and which

Conclusion

In the brilliant and straightforward perspective of John Paul II's teaching on Mary's maternal Mediation, as X. Pikaza justly notes, there are integrated, on an adequately trinitarian and historico-salvific foundation, with their ecclesiological implications in the light of philosophy and that Christian anthropology to be assessed and assimilated in theological work, three mariological perspectives: namely, the Protestant, the Orthodox, and the Catholic. The Protestant perspective contemplating Mary as the Model of faith; the Orthodox perspective contemplating her from the angle of Wisdom as the icon of the Spirit (the pneumatófora, at the antipodes of Protestant pessimism which negates the very possibility of any deification of fallen nature), are rooted, the first and the second without their exclusive unilateralisms, in the Catholic perspective as defined within the integrated horizon of John Paul II. This effectively underscores her essential bond to Christ in His theandric being and in His salvific work as maternal Mediatrix in the Mediator.

Pikaza unfortunately considers as positive the analysis of a disgraceful situation in which Marian Coredemption and Mediation occupying so central a place in the preconciliar Mariology, "now find themselves in a current situation so changed since the Council that even the authors who pass for being more traditional in this field have shamefully left out of their treatises any mention of Mary's titles of universal Mediatrix and Coredemptrix."³⁴ (He cites, for example, C. Pozo, *María en la Obra e la salvación*, Madrid 1974).

Following the lucid guidance of "Redemptoris Mater" within in the rich context of the John Paul II's Magisterium (which includes His emphasis of the importance of Christian philosophy for authentic theological efforts, so vigorously exposed in *Fides et Ratio*), we can grasp how it is possible to achieve, along lines also to be found in the

enjoys the dignity of children of God in whom dwells the Holy Spirit as in a temple" (cf. LG 9b).

³⁴ De la Potterie-Pikaza-Losada, *Mariología fundamental*, Salamanca 1985, 124 ff.

more classic Catholic mariology, a harmonious integration of these three perspectives, but without any unilateralism and forensicism. This is achieved, not by prescinding from all the consequences of a balanced, christological foundation, but by contemplating these perspectives in the light of the Trinitarian Mystery and of the double, joint, and inseparable missions of the Word, and of the Spirit from the Father (the two hands of the Father) culminating conjointly across the history of salvation in the fullness of the whole Christ, of the new, eschatological Jerusalem. Mary's faith, adequately considered, i.e., by repudiating the skewed fiducial, forensic perspective of Lutheranism, is at the root of her maternal Mediation as the New Eve, the Mediatrix in the one Mediator, who participates in the New Adam's Mediation of headship – to which she adds nothing, but rather whose necessity she manifests. This is ordained – *ad melius esse* - to the restoration of the supernatural life. And her presence in the mystery of Christ and of His “pleroma” the Church as icon of the Spirit, the “pneumatófora” of the Orthodox, is that of the Mother indissolubly united to her Son who vivifies the Church in and by means of the mystery of that “single-shared Mediation”. By this “single-shared mediation” the Church lives as an instrument of the Kingdom until its eschatological consummation.

Here we see why we can and must say that the Church was born, in so far as Bride and mystical Person distinct from Christ, her Bridegroom and Head, from His opened side “and” from the sword of the Woman's sorrow. We are dealing here, we repeat, with an “and” of transcendent participation. As distinguished from predicamental participation, it does not detract from the fullness of Christ's Mediation and grace of headship, from which this Marian participation derives by the free will of God. Its supreme appropriateness is evident, and demonstrates its necessity, making the path of Christian life more amiable. The reason it does so is none other than the supreme appropriateness of Marian mediation, viz., all the attractive tenderness of a Mother's Heart reflecting the mercy of the Father who so loved the world as to send His Only-Begotten Son in the Spirit (cf. L.G. 62). Mary is the Mother of the whole Christ (the offspring – in the singular

– of Abraham, our father in the faith, who is also the same offspring of the Woman of the Alpha and the Omega, that is, the Woman of Genesis and of the Apocalypse addressed as Blessed: “Blessed art thou who hast believed” Lk 1:45), in virtue of a Motherhood “spreading itself” over the Church in the form of the Cross (Cf. R.M. 24). In and through this Motherhood the Spirit comes to men, one by one, who accept the salvific gift offered to all without exception. It is a Motherhood which proceeds from the original source of the intimate life of God and of all His works “ad extra”. In other words, it is a maternity proceeding from the subsistent Paternity of God the Father, which contains by eminence the properties of maternity (cf. CEC, 239), which this Maternity reflects, imitates and participates in the Spirit, a maternity realized in and through the Church. That Maternity has no other end – or meaning – than to make it possible for mankind, dispersed on account of sin, to return to the Father in a fraternal communion of the children of God in the whole Christ, from the just Abel to the last of the elect.

Mary cannot be, in any way, shape or form, an obstacle to sane and constructive ecumenism, but rather its most solid guarantee of avoiding grave and equivocal adulterations.³⁵

³⁵ This is one of the clearest examples of “the hierarchy of truths” (UR 11c), and as a primary truth is given one passes then to those closely united to it. The dialogue with Protestants on this point must be structured primarily to facilitate description of the full content of the mystery of Christ. Thus will appear, in all its impressive fullness, the mystery of Mary, deriving from and inseparably united to the mystery of the Church in an indivisible unity of participation in “the one mediation of the Redeemer which does not exclude, but which arouses in creatures, as the unique goodness of God is communicated to them in distinct forms, a multiple cooperation sharing a unique source” (cf. LG 62b). According to Paul VI (cf. *Marialis Cultus*) Mary is the maternal center of unity” and “Mother of unity” who with her powers can bring about the full integration of the separated brethren “in the one Church founded and guided by Christ”. Unity, rooted in the one faith and work of charity infused at Baptism, is the fruit of the maternal mediation of Mary, in and through the maternal sacramentality of the Church. This begins to be exercised in baptismal regeneration, linked to the action of Mary, and culminates in the eucharistic mystery, root of the salvific efficacy of all its activity (cf. SC 9). Cf. A. Bandera, *La Virgen y los sacramentos* (Madrid 1987).

Mary draws her children into and obtains from her Son, “the Firstborn among many brethren” (Rm 8:16), that full communion of the “one fold and one Shepherd” (Jn 10:16). Our Lady, as at Cana of Galilea, will accelerate the fulfillment of this prophecy which is the basis of the Church’s ecumenical hope. All that Christ can do in His omnipotence, as has frequently been said, His Mother can do, even anticipating it, with her intercession. She unites herself to the priestly prayer of Jesus (Jn 17) in which He asks of the Father that all His disciples may be “one”, as They are One in the Spirit, in the intimate “communion” of the indivisible Trinity. Jesus’ prayer – which is necessarily heard by His Father – shall be realized when God’s hour arrives, prepared by Mary, who counting on her children’s cooperation shortens the time of the great trial – the scandal – of division among Christians who divided so hinder the salvific plan of God. It shall be Mary’s hour. She ever prepares, like the dawn of the Sun of Justice, the advent of the messianic reign which begins for the humble at Nazareth, and continues until the realization of the consummated Kingdom at the conclusion of the history of salvation.

In a recent study on the maternal Mediation of Mary³⁶ I commented on the negative opinion of a certain well-known commission established to critique the petition for its dogmatic definition of that truth, the occasion being the Marian Congress of Czestochowa on August 24th, 1996. This commission opined, without any solid arguments, that the three titles proposed, namely: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate, are ambiguous, and urged the “importance of pondering why the Magisterium has used this title so rarely over the past 50 years.” Whatever else might be said of this last claim – which has been proven false, as we have indicated earlier - it is obviously a blatant falsehood by the very fact that John Paul II refers to Mary’s maternal Mediation (one can consult “Redemptoris Mater”, especially Part III) as the key to His mariological teaching. It is also quite clear that the current theological environment can hardly be described as

³⁶ Cf. *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 48 (1998) pp. 469 ss.

very mature. This immaturity may well be at the root of suggestions that a definition of the doctrine now is inopportune. It goes without saying that the opportune character of the definition is to be decided by the Magisterium, not the theologians. But in no way can some absence of sound doctrinal foundation for a definition, a foundation consisting of a three theological sources: trinitarian, ecclesiological, and anthropological, be alleged for claiming a definition now to be inopportune, as the critique of the International Marian Academy asserts. In my judgment, the doctrinal foundation for definition is to be found in the Magisterium of John Paul II (I have motives to suspect that the Pope desires to prepare for such definition). Even less telling are the supposed ecumenical difficulties. At root these are, as we have shown earlier, problems involving the presuppositions of faith arising out of nominalism. So they are, strictly speaking, problems of a philosophical rather than theological or mariological order. The immanentist somersaults and anthropocentric subjectivism consequent on these philosophical assumptions cry out for refutation, as John Paul II vigorously stresses in his brilliant Encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio*. This will happen when God's hour arrives.

Sine Labe Originali Concepta: The Debitum Peccati in Scotus, Aquinas, and Bonaventure post Ineffabilis Deus

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Introduction

The objective of this work is to show that Bl. John Duns Scotus' account of original sin and the preservation of the blessed Virgin Mary is the truly reasonable theory in light of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception. To show this we will first provide definitions of several of the terms which have become involved in this discussion over time. Second, there will be a short summary of the theological thought of Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, and John Duns Scotus regarding original sin and its applicability to the Immaculate Conception of the blessed Virgin Mary; for our purposes, we consider the Immaculate Conception as defined by the apostolic constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*. Third, we will contrast the thought of these three theologians and draw on recent work in biblical theology to demonstrate the relevance of Scotus' thought in the Church as regards covenant theology. We will then conclude with a few final thoughts, and a brief synthesis of our discussion.

None would argue against the statement that Aquinas has made a great impact on contemporary theology through his writings and in virtue of his being named by the popes as the model of theological method. Aquinas has become the exemplar of clarity in method and thought, and is a gem in the crown of the Dominican order. As Aquinas is to the Dominican figures in scholastic theology, Bonaventure is to the Franciscans of the scholastic period, and this is shown in his *Breviloquium*, Sentence Commentary, and life of St. Francis.

Lastly, we will be considering Duns Scotus. He was born toward the end of the lives of Bonaventure and Aquinas, so he can only somewhat be considered a contemporary of theirs, but the

contribution which we will be considering is his greater exposition on the nature of original sin and his advocacy for the Immaculate Conception, whereas both Bonaventure and Aquinas had argued against it. Aquinas argued against it to a more absolute extent, and Bonaventure to a gentler, yet still negative, manner.

All three theologians wrote commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, as was the common practice for those studying at Oxford or the University of Paris for the title of Master, and it is primarily within those works that we find our relevant texts: for St. Thomas, a further treatment is given in his *Summa Theologica* and his Commentary on Romans, and for Bonaventure we will also be using and referencing his *Breviloquium*.

As was said above, there are several terms which merit explanation for the sake of our conversation, so we will begin with these and then proceed from there to our discussion of each of the three theologians.

Defining our terms

Maculism: This position holds that Mary was created such that she received the stain of original sin in her body at the moment of conception, and in her soul at the moment of their union. She was thereafter cleansed completely and absolutely by the redeeming power of Christ. Aquinas comments in his *Summa* that “if the soul of the Blessed Virgin had never incurred the stain of original sin, this would be derogatory to the dignity of Christ, by reason of His being the universal Savior of all. Consequently, after Christ who, as the universal Savior of all, needed not to be saved, the purity of the Blessed Virgin holds the highest place.”¹ There has been disagreement between the Dominicans and the Franciscans from the scholastic period onward regarding the possibility of Mary’s having been immaculately conceived; the Dominicans have long held, with St. Thomas, that it is not possible for Mary to have been completely

¹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q.27, a.2, ad secundum.

immaculately conceived on account of the inherence of original sin in the nature of man, and it would have defeated the universal redemption of Christ if there had been one who was never touched by the stain of sin.²

Immaculism: This position, which has been historically held by the Franciscans and the Jesuits, asserts that Mary was kept always and everywhere free from any stain of original sin.³ In addition to being in accord with what would eventually be dogmatically defined, this position runs contrary to the prevailing opinion during the scholastic period. We will see later that Scotus prefers to hold that Mary was filled with grace from the moment of her conception and that she thereby never contracted original sin, which was naturally due to her on account of being originate of Adam. To understand how this is possible we must move to our next definition.

Original justice: For Scotus and Aquinas there is a shared acknowledgement that original justice was the gratuitous gift of God whereby man's nature was elevated by grace. The effect of this was such that his lower powers and passions were subordinate to his higher faculties and powers. Thus, he was always able to moderate his natural desires and inclinations such that he kept the laws of God and persevered in obedience and right honor toward his Creator. In the state of original justice there would have been no concupiscence in man, for concupiscence is nothing but the disordered attachment of the passions to the goods which man naturally desires and the seeking after of those goods in a manner which is not restrained by the will. In both Aquinas and Scotus it is held that this gift was given to Adam as a trust which would also be given to his progeny through his seed, and this on the condition of Adam's perseverance in justice. We will discuss this later in the context of the covenant theology of Dr. Scott Hahn.

² Ibid

³ Patricia W. Manning "An Overview of the Pre-Suppression Society of Jesus in Spain", *Brill Research Perspectives in Jesuit Studies* 2, 3 (2020): 1-158.

Original sin: This is the personal sin of Adam by which he lost original justice for himself, and, consequently, for his progeny until the end of time. Furthermore, this first sin and corruption of the nature of man resulted in concupiscence in the body. Just as in Adam the gift of original justice was superadded to his nature through the grace of God and intended by God for all of his progeny, the privation of justice which resulted from Adam's sin now becomes the birthright of all of his progeny through their share in the one human nature which was complete and original in Adam.

Concupiscence: As was mentioned above, this is the carnal inclination toward legitimate goods which is immoderate and lacks the disciplinary power of the will which would have permitted a right ordering of our actions. This right ordering would have directed the passions toward action which accords with justice toward God and in relation to His creation; instead, we now experience the overriding of the will for the sake of satisfying an immoderate desire for earthly goods. According to Scotus, concupiscence does not constitute original sin itself, for concupiscence dwells in the sensitive appetite as an act, habit, or proneness,⁴ and is understood by him to be the material of original sin, whereas the form, as said above, is the privation of owed justice. Aquinas agrees in this, yet does less to distinguish the two than Scotus, and applies the predicable quality of the material to the formal thereby saying that concupiscence may be called original sin.⁵

Debitum Peccati: This is the term for the debt which all men naturally descended from Adam share on account of the original sin which he committed. This debt has been passed down through Adam's seed, and now occurs naturally in all who are born of woman with the absolute exception of two: the blessed Virgin Mary, and her Son Jesus Christ. Tradition holds that John the Baptist was cleansed from original sin in the womb of Elizabeth at Mary's visitation, and was thus born without original sin, but he still contracted original sin

⁴ Scotus, *Ordinatio* II, Dist. 30-32, ¶ 50-53

⁵ Aquinas, *Sentences* II, D.30, Q. 1, a.3

via his conception. In large part this phrase is involved in the discussions which regard the immaculate conception and its manner of execution, though it may be used in discussions of original sin in general.

Those who hold the maculist position would assert that the *debitum peccati* was redeemed in Mary, and was present and affective in her conception, whereas those who hold to the immaculist position would say that she was miraculously preserved by God.⁶ There are variations of the phrase depending on the degree to which the writer inclines toward the maculist or immaculist position, but a digression into these is unnecessary for our purposes. Scotus' view that the debt imputed to the progeny of Adam through Adam subsists in man insofar as he is a natural son of Adam accords with both the maculist and immaculist positions, but the difference lies in the assertion of maculism in Mary. Scotus posits this as the less excellent option when compared with the possibility that she was preserved from the first moment from the stain of sin.⁷

Aquinas on Original Sin

In his commentary on the Sentences Aquinas begins with the definition of sin in man as regards his origin in Adam. For Aquinas the effects of sin which flow from our nature post-fall (Concupiscence, death, passibility, and corruptibility) have the character of punishments which are due to the state in which man was created, but not insofar as the principles of our nature are concerned.⁸ What is meant by this is that Aquinas considers it to have been natural in the order of divine intention for man to be possessed of the habit of original justice from the moment of his existence; further, it means that the same habit should be passed on from the

⁶ It is worth noting that those who are speaking of the Immaculate Conception in a post-definition world would add the phrase, "...in view of the future redemptive acts of Christ." In the discussion as framed by Scotus in his *Ordinatio*, this addendum does not seem to occur.

⁷ Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, D. 3, ¶ 28-33

⁸ Aquinas, *Sent.* II, D. 30, Q. 1, a.1

principal of that human nature, Adam, to the consequent instances of that nature, these being the human offspring which were spawned from his seed. From this, since both the gain and loss were attained in the single person who was the sum of human nature, Aquinas says that the fault of Adam proceeded from the will of the entirety of nature, for Adam was constitutive of the entirety of that nature. Furthermore, it continues to do so in the progeny which are from the Adamic line. Therefore, in every descendant of Adam there is a privative deficiency which constitutes an evil, and which carries natural fault but not personal fault. In other words, Aquinas considers the fault of sin to be according to the nature, not a personal failure for which the individual carries the weight of guilt.

It is also important to understand that in Aquinas' thought original justice consisted in both a grace of the intellect and of the will whereby the intellect was illumined and the will was perfectly ordered to the upright observance of God's divine will. As well, there was a consequent uprightness of the body whereby the concupiscible passions were subdued and subjected to the will. Thus, after the fall there exists in man both a disorder of the will, which now inclines toward the lower things to an inordinate degree, but also a disorder of the flesh whereby it carries the imprint of sin and has become dominant over the will.⁹ The inclination of the will he refers to as a kind of formal fault, and the fleshly concupiscence he refers to as the material fault. We noted above that the submission of the body in its original state is on account of the will, and so now the deficiency of the will's ability to govern the flesh is followed by the noncompliance of the passions which are now able to overcome reason and the will. An important threefold distinction which Aquinas makes is between deficiency, evil, and fault.¹⁰ A deficiency is understood to be a simple negation, whence a thing which was is not any longer; an evil is the privation of a good which ought to be present but is not; and a fault is understood as an unnatural privation which carries the weight of personal choice, in other words, a freely chosen evil. It is according

⁹ Aquinas, *Sent.* II, D. 32, Q. 1, a.1.

¹⁰ Aquinas, *Sent.* II, D. 30, Q. 1, a.2

to these definitions that the above understanding of original sin comes about.

Now, when asking whether there can be a fault in the progeny of Adam without personal failure on their part, as in the case of original sin, Aquinas answers in the affirmative for this reason: to have a punishment due without having a fault which demands that punishment would be a fault in the divine justice, for a punishment without a fault is a trespass of justice, and God is infinitely just. Since it cannot be said that we as descendants of Adam bear the personal fault for the sin of Adam, Aquinas concludes that there must be present an original and natural fault without personal culpability. This is what we refer to as the *debitum*, as we have defined it above.

A final note is that the Thomistic understanding of baptism affords the remission of original sin through the Sacrament, which means the removal of the fault which was present due to nature and replaces that privation with the presence of sanctifying grace in the soul as satisfaction for the debt owed. This, according to Aquinas, restores the upright quality to the will which was lost through Adam while yet leaving the *fomes*, which is the inflammation of the passions, and concupiscence in the flesh. Thus, Aquinas still allows for a new privation to occur in the individual's soul, but this would be due to personal mortal sin, and does not reach the level of a natural fault which may be passed on but remains a personal fault which may be remedied.¹¹

Scotus on Original Sin

Scotus holds that in original sin is a twofold combination of lack of owed justice,¹² which is the formal element, and the hereditary debt of having that justice, which constitutes the material element. This debt incurred is what is called the *debitum peccati*. The owed justice of which he speaks is that which was granted to Adam and subsequently lost by him; therefore, there was not original sin in Adam but

¹¹ Aquinas, *Sent.* II, D.32, q.1, a.1

¹² Scotus, *Ordinatio* II, D. 30-32, ¶ 54-57

personal sin. The consequence of this privation is what we understand as concupiscence, and this is the disordering of the passions and the will such that the latter override the former. We see this illustrated by the St. Paul when he says, “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing that I hate,”¹³ and from our Lord, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”¹⁴

The description used by Scotus for Adam’s original sin is a “demeriting cause.”¹⁵ It was by this that Adam rejected and thereby lost what had been given in perpetuity to his seed should he should persevere in justice toward God, thus earning a demerit from that which had been merited through his original state of holiness. This became effective for both himself and his posterity.

Regarding the reception of the debt, both Scotus and Aquinas understand the *debitum* to be a patrilineal inheritance, and this also evinces the divine plan behind the single human parentage of Christ: he does not fall into the line of Adam and is therefore not a natural debtor in the Adamic line. According to their understanding, the seed of the father is that which is bound up with the *infectio carnis*, and it is this lustful appetite which is engaged when the marital act occurs. This is also based upon the transmission of human nature from the male to the woman’s seed via the spermatozoa.¹⁶

Finally, Scotus considers the effect of baptism upon original sin to be that baptism cleanses man of the *debitum peccati* by effacing the debt of justice which was owed through Adam and replacing it with sanctifying grace, thus making in each person a new owed justice

¹³ Rom 7:15

¹⁴ Matt 26:41

¹⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio* II, D. 30-32, ¶ 72

¹⁶ Given the current understanding that both parents contribute genetic material to the child in order to cooperate in the creative act, the author is not certain how tenable this understanding is in the modern day. Unfortunately, the topic cannot be further explored within the context of this work.

which consists in the maintenance of sanctifying grace within himself. With this indwelling of grace comes a consequent personal *debitum* to maintain that grace, and an individual punishment which is incurred by the loss of that grace. Here we see another correlation between the Thomistic and Scotistic positions, with each proposing that sanctifying grace replaces what was lost, but the divergence comes about when we consider that Scotus appears to allow for what would later become the dogma of the Immaculate Conception: namely, that it is formally from the privation of original justice in the soul that disorder comes about in man, and the concupiscence of the flesh is a consequent of this, whereas Aquinas holds that the *debitum* is incurred as a consequence of the flesh, and that it is the soul which is corrupted by the flesh once they are united.

Bonaventure on Original Sin

As with Scotus, Bonaventure uses the language of a lack of due justice to describe original sin in man, but, insofar as his account of the sin and its effects is concerned, it closely parallels Aquinas' account. Bonaventure adopts a language of corruption in the nature which is very similar to that of Aquinas, wherein the sin of Adam caused the corruption of the original ordering of the passions to the will, and that became a transmitted *debitum* within human nature as descended from Adam. More so than Aquinas, though, Bonaventure uses the terminology of rebellion when he refers to the concupiscible powers militating against the will,¹⁷ and elsewhere he refers to the domination of the spirit by the flesh, which domination is called concupiscence and is always linked to a lack of the above due justice.¹⁸

As regards the transmission of sin in Bonaventure's thought, we again see an account highly similar to that of Aquinas, with sin having

¹⁷ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* III, ch.6, ¶ 3.

¹⁸ Bonaventure, *Sentences* II, d.30, a.2, qa.1 "Haec autem est concupiscentia immoderata et intensa, adeo ut sit carnis ad spiritum praedominantia, et talis semper est iuncta carentiae debitae iustitiae, et secundum quod inest nobis ab origine dicitur peccatum originale."

vitiated human nature such that the original fault whereby Adam lost original justice for himself and his progeny is passed down as a cupidity in his descendants. Bonaventure's focus centers on the corruption of the body to a larger extent than either Aquinas or Scotus, and he emphasizes that it is from the body that the soul becomes corrupted, and it is within the body which has taken on the rebellion of the passions that the soul, deprived of the justice intended by God, falls prey to the selfsame passions of the body. Most interesting is his final comment, which cites both Anselm and Augustine as having written of a twofold act of evil: the first was the turning away from God, and the second was turning toward His creatures.¹⁹ As a consequence of this conversion toward the flesh, man has become a servitor of the flesh until he is reconfigured to Christ under the New Covenant.

Having considered the thought of these three in turn, let us proceed to a brief synthesis of their theories regarding the possibility of the Immaculate Conception and the reasons for their position.

The Immaculate Conception in the Theologians

Aquinas holds that Mary being immaculate from the moment of her conception is untenable for several reasons, of which we will mention three: first, he denies the possibility on account of the fact that Christ is the universal redeemer, and, if there were a human who did not stand in need of being redeemed from the *debitum*, it would be an insult to Christ and a destruction of His universal redemption.²⁰ Second, he argues that Mary having been born from the union of man and woman would necessitate a reception of the nature which came from Adam, and this was a nature infected with original sin, so she must have been both conceived and then subsequently purified in the womb, for natural precedes spiritual.²¹ Aquinas here seems to ascribe to the implantation of the rational soul post-conception, with what is presumably either a vegetative or sensitive soul being the

¹⁹ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* III, ch.6, ¶ 3.

²⁰ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, q.27, a.2, *Respondeo*.

²¹ Aquinas, *ST*. III, q.27, a.1, *Ad primum*.

principle of life up to that point. Since the proper subject of grace is a rational creature, he holds that the conceived flesh would have already taken on the infection of original sin and that it must actually be after the moment of ensoulment that she received the sanctifying grace which cleansed her from sin.²² This returns again to his first principle that a total preservation from sin would cause Mary to fall outside the terms of Christ's redemption, which is impossible if Christ is redeemer of all men. Third, Aquinas holds that Mary was cleansed from original sin in the womb but was not completely cleansed of the *fomes* of sin (*Fomes* being the spark of inordinate attraction to some good) which was present in the body. He admits that the *fomes* must have been attenuated in some manner such that she never committed a single sin, and he asserts that the final and complete cleansing of Mary was accomplished at the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit by the power of the Most High when Christ was conceived.²³ Aquinas considers the alternative of Mary's complete cleansing in the womb to be "somewhat derogatory to the dignity of Christ,"²⁴ as it would seem to devalue His redemptive action.

Bonaventure follows a similar line as Aquinas when he considers whether Mary could have been preserved prior to the contraction of original sin, for he asserts in like manner that "*omnes in Adam peccaverunt*,"²⁵ as well as emphasizing the point that one who was without original sin from the moment of their conception would not stand in need of redemption, and such is therefore "profane and impious to say."²⁶ Indeed, like Aquinas, Bonaventure seems to favor the majority opinion of the time, which states that Mary was sanctified in the womb prior to birth, yet after the union of soul with body and the soul's consequent contraction of original sin. In his last *ad oppositum* regarding, "whether the soul of the blessed Virgin was sanctified before the contraction of original sin," and while replying to the objection which states that God could have preserved the

²² Aquinas, *ST*. III, q.27, a.2, *Respondeo*.

²³ Aquinas, *Sent*. III, d.3, q.1, a.2, Response to qa.1

²⁴ Aquinas, *ST*. III, q.27, a.3, *Respondeo*.

²⁵ Bonaventure, *Sent*. III, d.3, a.1

²⁶ *Ibid*. "*Si ergo hoc est profanum et impious dicere...*"

Virgin Mary from all stain of sin from the moment of her creation, Bonaventure succinctly admits the possibility, saying:

*Ad illud quod obiicitur, quod possibile fuit, in primo instanti gratiam infundi; dicendum, quod absque dubio non erat impossibile apud deum omne verbum, nec illud, videlicet quod posset facere virginem ab omni peccato immunem; non tamen hoc decuit alicui concedere nisi ei soli, per quem omnium facta est salus, videlicet Domino Iesu Christo, ut non gloriatur in conspectu eius omnis caro; sed ipsi soli sit honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*²⁷

This reply from a scholarly contemporary of Aquinas stands in contrast to the response of Aquinas himself, who simply states that such a thing would imperil the unique quality of Christ's conception without original sin, for only Christ stands without need of redemption on account of original sin.²⁸ Where Aquinas argues against the possibility of such a thing, Bonaventure admits the possibility while arguing against the fittingness of it.

Scotus takes a somewhat different approach. He begins by acknowledging each of the predominant views, namely, that Mary was conceived in original sin and was later cleansed; that she received corruption from the flesh necessarily as having been conceived in by the union of man and woman according to the line of Adam; and that she suffered from the punishments which were due to sin, such as hunger, thirst, and others, therefore she could not have been conceived without original sin.²⁹

Against the first he argues that, while it is true that Christ is the most perfect mediator, there is no better or more perfect mediation than to prevent punishment from befalling the one for whom you mediate, and, since Christ is the perfect mediator, it is fitting that there be one person for whom He accomplished that perfect mediation, and it is further fitting that it be the one from whom He would take his

²⁷ Bonaventure, *Sent.* III, d.3, p.I, a.1, qa.II, ad sextam.

²⁸ Aquinas, *Sent.* III, d.3, q.1, a.1, qa.2

²⁹ Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, d.3, q.1, n.14-34

human nature. According to Scotus, the offense which is given to God is on account of sin in the soul, and this offense is only perfectly placated by there being a soul which does not have sin within it; thus, Mary being sinless from the moment of her conception is the perfect placation of a God who would be offended by sin; second, he says that it is just as commonly held that there must be one person in relation with whom Christ stands as perfect and total mediator, and that this person is Mary, whom He has preserved from both actual and original sin. A further aspect of the argument proposes that the one who was so perfectly mediated to is thereby bound more closely than any other to the person of Christ. This would accord with the continuous tradition which posits Mary as *coredemptrix*.

Scotus' treatment of the second point is fairly brief, and it simply states that Anselm understands original sin to be a lack of owed justice, just as Scotus does. So, just as a person after baptism may remain in grace even while in the flesh and not contract original sin again, so could God have cleansed Mary from the first, such that she need never have experienced the infection. Finally, for the third he says that the presence of sufferings is not conclusive, as sufferings may be allowed for the sake of a good such as the attaining of merit.³⁰ One could rightly point to Christ Himself in support of this point, for He suffered many things for the sake of attaining merit.

After having treated of these different options, he puts forward three further possibilities: that Mary was never in sin through the special grace of God; or, that she was in sin for a single moment prior to her cleansing; or that which was the common opinion of the time, namely that she was in sin for a period of time but was then cleansed completely at the end of that period. This last would correspond to the postulate that Mary was conceived in sin but was sanctified at the moment when a rational soul was infused into her body. Scotus' comment regarding these options is telling as to his preference, for he says, "but as to which one happened among these three that have been shown to be possible, God knows; but if it not be repugnant to

³⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, d.3, q.1, n. 26-27

the authority of the Church or to the authority of Scripture, then to attribute to Mary the more excellent seems probable.”³¹

It is ultimately the proposed “more excellent” option which will win the day some six hundred years later, when in 1854 pope Pius IX would define the dogma of the Immaculate Conception by the apostolic constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*.

The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception

When Pius IX declared the Immaculate Conception to be a dogma of the faith it was the culmination of eighteen hundred years of theological study and devoted love on the part of the clergy and faithful of the Church, and the language which he uses throughout the constitution leaves no room for doubt as to what he is trying to say; the text of the definition is clear on this:

We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.³²

Given that the common opinion held by those who were great theologians in the scholastic period was that Mary was not sanctified from this first moment, but rather after the infusion of the soul into the body, this represents a significant break from what had been the accepted understanding. With those words the holy father put to an end all debate regarding the immaculate conception of Mary, but this begs the question: what about the understanding of original sin which was held by Aquinas and his fellow scholastics? Bonaventure and

³¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, d.3, q.1, n. 34

³²Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, ¶ 34

Aquinas both held that it was a natural corruption which was present in the body, and this as a consequence of the privation which is original sin. The presence of this corruption in the body was the vitiating cause of corruption in the soul via concupiscence.

Scotus' account, on the other hand, describes original sin as being primarily a defect of owed justice, whereby man is unable to orient himself toward God in the full manner which he was intended by his Creator. Man, therefore, falls prey to the impulses of the body due to the weakness of his will, as well as through the consequent unshackling and inflammation of the passions.

The Church holds to the doctrine that life begins with conception, and we know from modern technology that conception—here meaning the beginning of an individuated life principle in an organic being—occurs once the *ovum* has been fertilized by sperm, so we may dismiss the theory wherein the scholastics claimed that the soul was not infused into the flesh until a certain period of time after the initial conception had occurred and at which time the body was considered to be sufficiently developed for rational life.

Furthermore, we can dismiss the notion, popular among the scholastics of which Aquinas was one, which advocated for a sanctification of Mary which was post ensoulment: the definition of the dogma has in no uncertain terms stated that the discussion is closed, and that the moment of sanctification has been established as the first moment of Mary's existence. In light of this, the available avenue of discussion seems to be regarding the manner by which Mary's sanctification occurred, and this necessarily in light of Christ's redemptive action and identity as the new Adam.

Now it is obvious from the account of the scriptures that Christ did not come in order to biologically replace Adam as the head of the human race and the new origin of human nature. Christ remained a virgin like His mother, and any such positions to the contrary have been condemned by the Church since the earliest times. Yet the Church has held from the beginning, and still holds, that Christ is the

head of the mystical body, which is the Church, and that He is the new Adam who has redeemed mankind from the sin of the old Adam. How, then, is Christ held to have become the new head of redeemed mankind? It is said by St. Paul in his letter to the Romans that we are “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus,”³³ and we know from later in that same passage that this life in God through Christ is accomplished by being baptized into Christ, which baptism is held to be a spiritual configuration to Christ and a sharing in the redemptive action of Christ.

We must conclude, then, that two simultaneous actions must occur: first, for man to be innocent of the *debitum* incurred by original sin, which *debitum* is a necessary consequent of descent from Adam according to his nature, we must be removed from the natural headship of Adam; second, we must be placed under the headship of Christ in order that, through His merits, we may be both no longer bound to the *debitum* and cleansed of the fault incurred therefrom.

This second action is accomplished through baptism and is through spiritual participation in Christ, who was born without the *debitum* and made reparation for it on our behalf. If we understand Mary to have been the first fruit of the redemption of Christ, and if we agree with Scotus’ argument that there must have been one for whom Christ was the most perfect mediator, beyond the scope of any other being, then it follows that Mary was the first of the natural children of Adam to be configured to Christ in such a manner. Furthermore, she must have necessarily been the most perfectly configured, for there was never a stain of sin on her, nor, according to Pius IX, was there any fault in her which would have flowed from the touch of sin, for he says that “the Blessed Virgin was, through grace, entirely free from every stain of sin, and from all corruption of body, soul and mind.”³⁴

³³ Romans 6:11

³⁴ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, ¶ 23

The Synthesis

Now we have seen with the Thomistic and Scotistic accounts of baptism that they consider the sanctifying grace which we receive at baptism to be filling the place of original justice, the absence of which Scotus says is the cause of the *debitum* in us. Thus, we can comfortably assert that Mary's immaculate conception was, at minimum, on account of the immediate and total infusion of sanctifying grace into her soul at the very moment of her conception, which was also her incorporation into the New Covenant instituted by Christ in His blood. The maximum which might be asserted, given the above words of the holy father, is that Mary experienced both an infusion of sanctifying grace as well as the total return of the preternatural gifts which had been bestowed upon Adam.

The term "covenant" requires further comment, as it will figure in our concluding thought; namely, that the ransoming of each of the baptized, including the blessed Virgin, was both a ransoming from the covenant punishments which were due to all Children of Adam on account of his breaking the original covenant, as well as an incorporation into the New Covenant in Christ, which restores and elevates the filiation that had been established in Adam.

Within each of the above accounts of original sin and its transmission an overarching parallel may be drawn between this concept of inherited debt and the idea of covenant as a familial bond. This concept has been set forth by Dr. Scott Hahn in the last twenty years, and the basic thesis for which Dr. Hahn argues is that 'covenant' in the ancient near-east constituted the voluntary formation of a sacred familial bond between covenant partners. This bond inaugurated a generational obligation to uphold the terms of the covenant which had been agreed upon by the covenant-makers.³⁵

³⁵ Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009)

Dr. Hahn goes on to posit that the creation account of Adam constitutes a covenant relationship between God and Adam, drawing first from the end of the creation account which gives the sabbath as a sign of God's covenant, and including the scriptural statement that God created man "in His image and likeness,"³⁶ which is kinship language.³⁷ This position provides a narrative according to which original sin, which we here define as the privation of original justice, is understood to be a perpetual lacuna in the fulfillment of the first covenant between God and man. Not only does it do this, but it also explains why and how all men are able to be spiritually incorporated into the death and resurrection of Christ; for, just as the patriarchs made solemn covenant oaths on behalf of all their people and their posterity, so also did Christ suffer, die, and rise in order that all men might be saved through baptism. What must be added is that, since our configuration to Christ is not in the natural order but the supernatural, it requires the action of the Holy Spirit through the waters of baptism for us to be joined to Christ as spiritual members of His body. Having completed our brief aside into the meaning of "covenant," we return to Mary.

What remains now is to connect this covenant concept with the dogma of the immaculate conception, and so we proceed thus: the holy father states that "[Mary] was entirely a fit habitation for Christ, *not because of the state of her body, but because of her original grace.*"³⁸ While not part of the formula of definition, the statement must be treated with respect by any who would seriously seek to further the science of theology, since it clearly bespeaks the mind of the Church on the matter. If we take it as authoritative that it was on account of this plenitude of grace that Mary was fit to be the *Theotokos*, then we may apply the deduction that what would have made her *unfit* was not a concupiscence of the body which affected the soul, as was emphasized by Aquinas and Bonaventure, but rather the absence of

³⁶ Genesis 1:26

³⁷ Scott Hahn and John Bergsma. "Covenant," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Theology*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015) 151-166.

³⁸ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, ¶ 23 (Emphasis added)

original justice in the soul, for which sanctifying grace is the replacement.

This sanctifying grace comes about through incorporation into the New Covenant through baptism, and we can see in this that it is according to the nature of a covenant redemption and renewal that Mary's salvation was obtained. It is the author's assertion that the Scotistic proposition of the *debitum peccati*, of which concupiscence is a material consequent, coming primarily from a privation of grace in the form of owed original justice, and not necessarily through the natural procreative act of the parents, must be held as the reasonable one in light of Pius IX's words.

If it is true that the blessed Virgin's purity of soul was the pertinent factor in her fitness to carry the Son of God, then it is untenable to hold that the flesh is the principle whereby the soul is corrupted, except insofar as it is the material consequence of the formal *debitum*. Thus, the *debitum* does not flow from a corruption of man *per natura* but is the resultant debt toward God for failure to give that justice which is owed Him. The subsequent withholding of that original justice, which was covenanted to man as a superaddition to his nature on the condition of his perseverance in the same, is what we now experience as the fallen human nature whose concupiscible appetites inhere in what Thomas and Bonaventure refer to as the lustful flesh. It is this nature which witnesses the subjection of the will to the passions.

Conclusion

There are many ways in which the three theologians agree on the nature of original sin, its transmission, and its effects upon man, and it is also true that what Scotus emphasizes in his account of original sin is contained implicitly in the work of Aquinas and Bonaventure, for they agree on the lack of grace as the formal aspect of the *debitum* and the concupiscible appetites as the material aspect. The difference in emphasis which we see between flesh as prior and vitiate before ensoulment on the one hand, and the soul as *debitor principalis* on the

other is a slight difference, but it produces manifold effects. Furthermore, it seems likely that it is largely due to the concept of post conception ensoulment that we see a disagreement between Scotus and his confreres. To posit carnal transmission of the *debitum* is almost necessitated by the theory of delayed ensoulment, whereas Scotus does not seem to adopt this concept of procreation, and he thus lacks the limiting factor of attaching the transmission of sin to the flesh prior to the soul's existence.

A final note on the reluctance of Aquinas to assert the Immaculate Conception would be this: it appears that he did not consider the possibility of an immaculate conception in view of the future merits of Christ, and if he did it is not evident in the passages of which we have spoken. The Thomistic position is based upon a zeal for the defense of the dignity of Christ as universal redeemer, and this cannot but be respected. Any disagreement between them notwithstanding, these three theologians are all to be honored for the great works which they did unto the greater glory of God.

In the final analysis, to pit one against the other is to turn brother against brother, because for all of the disagreements which have occurred between proponents of the Dominican and Franciscan schools of theology, it seems proper to remind ourselves that both Scotus and Aquinas belong to the same continuity of tradition which we do. Moreover, had Aquinas lived to see the declaration of the dogma he would certainly have accepted the teaching of the Church, and with his own hands he would have celebrated the Mass of our Lady on December 8th, just as Scotus and Bonaventure would have done.

“Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away”:

The Use of Scripture and the Fathers in *Munificentissimus Deus*

ANDREW L. OUELLETTE

Introduction

In a packed Saint Peter’s Square in 1950, Pope Pius XII declared the second and most recent papal dogmatic declaration on the Virgin Mary. Following the example of his predecessor Pope Pius IX who proclaimed the Immaculate Conception of Mary as dogma in 1854, and the theology of papal authority set forth by the First Vatican Council, Pope Pius XII dogmatically declared the assumption of Mary body and soul into heaven as worthy of belief and binding on the faithful. As to the reasoning for declaring such a definition at that particular moment in history, John Saward wrote:

Pope Pius saw that the Assumption struck a prophetic blow against the institutionalized individualism of the modern world, its competitive and alienated spirit, demonstrated in a global way in the Second World War, which had ended only five years before, and daily seen in men’s lives. A dogma that is based on an indestructible relationship of Mother and Son, and of the Son with humanity, has much to offer the world.¹

¹ Rev. John Saward, M.A., “The Assumption”, *Mary’s Place in Christian Dialogue*, edited by Alberic Stacpoole, O.S.B. (Middlegreen: St Paul Publications, 1982), p. 120. This analysis on Pope Pius XII’s motives in issuing *Munificentissimus Deus* appear to be valid if we read it side-by-side with this address given by the Holy Father at the time of the document’s publication:

The world is without peace, is tormented on every side by hostility, division, opposition, and hatred, because faith has grown weak, and almost all sense of love and brotherhood in Christ has been lost, while we pray in all ardor that she who has been assumed may be a sign to the return to human hearts of the warmth of human affection and life. We do not tire in reminding this

In the document *Munificentissimus Deus*, that details the nature and reasoning for the Marian definition, the Holy Father sought the authority of both Scripture and tradition to show a basis for belief in a statement regarding Mary that has both no explicit Scriptural account and no historical record on the event of her passing from this life. The purpose of this paper will be to survey the sources used by Pope Pius XII and to make note of how (and if) his statements in *Munificentissimus Deus* are in harmony with the tradition of the Church – particularly from the patristic period. This will be done in in three parts. First, the references that Pope Pius XII makes to the liturgy, early popes, and certain Eastern fathers will be discussed highlighting the Holy Father’s insistence of these factors as serving a historical basis for a long-standing belief of the Church. Second, this paper will briefly examine the purpose of typology in biblical exegesis and the use of typology in *Munificentissimus Deus*. This will be done through a survey of certain Marian types mentioned in the papal document such as Ark of the Covenant, Queen-Mother, and Spouse. Third, this paper will look at the use of New Testament passages in *Munificentissimus Deus* and the appropriateness of these references. Within the sections that treat Old Testament types and the New Testament, the writings of some Fathers of the patristic period that reference these passages of Scripture will be examined and compared with their usage in *Munificentissimus Deus*. Lastly, by way of conclusion, this paper will provide certain questions related to ecumenical dialogue that need further reflection as we look move closer and closer to the eightieth anniversary of the dogmatic declaration of Mary’s bodily Assumption into heaven.

world that nothing can ever prevail over the fact and the knowledge that we are all children of one and the same Mother, Mary, who is alive in heaven and is a bond of union for the Mystical Body of Christ, as new Eve, and new Mother of the Living, who wishes to lead all men to the truth and the grace of her divine Son.” (*AAAS*, ser 2, V. 17, n. 15 (November 4, 1950), 781.)

Liturgical and Papal Precedent

After highlighting early Christian affirmation of Mary's bodily assumption into heaven from the witness of sacred architecture and images, the many areas of the world "placed under the special patronage and guardianship"² of Mary assumed, the religious institutes founded (and approved) with this Marian privilege as a foundational charism, and after reminding Catholics that the fourth glorious mystery of the Rosary calls to mind Mary's assumption, Pius XII begins to lay out a historical narrative of Christian belief in the dogma through reliance on ancient liturgical books and the authority of his predecessors. It is important to note again that Pius XII is not seeking to find historical evidence for the reality of Mary's passing from this life and her bodily assumption into heaven. Despite not having any documented eyewitness accounts, and the lack of references to the event in the first centuries of Christianity, the historical development that Pius XII traces of the early Christian confession in Mary's assumption helps to establish the credibility and the reasonability of the dogmatic assertion. By referencing the ancient Christian liturgical heritage, and the ecclesial acts of approval of this mystery, Pius XII gives nod to the assertion that the Church can define truths of the faith as dogma that are both explicit in the deposit of faith *and* virtually implicit.³ While the dogma of Mary's assumption is not explicitly found in the deposit of faith as it was handed on to the Apostles by Christ, it has been explicitly affirmed, believed, and celebrated by the Church as being implicit because of her role as the New Eve and the *Theotokos*.

In his appeal to the authority of the Church's liturgical patrimony, Pope Pius XII cites a euchological prayer from the tenth century Gregorian Sacramentary specific to the liturgical commemoration of

² Pope Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus* (hereafter: *MD*), no. 15.

³ For discussion on the relationship between formally explicit and virtually implicit articles of faith within divine revelation see Joseph Duhr, *The Glorious Assumption of the Mother of God* (Paris: La Maison de la Bonne Presse, 1948).

Mary's assumption, "Venerable to us, O Lord, is the festivity of this day on which the holy Mother of God suffered temporal death, but still could not be kept down by the bonds of death, who has begotten your Son our Lord incarnate from herself."⁴ Likewise, Pius XII also will cite from the Gallican sacramentary, whose prayers are less sobering than the words of the Gregorian and later Roman rite, that speaks of the end of Mary's life as "an ineffable mystery all the more worthy of praise as the Virgin's Assumption is something unique among men."⁵ Looking to the East, Pius XII cites a prayer that bespeaks of the rich liturgical tradition of the East, and of the East's emphasis on Mary's dormition as something connected to her virginal motherhood, "God, the King of the universe, has granted you favors that surpass nature. As he kept you a virgin in childbirth, thus he has kept your body incorrupt in the tomb and has glorified it by his divine act of transferring it from the tomb."⁶ One thing to note of interest is that Pius XII will use these liturgical texts to show that the idea of Mary's repose and assumption was already "known and accepted by Christ's faithful" rather than the date of the feast itself being the primary source of knowledge and inspiration because "the liturgy of the Church does not engender the Catholic faith, but rather springs from it."⁷

In addition to the liturgical affirmation of the Church regarding Mary's assumption into heaven, the precedent set by the predecessors of Pius XII is shown as another historical aid to the reasonability and fittingness of the dogma. While citing the Gregorian Sacramentary,

⁴ Referenced in *MD*, 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.* The citation of this Eastern liturgical prayer is obscure as the Vatican website simply marks it as coming from: "Menaei Totius Anni" – which is especially confusing as it is a Latin name for an Eastern text. Further research finds that the prayer, in fact, comes from the sticheron for 6th Ode of the First Canon, Feast of the Dormition: Νέμει σοι τὰ ὑπέρ φύσιν, Ἄναξ ὁ πάντων Θεός· ἐν γὰρ τῷ τίκτειν, Παρθένον ὥσπερ ἐφυλάξεν, οὕτως ἐν τάφῳ τὸ σῶμα διετήρησεν, ἀδιάφθορον, καὶ συνεδόξασε, θεία μεταστάσει, γέρα σοι ὥσπερ Υἱὸς Μητρὶ χαριζόμενος.

⁷ *MD*, 20.

Pius XII also makes note that this text was sent by Adrian I (d. 795 AD) to the emperor Charlemagne. References are also made to Sergius I (d. 701 AD) and the stational procession he prescribed for four feasts of Mary (one of which was the Dormition on August 15). Leo IV (d. 855 AD) made law that a vigil be observed for the feast of the Assumption (as it was already being called at this time) and that this feast has its own octave. The historical evidence for a fast on the day prior to the feast is also affirmed through the writings of Nicolas I (d. 867 AD). While some might argue that this argument from papal authority is a product of ultramontanist thought inherited from the Vatican I, the mention of these popes of the later patristic era does have real value in that it shows an ecclesial approval in the West that grew over time - albeit later than the feast's development in the Eastern church. Despite the liturgical commemoration of the Dormition in the East being traced back to the end of the fifth century, where there was a basilica in Gethsemane venerating Mary's "tomb", the liturgical celebration of Mary's assumption in the West began much later. While there are many reasons speculating this later development in the West, it can be stated that there are no references to the existence of the feast earlier than the mid-seventh century.⁸

The Authority of the Fathers

After briefly establishing the liturgical historicity of the celebration of Mary's Dormition and Assumption, Pius XII is then able to move forward in highlighting the homilies of certain Fathers who preached in honor of this feast. It is interesting to note that Pope Pius XII in *Munificentissimus Deus* selects three Eastern Fathers for this: John Damascene, Germanus of Constantinople, and Modestus of Jerusalem (simply referred to as a "very ancient writer"). His first reference is an excerpt from a homily of John Damascene (d. ~ 749 AD) in honor of Mary's Dormition:

⁸ For more speculation on the later development of Mary's Assumption in the West see, L. Everett, C.S.S.R., "Mary's Death and Bodily Assumption", *Mariology Vol. 2*, ed. Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M., (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1957) pp. 477-481.

It was fitting that she, who had kept her virginity intact in childbirth, should keep her own body free from all corruption even after death. It was fitting that she, who had carried the Creator as a child at her breast, should dwell in the divine tabernacles. It was fitting that the spouse, whom the Father had taken to himself, should live in the divine mansions. It was fitting that she, who had seen her Son upon the cross and who had thereby received into her heart the sword of sorrow which she had escaped in the act of giving birth to him, should look upon him as he sits with the Father. It was fitting that God's Mother should possess what belongs to her Son, and that she should be honored by every creature as the Mother and as the handmaid of God.⁹

It is important to note here that, like his contemporaries, John Damascene emphasizes Mary's other privileges of divine maternity and virginal motherhood, with the Assumption being a logical consequence of these realities. His reference of Germanus of Constantinople (d. 730 AD) is of interest in that the passage he cites highlights the privileged purity of Mary as a reason for her Dormition:

You are she who, as it is written, appears in beauty, and your virginal body is all holy, all chaste, entirely the dwelling place of God, so that it is henceforth completely exempt from dissolution into dust. Though still human, it is changed into the heavenly

⁹ John Damascene, *On the Holy and Glorious Dormition and Transformation of Our Lady Mary, Mother of God and Ever-Virgin, Homily II*, n. 14. All translations from the Eastern fathers comes from: Brian E. Daley, S.J., trans. *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998.

life of incorruptibility, truly living and glorious,
undamaged and sharing in perfect life.¹⁰

While this excerpt from Germanus is noteworthy for its emphasis on Mary's virginal purity as a reason for her being assumed into heavenly glory, a word of caution must be stated to avoid making any sort of anachronistic assumptions of this passage showing evidence of a patristic belief in the Immaculate Conception. Mary's virginal purity is affirmed by Germanus, yet it cannot be clearly discerned whether this is in connection to Mary being redeemed from the moment of her conception and, therefore, without the stain of original sin.¹¹ Lastly, Pope Pius XII cites Modestus of Jerusalem who, in an encomium on the Dormition, writes:

As the most glorious Mother of Christ, our Savior and God and the giver of life and immortality, has been endowed with life by him, she has received an eternal incorruptibility of the body together with him who has raised her up from the tomb and has taken her up to himself in a way known only to him.¹²

While evidence for a liturgical celebration of this mystery of Mary can be traced to a couple centuries before the time of these Eastern Fathers, their words are some of the earliest references that we have to Mary's dormition and assumption – apart from fourth century apocryphal writings and late sixth century homilies from Churches

¹⁰ Germanus of Constantinople, *On the Most Venerable Dormition of the Holy Mother of God*, Homily I, n. 5.

¹¹ For an excellent text on the Eastern and Western understanding of the Immaculate Conception (especially with Eastern writers that might be more in favor of the theology) see: Christiaan W. Kappes, *The Immaculate Conception: Why Thomas Aquinas Denied, While John Duns Scotus, Gregory Palamas, & Mark Eugenius Professed the Absolute Immaculate Existence of Mary* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2014).

¹² Modestus of Jerusalem, *Encomium on the Dormition of the Holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary*, n. 14.

that rejected the Christological decrees of the Council of Chalcedon. As Brian Daley, SJ comments on this phenomenon:

It was only in the early seventh century...after the official acceptance of the feast into the calendar of imperial “Great” Church, that Greek preachers and theologians, as far as the extant literature shows, began the challenging process of interpreting the significance for Christians of the feast of Mary’s dormition, and the non-Biblical story it celebrates, within the context of the whole tradition of orthodox faith and worship.¹³

While one could speculate the reasons as to why Pope Pius XII did not utilize either the non-Chalcedonian and Apocryphal writings in *Munificentissimus Deus*¹⁴, their importance should continue to be stressed as they present us with a pious devotion of early Christians to this mystery of Mary that preceded any definition or solemn approval of the institutional Church. That being said, to critique *Munificentissimus Deus* as a document that is found lacking in its use of historical data would be to misunderstand the nature of a text that is both ecclesial and dogmatic in tone. A papal dogmatic document is not intended to serve as a historically critical text on the antiquity of Christian honoring of Mary being assumed into heavenly glory. Rather, its purpose is to briefly expound on that which brings us to see this mystery as being reasonable, fitting, and – therefore- worthy of belief. As the late Mariologist Juniper Carol, O.F.M. wrote on this issue prior to the 1950 declaration:

¹³ Brian Daley, S.J., trans. *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood: Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1998). p. 12.

¹⁴ For example, L. Everett, C.S.S.R. writes, “Doubtless the Holy Father made no mention of the Apocrypha due to the fact that many non-Catholic critics maintain that the later tradition of the Church expressing belief in the Assumption is an outgrowth of them.” (“Mary’s Death and Bodily Assumption”, *Mariology Vol. 2*, p. 483.)

In order to establish the continuity of a given doctrine throughout the ages it is not necessary that we possess an uninterrupted chain of explicit testimonies linking our times with the apostolic period. The reason for this is quite obvious. Since the custody and infallible interpretation of the deposit of faith has been entrusted by God to a living organism which is the Church, and since the Church of today is the same moral person it was in the first of second century, it follows logically that whatever the Church of today holds and teaches as pertaining to the original deposit of revelation was also held and taught (at least implicitly) by the Church of the first centuries.¹⁵

As we will see, what was given by Christ to the apostles (both explicitly and implicitly) up to the day of Pentecost, and entrusted to the living organism of the Church, would be further elaborated and interpreted to bring those implicit realities more visible and tangible to the believing community. An examination into the nature of typology, its limits and parameters, and its use in both the writings of the Fathers and in *Munificentissimus Deus* will bring forth issues related to biblical interpretation, the teaching authority of the Church, and – ultimately – Christian unity.

The Use of Typology in *Munificentissimus Deus*

After referencing certain Fathers and their affirmation of the mystery of Mary's Assumption and Dormition, Pope Pius XII moves to expound on the biblical justification such a belief. Without any clear direct reference from Scripture to the end of Mary's earthly life and what immediately followed, one might argue that there are profound problems with establishing such a dogmatic affirmation of something not only lacking in historical evidence, but also lacking in the written

¹⁵ Juniper Carol, O.F.M., "The Definability of Mary's Assumption", *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, Vol. 118, 1948, pp. 164-165.

word of God. This issue appears to be ever-present in the writing of *Munificentissimus Deus* as Pope Pius XII will recognize that “often there are theologians and preachers who, following in the footsteps of the holy Fathers, have been *rather free in their use of events and expressions taken from Sacred Scripture* to explain their belief in the Assumption.”¹⁶ Without using any technical terms such as typology, the typical/spiritual sense of interpretation, or analogy¹⁷, Pope Pius XII recognizes that the Fathers of the Church - and subsequent theologians - studied persons, places, events, and objects in the Bible that foreshadow that which God makes present and visible in salvation history. For our discussion on this topic as it relates to the solemn definition of Mary’s Assumption, we will unpack the Catholic understanding of typology and its implications in early Christian biblical interpretation – specifically in relation to the defense of Mary’s Dormition and Assumption.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* clearly states that such an understanding of Scripture is due to the unity of God’s plan, this unity allows for possibility that the “realities and events about which it [Scripture] speaks can be signs.”¹⁸ Because this possibility comes from such a unity that is unfolded within the biblical narrative, the study and discernment of these signs cannot be seen as some type of study being imposed on the scriptural text from outside. What bears witness to this fundamental aspect of typology is that the biblical authors themselves (especially Paul) will show how people, places, and events in the Old Testament are shadows of realities that are fulfilled in Christ and his Church.¹⁹ In addition to Paul’s comparison

¹⁶ *MD*, 26. My emphasis.

¹⁷ This is not to say that typology and analogy are the same thing. It is important to stress this point that the Greek conception of allegory is not the same as the biblical and Semitic understanding of typology as something found within the sacred text.

¹⁸ *CCC*, n. 117.

¹⁹ “Typology is not simply applied to the Bible; it is something applied within the Bible. Because typology was used by the authors of the Bible, studying the Bible in terms of typology is a valid approach to understanding salvation history. The point is important to stress, since typology is

of Adam and Jesus (Romans 5:12-21), another example of typological interpretation being applied within the biblical texts can be found in 1 Corinthians 10:1-5:

I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same supernatural food and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

While the question as to the nature of Paul's typology and to the extent that it should be valued (whether it is something strictly moral to exhort early Christians against idolatry or there is a sacramental quality to it) is a topic for further discussion that cannot be found in this paper²⁰, the New Testament discernment of signs behind the people, places, and events of the Old Testament can present us with a biblical precedent for what the Fathers would do as interpreters of Scripture. For early Christian theology, the discernment of various types within Scripture brings to light the inner coherence of the various texts and presents the believer with, what *Dei Verbum* calls, a "true divine pedagogy".²¹ This spiritual interpretation of Scripture

sometimes confused with a method of biblical interpretation that Christian theologians adopted from the world of classical antiquity." S. Hahn (editor), "Typology", *Catholic Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), p. 929.

²⁰ For more information on various modern Protestant scholars and their respective understanding of biblical typology and its use see: M. Levering, "The Validity and Scope of Typological Exegesis", *Mary's Bodily Assumption* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), pp. 83-110.

²¹ "The principal purpose to which the plan of the old covenant was directed was to prepare for the coming of Christ, the redeemer of all and of the messianic kingdom, to announce this coming by prophecy (see Luke 24:44; John 5:39; 1 Peter 1:10), and to indicate its meaning through various types (see 1 Cor. 10:12). Now the books of the Old Testament, in

also allowed early Christians to find hints and inklings of Mary's fate within the biblical text. Aside for the exposition of Genesis 3:15 and the implications of the enmity that God places between the woman of the future and her seed against the serpent and his, the Fathers discerned certain realities of the Old Testament that found anticipated a Mariological fulfillment centered on Christ and his saving mission. Therefore, because of the lack of explicit biblical reference to the historical event of Mary's death and bodily assumption into heaven, the Fathers were prone to apply these principles of typological interpretation and be, as Pius XII writes, "rather free in their use of events and expressions taken from Sacred Scripture."²² With this affirmation from Pope Pius XII, the pope will mention a few texts of the Old Testament as typologically significant with regards to Mary's bodily Assumption: Ark, Queen, and Bride.

Mary as New Ark of the Covenant

The first type that Pope Pius XII mentions as important to the Fathers is the Ark of the Covenant:

Thus, to mention only a few of the texts rather frequently cited in this fashion, some have employed the words of the psalmist: "Arise, O Lord, into your resting place: you and the ark, which you have sanctified"(Ps. 131:8); and have looked upon the Ark of the Covenant, built of incorruptible wood and

accordance with the state of mankind before the time of salvation established by Christ, reveal to all men the knowledge of God and of man and the ways in which God, just and merciful, deals with men. These books, though they also contain some things which are incomplete and temporary, nevertheless show us true divine pedagogy. These same books, then, give expression to a lively sense of God, contain a store of sublime teachings about God, sound wisdom about human life, and a wonderful treasury of prayers, and in them the mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way. Christians should receive them with reverence." *Dei Verbum*, 15.

²² *MD*, 26.

placed in the Lord's temple, as a type of the most pure body of the Virgin Mary, preserved and exempt from all the corruption of the tomb and raised up to such glory in heaven.²³

As the Ark is first described to us in the Exodus, its significance is not underemphasized as it becomes the place on earth that God dwells among his people. Inside the Ark were fragments of the Ten Commandments – broken following Israel's egregious idolatry (Exodus 31-32), fragments of the miraculous manna (Exodus 16:34) and the rod of Aaron the high priest (Numbers 17:10). With Mary as the New Ark, her womb becomes that vessel in which God dwells among his people, containing within her Christ Jesus who is the fulfillment of the law (Matthew 5:17), our spiritual nourishment (John 6:49ff), and our high priest (Hebrews 4:14-16). The typological significance of Mary as the New Ark is of real importance in how the later Fathers understood the assumption of Mary. Stefano Manelli points out, "In the mystery of Mary's Assumption into heaven, in the splendor of glory, is realized most fully the incorruptibility of the Ark, the perennial dwelling place of God."²⁴ In his *Ecce Mater* in honor of the Dormition of Mary, Modestus of Jerusalem brings to light the typological significance of Mary as the New Ark of the New Covenant:

She [Mary] is not carried like Moses' ark of old, drawn by oxen, but she is escorted and surrounded by an army, heaven's holy angels. She is not an ark made by hands, not plated with gold, but is God's spiritual handiwork, resplendent all over with the radiance of the holy and life-giving Spirit, who descended upon her. She does not contain the vessel of manna and the tablets of the covenant, but the Lord who provided both the manna and the eternal blessings promised in

²³ *MD*, n. 26.

²⁴ Stefano Manelli, F.I., *All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed: Biblical Mariology* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2005), p. 67.

the Old and New Covenants, and who was born as her child – he who freed from the curse of the Law those who have faith in him. She does not contain the rod of Aaron, nor is she crowned with glorious cherubim, but rather the incomparably more glorious rod of Jesse, revealed by the prophet and overshadowed by the almighty power of the Father on high (Is 11:1; Lk 1:35). She does not move before the Hebrew people, like that former ark, but follows the God who has appeared on earth in flesh furnished by her; she is called blessed by angels and by men and women, for the glory of the one who magnified her above all ranks of heaven and earth, as she cries out her holy words, “My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my savior.” (Lk 1:40).²⁵

The exposition of Mary’s visitation to her cousin Elizabeth and the reference to Mary’s canticle of praise in the Magnificat is also significant in our typological understanding of Mary as the New Ark if one compares this narrative with the story of the Ark approaching Jerusalem before David the King (cf. 2 Sam 6). In addition to Modestus’ exposition of Psalm 131:8, Andrew of Crete in a homily celebrating Mary’s dormition also sees Mary as a typological fulfillment, strikingly seeing the Psalm verse as an act of David praying to Christ: “God’s ancestor David prayed to Christ on your behalf.”²⁶ John Damascene as well finds Mary in Psalm 131:8 as, unlike the inanimate and physical ark, “the living, spiritual ark of the Lord” that has “gone up to the resting-place of her Son.”²⁷

Mary as Queen Mother

²⁵ Modestus of Jerusalem, *An Encomium on the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, Mary, Mother of God and Ever-Virgin*, n. 4.

²⁶ Andrew of Crete, *On the Dormition: Homily III*, n. 6.

²⁷ John Damascene, *A Discourse on the Dormition: Homily III*, n. 2.

Pope Pius XII in *Munificentissimus Deus* moves to show another biblical type of Mary that had been interpreted by the Fathers as a sign of her Dormition and Assumption, “Treating of this subject, they also describe her as the Queen entering triumphantly into the royal halls of heaven and sitting at the right hand of the divine Redeemer.”²⁸ The citations within the dogmatic statement take note of Psalm 45(44), a psalm that is attributed to the “Sons of Korah” – Levitical singers for the sanctuary in Jerusalem – that is considered a love song and one of great praise following the song of lament found in Psalm 44 (43):

Hear, O daughter, consider, and incline your ear;
forget your people and your father’s house;
and the king will desire your beauty.
Since he is your lord, bow to him;
the people of Tyre will court your favor with gifts,
the richest of the people with all kinds of wealth.
The daughter of the king is decked in her
chamber with gold-woven robes,
in many-colored robes she is led to the king,
with her virgin companions, her escort, in her train.
(Psalm 45(44):10-14)

As the Holy Father mentions the Fathers’ use of Psalm 45 (44) he points to Mary as the Queen in the new Davidic kingdom who joins her son and king in the royal halls of heaven. To begin to have an adequate understanding of this typological image it is important for one to take a historical and political note of how leadership and authority was seen within the royal Davidic family. While the kingdom of Israel was like the other kingdoms of that period, in that polygamy was a common practice within a royal family, it was dissimilar in that the queen was not one of the king’s wives (either the first married or the most favored) but his mother. The mother was given the title “queen mother” – *gebirah* – and she was given a place of authority within the kingdom and honor before the king’s

²⁸ *MD*, 26.

subjects. Our biblical understanding of the queen mother can be found in the historical books of the Old Testament (especially 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles) and in the prophetic literature (see Jer. 13:18; 29:2). For example, 1 Kings mentions Adonijah's request that Bathsheba beseech her on Solomon for favor. The encounter between Adonijah and Bathsheba, and her entrance into the royal halls of her son after he had been coronated king following the death of his father David are particularly striking:

Then Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably." Then he said, "I have something to say to you." She said, "Say on"...and he said, "Pray ask King Solomon – he will not refuse you - to give me Abishad the Shunammite as my wife." Bathsheba said, "Very well; I will speak for you to the king."...So Bathsheba went to King Solomon, to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a throne brought for the king's mother, and she sat on his right. (1 Kings 2:13-14, 17-20)

From these passages we can gain two insights into the relationship between the king and his mother, and relationship between the queen mother and the king's subjects. *One*, the king gives due honor to his mother in ways that signify her queenship role. The king rises to meet her and "bowed down to her" showing a sign of deference and respect that signifies the king's respect for his mother as an equal and, in a certain sense, someone that he himself might be subject to through his act of veneration. This is different from how Bathsheba approached her husband David when it was not the king who bowed to her but Bathsheba who bows to her king. (Cf. 1 Kings 1:16-17). With Bathsheba's son now on the throne, it is now the son who bows and shows respect for his mother. This honor of the king's mother acting as a ruling queen is further emphasized with the king having a throne brought for his mother so that she can sit at his right.

Two, the relationship between the *gebirah* and the people of Israel (as depicted in her conversation with Adonijah) is one in which the queen mother has the power and authority to intercede before the king of their behalf. Moreover, there appears to be an understanding that the queen mother *will* be heard by the king and that the king would not be able to refuse his mother's requests. With an understanding of queen mother, and her roles and functions within the Davidic kingdom, some scholars will identify parallels between the narratives in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles with Elizabeth's greeting of Mary at the Visitation referring to her as "mother of my Lord" (Lk. 1:41-45) and Mary's intercession on behalf of the stewards at the Wedding of Cana (Jn. 2).²⁹

Looking to the Fathers we find many references to the Old Testament *gebirah*, specifically Psalm 45 (44) cited by Pope Pius XII in *Munificentissimus Deus*. Theoteknos of Livias, in an encomium in honor of Mary's Assumption, cites Psalm 45 (44) with regards to Mary's presentation in the temple by her mother Anna.³⁰ Modestus of Jerusalem would go on to say that David (in Psalm 45(44) – even if the psalm was most likely not written by David himself) "foresaw" that Mary would have the role of being the virgin Mother of God

²⁹ See, B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary: Unveiling the Mother of the Messiah*. (New York: Image, 2018) pp. 83-86; S. Manelli, F.I., *All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed: Biblical Mariology*. (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2055). pp. 178-180, 331-344.

³⁰ "She was begotten like the cherubim, from pure and spotless clay. For while she was still in the loins of her father Joachim, her mother Anna received a message from a holy angel, who said to her, "Your seed shall be spoken of throughout all the world." Therefore Anna brought her to the temple of the Lord as an offering. And during all her time there, the maiden stood alongside Christ the king, "at his right hand, splendidly clothed in a robe of gold," as the prophet says, "*Listen, daughter and see, and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house. The king desires your beauty: he is your Lord – pay homage to him.*" (Theoteknos of Livias, *An Encomium on the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God*, n. 2)

“for the salvation of all the world”.³¹ John Damascene, in his homilies on Mary’s Dormition, sees her entrance into heavenly glory as fulfillment of Psalm 45(44) writing:

You [Mary] have gone on to the very royal throne of your Son, where you see him with your own eyes and rejoice; you stand beside him in great, indescribably freedom... You are a blessing for the world, sanctification for all things, rest for the weary, consolation for the grieving, healing for the sick, a harbor for the storm-tossed, forgiveness for sinners, friendly encouragement for the sorrowing, ready help for all who call on you. (*Homily I on the Dormition*, no. 11)

Finally, John Damascene, in another homily, strikingly refers to Mary as “queen” in his depiction of the moment of Mary’s passing from death into eternal life, “Some of them [angels] would have acted as a guard of honor for her spotless, holy soul, and would have ascended with it on its way to heaven, until they had brought the Queen to her royal throne.”³²

Spotless Bride

The last Old Testament typological image that Pope Pius XII highlights in *Munificentissimus Deus* is the image of Mary as the chaste and pure Spouse of the Bridegroom found especially in the wisdom literature. Pope Pius XII writes:

Likewise they [the Fathers and theologians] mention the Spouse of the Canticles "that goes up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense" to be crowned. These are

³¹ Modestus of Jerusalem, *Economium on the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, Mary, Mother of God and Ever-Virgin*, n. 8.

³² John Damascene, *Homily II on the Dormition*, n. 11.

proposed as depicting that heavenly Queen and heavenly Spouse who has been lifted up to the courts of heaven with the divine Bridegroom.³³

The passages that Pius XII references in this regard are Song of Songs 3:6; 4:8; 6:9, and these are passages commonly cited by the Fathers in their celebration of Mary's Assumption. This is clearly seen in the writings of early Christian thinkers like Theoteknos³⁴, Andrew of Crete³⁵, and John Damascene who – in a very striking way – attributes this passage from the Song of Songs to Mary while connecting it to her other privileges of queen and divine maternity:

Come down, come down, O Lord, and pay your mother the debt you owe her, the return she deserves for having nourished you. Open your divine arms; receive your mother's soul, you who on the cross entrusted your own spirit into your Father's hand. Call to her in a gentle whisper, "Come, my beautiful one, my dear one, you who in your virginity are more radiant than the sun. You gave me a share in what was yours; come, enjoy what is mine! Mother, come to your Son! Come, reign with him who became poor with you by being born from you!" Go, mistress, go!

³³ *MD*, 26.

³⁴ "Suddenly there was thunder and a great earthquake; and they saw the holy virgin being taken up into heaven, so that there, where a place had been prepared for her by her Son, she might abide in free access to him, joining the choirs of angels and the company of prophets and apostles...She has "sought her beloved and found him", as is written in the Song of Songs. (Theoteknos of Livias, *Encomium on the Dormition*, n. 7.).

³⁵ "The holy book of Canticles described you in advance, when it made this hidden allusion: "Who is this who comes up from the desert like a column of smoke, breathing myrrh and incense made from all the merchant's powders?" The same holy book also foretold you when its author wrote, "Here is Solomon's resting place; he has made its posts of silver, its base of gold, its steps of porphyry. Within it is paved with stone, [a gift of] love from the daughters of Jerusalem." And further: "Come out, daughters of Sion, and gaze on King Solomon. He is wearing the crown with which his mother crowned him on his wedding day, on the day of his heart's delight.'" (Andrew of Crete, *Homily III on the Dormition*, n. 6).

Do not first go up, as Moses did, and then die, but die, and so go up! Place your soul in the hands of your own Son! Give what is made of earth to the earth, since that, too, will be raised up with you.³⁶
(*Homily III on the Dormition*, n. 6)

Within this discussion of Mary as the new queen mother, and a type of the spouse of the bridegroom, requires more elaboration – than can be given in this paper - on this unique privilege being in harmony with her other privileges and titles such as being the New Eve and the new Ark of the Covenant. While the relationship between these privileges is touched on in *Munificentissimus Deus*, the exposition is brief and lacks a depth into the biblical Mary in relationship with the rest of the sacred text. Despite the sparse references to the Mary of the Scriptures that could have (possibly) assisted in the ecumenical issues of the dogmatic degree, *Munificentissimus Deus* can reasonably be said to be a building-block in the twentieth-century Magisterial teaching on Mary. Matthew Levering comments further on this:

By comparison to *Munificentissimus Deus*, *Lumen Gentium* and *Redemptoris Mater* rely more heavily on the biblical portraits of the events of Mary's life. Unlike *Munificentissimus Deus*, of course, these documents do not focus on Mary's Assumption. Rather, *Lumen Gentium* and *Redemptoris Mater* set for a biblical theology of Mary that aims to help believers understand why the Church teaches what it does about Mary. The goal is to show how the Church's teaching on Mary as the immaculately conceived mother of God, perpetual virgin, new Eve, intercessor, and "woman clothed with the sun" hold together. The Annunciation, the Visitation, the presentation of the infant Jesus at the Temple, the wedding of Cana, the Cross, and Pentecost provide the key landmarks for the documents' reflections,

36

along with Genesis 3:15, Ephesians 5:27, and Revelation 12.³⁷

After a brief survey of the Old Testament types cited by Pope Pius XII in *Munificentissimus Deus*, and finding their use amongst the Fathers, it is important that we also briefly look at the New Testament passages cited by the Holy Father to ascertain either their use or misuse according to how it is similar to their use by the Fathers. This will be done by looking at three passages in particular: the Annunciation account and the greeting of the archangel Gabriel to Mary (Luke 1:28), Paul's writings on Christ the New Adam (Romans 5-6) along with his first letter to the Church in Corinth (1 Cor 15:50-57), and finally the mysterious woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet in the Apocalypse (Rev 12:1).

Luke 1:28 – “Hail, full of grace!”

In his reflection on scholastic theologians and their witness to belief in Mary's bodily assumption into heaven, Pope Pius XII writes:

Similarly, they [scholastic theologians] have given special attention to these words of the New Testament: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women," (Lk. 1:28) since they saw, in the mystery of the Assumption, the fulfillment of that most perfect grace granted to the Blessed Virgin and the special blessing that countered the curse of Eve.³⁸

Even though Luke 1:28 is mentioned (specifically) with connection to the period of scholasticism, it may be beneficial to compare this reference to the angelic salutation with the use of this passage from the Fathers in their words on the mystery of Mary's Assumption.

³⁷ Matthew Levering, *Mary's Bodily Assumption* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), p. 31.

³⁸ *MD*, 27.

From the very start it is important to note that while Pope Pius XII may see Luke 1:28 as a passage that connects the privilege of Mary's Assumption with her Immaculate Conception, it is not the intent of this paper to apply the Western theology of original sin and preservative redemption (anachronistically) back onto the Fathers who also cite Luke 1:28. While one might argue that a "golden thread" of belief in Mary's sinlessness can be traced back to the early Church³⁹, this is not the topic of this paper. Rather, by comparing the use of Luke 1:28 in *Munificentissimus Deus* (which is absolutely a reference in connection to the Catholic belief of the Immaculate Conception) with its use among the Fathers, this paper will attempt to show how such the angelic salutation has been used in defense of Mary's Dormition and Assumption.

Modestus of Jerusalem will cite Luke 1:28 in a narrative that he provides on how the angels are "eager to see and admire her [Mary's] divine beauty, shining with God's glory... They longed to see her form so "full of grace" (Lk 1:28) from which he [Jesus] formed himself by the Holy Spirit and became, in truth, mortal in form while remaining what he was and "existing in the form of God" (Phil 2:6).⁴⁰ In a style that is particular to John Damascene, we find this Eastern Father expounding on the words of the angel Gabriel, "With Gabriel, the chief of the angels, let us cry out, "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with you!" (Lk. 1:28) Hail, inexhaustible ocean of grace! Hail, our

³⁹ "We can, for example, cite both an Eastern Father and a Western Father in a defense of Mary's purity and sinlessness:

"Only you [Jesus] and your Mother are more beautiful than everything. For on you, O Lord, there is no mark; neither is there any stain in your Mother." (Ephrem, *Nisibene Hymns* 27.8).

"We must except the holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom I wish to raise no question when it touches the subject of sins, out of honor to the Lord; for from Him we know what abundance of grace for overcoming sin in every particular was conferred upon her who had the merit to conceive and bear Him who undoubtedly had no sin." (Augustine, *On Nature and Grace*, n. 42).

⁴⁰ Modestus of Jerusalem, *Encomium on the Dormition*, no. 8.

only salve for sorrow! Hail, medicine that banishes pain from every heart! Hail, you through whom death has been banished, and life made welcome!⁴¹ In like fashion, John Damascene will also urge his congregation to use the angelic salutation as a starting point of “holy songs” before Mary -as if the individual could mystically be present at the time of her death – calling to mind the idea of the liturgy as a living anamnesis:

Let us raise holy songs, in words such as these: “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you!” (Lk. 1:28) Hail, you who were predestined to be Mother of God! Hail, you who were chosen before all ages by God’s will, most holy shoot of the earth, vessel of the divine fire, sacred image of the Holy Spirit, spring of the water of life, paradise for the tree of life, living branch of the holy vine that flows with nectar and ambrosia, river filled with the perfumes of the Spirit, field of divine wheat, rose glowing with virginity and *breathing the fragrance of grace*, lily robed like a queen, ewe who gave birth to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, workshop of our salvation, higher than the angelic powers, servant and mother! *Come, let us surround that spotless tomb and let us drink of God’s grace.*⁴²

Pauline Theology and Mary’s Assumption

Highlighting the importance the Fathers stressed on Mary as the New Eve, Pope Pius XII in *Munificentissimus Deus* notices a connection to the Apostle Paul and his writings concerning both the victory of the Christ the New Adam (Romans 5-6) and the hopeful anticipation of the resurrection of the body (1 Corinthians 15:35-58). The Holy Father writes:

⁴¹ John Damascene, *Homily II on the Dormition*, no. 16.

⁴² My emphasis. John Damascene, *Homily III on the Dormition*, no, 5.

We must remember especially that, since the second century, the Virgin Mary has been designated by the holy Fathers as the new Eve, who, although subject to the new Adam, is most intimately associated with him in that struggle against the infernal foe which, as foretold in the protoevangelium, would finally result in that most complete victory over the sin and death which are always mentioned together in the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles.⁴³

While the Fathers have commonly understood Mary to be the New Eve since – as far as extant records show – the second century beginning with Irenaeus⁴⁴, the Mariological implications of Romans

⁴³ *MD*, no. 39.

⁴⁴ “In accordance with this design, Mary the Virgin is found obedient, saying, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38) But Eve was disobedient; for she did not obey when as yet she was a virgin. And even as she, having indeed a husband, Adam, but being nevertheless as yet a virgin (for in Paradise “they were both naked, and were not ashamed”, (Genesis 2:25) inasmuch as they, having been created a short time previously, had no understanding of the procreation of children: for it was necessary that they should first come to adult age, and then multiply from that time onward), having become disobedient, was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race; so also did Mary, having a man betrothed [to her], and being nevertheless a virgin, by yielding obedience, become the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race. And on this account does the law term a woman betrothed to a man, the wife of him who had betrothed her, although she was as yet a virgin; thus indicating the back-reference from Mary to Eve, because what is joined together could not otherwise be put asunder than by inversion of the process by which these bonds of union had arisen; so that the former ties be cancelled by the latter, that the latter may set the former again at liberty. And it has, in fact, happened that the first compact looses from the second tie, but that the second tie takes the position of the first which has been cancelled. For this reason, did the Lord declare that “the first should in truth be last, and the last first.” (Matthew 19:30, Matthew 20:16) And the prophet, too, indicates the same, saying, instead of fathers, children have been born unto you. For the Lord, having

5-6 is not so easily found.⁴⁵ Focusing specifically on 1 Corinthians 15:35-57, we find several references to this Pauline passage from the Fathers in their defense and praise of Mary's bodily assumption into heaven.

In response to the question of how the dead will be raised and what kind of body they will possess (Cf. 1 Cor 15:35), Paul moves into a sweeping exposition on the diversity of material creation and their respective "glory" as befits their unique nature (Cf. 1 Cor 15:36-41). From here Paul affirms the belief in the resurrection of the body to a glorified body because "just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven." (1 Cor 15:49). Affirming the reality of new life that comes about through the resurrection of Christ, Paul can say "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor 15:56-57). From these words of Paul, Pope Pius XII shows how the fathers and doctors of the Church saw Mary's bodily Assumption into heaven as the first fruit of Christ's resurrection in which "death is swallowed up in victory." (Cf. 1 Cor 15:54).⁴⁶ Andrew of Crete, for example, looks to

been born the First-begotten of the dead, (cf. Revelation 1:5) and receiving into His bosom the ancient fathers, has regenerated them into the life of God, He having been made Himself the beginning of those that live, as Adam became the beginning of those who die. (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:20-22) Wherefore also Luke, commencing the genealogy with the Lord, carried it back to Adam, indicating that it was He who regenerated them into the Gospel of life, and not they Him. And thus also it was that the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, this did the virgin Mary set free through faith." (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III.22.4)

⁴⁵ There is one reference to Romans 5:21 that we find in a homily on the Dormition by Andrew of Crete, yet it is not used specifically in reference to Mary as the New Eve in relationship with her Son the New Adam. (see: Andrew of Crete, *Homily II on the Dormition*, no. 3).

⁴⁶ "Consequently, just as the glorious resurrection of Christ was an essential part and the final sign of this victory, so that struggle which was common to the Blessed Virgin and her divine Son should be brought to a close by the glorification of her virginal body, for the same Apostle says: "When this

the Pauline theology of death and the resurrection of the body as the basis for his defense of Mary's Dormition. Rather than starting from the person of Mary and the event of the Dormition, Andrew of Crete begins his homily with a discourse on death and what death means for the follower of Christ:

It is death's tyranny, real death, when we who die are not allowed to return to life again. But if we die and then live again after death – indeed, live a better life – then clearly that is not so much a death as a sleep [literally: dormition], a passage into a second life... Indeed, if I must speak the truth, the death that is natural to the human race even reached as far as Mary: not that it held her captive as it holds us, or that it overcame her – far from it! But it touched her enough to let her experience that sleep that is for us... Mary's death was, we might say, a parallel to that first sleep, which fell upon the first human being when his rib was removed to complete the creation of our race.⁴⁷

Likewise, John Damascene will cite from Paul's words in his affirmation of both the mystery of Mary's Assumption and a real death she succumbed to:

See how the one who overcame the defining limits of nature in her childbearing now gives way to those same limits and submits her unsullied body to death! It was only right for that body to 'lay aside what is mortal and put on immortality' (1 Cor 15:52), since the Lord of nature himself did not refuse the test of death.⁴⁸

mortal thing hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory."⁴⁷ (MD, 39)

⁴⁷ Andrew of Crete, *Homily II on the Dormition*, no. 2; 4.

⁴⁸ John Damascene, *Homily I on the Dormition*, no. 10.

The affirmation of Mary's death (dormition, "falling asleep") that we find in both Andrew of Crete and John Damascene are just two examples of what appears to have been more of a commonly held belief in early Christianity.⁴⁹ This being said, the dogmatic definition of Pope Pius XII deliberately leaves the question of the nature of Mary's death undefined – only to say "having completed the course of Her earthly life was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory". Questions considering the nature of Mary's death, whether her Dormition can be considered a death, and the virtue of Mary's death being a "falling asleep" unlike the gruesome and agonizing death of her Son, remain to be discerned and discussed.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ This death that was commonly believed and affirmed (especially in the East) is a different death than what any other person experiences. Therefore, it would be wrong to assume that the Fathers, in their affirmation of Mary's Dormition and Assumption, believed that Mary suffered a common death with the rest of humanity. "This perspective is to be preferred to that which hypothesizes a common death for Mary, because it better corresponds to the role of Mary as New Eve: She "died" in the same way in which Eve would have "died" if she had not sinned. The death would not be marked by sin and by its consequences, and thus it would be a joyous passage to true life. Mary is without sin, and so she cannot die as we sinners do." (M. Gagliardi, *Truth is a Synthesis: Catholic Dogmatic Theology* (Steubenville: Emmaus Academic, 2020), p. 511).

⁵⁰ Certain Fathers, like Bernard of Clairvaux, acknowledged that Mary did experience suffering in a great degree – and especially suffering in union with her Son. Looking to Simeon's prophecy of Mary in Luke 2:34 ("and you yourself a sword will pierce"), Bernard saw Mary as a victim in union with the divine Victim, "Do not marvel, O brothers, when it is said that Mary was a martyr in spirit. The martyrdom of the Virgin is set forth both in the prophecy of Simeon and in the actual story of our Lord's Passion... Truly, O blessed Mother, a sword has pierced your heart. For only passing through your heart could a sword enter the flesh of your Son." (Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones de tempore: in dominica infra octavam Assumptionis*, no. 14).

Revelation 12 – The Mysterious Woman

A particular reference to Scripture that Pope Pius XII uses in the dogmatic declaration of *Munificentissimus Deus* is Revelation 12:1, “And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” What makes this Scriptural citation interesting is that, while Pius XII affirms its usage amongst the scholastic theologians of the Western church, it is a passage that was not typically given a Mariological interpretation by the early Church. On the contrary, almost every commentary on Revelation that we have from the first few centuries - which is not much, considering the attitude of suspicion that the early Church had towards the apocalyptic text – attributes the Church to the woman that John sees. It's not until the writings of the Latin father Quodvultdeus in the fifth century that we find an identification of the woman in Revelation 12 with the Virgin Mary:

In the apocalypse of John the Apostle it is written that “the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, that when she had delivered her child, he might devour it . . . No one of you is ignorant of this: that the dragon is the devil; nor of this: that the woman signifies the Virgin Mary, who being inviolate, brought forth our Head inviolate; at the same time she represented in her person Holy Church in figure, that as she remained a virgin in bringing forth her Son, so also the Church brings forth His members at all times, without any loss to her virginity.⁵¹

Considering the suspicion that some of the local churches had of the inspiration of Revelation, and the later post-Ephesus development of a more public celebration of Mary's Dormition and Bodily Assumption, this later affirmation of the Mary as the woman in

⁵¹ Quodvultdeus, *De Symbolo*, no. 3

Revelation 12 might not necessarily be considered as something foreign or in opposition to the earlier commentaries that acknowledged the mysterious woman as a personification of the Church on earth. By taking the “both/and” approach and affirming that the woman of Revelation 12 is *both* Mary and the Church, some scholars will see this as an interpretation of the Scriptural text that affirms both a christotypical and an ecclesiotypical Mariology.⁵² The problem of arriving at a universal ecclesial consensus on the woman in Revelation 12 is, however, not something easily solved. One might also argue that due to the short reference by Pope Pius XII to this scriptural passage, *Munificentissimus Deus* does not assist much in furthering an ecumenical discussion on the placement of Revelation 12 in the Church’s understanding of Mary. It might well be argued that the reference made in *Munificentissimus Deus* leaves somethings to be desired. Examples of what might have been of benefit are 1) the theology of the woman in Revelation 12 being Mary as the New Eve – creating “bookends” of Scripture with Eve in Genesis 3:15, and 2) Mary in Revelation 12:1, and the relationship between Revelation 12:1 and the Marian title of New Ark of the Covenant as made clear by the fact of John’s vision of the Ark before the woman appears.⁵³

⁵² “It is our conviction that the “woman” is Mary, *also exemplifying the Church*, that is to say, she is Mary as a physical person, the Mother of Jesus, and she is Mary as a mystical figure, Mother of all the believers, “heavenly model” of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 65). The “Woman” of Revelation recapitulates and expresses the total reality of Mary’s divine and ecclesial maternity. The “Woman” of Revelation recapitulates and expresses the whole reality of the divine Motherhood and of the ecclesial Motherhood of Mary.” (S. Manelli, *All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed: Biblical Mariology* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2005) p. 413)

⁵³ For more information on Revelation 12 in *Munificentissimus Deus* see: Bissonnette, George (1951) "The Twelfth Chapter of the Apocalypse, and Our Lady's Assumption," *Marian Studies*: Vol. 2, Article 12. Available at:

https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol2/iss1/12.

Ecumenical Reflections

Where (and how) can this overview of the Scriptural and patristic sources in *Munificentissimus Deus* lead the Catholic Church to a more fruitful ecumenical dialogue with other Christian churches? Rather than “settling the issue” of Mary’s assumption for the global Christian community, the document published on November 1, 1950 continues to present challenges to the ecumenical movement. It is my opinion that these challenges are not bad, nor should they be a cause of frustration. Looking at what came after *Munificentissimus Deus*, with the promulgation of *Lumen Gentium* and its chapter on Mary⁵⁴, and the papal encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* by John Paul II, one can argue that the dogmatic decree of Pope Pius XII gave rise to future Magisterial teaching on Mary that followed a more biblical and patristic foundation. As it might be argued by some that Paul VI’s *Humane Vitae* needed John Paul II’s catechesis on Christian anthropology and the theology of the body, so to did *Munificentissimus Deus* require later documents to flesh out what had been stated so poignantly and definitively. By way of conclusion, I would like to suggest three issues that come out of *Munificentissimus Deus* that call for further discussion and discerning in our continued attempt at Christian unity.

One, the use of Scripture in the dogmatic statement brings to discussion issues in typology and biblical interpretation. As the use of typology, its limits, and its scope, is an issue of much importance within Catholic and Protestant biblical scholarship, so too does this intimately bound it together with another issue of importance: *Mary*. By returning to the biblical basis for belief in Mary and her privileges, a more fruitful dialogue between apostolic and reformed churches may take place. In addition to this, the issue of “fittingness” as a

⁵⁴ For a good reference on Mary in *Lumen Gentium* and the Mariological aftermath of the Second Vatican Council see: J. Ratzinger, “On the Position of Mariology and Marian Spirituality Within the Totality of Faith and Theology”, *The Church and Women: A Compendium* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), pp. 67-79.

principle coming from typology and biblical interpretation should be further clarified – as this line of reasoning (*potuit, deuit, ergo fecit*) was used in both Pope Pius IX's dogmatic statement on Mary's Immaculate Conception and Pius XII's *Munificentissimus Deus*.

Two, the solemn definition made by Pope Pius XII can bring us to a greater discussion on the role of the laity in the process of dogmatic declarations, and the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. As the Holy Father notes the overwhelmingly positive response to a dogmatic declaration with the petitions of lay faithful from all over the world,⁵⁵ this gives rise to a need for further discernment on the role that the faithful have in the Church's development of doctrine, and the relationship between the episcopacy and the laity. Thomas A. O'Meara, O.P. will write:

The People of the Church play an important role in the development of doctrine, for they too are guided in their faith by the Spirit...The Spirit of God is not confined to the hierarchy. The Holy Ghost permeates all the members of the Church and may lead any of them to contribute to the development of doctrine. In an organize and vital way the spiritual currents in the Church find expression in the bishops.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ "But those whom "the Holy Spirit has placed as bishops to rule the Church of God" gave an almost unanimous affirmative response to both these questions. This "outstanding agreement of the Catholic prelates and the faithful," affirming that the bodily Assumption of God's Mother into heaven can be defined as a dogma of faith, since it shows us the concordant teaching of the Church's ordinary doctrinal authority and the concordant faith of the Christian people which the same doctrinal authority sustains and directs, thus by itself and in an entirely certain and infallible way, manifests this privilege as a truth revealed by God and contained in that divine deposit which Christ has delivered to his Spouse to be guarded faithfully and to be taught infallibly." (*MD*, 12)

⁵⁶ Thomas A. O'Meara, O.P., *Mary in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), p. 287.

Three, the reality of *Munificentissimus Deus* and the dogma of papal infallibility behind it should lead Christians to a greater understanding of papal authority that serves (positively) to Christian unity, rather than a hinderance to it. Through the aid of the Second Vatican Council's teaching on the relationship between Scripture, tradition, and the Magisterium in its document *Dei Verbum*, scholars may be able to go back to this Marian statement from Pope Pius XII and find it in a new light that affirms the successor of Peter as a steward and servant of the deposit of faith, and as a teacher whose competence in providing instruction to the Church comes from Christ and not from any power originating from himself. As O'Meara writes:

It is this sacramental activity of Christ and the Spirit in the Church which makes the Petrine succession in time and doctrine at all feasible. Rather than see the papacy as an unbelievable power, we should try to see it as bound to the Word of God, circumscribed by revelation, a crucial human point of vertical contact with Christ the Founder, and, most of all, the servant of the entire Church.⁵⁷

With each year bringing us closer to the eightieth anniversary of *Munificentissimus Deus*, I believe that it is important that theologians remain together in dialogue, discernment, and prayer on these issues of the relationship between Scripture and tradition and papal authority, as they are related to the Church's understanding of the Virgin Mary and her place in the divine economy. From this conviction comes the hope that we can gather with Our Lady, as the apostles did in the upper room on the day of Pentecost and be together in real unity.

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⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 292.