

Marian Coredemption in Light of Christian Philosophy

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“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, “Mère de l’Eglise”, in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 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 coredemptive 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 fountal 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 structure 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.