

Ecce Mater Tua

A Journal of Mariology

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Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order

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We welcome scholarly contributions from all topics in Mariology, including but not limited to Marian doctrine, Mary in Scripture and the writings of the Fathers, Marian piety and devotion, Mary in the liturgy, Mary in the papal magisterium. Topics in Marian mediation are especially welcome.

Quotations of the Bible should use the RSV-CE, unless the essay necessitates the use of another version. Please include five keywords with your submission (e.g., Mariology, perpetual virginity, John of Damascus, Thomas Aquinas, Pope Pius IX). If an article or book review is accepted for publication, authors must verify that the piece conforms to style instructions. Greek and Hebrew do not need to be transliterated, but may be submitted in Unicode format, and the author should attend to making sure that words are spelled correctly with correct diacritical marks.

Book Reviews:

Ecce Mater Tua does not accept unsolicited book reviews. Publishers interested in having Marian titles reviewed in this journal should contact the editors at the email address above.

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Ecce Mater Tua

Introduction to *Ecce Mater Tua* Vol. 9

THE EDITORS

This issue of *Ecce Mater Tua* is being published within a few weeks of the tragic death of Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins (1945–2024), who died on February 3, 2024 as the result of an accidental fall. Msgr. Calkins was an outstanding Mariologist, liturgist, priest, and a member of the theological commission of the International Marian Association (IMA). He will be dearly missed. We are dedicating this issue to his memory, and we pay tribute to him in the *Commentario* section.

Msgr. Calkins was a speaker for the September 14–15, 2023 Marian Symposium held at Franciscan University of Steubenville and co-sponsored by the IMA. His paper was on “The Truth of Marian Coredeemption, the Papal Magisterium and the Present Situation.” He also gave this paper via technology from Steubenville for an international theological conference on Marian co-redemption held at St. Mary’s Friary in Dundee, Scotland the same weekend. We are honored and pleased to include Monsignor Calkins’ symposium paper in this issue of *Ecce Mater Tua*. It represents his final scholarly paper, and one given at two Marian conferences.

The September 14–15, 2023 conference was a Spirit-filled event that featured some excellent speakers, including Most Rev. Oliver Dashe Doeme, the Bishop of Maiduguri, Nigeria and Most Rev. William John Waltersheid, the Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburg, PA. Bishop Doeme related the story of Jesus’s appearance to him in which Our Lord revealed that the Rosary was the spiritual weapon to defend his priests and people from the aggression of the terrorist group, Boko Haram. Bishop Waltersheid gave an inspirational talk on the spirituality and power of Marian consecration.

In this issue, several other papers given at the Steubenville/IMA conference are published, including an outstanding paper by the IMA president, Dr. Mark Miravalle, entitled “Mother of Us All: Global Ramifications for a World in Crisis.” This essay shows how the dogmatic recognition of Mary as the Mother of us all and Co-

redemptrix will lead to a release of graces that our world desperately needs. This essay is so important that it is also being published in Italian and Spanish to reach a wider audience.

Articles by Robert Fastiggi, Andrew Ouellete, and Mike Scherschligt also appear in this issue, and they are based on their talks given at the September 14–15, 2023 conference.

This issue coincides with the memorial of Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order, whose shared and intense devotion to the Holy Mother of God bound them to a spiritual friendship through the mendicant life. We know that Msgr. Calkins loved Our Lady like these Seven Holy Founders, and he consecrated his priesthood to Mary. Let us trust that Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins is now in the presence of the Most Holy Trinity along with the Immaculate Mother, whom he loved so much.

Commentario

Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins, *In Memoriam*

MARK MIRAVALLE, S.T.D. AND ROBERT FASTIGGI, PH.D

On a first Saturday, February 3, 2024, the international Mariological community lost one of its finest sons. Monsignor Arthur Burton Calkins was taken home after a fall and ensuing brain injury.

Known globally for his documentation of the Mariological writings of St. John Paul II—in fact often recognized as the world’s expert on the subject—Msgr. Calkins was also a courageous defender and lucid articulator on the subject of Marian coredemption. He dedicated his last great conference presentation at the Franciscan University of Steubenville to Marian coredemption, the text of which is herein published in his honor and memory.

Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins was born in Erie, Pennsylvania on April 18, 1945. After attending St. Joseph Elementary Catholic School, he studied at St. Mark Seminary High School (1959–1963). After two years at Gannon University in Erie, he went on to earn a BA in Scholastic Philosophy (1966) from St. Mary’s Seminary and University in Baltimore. He continued his studies for the priesthood at the Catholic University of America where he received his STB in 1969 and his MA in Sacred Theology in 1971. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1970 for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. From 1970–1983 Fr. Arthur served in various parishes, studied at Oxford University (1972–1974), and taught at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans (1976–1977). From 1983–1984, he studied at the International Marian Research Institute [IMRI] in Dayton, Ohio, and he received his STL degree from IMRI in 1986 (*magna cum laude*). From 1984–1988, he served as chaplain at the Shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Washington, N.J., which is devoted to the messages of Fatima. From 1988 to 2010 he lived in Rome where he was an official of the Pontifical Ecclesia Dei Commission—a commission established by St. John Paul II to help Catholics devoted to the traditional Latin Mass. In 1990, Msgr. Calkins received his STD degree *summa cum laude* from the Pontifical Theological Faculty of St. Bonaventure—the Seraphicum—where the late Fr. Peter

Damian Fehlner, OFMConv, served as his thesis director. In 1997 he was named a Chaplain of His Holiness, which carries the title of Monsignor. In 2010, he was named a Prelate of Honor of His Holiness.

Msgr. Calkins was a prolific author. He published over 400 articles and book reviews that appeared in journals such as *Missio Immacolatae* and *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* as well as in volumes such as the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* supplements, *The Oxford Handbook of Mary*, and *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*—for which he contributed three chapters. His masterful book, *Totus Tuus: John Paul II's Program of Marian Consecration and Entrustment*, was first published in 1992 and then published in a second edition in 2017. In addition, Msgr. Calkins edited an Italian anthology of the Marian writings of John Paul II entitled, *Totus Tuus: Il Magistero Mariano di Giovanni Paolo II* (Siena: Cantagalli, 2006).

Recognized as a leading expert on the Mariology of St. John Paul II, Msgr. Calkins was also an expert on St. Joseph, the Catholic liturgy, and Blessed Concepción de Armida (1862–1937)—known as Conchita—a Mexican mystic and spiritual writer who was beatified in 2019. In addition to being a member of the Theological Commission of the International Marian Association, Msgr. Calkins was a member of the Mariological Society of America, the Roman Theological Academy, and a corresponding member of the Pontifical Marian Academy International.

Msgr. Calkins must be remembered for his courageous commitment to Our Lady's unique role with Jesus in the historic work of Redemption under the title, "Co-redemptrix" as well as his public support for the solemn definition of Mary's Role in the Redemption. His support for this definition was often carried out within theological circles where his full Marian voice represented the significant minority.

Still, Monsignor's commitment to the "whole truth about Mary"—to use the term of St. John Paul II—remained unabated. With

extraordinary scholarship, clarity, and conviction, Msgr. Calkins always testified to the classical and perennial doctrine of Mary, Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix of all graces. He did so both in head and in heart as manifested in his concurrent promulgation of Marian consecration in his book, *Totus Tuus: John Paul II's Program of Marian Consecration and Entrustment*.

Monsignor Arthur Burton Calkins was a fearless, erudite, and compassionate defender of Mary Immaculate, the Co-redemptrix, during his earthly sojourn. He now will experience the abundant fruits of his Marian courage and love eternally.

Father Arthur, *requiescat in pace*.

Mother of the Redemption: First Principle of Mariology and Remedy for the Church?

Mark Miravalle, S.T.D.

In the perennial discussion concerning what fundamental principle of Mariology is that from which every other Marian truth derives, it is time to consider the role of the Immaculate Virgin as *Mother of the Redemption*. I would like to introduce this possibility in the most succinct modus possible.

Mother of the Redemption denotes Mary's entire and existential role with and under Jesus in the overall work of Redemption in fulfillment of God the Father's predestined plan. It was the eternal will of the Father that Mary, in virtue of her Immaculate Conception, would "mother" every aspect of the Redemption, as Mother of the Redeemer and Mother of the redeemed.

The traditional first principle, Mother of God, certainly serves as a foundational truth for her other prerogatives. But why is Mary Mother of God? She is Theotokos because God the Father willed that the Second Person of the Trinity would become flesh as Jesus Christ, divine and human Redeemer, at the high point of creation in order to redeem humanity from the sin of Adam and Eve and its effects.

In fact, all Our Lady's prerogatives take place because of her God-designed role with and under Jesus in the Redemption.

Why was Mary immaculately conceived? To give Jesus Christ, the divine and human Redeemer, an immaculate human nature like her own in order to save us, and to be his perfect human companion in the work of Redemption.

Why did Mary possess a threefold virginity? To conceive the divine Redeemer through the power of the Holy Spirit, and to be his greatest disciple throughout her entire life.

Why was Mary assumed into heaven? To share the victory of the divine Redeemer over sin and death, and to serve as the perfect human example of what ultimately awaits all who freely accept the divine Redeemer.

As Mother of the Redemption, Mary's unique role with Jesus in Redemption begins with her Immaculate Conception and is sustained in her intimate love and perfect obedience to the Father leading up to the Annunciation. It is pre-eminently manifested when she freely agrees to become the Mother of the Redeemer and bring the Redeemer into human history. It is morally and physically evident in giving birth to the Redeemer and spiritual birth to the Church and is sustained in love and obedience to the Redeemer during his thirty years of private life. It is exercised by bringing the Redeemer into his public ministry by interceding for his first public miracle and is brought to its climax at Calvary in suffering with the Redeemer to redeem the world as the New Eve with the New Adam. It is fortified by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and expressed as Mother of the apostolic Church. As Mother of the Redemption, her unique role is extended as Mother and Teacher of the Apostles and is perennially and continually expressed throughout history leading up to today as the Mother of the Church and Spiritual Mother of all peoples.

In this sense, it can rightly be said that all other titles and prerogatives of the Immaculate Virgin Mary are contained within her singularly providential role as *Mother of the Redemption*.

It is time for the Church to acknowledge and appreciate the unequalled role of Mary Immaculate, as a human being and as a woman, in her unparalleled role in the Redemption with and under Jesus Christ, as eternally predestined by the Father and sustained by the Spirit. It is time for the Church to follow the inspirations and directions of the Mother of the Redemption with a newfound humility and obedience. It is time for the Church to see the Mother of the Redemption as the ultimate voice and force of remedy that will lead the Church and the world through the unprecedented times that lie before us.

The Teaching of Mariology Since Vatican II

Robert Fastiggi, Ph.D.

November 21, 2024 will mark 60 years since the promulgation of Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church known as *Lumen Gentium*. In his November 21, 1964 address marking the close of the third session of Vatican II, St. Paul VI not only promulgated *Lumen Gentium*; he also solemnly declared the Virgin Mary to be the Mother of the Church with these words:

Therefore, for the glory of the Virgin Mary and for Our own consolation, We proclaim the Most Blessed Mary Mother of the Church, that is to say of all the people of God, of the faithful as well as of the Pastors, who call her the most loving Mother. And We wish that the Mother of God should be still more honored and invoked by the entire Christian people by this most sweet title.¹

In this same address, Paul VI points to Mary's presence in the economy of salvation as the basis for her role as the Mother of the Church:

Just as, in fact, the Divine Maternity is the basis for her special relationship with Christ, and for her presence in the economy of salvation brought about by Jesus Christ, thus it also constitutes the principal basis for the relations between Mary and the Church, since she is the mother of Him Who, right from the time of His

¹ Paul VI, Address at the Conclusion of Session III of Vatican II (November 21, 1964) is available in Latin, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese on the Vatican website: https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/la/speeches/1964/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19641121_conclusions-iii-sessions.html. The English translation is taken from: <https://vaticaniiat50.wordpress.com/2014/11/22/pope-pauls-speech-at-closing-session/>

Incarnation in her virginal bosom, joined to Himself as head of His Mystical Body which is the Church.²

Paul VI brings together Mary's role in the economy of salvation with her role as the Mother of the Church. In doing so he affirms the correct meaning of chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*, which is entitled "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church."

Unfortunately, what Vatican II taught about the Blessed Virgin Mary has not been adequately appreciated by many Catholic theologians. In spite of the rich synthesis of Marian doctrine found in *Lumen Gentium* chapter VIII, there was a notable decline in the academic study of Mariology in Catholic colleges, universities, and seminaries following the Council. Writing in 2017, Professor John Cavadini of the University of Notre Dame observed that Mariology, understood as "the theological study of Mary, has all but vanished from the theological mainstream and from theological curricula."³

Prior to Vatican II there was the "Marian Age" marked by a renewed theological interest in Mary, which flourished especially after the 1854 dogmatic proclamation of the Immaculate Conception.⁴ There were multiple Marian congresses focused on themes such as Marian coredeemption and mediation.⁵ Cardinal Désiré Joseph Mercier (1851–1926)—the Archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels and the Primate of Belgium from 1906 to 1926—was active in petitioning for a dogmatic proclamation of Mary, Mediatrix of all graces until his death

² Ibid.

³ John C. Cavadini, "Introduction" to *Mary on the Eve of the Second Vatican Council*, edited by John C. Cavadini and Danielle M. Peters (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), 2.

⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵ See Giuseppe M. Besutti (2014) "I Congressi Mariani ed i relativi "Atti" dalla fine del sec. XIX al 1950," *Marian Library Studies*: Vol. 17 (2014) Article 27, Pages 345-364, available at: http://ecommons.udayton.edu/ml_studies/vol17/iss1/27

in 1926.⁶ There were also petitions for the dogmatic proclamation of Mary's Assumption into heaven body and soul.

Between 1849 and 1950, these petitions “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.”⁷ Cardinal Mercier's efforts to have Mary defined as the Mediatrix of all graces did not succeed. The petitions for the Assumption, however, did succeed, and Pius XII defined the dogma of the Assumption in 1950.⁸

When St. John XXIII announced his plans to convene Vatican II on January 25, 1959, there was a preparatory phase during which many suggestions were made by bishops concerning the council. Fr. Michael O'Carroll states that 382 bishops asked for a conciliar statement on Marian mediation, with 266 wanting a dogmatic definition.⁹ He also notes that 54 bishops wanted a conciliar statement on Mary as Co-redemptrix, with 36 seeking a dogmatic definition.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

These petitions for new Marian dogmas manifested the concerns of many bishops. John XXIII, however, made it clear that there would not be any new dogmatic definitions because of the predominantly

⁶ See Manfred Hauke, *Mary, Mediatrix of Grace: Mary at the Foot of the Cross-IV: Supplement* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2004) and Gloria Falcão Dodd, *(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).

⁷ Michael O'Carroll, C.S.S.p., *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 56.

⁸ See Pius XII, apostolic constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus* (November 1, 1950): https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus.html

⁹ O'Carroll, 352

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 308.

¹¹ G.M. Besutti, O.S.M. *Lo Schema Mariano al Concilio Vaticano II* (Rome: Edizioni Marianum, 1966), 17.

pastoral orientation of the council.¹² The treatment of Mariology at Vatican II, nevertheless, shows a concern for Marian co-redemption and Marian mediation. In the *praenotanda* or explanatory note that accompanied the first 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.,”¹³

Although *Lumen Gentium* avoids the title co-redemptrix, it clearly affirms Mary’s cooperation with the work of redemption at the Annunciation in no. 56 and under the Cross in no. 58. This is why some 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 Coredemptrix in several places without using the term.¹⁴ *Lumen Gentium*, 54 also makes it clear that Vatican II had no intention of providing “a complete doctrine on Mary;” neither did it “wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified.” Therefore, “those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her. . . .”

Lumen Gentium chapter VIII provides a fine synthesis of Catholic Mariology even though it does not claim to offer a complete doctrine of the Virgin Mary. Why, though, did Mariology fall into decline after Vatican II? The answer, I believe, is one of perception. During the council, some bishops and theologians favored what is known as the “Christotypical” approach to Mariology, which emphasizes Mary’s unique cooperation with Christ in the work of redemption. Others

¹² Mark Miravalle, “*With Jesus*” *The Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix* (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing, 2003), 168.

¹³ *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen I, Periodus Prima, Pars IV* [Vatican City, 1971], p. 99.

¹⁴ See Jean Galot S.J. in *La Civiltà Cattolica* [1994] III: 236-237 and Georges Cottier, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, June 3–4, 2002), p. 8.

avored what is known as an ecclesiotypical approach, which highlights Mary as a member of the Church and an example of Christian discipleship. The Christotypical approach was favored by Carl Balić, O.F.M. (1899–1977), the founder of the Pontifical Marian Academy International, who was one of the drafters of *Lumen Gentium*, chapter VIII. The ecclesiotypical approach was favored by Msgr. Gérard Philips (1899–1972), who was the principal editor of the entire text of *Lumen Gentium*.¹⁵ The ecclesiotypical approach was especially promoted by bishops and theologians from Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands who were concerned about ecumenical issues. Because Vatican II decided to integrate Mariology into *Lumen Gentium* rather than have a separate document on the Virgin Mary, there emerged the perception that the council had opted for an ecclesiotypical approach to Mariology rather than a Christotypical one.

I believe this perception is based on a misunderstanding of what happened at the Council. The vote for the integration of the Marian *schema* into *Lumen Gentium* was actually a return to an earlier plan to include the treatment of Mary in the 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 January 1962. The theological commission approved the *schema* as a separate document on November 23, 1962. In September 1963 seven council Fathers, however, requested a return to the earlier plan for integration. A vote was taken on this request on October 29, 1963 with the option for inclusion being adopted by a narrow vote of 1,114 to 1,074.¹⁶

When it was decided that Mariology would be integrated into the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, the Polish bishops and some others argued that the chapter on Mary should appear early in the constitution rather than at the end. On September 16, 1964,

¹⁵ Manfred Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, translated by Richard Chonak (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2021), 96.

¹⁶ O'Carroll, 352

Archbishop Karol Wojtyła made an intervention in which he argued that an earlier placement of the chapter on Mary would be appropriate. This is because the office (*munus*) of the Virgin Mary consists in building up the Mystical Body of Christ: first by giving birth to his physical body and then by her unique participation in the “works of Redemption and Salvation accomplished by Christ” (*opera Redemptionis et Salvationis a Christo peracta*), a participation that continues forever (*continuat in saecula*).¹⁷ The proposal of Archbishop Wojtyła, the future pope and saint, was not accepted. Nevertheless, the theology of his proposal was later incorporated into the Marian teachings of his pontificate.

The perceived victory of ecclesiotypical Mariology at Vatican II continues to have some unfortunate effects. In a book originally published in German in 1980, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger observed that “the immediate outcome of the victory of ecclesiocentric Mariology was the collapse of Mariology altogether.”¹⁸ St. Paul VI tried to offset this situation by his apostolic exhortation, *Marialis Cultus* of 1974, and St. John Paul II sought to renew Marian doctrine and devotion throughout his pontificate.

In spite of these papal efforts, Catholic colleges, universities, and seminaries have not given Mariology sufficient attention since Vatican II. In 2015–2016, I conducted a survey of 32 major Catholic seminaries in the USA, and I found out that only 9 out of the 32 had a required stand-alone course in Mariology.¹⁹ While almost all the

¹⁷ See Exc.mus P.D. Carolus Wojtyła, Archiepiscopus Cracoviensis (no. 51) in *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* Volumen III Periodus Tertia Part II Congregationes Generales LXXXIII–LXXXIX (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, MCMLXXIV [1974]), pages 178–179.

¹⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, “Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine and Piety in faith and Theology as a Whole” in Joseph Ratzinger and Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mary: the Church at the Source* trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 24.

¹⁹ See Robert L. Fastigi, “Teaching Mariology in Catholic Seminaries in the USA” in *Religions* 2023, 14(2), 275; <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14020275>

seminaries had an elective course in Mariology, it was generally not required.²⁰ The majority of the seminaries seem to believe that Mariology should be covered in Ecclesiology because of the decision at Vatican II to integrate Marian doctrine into *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. The failure to have a required Mariology course in Catholic seminaries seems to run counter to a 1988 document of the Congregation for Catholic Education, which states:

Considering the importance of the Virgin in the history of salvation and in the life of the people of God, and after the promptings of Vatican Council II and the Popes, **it would be unthinkable that the teaching of Mariology be obscured today: it is necessary, therefore, that it be given its just place in seminaries and theological faculties** (emphasis added).²¹

The lack of proper formation in Mariology has had some negative effects on Catholic theology. The International Theological Commission [ITC], for example, issued a document in 2012 entitled *Theology Today: Perspective, Principles, and Criteria*.²² In many ways, it is a very fine document that places emphasis on the priority of the Word of God and revelation through Christ. There is, though, not a single mention of Mary in the document. I brought this to the attention of

²⁰ Although Mariology is not required in most US Catholic seminaries, there are encouraging signs of an increase in Marian devotions among the students.

²¹ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Virgin Mary in Intellection and Spiritual Formation* (March 25 1988), no. 27: <https://udayton.edu/imri/mary/m/magisterial-documents-the-virgin-mary-in-intellectual-and-spiritual-formation.php>. This document is cited in footnote 396 (p. 134) in the *Program for Priestly Formation in the United States of America* Sixth Edition (Washington, D.C. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops,, 2022) in no. 328, where Mariology is included in the list of topics that must be covered in the core of dogmatic theology.

²²International Theological Commission, *Theology Today: Perspective, Principles, and Criteria* (2012): https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_doc_20111129_tologia-oggi_en.html

one member of the ITC, and I was told that there was a section on Mary, but it was removed because the document needed to be reduced in length. This conscious decision to remove the Virgin Mary from a document on “theology today” is disheartening. It suggests that Catholic theology today can be done without any reference to the Mother of God. Without reference to the Virgin Mary, there is the danger that theology will become overly masculine and deprived of the feminine genius.

During a July 28, 2013 in flight press conference, Pope Francis offered this important insight:

A Church without women is like the college of the Apostles without Mary. The role of women in the Church is not simply that of maternity, being mothers, but much greater: it is precisely to be the icon of the Virgin, of Our Lady; what helps make the Church grow! But think about it, Our Lady is more important than the Apostles! She is more important! The Church is feminine. She is Church, she is bride; she is mother.²³

Pope Francis is correct. The Virgin Mary is more important than the Apostles, and she is essential to the life of the Church. In fact, the Church is only the Body of Christ because Mary conceived and gave birth to Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body, which is the Church.

Mary is also essential to theology. All the popes since Vatican II have spoken of the central role of the Virgin Mary in the economy of salvation and her importance for Catholic theology. In his December 5, 2014 address to the International Theological Commission, Pope Francis reminded the members of this commission that the Virgin Mary is “the teacher of authentic theology:”

²³ Pope Francis, press conference on the return flight from World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro (July 28, 2013): https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-conferenza-stampa.html

The Immaculate Virgin, as a privileged witness of the great events of salvation history, “kept all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2:19): A woman of listening, a woman of contemplation, a woman of closeness to the problems of the Church and of the people. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with all the resources of her feminine genius, she has not ceased entering ever more deeply into “all the truth” (cf. Jn 16:13). Mary is thus the icon of the Church which, eagerly awaiting her Lord, progresses day after day in her understanding of the faith, thanks also to the patient work of men and women theologians. **Mary the Madonna, the teacher of authentic theology**, obtain for us—with her maternal prayer—that our charity “may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment” (Phil 1:9).²⁴

Mary is the teacher of authentic theology because she is a woman of contemplation. Pope Francis highlights this contemplative, sapiential dimension of theology in his November 1, 2023 apostolic letter, issued *motu proprio*, *Ad Theologiam Promovendam*.²⁵ In no. 7 of this letter, he reminds us that theology cannot be merely abstract and ideological. Instead, it must be “elaborated on the knees, pregnant with adoration and prayer; a transcendent knowledge and, at the same time, attentive to the voice of the people (*elaborato in ginocchio, gravido di adorazione e di preghiera; un sapere trascendente e, al contempo, attento alla voce dei popoli*). Mary helps us do theology in this manner because she is

²⁴ Pope Francis, Address to the International Theological Commission (December 5, 2014): https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141205_commissione-teologica-internazionale.html (I have made some minor changes to the translation in the cited passage after consulting the Italian original).

²⁵ Pope Francis, apostolic letter issued *motu proprio*, *Ad Theologiam Promovendam* (November 1, 2023): https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/motu_proprio/documents/20231101-motu-proprio-ad-theologiam-promovendam.html

the woman of contemplation who knows her divine Son better than any theologian.

The Virgin Mary not only helps us do theology, she also is essential to the content of theology. Pope Francis makes it clear that we cannot understand Jesus without his Mother. In his January 1, 2015 homily for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the Holy Father says:

Mary is so closely united to Jesus because she received from him the knowledge of the heart, the knowledge of faith, nourished by her experience as a mother and by her close relationship with her Son. The Blessed Virgin is the woman of faith who made room for God in her heart and in her plans; she is the believer capable of perceiving in the gift of her Son the coming of that “fullness of time”(Gal 4:4) in which God, by choosing the humble path of human existence, entered personally into the history of salvation. **That is why Jesus cannot be understood without his Mother** (emphasis added).²⁶

Pope Francis, like St. John Paul II, is also aware that Mary, according to God’s plan, is essential to the economy of salvation. In his homily of January 1, 2020, he reminds us that “there is no salvation without the woman:”

In God, there will forever be our humanity and Mary will forever be the Mother of God. She is both woman and mother: this is what is essential. From her, a woman, salvation came forth and thus there is no salvation without the woman. In her, God was united to us, and if we want to unite ourselves to him, we must take the same path: through Mary, woman and mother. That is why we begin the year by celebrating Our Lady, the

²⁶ Pope Francis, homily (January 1, 2015): https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150101_omelia-giornata-mondiale-pace.html.

woman who wove the humanity of God. If we want to weave humanity into this our time, we need to start again from the woman.²⁷

In his September 15, 2021 homily, the Holy Father states that “Mary shared in her Son’s mission of salvation, even to the foot of the Cross.”²⁸ In his general audience of February 16, 2022, Pope Francis cites *Lumen Gentium*, 58 to remind us that Mary cannot be separated from her Son in the plan of salvation.²⁹

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.

There is much more that can be said about why the study of Mariology is so important for Catholic theology. There are so many writings of saints, mystics, and popes on the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of salvation. There is also the need to study Mary in the liturgy, as well as Marian devotions, prayers, and apparitions. Without proper theological training in Mariology, Catholic theology will not be truly Catholic.

The decision at Vatican II to include Mariology in the constitution of the Church was **not** a decision to reduce Marian theology to a few lectures in an ecclesiology class. We are grateful that there is a

²⁷ Pope Francis, homily (January 1, 2020): <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2024/documents/20240101-omelia-madredidio-pace.html>. I have slightly adjusted the translation changing “there is no salvation without **a** woman” to “there is no salvation without **the** woman” in light of the original Italian: “*non c’è salvezza senza **la** donna.*”

²⁸ Pope Francis, homily in Sastin, Slovakia (September 15, 2021): <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2021/documents/20210915-omelia-sastin.html>

²⁹ Pope Francis, General Audience (February 16, 2022): <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2022/documents/20220216-udienza-generale.html>

growing awareness among the faithful of the need for a deeper Mariology that is not simply ecclesiotypical. The International Marian Association is committed to the study of the full truth about Mary, who is indeed “the teacher of authentic theology.”

Ecce Mater Tua

Articles

The Truth of Marian Coredeemption, the Papal Magisterium and the Present Situation

MSGR. ARTHUR B. CALKINS

Slightly over eighteen years ago I participated in a symposium that took place at the shrine of Our Lady in Fatima with the title “Mary, Unique Cooperator in the Redemption”.¹ My own paper on that occasion bore the same title that I have chosen for my presentation on this occasion as well. While in the course of these intervening years the truth has not changed because it cannot change and the authentic papal magisterium has not changed because it cannot change, the present situation, however, is obviously no longer what it was from the 3rd to the 7th of May in 2005 immediately after the death of Pope Saint John Paul II and the election of Pope Benedict XVI. What is particularly fortuitous on this occasion is that two symposia on this same topic are taking place on these two most appropriate days in 2023 as the Church celebrates the Triumph of the Cross and the Sorrows of Mary in Dundee, Scotland and in Steubenville, Ohio at the Franciscan University. I am very honored to be a link between these two symposia, while noting that the Reverend Dr. Manfred Hauke, who is participating in the Dundee symposium, made an important contribution to the Fatima symposium in 2005 and Dr. Mark Miravalle, who played a major role in organizing the Fatima symposium, plays a similar role at the Franciscan University of Steubenville today. I pray that both of these symposia, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will kindle anew great ardor for the truth of Mary’s active collaboration in the work of the Redemption throughout the universal Church.

I. Mary, the New Eve

Even though the explicit treatment of Mary’s collaboration in the work of redemption has appeared in ever sharper relief in the papal

¹ *Maria “Unica Cooperatrice alla Redenzione”. Atti del Simposio sul Mistero della Corredenzione Mariana, Fatima, Portogallo 3-7 Maggio 2005* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2005).

magisterium only within the past two centuries, there is well founded reason to say that it is part and parcel of the tradition that has come down to us from the Apostles and makes progress in the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Dei Verbum* #8). The indissoluble link between the “Woman” and “her seed,” the Messiah, is already presented to us in the protoevangelium (Gen. 3:15)², where the first adumbrations of God’s saving plan pierce through the darkness caused by man’s sin. The identification of the “Woman” with Mary is already implicit in the second and nineteenth chapters of the Gospel of St. John where Jesus addresses his mother as “Woman”³ and in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation.⁴ The Apostle Paul had already explicitly identified Jesus as the “new Adam” (cf. Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49) and it was a natural and logical development for the sub-Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr (+ c. 165), Irenaeus of Lyons (+ c. 202) and Tertullian (+ c. 220), to see Mary as the “new Eve”⁵, the God-given helpmate of the “new Adam”. Virtually all of the experts are agreed that the classic presentation of Mary as the “New Eve” achieves full maturity in the writings of Saint Irenaeus of Lyons. Of Irenaeus’ Eve-Mary comparison the late René Laurentin says:

Irenaeus gives bold relief to a theme only outlined by Justin [Martyr]. With Irenaeus the Eve-Mary parallel is not simply a literary effect nor a gratuitous improvisation, but an integral part of his theology of salvation. One idea is the key to this theology: God’s saving plan is not a mending or a “patch-up job” done on his first product; it is a resumption of the work from the beginning, a regeneration from head downwards, a

² Cf. Michael O’Carroll, C.S.Sp., *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc.; Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1982) 370-373; Stefano Manelli, FI, *All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed: Biblical Mariology* Revised and Enlarged Second Edition (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2005) 20-37; Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary: Unveiling the Mother of the Mother of the Messiah* (NY: Image, 2018) 14-18

³ Cf. *Theotokos* 373-375; Manelli 364-383; Pitre 185-193.

⁴ Cf. *Theotokos* 375-377; Manelli 394-414; Pitre 60-63.

⁵ Cf. *Theotokos* 139-141.

recapitulation in Christ. In this radical restoration each one of the elements marred by the fall is renewed in its very root. In terms of the symbol developed by Irenaeus, the knot badly tied at the beginning is unknotted, untied in reverse (*recirculatio*): Christ takes up anew the role of Adam, the cross that of the tree of life. In this ensemble Mary, who corresponds to Eve, holds a place of first importance. According to Irenaeus her role is necessary to the logic of the divine plan. ...

With Irenaeus this line of thought attains a force of expression that has never been surpassed. Later writers will broaden the bases of the comparison but to our day no one has expressed it in a way more compact or more profound.⁶

Before moving on to the papal magisterium as such, it will not be out of place to underscore why I believe Saint Irenaeus is such an important figure for our consideration. Not only is he invoked implicitly – by being included among the Fathers – in the Marian magisterium of Blessed Pius IX, but he is also referred to explicitly in that of the Venerable Pius XII, Pope Saint Paul VI, the Second Vatican Council and most notably in that of John Paul II. The notable scholar Jaroslav Pelikan provides us with a fascinating hint about the importance of the Bishop of Lyons:

When it is suggested that for the development of the doctrine of Mary, such Christian writers as Irenaeus in a passage like this [in *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*] “are important witnesses for the state of the tradition in the late second century, *if not earlier*” that raises the interesting question of whether Irenaeus had invented the concept of Mary as the Second Eve here or was drawing on a deposit of tradition that had come to him from “earlier.” It is difficult, in reading his *Against*

⁶ René Laurentin, *A Short Treatise of the Virgin Mary* trans. by Charles Neumann, S.M. (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press, 1991) 54, 57. Italics (except for “recapitulation” and “recirculatio”) my own.

Heresies and especially his *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, to avoid the impression that he cited the parallelism of Eve and Mary so matter-of-factly without arguing or having to defend the point because he could assume that his readers would willingly go along with it, or even that they were already familiar with it. *One reason that this could be so might have been that, on this issue as on so many others, Irenaeus regarded himself as the guardian and the transmitter of a body of belief that had come to him from earlier generations, from the very apostles. A modern reader does need to consider the possibility, perhaps even to concede the possibility, that in so regarding himself Irenaeus may just have been right and that therefore it may already have become natural in the second half of the second century to look at Eve, the “mother of all living,” and Mary, the mother of Christ, together, understanding and interpreting each of the two most important women in human history on the basis of the other.*⁷

Put simply, Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of the Apostle John. There is every reason, then, to believe that what he transmits to us about Mary as the “New Eve” is an integral part of “the Tradition that comes to us from the Apostles”.⁸

This datum of the tradition has come into ever clearer focus through the teaching of the Popes in the course of the past one hundred fifty years, most notably in Blessed Pope Pius IX’s Bull of 1854, *Ineffabilis Deus*⁹, Pius XII’s Apostolic Constitution of 1950, *Munificentissimus*

⁷ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996) 43-44. Italics in second part of passage my own.

⁸ Cf. my study “*Maria Reparatrix: Tradition, Magisterium, Liturgy*” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, III: *Maria, Mater Unitatis – Acts of the Third International Symposium on Marian Coredemption* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2003) 223-232.

⁹ Cf. my study “*The Immaculate Coredemptrix in the Life and Teaching of Bl. Pius IX*” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, V: *Redemption and Coredemption under the Sign of the Immaculate Conception – Acts of the Fifth International Symposium on Marian Coredemption* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2005) 508-541.

*Deus*¹⁰, and his Encyclicals *Mystici Corporis* of 1943¹¹ and *Ad Cali Reginam* of 1954. In the last mentioned document the Holy Father spoke in these explicit terms:

From these considerations we can conclude as follows: Mary in the work of redemption was by God's will joined with Jesus Christ, the cause of salvation, in much the same way as Eve was joined with Adam, the cause of death. Hence it can be said that the work of our salvation was brought about by a "restoration" (St. Irenaeus) in which the human race, just as it was doomed to death by a virgin, was saved by a virgin. Moreover, she was chosen to be the Mother of Christ "in order to have part with Him in the redemption of the human race" [Pius XI, *Auspicatus profecto*].

"She it was, who, free from all stain of personal or original sin, always most closely united with her Son, offered Him up to the Eternal Father on Calvary, along with the sacrifice of her own claims as His mother and of her own mother love, thus acting as a new Eve on behalf of Adam's children, ruined by his unhappy fall" [*Mystici Corporis*].

From this we conclude that just as Christ, the new Adam, is our King not only because He is the Son of God, but also because He is our Redeemer, so also in a somewhat similar manner the Blessed Virgin is Queen not only as Mother of God, but also because she was associated as the second Eve with the new Adam..¹²

¹⁰ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* [subsequently *AAS*] 42 (1950) 768; #519]; *Our Lady: Papal Teachings* trans. Daughters of St. Paul (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1961) #383 [subsequently *OL*].

¹¹ *AAS* 35 (1943) 247-248; *OL* #383.

¹² *Quibus ex rationibus huiusmodi argumentum eruitur: si Maria, in spirituali procuranda salute, cum Iesu Christo, ipsius salutis principio, ex Dei placito sociata fuit, et quidem simili quodam modo, quo Heva fuit cum Adam, mortis*

We may note that with the clarity which characterized all of his dogmatic statements the great Pontiff insisted on Mary's active, but subordinate role in the work of our salvation and in doing so he invoked the authority of Saint Irenaeus, the "father of Catholic dogmatic theology," who, on the 21st of January 2022, was duly recognized by Pope Francis as a Doctor of the Church.

The theme of Mary as the "New Eve", with explicit references to Saint Irenaeus, was duly cited in chapter eight of the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* #56 thusly:

Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man's 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 with him in their preaching: "the knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened

principio, consociata, ita ut asseverari possit nostrae salutis opus, secundum quandam «recapitulationem» peractum fuisse, in qua genus humanum, sicut per virginem morti adstrictum fuit, ita per virginem salvatur; si praeterea asseverari itidem potest hanc gloriosissimam Dominam ideo fuisse Christi matrem delectam «ut redimendi generis humani consors efficeretur», et si reapse «ipsa fuit quae vel propriae vel hereditariae labis expers, arctissime semper cum Filio suo coniuncta, eundem in Golgotha, una cum maternorum iurium maternique amoris sui holocausto, nove veluti Heva, pro omnibus Adae filiis, miserando eius lapsu foedatis, aeterno Patri obtulit»; inde procul dubio concludere licet, quemadmodum Christus, novus Adam, non tantum quia Dei Filius est, Rex dici debet, sed etiam quia Redemptor est noster, ita quodam analogiae modo, Beatissimam Virginem esse Reginam non tantummodo quia mater Dei est, verum etiam quod nova veluti Heva cum novo Adam consociata fuit. AAS 46 (1954) 634-635; OL #705.

by her faith.” Comparing Mary with Eve, they call her “Mother of the living,” and frequently claim: “death through Eve, life through Mary.”¹³

In his *Professio Fidei* of 30 June 1968 Paul VI, expressly citing *Lumen Gentium* #56 as a source, called Mary the “New Eve”¹⁴ and Pope John Paul II without a doubt made more references to Mary as the “New Eve” and examined the implications of this title more than all of his predecessors combined.¹⁵

II. Development of Doctrine

In his catechesis of 25 October 1995 Pope John Paul II traced the history of doctrinal development regarding Our Lady’s cooperation in the work of Redemption in broad strokes, beginning, not surprisingly with the Bishop of Lyons:

At the end of the second century, St. Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp, already pointed out Mary’s contribution to

¹³ *Merito igitur SS. Patres Mariam non mere passive a Deo adhibitam, sed libera fide et oboedientia humanae salutis cooperantem censent. Ipsa enim, ut ait S. Irenaeus, «oboediens et sibi et universo generi humano causa facta est salutis». Unde non pauci Patres antiqui in praedicatione sua cum eo libenter asserunt: «Hevae inobedientiae nodum solutionem accepisse per oboedientiam Mariae; quod alligavit virgo Heva per incredulitatem, hoc virginem Mariam solvisse per fidem»; et comparatione cum Heva instituta, Mariam «matrem viventium» appellant, sapiusque affirmant: «mors per Hevam, vita per Mariam».* Austin Flannery, OP, General Editor, *Vatican Council II Vol.1: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* revised edition (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1996) 416 [subsequently Flannery].

¹⁴ *AAS* 60 (1968) 438-439.

¹⁵ Cf. the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* of 15 August 1988 #11 [*Inseg* XI/3 (1988) 337-340]; general audience of 24 January 1996 [*Inseg* XIX/1 (1996) 115-117]; Pope John Paul II, *Theotókos – Woman, Mother, Disciple: A Catechesis on Mary, Mother of God* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2000) [Subsequently *MCat*] 61-63; general audience of 29 May 1996 #3-5 [*Inseg* XIX/1 (1996) 1390-1392, *MCat* 93-96]; general audience of 18 September 1996 [*Inseg* XIX/2 (1996) 372-374; *MCat* 136-138]. These are just a few of the more important citations.

the work of salvation. He understood the value of Mary's consent at the time of the Annunciation, recognizing in the Virgin of Nazareth's obedience to and faith in the angel's message the perfect antithesis of Eve's disobedience and disbelief, with a beneficial effect on humanity's destiny. In fact, just as Eve caused death, so Mary, with her "yes", became "a cause of salvation" for herself and for all mankind (cf. *Adv. Haer.*, III, 22, 4; *SC* 211, 441). But this affirmation was not developed in a consistent and systematic way by the other Fathers of the Church.

Instead, this doctrine was systematically worked out for the first time at the end of the 10th century in the *Life of Mary* by a Byzantine monk, John the Geometer. Here Mary is united to Christ in the whole work of Redemption, sharing, according to God's plan, in the Cross and suffering for our salvation. She remained united to the Son "in every deed, attitude and wish" (cf. *Life of Mary*, Bol. 196, f. 123 v.).

Mary's association with Jesus' saving work came about through her Mother's love, a love inspired by grace, which conferred a higher power on it. Love freed of passion proves to be the most compassionate (cf. *ibid.*, Bol. 196, f. 123 v.).¹⁶

¹⁶*Alla fine del secondo secolo sant'Ireneo, discepolo di Policarpo, pone già in evidenza il contributo di Maria all'opera della salvezza. Egli ha compreso il valore del consenso di Maria al momento dell'Annunciazione, riconoscendo nell'obbedienza e nella fede della Vergine di Nazaret al messaggio dell'angelo l'antitesi perfetta della disobbedienza e dell'incredulità di Eva, con effetto benefico sul destino dell'umanità. Infatti, come Eva ha causato la morte, così Maria, col suo "sì", è divenuta "causa di salvezza" per se stessa e per tutti gli uomini (cf. Adv. Haer. 3,22,4; SC 211,441). Ma si tratta di un'affermazione non sviluppata in modo organico e abituale dagli altri Padri della Chiesa. Tale dottrina,*

It took almost a millennium, but the seed of the doctrine already expounded by Saint Irenaeus would continue to bear fruit.

III. Papal Teaching on Mary's Union with Jesus in the Work of Redemption before the Council

In his Rosary Encyclical *Jucunda Semper* of 8 September 1894 Pope Leo XIII drew out, even more explicitly than his predecessor, Mary's sufferings on Calvary:

When she professed herself the handmaid of the Lord for the mother's office, and when, at the foot of the altar, she offered up her whole self with her child Jesus – then and thereafter she took her part in the painful expiation offered by her Son for the sins of the world. It is certain, therefore, that she suffered in the very depths of her soul with His most bitter sufferings and with His torments. Finally, it was before the eyes of Mary that the divine Sacrifice for which she had borne and nurtured the Victim was to be finished. As we contemplate Him in the last and most piteous of these mysteries, we see that “there stood by the cross of Jesus Mary His Mother” (Jn. 19:25), who, in a miracle of love, so that she might receive us as her sons, offered generously to Divine

invece, viene sistematicamente elaborata per la prima volta, alla fine del decimo secolo, nella “Vita di Maria” di un monaco bizantino, Giovanni il Geometra. Maria è qui unita a Cristo in tutta l'opera redentrice partecipando, secondo il piano divino, alla Croce e soffrendo per la nostra salvezza. Ella è rimasta unita al Figlio “in ogni azione, atteggiamento e volontà” (Vita di Maria, Bol. 196, f. 122 v.). L'associazione di Maria all'opera salvifica di Gesù avviene mediante il suo amore di Madre, un amore animato dalla grazia, che le conferisce una forza superiore: la più esente da passione si mostra la più compassionevole (cf. Vita di Maria, Bol. 196, f. 123 v.).] Inseg XVIII/2 (1995) 934-935 [ORE 1414:11; MCat 25-26].

Justice her own Son, and in her Heart died with Him,
stabbed by the sword of sorrow¹⁷

In this passage Leo touched upon themes that his successors would continue to develop in an ever swelling crescendo in the course of the twentieth century: Mary's offering of herself in union with Jesus in expiation for the sins of the world, her "mystical death" described in terms of "dying with him in her heart" [*cum eo commoriens corde*] and the spiritual maternity which flows from her participation in the sacrifice.

Surely one of the most famous passages on this theme is that which we find in Benedict XV's Letter *Inter Sodalicia* of 22 May 1918:

The choosing and invoking of Our Lady of Sorrows as patroness of a happy death is in full conformity with Catholic Doctrine and with the pious sentiment of the Church. It is also based on a wise and well-founded hope. In fact, according to the common teaching of the Doctors it was God's design that the Blessed Virgin Mary, apparently absent from the public life of Jesus, should assist Him when He was dying nailed to the Cross. Mary suffered and, as it were, nearly died with her suffering Son; for the salvation of mankind she renounced her mother's rights and, as far as it depended

¹⁷ *Quum enim se Deo vel ancillam ad matris officium exhibuit vel totam cum Filio in templo devovit, utroque ex facto iam tum consors cum eo extitit laboriosa pro humano genere expiationis: ex quo etiam in acerbissimis Filii angoribus et cruciamentis, maxime animo condoluisse dubitandum non est. Ceterum praesente ipsa et spectante, divinum illud sacrificium erat conficiendum, cui victimam de se generosa aluerat; quod in eisdem mysteriis postremum flebilisusque observatur: stabat iuxta Crucem Iesu Maria Mater eius, quae tacta in nos caritate immensa ut susciperet filios, Filium ipsa suum ultro obtulit iustitiae divinae, cum eo commoriens corde, doloris gladio transfixa* Amleto Tondini, Ed., *Le Encicliche Mariane* second edition (Rome: Angelo Belardetti Editore, 1954) [subsequently Tondini] 204-206; OL #151.

on her, offered her Son to placate divine justice; so we may well say that she with Christ redeemed mankind.¹⁸

It should be noted here that Benedict indicates that Mary's presence beneath the Cross of Christ was "not without divine design" [*non sine divino consilio*], the very same phrase reproduced verbatim in *Lumen Gentium* #58, although with no reference to this text. Evidently deriving from the principle that "God, by one and the same decree, had established the origin of Mary and the Incarnation of Divine Wisdom,"¹⁹ Benedict XV held that God had also predestined Mary's union with her Son in his sacrifice to the extent of offering him in sacrifice insofar as she was able to do so [*quantum ad se pertinebat*]. It should also be pointed out here that Benedict was certainly not stating that the sacrifice of Jesus was not sufficient to redeem the world, but rather that, on the basis of the understanding of the "recapitulation" already articulated by Saint Irenaeus, God wished the sacrifice of the New Eve to be joined to that of the New Adam. He wished the active participation of a human creature to be joined with the sacrifice of the God-man.

Let us consider now how this theme is treated in two encyclicals of the Venerable Pope Pius XII. Our first passage comes from the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* of 29 June 1943, promulgated during the height of World War II:

¹⁸ *Quod autem Virgo Perdolens bonae mortis Patrona deligitur atque invocatur, id cum mirifice doctrinae catholicae pioque Ecclesiae sensui respondet, tum spe innititur recte feliciterque collocata. Enimvero tradunt communiter Ecclesiae Doctores, B. Mariam Virginem, quae a vita Iesu Christi publica veluti abesse visa est, si Ipsi mortem appetenti et Cruci suffixo adfuit, non sine divino consilio adfuisse. Scilicet ita cum Filio patiente et moriente passa est et pæne commortua, sic materna in Filium jura pro hominum salute abdicavit placandæque Dei justitiae, quantum ad se pertinebat, Filium immolavit, ut dici merito queat, Ipsam cum Christo humanum genus redemisse. AAS 10 (1918) 181-182; OL #267.*

¹⁹ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus* of 8 December 1854 in Tondini 32; OL #34.

She [Mary] it was who, immune from all sin, personal or inherited, and ever most closely united with her Son, offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father together with the holocaust of her maternal rights and motherly love, like a new Eve, for all the children of Adam contaminated through this unhappy fall, and thus she, who was the mother of our Head according to the flesh, became by a new title of sorrow and glory the spiritual mother of all His members.²⁰

Let us underscore here the emphasis on Mary's offering of Christ to the Eternal Father as a "New Eve", effectively drawing out the implications of the teaching of Saint Irenaeus. He would offer yet another beautiful perspective on this joint offering of the Son and the Mother in his great Sacred Heart Encyclical *Haurietis Aquas* of 15 May 1956:

That graces for the Christian family and for the whole human race may flow more abundantly from devotion to the Sacred Heart, let the faithful strive to join it closely with devotion to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God. By the will of God, the most Blessed Virgin Mary was inseparably joined with Christ in accomplishing the work of man's redemption, so that our salvation flows from the love of Jesus Christ and His sufferings intimately united with the love and sorrows of His Mother²¹

²⁰ *Ipsa fuit, quæ vel propria, vel hereditaria labis expers, arctissime semper cum Filio suo coniuncta, eundem in Golgotha, una cum maternorum iurium maternique amoris sui holocausto, nova veluti Eva, pro omnibus Adæ filiis, miserando eius lapsu foedatis, Æterno Patri obtulit; ita quidem, ut quæ corpore erat nostri Capitis mater, spiritu facta esset, ob novum etiam doloris gloriæque titulum, eius membrorum omnium mater. AAS 35 (1943) 247-248; OL #383.*

²¹ Quo vero ex cultu erga augustissimum Cor Iesu in christianam familiam, imo et in omne genus hominum copiosiora emolumenta fluant, curent cristifideles, ut eidem cultus etiam erga Immaculatum

In this classic passage every word is carefully weighed and measured in order to make a declaration on the redemption and Mary's role in it, which remains unparalleled for its clarity and precision. No doubt for this reason it is included in Denzinger-Hünemann's *Enchiridion Symbolorum*.²² Pius professes that "our salvation flows from the love of Jesus Christ and His sufferings" [*ex Iesu Christi caritate eiusque cruciatibus*] which are "intimately united with the love and sorrows of His Mother" [*cum amore doloribusque ipsius Matris intime consociatis*]. The Latin preposition *ex* indicates Jesus as the source of our redemption while three other Latin words, *cum* and *intime consociatis*, indicate Mary's inseparability from the source. Finally, let us note Pius' insistence on the fact that this union of Jesus with Mary for our salvation has been ordained "by the will of God" [*ex Dei voluntate*].

On this topic I have only been able to highlight some of the most important texts from among the numerous passages which could have been cited,²³ but before moving on to the eve of the Council, it is necessary to speak of the use of the term "Coredemptrix" to describe Mary's active participation in the work of our redemption. I have sketched elsewhere the origins of this term and how it had entered into pontifical documents and was used three times by Pope

Dei Genetricis Cor arcte copuletur. Cum enim ex Dei voluntate in humanæ Redemptionis peragendo opere Beatissima Virgo Maria cum Christo fuerit indivulse coniuncta, adeo ut ex Iesu Christi caritate eiusque cruciatibus cum amore doloribusque ipsius Matris intime consociatis sit nostra salus profecta. *AAS* 48 (1956) 352 [OL #778].

²² Denzinger, Heinrich. *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, 43rd Edition edited by Peter Hünemann for the bilingual edition and for the English edition by Robert Fastiggi and Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012) #3926.

²³ For further references, cf. Arthur Burton Calkins, "Il Mistero di Maria Corredentrica nel Magistero Pontificio" in Autori Vari, *Maria Corredentrica: Storia e Teologia I* (Frigento [AV]: Casa Mariana Editrice «Bibliotheca Corredemptionis B. V. Mariae» Studi e Ricerche 1, 1998) [subsequently *MMC1*] 188-218 and *Ibid.*, "The Mystery of Mary Coredemptrix in the Papal Magisterium" in Mark I. Miravalle, S.T.D. (ed.), *Mary Co-redemptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today* (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing Company, 2002) [subsequently *MMC2*] 64-79.

Pius XI in addresses and a prayer.²⁴ It had, in effect, become the most common way to indicate Mary's active role in the work of our redemption, secondary, subordinate and dependent upon Jesus and at the same time altogether unique in comparison with any other human being.

IV. The Situation on the Eve of the Second Vatican Council

First, it must be remembered that the Second Vatican Council was convoked just at a time when Marian doctrine and piety had reached an apex²⁵ which had been building on a popular level since the apparition of Our Lady to Saint Catherine Labouré in 1830²⁶ and on the magisterial level since the time of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December 1854.²⁷ This Marian orientation had accelerated notably during the nineteen-year reign of the Venerable Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) with the Consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on 31 October 1942,²⁸ the dogmatic definition of the Assumption of Our Lady on 1 November 1950,²⁹ the establishment of the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1944³⁰ and of the Queenship of Mary in the Marian Year of 1954.³¹

²⁴ Cf. MMC1:147-153; MMC2:29-35.

²⁵ Cf. Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp., "Still Mediatrix of All Graces?", *Miles Immaculata* 24 (1988) 121-122; *Theotokos* 351-352.

²⁶ This apparition of Our Lady would be succeeded by a number of others in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which would eventually be recognized by the Church as worthy of credence. Cf. Donal Foley, *Marian Apparitions, the Bible, and the Modern World* (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2002) 113-346.

²⁷ Cf. *Theotokos* 179-180. Interestingly, Father O'Carroll acknowledges an impetus for the definition in the apparition of 1830, cf. *Theotokos* 182.

²⁸ Cf. Arthur Burton Calkins, *Totus Tuus: Pope Saint John Paul II's Program of Marian Consecration and Entrustment* Second edition, revised and brought up to the end of the Pontificate of Pope Saint John Paul II (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2017) 100-103.

²⁹ Cf. *Theotokos* 555-556.

³⁰ Cf. *Totus Tuus* 101-102.

³¹ Cf. *Totus Tuus* 105-108.

Secondly, and as a consequence of this comprehensive “Marian movement”, much study, discussion and debate had been devoted to Mary’s role in salvation history, specifically to the topics of coredemption and mediation. While there had been vigorous disputation regarding Mary’s active collaboration in the work of our redemption during the reign of Pope Pius XII, by the time of the International Mariological Congress in Lourdes in 1958 there was a fairly unanimous consensus regarding Our Lady’s true cooperation in acquiring the universal grace of redemption. Not surprisingly, then, a good number of bishops entered the Council with the desire to see a comprehensive treatment of these questions. Father Michael O’Carroll, C.S.Sp. informs us that of the 54 bishops at the Council who wanted a conciliar pronouncement on Mary as Coredemptrix, 36 sought a definition and 11 a dogma of faith on this matter.³² On the related question of Mary’s mediation, he tells us that 362 bishops desired a conciliar statement on Mary’s mediation while 266 of them asked for a dogmatic definition.³³ Father Besutti, on the other hand, holds that over 500 bishops were asking for such a definition.³⁴ A fundamental reason why no such definition emanated from the Council was the expressed will of Pope Saint John XXIII that the Council was to be primarily pastoral in its orientation, specifically excluding any new dogmatic definitions.³⁵

Thirdly, at the very same time another current was entering into the mainstream of Catholic life, that of “ecumenical sensitivity”. While Father Besutti confirms that the word “Coredemptrix” did appear in

³² Cf. *Theotokos* 308.

³³ Cf. Michael O’Carroll, C.S.Sp., “Mary’s Mediation: Vatican II and John Paul II” in *Virgo Liber Verbi: Miscellanea di studi in onore di P. Giuseppe M. Besutti, O.S.M.* (Rome: Edizioni «Marianum», 1991) 543; *Theotokos* 352. In the latter article Father O’Carroll gave the number of Fathers asking for a statement on Mary’s mediation as 382. Toniolo gives the number as 381, cf. Toniolo 34.

³⁴ G. Besutti, O.S.M., *Lo schema mariano al Concilio Vaticano II* (Rome: Edizione Marianum-Desclée, 1966) 17.

³⁵ Cf. Alessandro M. Apollonio, *Il “calvario teologico” della Corredenzione mariana* (Castelpetroso, IS: Casa Mariana Editrice, 1999) 14; Serafino M. Lanzetta, *Vatican II, A Pastoral Council: Hermeneutics of Council Teaching* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2016) 1-53.

the original schema of the Marian document prepared in advance for the Council,³⁶ the *Prænotanda* to the first conciliar draft document or schema on Our Lady contained these words:

Certain expressions and words used by Supreme Pontiffs have been omitted, which, in themselves are absolutely true, but which may only be understood with difficulty by separated brethren (in this case Protestants). Among such words may be numbered the following: “Coredemptrix of the human race” [Pius X, Pius XI]: “Reparatrix of the whole world” [Leo XIII]³⁷

This original prohibition was rigorously respected and hence the term “Coredemptrix” was not used in any of the official documents promulgated by the Council and, undeniably, “ecumenical sensitivity” was **the** prime factor in its avoidance³⁸ along with a distaste for the general language of mediation on the part of more progressive theologians.³⁹ I believe that it is more than time to question the wisdom and effectiveness of such a highly questionable strategy.⁴⁰

³⁶ *Lo Schema* 28-29; cf. Ermanno M. Toniolo, O.S.M., *La Beata Maria Vergine Nel Concilio Vaticano II* (Rome: Centro di Cultura Mariana «Madre della Chiesa», 2004) 36.

³⁷ Omissæ sunt expressiones et vocabula quædam a Summis Pontificibus adhibita, quæ licet in se verissima, possent difficulius intelligi a fratribus separatis (in casu a protestantibus). Inter alia vocabula adnumerari queunt sequentia: «Corredemptrix humani generis» [S. Pius X, Pius XI] ... «Reparatrix totius orbis» Leo XIII. *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi*, Vol. I, Pt. VI (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1971) 99; my trans. Cf. Toniolo 98-99; Gabriele M. Roschini, O.S.M., *Maria Santissima nella Storia della Salvezza II* (Isola del Liri: Tipografia M. Pisani, 1969) 111-112.

³⁸ Cf. Thomas Mary Sennott, O.S.B., “Mary Mediatrix of All Graces, Vatican II and Ecumenism,” *Miles Immaculatæ* 24 (1988) 151-167; *Theotokos* 242-245.

³⁹ Cf. Ralph M. Wiltgen, S.V.D., *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber: A History of Vatican II* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1985, c. 1967) 90-95, 153-159.

⁴⁰ Cf. My exchange with the then don [later Archbishop & Cardinal] Angelo Amato. Angelo Amato, “Verso Un Altro Dogma Mariano? Marianum LVIII (1996) 229-232 and my response, “Towards Another Marian Dogma? A Response to Father Angelo Amato,” *Marianum* LIX (1997) 163-165.

We need to note further that the working draft document on Our Lady, which eventually became chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium* was the single most contested text of the council and went into eight drafts. Its main drafters were Padre Karlo Balić⁴¹, a Croatian Franciscan scholar and founder of the Pontifical International Marian Academy [PAMI] who managed to insert footnotes in the final document referring to papal documents, which spoke clearly of Marian coredeemption, and Monsignor Gérard Philips⁴² of the University of Louvain. On at least one occasion Balić resigned from the drafting committee and subsequently returned. Father Serafino Lanzetta has dealt with the complexity of this situation in his magisterial book *Vatican II, A Pastoral Council*.⁴³

V. The Second Vatican Council

The above discussion already gives some idea about the various currents that came to the fore at the time of the Second Vatican Council and I have dealt with them as well in other places.⁴⁴ Here I will limit myself to the positive presentation on Our Lady's active participation in the work of the Redemption which emerged in the Council's great Marian synthesis, chapter 8 of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. *Lumen Gentium* #56 speaks forthrightly of Mary's collaboration in the work of redemption:

Committing herself whole-heartedly to God's saving will and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally, as a handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her

⁴¹ Cf. *Theotokos* 68; Dinko Aračić, *La Dottrina Mariologica negli Scritti di Carlo Balić* (Rome: Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis, 1980); Roberto de Mattei, *The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story* (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2012) 289-299.

⁴² Cf. G. Philips, "La Vierge au IIe Concile du Vatican et l'Avenir de la Mariologie" in Hubert du Manoir, S.J. (ed.), *Maria: Études sur la Sainte Vierge*, VIII (Paris: Beauchesne et Ses Fils, 1971) 43-88; de Mattei 300-303.

⁴³ Cf. Lanzetta 363-418.

⁴⁴ Cf. *MMC*1:154-161 and *MMC*2:35-41.

Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of redemption, by the grace of Almighty God.⁴⁵

In the same paragraph there is further specification about the active nature of Mary's service which I have already cited in the discussion of Mary as the "New Eve". Quite clearly, then, the Council Fathers speak of an active collaboration of Mary in the work of the redemption and they illustrate this with the Eve-Mary antithesis as found in Saint Irenaeus.

Further, the Council Fathers did not content themselves with a general statement on Mary's collaboration in the work of the redemption, but went on to underscore the personal nature of the "union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation" [*Matris cum Filio in opere salutari coniunctio*] throughout Jesus' hidden life (#57) and public life (#58). Finally, in #58 they stress how she:

...faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associating herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which was born of her.⁴⁶

Not only, then, does the Council teach that Mary was generally associated with Jesus in the work of redemption throughout his life, but that she associated herself with his sacrifice and consented to it. Furthermore, the Council Fathers state in #61 that Mary:

...shared her Son's sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated by her

⁴⁵ Salvificam voluntatem Dei, pleno corde et nullo retardata peccato, complectens, semetipsam ut Domini ancillam personæ et operi Filii sui totaliter devovit, sub Ipso et cum Ipso, omnipotentis Dei gratia, mysterio redemptionis inserviens. *Flannery* 416 (I have altered the word order of the translation).

⁴⁶ *Flannery* 417.

obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls.⁴⁷

Not only did Mary consent to the sacrifice, but she also united herself to it. In these final two statements we find a synthesis of the previous papal teaching on Our Lady's active collaboration in the work of the redemption as well as a stable point of reference for the teaching of the postconciliar Popes.

VI. The Immediate Postconciliar Situation

While it may well be argued, as Pope John Paul II did, that:

...the Council's entire discussion of Mary remains vigorous and balanced, and the topics themselves, though not fully defined, received significant attention in the overall treatment,⁴⁸

it is also true that the battles on Our Lady's mediatorial role which took place on the council floor and behind the scenes continue to have their negative effects.⁴⁹

Effectively, the interpretation of the Second Vatican Council's Marian treatise found most frequently in the English-speaking world and very often elsewhere is represented by Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J.:

The achievements of Vatican II have been called a watershed. The chapter on Mary in the Constitution on the Church seemed to mark the end of an isolated, maximizing Mariology, and the inclusion of Mary in the theology of the Church.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Flannery 418.

⁴⁸ *Inseg* XVIII/2 (1995) 1369; *MCat* 51.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Theotokos* 351-356.

⁵⁰ Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., "Mary Since Vatican II: Decline and Recovery," *Marian Studies* LIII (2002) 12.

This departs notably from all of the commentaries on the Mariology of Vatican II offered by Pope Saint John Paul II in the course of his long pontificate and constitutes what I refer to as “Vatican II triumphalism”.

“Vatican II triumphalism” is virtually always a partial and one-sided interpretation of the council documents which favors a position espoused by one party at the time of the council and studiously avoids mention of any conciliar statements which would counterbalance the “favored” position. In the case of chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium* on “the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the mystery of Christ and of the Church”, the “favored” position heavily emphasizes Mary’s role as model of the Church. This reflects the rediscovered insights of ecclesiotypical Mariology (which sees an analogy between Mary and the Church) which were emerging again at the time of the council while very largely ignoring christotypical Mariology (which sees an analogy between Christ and Mary) and dismissing it as deductive and “privilege-centered”.⁵¹ The late Father Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm. consistently presented ecclesiotypical Mariology as the great triumph of the council even as he disclosed his discomfort at the christotypical elements which remained in the eighth chapter of *Lumen Gentium*.

The Council did indeed favor the notion that Mary is model to the Church, even archetype, without using that word, but its chapter on Our Lady is in fact a complicated compromise that sought to keep a balance between Mary’s association with her Son’s mediation and the obedient faithful Virgin as ideal of the Church’s own response to the Lord.⁵²

⁵¹ Cf. the comments by Fathers George F. Kirwin, O.M.I. and Thomas Thompson, S.M. in Donald W. Buggert, O.Carm., Louis P. Rogge, O.Carm., Michael J. Wastag, O.Carm. (eds.), *Mother, Behold Your Son: Essays in Honor of Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm.* (Washington, DC: The Carmelite Institute, 2001), 17 & 202.

⁵² Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., “Revolution in Mariology 1949-1989,” in *The Land of Carmel: Essays in Honor of Joachim Smet, O.Carm.* (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1991)

There were obviously many theological insights which were coming to the fore at the time of the council, largely due to the historical researches begun in the previous century in the areas of biblical, liturgical, patristic and ecclesiological studies. Many of these found expression in the council documents and specifically in chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium*. All too often, however, an overemphasis on certain of these insights on the part of the majority of commentators to the exclusion of the other insights, in fact, led to a “low Mariology” which focuses on Mary much more as “woman of faith,” “disciple” and “model” than as “spiritual mother” or “mediatrix” and tends to depreciate the importance of the antecedent papal magisterium. All too often the virtually exclusive emphasis on ecclesiotypical Mariology is coupled with the whole-hearted embracing of the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis and “lowest common denominator” ecumenism.⁵³ The practitioners of this methodology are almost always notably devoid of that awe before the mystery of Mary which comes instinctively to “little ones”.

VII. The Contribution of Pope Saint John Paul II

I have been studying the Marian magisterium of the late Pope John Paul II almost from the beginning of his pontificate and I believe that it is his greatest single legacy to the Catholic Church. While a large number of prominent modern mariologists have settled for presenting us with a one-sided interpretation of the Second Vatican Council’s Marian teaching in an almost exclusively ecclesiotypical key, Pope John Paul II managed to keep a remarkable balance in his presentation of Marian doctrine, emphasizing both the christotypical and ecclesiotypical dimensions. He quoted extensively from chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium* both in his Marian Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* as well as in the extensive corpus of his Marian teaching, opening the

457-458. On the former page one also finds his evaluation of Fathers Cyril Vollert, S.J., Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M. and Charles Balić, O.F.M., all of whom represent the christotypical approach to Mariology.

⁵³ Cf. Carroll, “Revolution in Mariology” 455.

conciliar texts up to their maximum potentiality, unlike so many “minimalists” who dominate the field of Mariology today. In terms of the number and depth of his Marian discourses, homilies, Angelus addresses and references in major documents, there is no doubt that his output exceeds that of all of his predecessors and successors combined.⁵⁴ His Marian magisterium alone would fill several large volumes and in assessing it, one should not forget the clear indications given in *Lumen Gentium* #25 for recognizing the authentic ordinary magisterium of the Roman Pontiff:

This loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given, in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak *ex cathedra* in such wise, indeed, that his supreme teaching authority be acknowledged with respect, and sincere assent be given to decisions made by him, conformably with his manifest mind and intention, which is made known principally either by the character of the documents in question, or by the frequency with which a certain doctrine is proposed, or by the manner in which the doctrine is formulated.

What is true in general about his Marian magisterium is true in particular about his teaching on Our Lady’s active cooperation in the work of the redemption or coredemption. His teaching in this area has been extraordinary and I have already published two lengthy essays on it⁵⁵ and some shorter ones⁵⁶ as well as treating it in the

⁵⁴ Cf. Giovanni Paolo II, *TOTUS TUUS. Il Magistero Mariano di Giovanni Paolo II* a cura di Arthur Burton Calkins (Siena: Edizioni Cantagalli, 2006). [Reviews in *Mariologisches Jahrbuch* 9 (2005) Bd. 2:102-105; *Milizia Mariana* LX:5 (Giugno 2006) 35; *Teresianum* LVII:2 (2006) 630-631; *Miles Immaculatae* XLII (Luglio-Dicembre 2006) 812-814; *Immaculata Mediatrix* VII, No. 2 (2007) 182-198; *Divinitas* LI «Nova Series» (2008) 338-339.]

⁵⁵ “Pope John Paul II’s Teaching on Marian Coredemption” in Mark I. Miravalle, S.T.D., (ed.), *Mary Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate, Theological Foundations II: Papal, Pneumatological, Ecumenical* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing Company, 1997) 113-147; also published in *Miles Immaculatae* XXXII (Luglio/Dicembre 1996) 474-508 and “Pope John Paul II’s Ordinary Magisterium on Marian Coredemption:

course of other studies of the papal magisterium on Marian coredeemption⁵⁷ without in any way having analyzed it exhaustively. To my knowledge, Monsignor Brunero Gherardini⁵⁸ and I are the only students of Mariology to have done so at length. Besides the passages which I have already presented in the course of this paper, I can only hope to share a small sampling of what I consider to be the most outstanding texts.

Perhaps occupying pride of place among these is his treatment of Our Lady's suffering in his Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris*. In that letter he had already stated in #24 that:

The sufferings of Christ created the good of the world's Redemption. This good in itself is inexhaustible and infinite. No man can add anything to it.⁵⁹

That is a premise from which no Christian can depart, but the mystery is even deeper as he tells us in #25 of that same letter:

Consistent Teaching and More Recent Perspectives” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross – II: Acts of the Second International Symposium on Marian Coredeemption* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2002) 1-36; also published in *Divinitas* XLV «Nova Series» (2002) 153-185.

⁵⁶ “The Heart of Mary as Coredeptrix in the Magisterium of Pope John Paul II” in *S. Tommaso Teologo: Ricerche in occasione dei due centenari accademici* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana “Studi Tomistici #59,” 1995) 320-335; “Il Cuore di Maria Corredentrice nel Magistero di papa Giovanni Paolo II” in *Corredemptrix: Annali Mariani 1996 del Santuario dell'Addolorata* (Castelpetroso, Isernia, 1997) 97-114; “Amorosamente consenziente al sacrificio del Figlio: Maria Corredentrice nei discorsi di Giovanni Paolo II,” *Madre di Dio* 67, N° 11 (Novembre 1999) 28-29.

⁵⁷ “Il Mistero di Maria Corredentrice nel Magistero Pontificio” in Autori Vari, *Maria Corredentrice: Storia e Teologia I* (Frigento [AV]: Casa Mariana Editrice «Bibliotheca Coredeemptionis B. V. Mariae» Studi e Ricerche 1, 1998) 141-220 and “The Mystery of Mary the Coredeptrix in the Papal Magisterium,” in Mark I. Miravalle, S.T.D. (ed.), *Mary Co-redeptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today* (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing Company, 2002) 25-92.

⁵⁸ Cf. Brunero Gherardini, *La Corredentrice nel mistero di Cristo e della Chiesa* (Rome: Edizioni Vivere In, 1998) 135-139.

⁵⁹ *Inseg* VII/1 (1984) 307 [St. Paul Editions 37].

It is especially consoling to note – and also accurate in accordance with the Gospel and history – that *at the side of Christ, in the first and most exalted place, there is always His Mother through the exemplary testimony that she bears by her whole life to this particular Gospel of suffering. In her, the many and intense sufferings were amassed in such an interconnected way that they were not only a proof of her unshakable faith but also a contribution to the Redemption of all. In reality, from the time of her secret conversation with the angel, she began to see in her mission as a mother her “destiny” to share, in a singular and unrepeatable way, in the very mission of her Son . . .*

It was on Calvary that Mary’s suffering, beside the suffering of Jesus, reached an intensity which can hardly be imagined from a human point of view but which was mysteriously and supernaturally fruitful for the Redemption of the world. Her ascent of Calvary and her standing at the foot of the cross together with the beloved disciple were a special sort of sharing in the redeeming death of her Son. And the words which she heard from His lips were a kind of solemn handing-over of this Gospel of suffering so that it could be proclaimed to the whole community of believers.

As a witness to her Son’s passion by her *presence*, and as a sharer in it by her *compassion*, Mary offered a unique contribution to the Gospel of suffering, by embodying in anticipation the expression of St. Paul which was quoted at the beginning. She truly has a special title to be able to claim that she “completes in her flesh” – as already in her heart – “what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.”

In the light of the unmatched example of Christ, reflected with singular clarity in the life of His Mother, the Gospel of suffering, through the experience and words of the Apostles, becomes *an inexhaustible source for the ever new generations* that succeed one another in the history of the Church.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ *Inseg* VII/1 (1984) 308-309 [St. Paul Editions 40-41] Italics my own.

These two citations from *Salvifici Doloris* help us to hold in tension the dynamic truths which underlie Marian coredemption. On the one hand “The sufferings of Christ created the good of the world’s Redemption, this good in itself is inexhaustible and infinite. No man can add anything to it.” On the other hand, “Mary’s suffering [on Calvary], beside the suffering of Jesus, reached an intensity which can hardly be imagined from a human point of view but which was mysteriously and supernaturally fruitful for the Redemption of the world.” Thus, the Pope strikes that careful balance which is always a hallmark of Catholic truth: he upholds the principle that the sufferings of Christ were all-sufficient for the salvation of the world, while maintaining that Mary’s suffering “was mysteriously and supernaturally fruitful for the Redemption of the world.” Is this a contradiction? No. It is a mystery. The sacrifice of Jesus is all-sufficient, but God wished the suffering of the “New Eve,” the only perfect human creature, to be united to the suffering of the “New Adam”. Does that mean that Mary could redeem us by herself? By no means. But it does mean that she could make her own unique contribution to the sacrifice of Jesus as the “New Eve”, the “Mother of the living”.

VIII. The Present Situation

I hope that what I have already presented sets the context for the present situation. One might have thought that the clarity of the conciliar teaching on Mary’s active collaboration in the work of the Redemption and its elucidation by Pope Saint John Paul II would have solidified the magisterial teaching on the doctrine, but obviously that is not the case. Rather, the hidden directives in the *Prænotanda* forbidding the Council Fathers to even use the words Coredemptrix and Reparatrix are now marching orders with this further clarification: it was originally admitted that these words are absolutely true in themselves [*verissime in se*], but now this is to be denied. Why? I remain convinced that the ultimate reason lies in the promotion of (1.) “lowest common denominator ecumenism”; (2.) Catholic theologians genuinely ignorant of the great tradition and (3.) the acceptance by many of very deep Protestant prejudices against

Catholic magisterial teaching.⁶¹ All of these positions seem to have been present on the council floor.⁶²

At this stage, to my great sadness, I am forced to admit that the present official position of the Holy See is resolutely and deliberately set against the concept of Mary as Coredemptrix and therefore Mediatrix of all graces, a truth which was already clearly enunciated in the great Encyclical of Pope Saint Pius X, *Ad Diem Illum Lætissimum* of February 2nd 1904:

When the supreme hour of the Son came, beside the cross of Jesus there stood Mary, His Mother, not merely occupied in contemplating the cruel spectacle, but rejoicing that her only Son was offered for the salvation of mankind; and so entirely participating in His Passion that, if it had been possible “she would have gladly borne all the torments that her Son underwent” [St. Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d. 48, ad Litt. dub. 4].

From this community of will and suffering between Christ and Mary “she merited to become most worthily the Reparatrix of the lost world” (Eadmer, *De Excellentia Virg. Mariæ*, c. 9) and dispensatrix of all the gifts that our Savior purchased for us by his death and by his blood.

It cannot of course be denied that the dispensing of these treasures is the particular and supreme right of Jesus Christ, for they are the exclusive fruit of His death, who by His Nature is the Mediator between God and man. Nevertheless, by this union in sorrow and

⁶¹ Cf. Brunero Gherardini, “Unity and Coredemption” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross – III: Maria, Mater Unitatis. Acts of the Third International Symposium on Marian Coredemption* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2003) 54-63; “Ecumenism on e Corredenzione” in *Maria “Unica Cooperatrice alla Redenzione”. Atti del Simposio sul Mistero della Corredenzione Mariana, Fatima, Portogallo 3-7 Maggio 2005* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2005) 463-475; *La Corredentrica nel mistero di Cristo e della Chiesa* (Rome: Edizioni Vivere In, 1998) 302-318.

⁶² Cf. Ralph M. Wiltgen, SVD, *The Rhine flows into the Tiber* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1985) 90-95;

suffering, We have said, which existed between the Mother and the Son, it has been allowed to the August Virgin “to be the most powerful Mediatrix and advocate of the whole world, with her Divine Son” (cf. *Ineffabilis Deus* [OL #64]).

The source, then, is Jesus Christ, “and of his fullness we have all received” (Jn. 1:16); “from him the whole body (being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system according to the functioning in due measure of each single part) derives its increase to the building up of itself in love”. But Mary, as St. Bernard justly remarks, is the “aqueduct,” or if you will, the neck by which the body is joined to the head and the head transmits to the body its power and virtue: “For she is the neck of our Head, by which he communicated to his mystical Body all spiritual gifts” (St. Bern. Sen., *Quadragesima de Evangelio æterno*, Sermon X, a. 3, c. 3).

We are thus, it will be seen, very far from declaring the Mother of God to be the authoress of supernatural grace. Grace comes from God alone. But since she surpassed all in holiness and union with Christ, and has been associated with Christ in the work of Redemption, she, as the expression is, merits *de congruo* what Christ merits *de condigno*, and is the principal minister in the distribution of grace. He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3); but Mary sits as a Queen on his right hand, the securest refuge of those who are in peril, as well as the most faithful of helpers, so that we have naught to fear or despair of, as long as she is our guide and our patroness, she is our defender and our protector (cf. *Ineffabilis Deus* [OL #65]).

With these principles laid down and returning to our subject, will it not appear to all that it is right and proper to affirm that Mary, whom Jesus made His constant

companion from the house of Nazareth to the place of Calvary, knew, as no other knew, the secrets of his heart, distributes as by a mother's right the treasures of His merits, and is the surest help to the knowledge and love of Christ? They prove it only too truly who, by their deplorable manner of life, deceived by false teaching, or the wiles of the devil, fancy they can dispense with the aid of the Virgin Mother. Miserable and unhappy are they who neglect her under pretense that thus they honor Christ. They forget that the "Child is not found without Mary His Mother" (cf. Mt. 2:11; Lk. 2:16).⁶³

It also saddens me to say that this opposition was clearly stated by the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as Prefect of the Congregation of the Faith in his conversation with Peter Seewald, stating that *the theology* of Coredemptrix is entirely orthodox, but *the term* is problematic because it often leads to confusion as to the *first cause* of salvation being Christ. And further, that other Marian titles are better able to communicate Mary's role in salvation. We argue that *Mother of the Church*, *Mother of the Eucharist*, or *Mother in the Order of Grace*, as we've seen from *Lumen Gentium*, express Mary's role adequately while also emphasizing the fact that she is not the first cause of grace. In response to the petitions for the definition of Mary as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate as the fifth Marian dogma⁶⁴, Cardinal Ratzinger stated to Peter Seewald:

The response of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is, broadly, that what is signified by this is already better expressed in other titles of Mary, while the formula "Co-redemptrix" departs to too great an extent from the language of Scripture and of the Fathers and therefore gives rise to misunderstanding. ...

⁶³ ASS 36 (1903-1904) 451-457 [OL #232-235]; D-H #3370.

⁶⁴ The promotion for the fifth Marian dogma stems from the book that launched the movement by Mark I. Miravalle, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing, 1993).

Mary, too, is everything that she is through him [Christ].

The word “Co-redemptrix” would obscure this origin. A correct intention is being expressed in the wrong way. For matters of faith, continuity of terminology with the language of Scripture and that of the Fathers is itself an essential element; it is improper simply to manipulate language.⁶⁵

With the greatest respect for the late Pope Benedict XVI and his papal teaching, I regret that as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith he did not consult more widely in this regard. My point is that once one grasps that Mary’s role is always, secondary, subordinate and totally dependent on Christ,⁶⁶ I don’t believe that Ratzinger’s proposals say what the word Coredemptrix really means nor do other such titles such as Cooperator, Collaborator, Associate, Ally, Sharer, Partaker, Participant, etc. Find a better word if you like, but the word Coredemptrix has been used in the Church since the fifteenth century⁶⁷ and I humbly believe that it is still the best word. My point is that it is not beyond the capability of any intelligent person to grasp that the term does not say or imply that Jesus, the God-man, and Mary, God’s most perfect creature, are on the same level. The term is not a manipulation of language as regards the use of scriptural language. With regard to the term Coredemptrix not being in continuity with the language of the Scripture and the Fathers what about the term God-bearer or *Theotokos* or Immaculate Conception?

⁶⁵ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *God and the World: A Conversation with Peter Seewald* Trans. by Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002) 306. Cf. also the interpretation given by Tim Staples in his very fine book *Behold Your Mother: A Biblical and Historical Defense of the Marian Doctrines* (El Cajon, CA: Catholic Answers Press, 2014) 237, footnote 328.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Lumen Gentium* #60, 62.

⁶⁷ Cf. Mark Miravalle, *“With Jesus”: The Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix* (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing, 2003) especially 101ff.

I now offer three instances of the questioning of established Catholic teaching about Our Lady's active collaboration in the work of Redemption from important fonts allied with the Holy See.

1. The first is the so-called Declaration of Częstochowa signed during a session of the Mariological Congress held in Częstochowa, Poland from the 18th to the 24th of August 1996, but only released in the June 4th 1997 edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* while John Paul II was on a pilgrimage to his homeland. It was accompanied by an anonymous article and one authored by Salvatore Perella, OSM⁶⁸. All was extremely negative about the prospects of a dogmatic definition of Mary's maternal mission as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate. The statement was signed by eighteen Catholic theologians, three orthodox theologians, an Anglican theologian and a Lutheran theologian. The last sentence stated: "Finally, the theologians, especially the non-Catholics, were sensitive to the ecumenical difficulties which would be involved in such a definition."⁶⁹ The declaration was not announced in advance and took place during an ecumenical roundtable discussion. Many questions might be asked about the entire procedure while one of the constrained signatories told me that the whole thing was rigged by the Secretariat of State [*Tutto era manipolato dalla Segreteria di Stato.*] There is added irony in that John Paul II's message to that Mariological Congress dated the 15th of August 1996 was strikingly supportive of Marian Coredemption, but only appeared in *L'Osservatore Romano* and its

⁶⁸ Father Salvatore M. Perrella, OSM, a longtime professor at the Pontifical Theological Faculty "Marianum" and a great opponent of Marian Coredemption, once authored a study entitled *The "Vota" and "Consilia" of the Italian Bishops on Mariology and on Coredemption in the Ante-preparatory Phase of the Second Vatican Council* in a very positive light. Cf. *I «Vota» e I «Consilia» Dei Vescovi Italiani sulla Mariologica e sulla Mariologia e sulla Corredenzione nella Fase Antipreparatoria del Concilio Vaticano II* (Rome: «Marianum», 1994). *Vota* here indicates wishes, desires whereas *Consilia* indicates recommendations.

⁶⁹ English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, 25 June 1997, 12.

English edition, not in the *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* or in the *Acta Apostolica Sedis*.⁷⁰

2. The second instance has to do with the official position of the Pontifical Faculty Marianum. I was personally invited by Father Ignacio Calabuig, OSM to present my position on the question of Marian Coredemption at a one-day meeting to discuss this issue at the Marianum on the 28th of May 1998. Professors and the student body were present along with other interested academics. Not surprisingly, I was the only person present who took the podium to speak positively on the issue. Afterwards Father Calabuig informed me that a dossier on the question would eventually be published in the Mariological journal *Marianum* and that I would be invited to submit further material supporting my position. That never happened. What did happen was that the journal *Marianum* published an 88-page dossier⁷¹ strongly opposing the whole idea of Marian Coredemption and Mediation in the course of which Father Calabuig inserted a footnote stating

With commendable precision the list of the usage of the title *Coredemptrix* in the magisterium of the Supreme Pontiffs was traced: A. BURTON CALKINS. *Il mistero di Maria Corredentrice nel magistero pontificio*, in A.A.V.V. *Maria Corredentrice*, I (cit. nota 4), pp. 141-220. The accurate and exhaustive study confirms what I have written: on the one hand *Coredemptrix* is not a proscribed title; it is susceptible to being correctly understood, which nonetheless requires some previous explanations of a linguistic and theological nature; on the other hand, such a title was rarely used by Supreme Pontiffs and in documents not of a magisterial character.⁷²

⁷⁰ *L'Osservatore Romano* 6 settembre 1996, p. 4; *Miles Immaculata* 32:2 (Luglio/Dicembre 1996) 440-444; English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, cumulative edition [subsequently ORE] #1461:8.

⁷¹ "Dossier di Una Giornata Teologica sulla Richiesta di definizione Dogmatica di «Maria Corredentrice Meatrice Avvocata» 28 Maggio 1998: Nota Introduttiva, Relazione di Ignazio M. Calabuig, Reportorio Bibliografico di Antonio Escudero Cabello" *Marianum* LXI (1999) 123-211.

⁷² *Marianum* LXI (1999) 157. Con encomiabile precisione è stato tracciato l'elenco dell'uso del titolo *Coredemptrix* nel magistero dei Sommi Pontefici: A. BURTON

I was also informed by a student that the student body had already been indoctrinated as to the correct position well in advance. There was also at least one other priest present who could have spoken in favor, but feared repercussions.

3. For the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, the Pontifical International Marian Academy published a set of Marian Guidelines for the new millennium entitled *The Mother of the Lord*. I suspect that most of the committee that composed these guidelines were “the experts” from the Pontifical Faculty Marianum, all carefully following the appropriate script. Here is how they chose to impose their position in #69 and 70 of the guidelines:

Genuine ecumenism does not compromise or change the *depositum fidei* on the Blessed Virgin Mary, but proposes, through shared and sincere study and dialog, to help the brothers and sisters of other Christian confessions to know the full revelation concerning Mary of Nazareth and to ponder their situation in view of our historical and cultural explanation of the image of the Virgin Mary. *We believe that it would be a serious disappointment if the current discussions on the Mother of God would be an obstacle to rather than a factor for promoting Christian unity.*

Relying on the teaching of John Paul II, we believe it opportune to recall some principles and norms which should guide theologians in mariological questions. They should follow the lines traced out in Vatican II's decree *Unitatis redintegratio* and the constitution *Lumen Gentium*, which urge theologians to “carefully refrain from

CALKINS. *Il mistero di Maria Corredentrice nel magistero pontificio*, in *A.A.V.V. Maria Corredentrice*, I (cit. nota 4) pp. 141-220. L'accurato ed esauriente studio conferma quanto ho scritto: da una parte il titolo *Coredemptrix* non è un titolo proscritto; è suscettibile di una lettura corretta, che richiede tuttavia alcune spiegazioni previe di natura linguistica e teologica; dall'altra, tale titolo è usato rarissime volte dai Sommi Pontefici e in documenti di indole non magisteriale.

whatever might by word or deed lead the separated brethren or any others whatsoever into error about the true doctrine of the Church.” ...

This requires that Marian studies:

- avoid long-standing prejudices (through *a purification of the historical memory*) and eliminate “expressions, judgments and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult”; ...
- refrain from imposing on brothers and sisters not in full communion with the Catholic Church “any burden beyond that which is strictly necessary (cf. Acts 15:28), *a counsel especially applicable to doctrinal matters concerning Mary which are disputed even among Catholic theologians themselves.*
- use carefully, with great surveillance, terms and formulas related to the Virgin Mary (*purification of language*). *Words or formulas which are not of ancient provenance or are not accepted by a great number of Catholic theologians do not promote mutual understanding; moreover, they arouse grave uneasiness among our brothers and sisters who are not in full communion with the Church; it is best to use terms which express the doctrine precisely and effectively without allowing the possibility of false interpretations.*⁷³

Of course, “Genuine ecumenism does not compromise or change the *depositum fidei* on the Blessed Virgin Mary,” but the “experts” effectively go on to imply that any teaching on Mary’s active collaboration in the work of the redemption and mediation of grace is merely an in-house dispute and would be upsetting to our separated brethren. First of all, a clear distinction needs to be made

⁷³ *Mother of the Lord: Memory, Presence, Hope* trans. Thomas A. Thompson, S.M. (St. Paul/Alba House, 2007) 104-106 Italics my own. The original Italian edition was *La Madre del Signore: Memoria Presenza Speranza* (Vatican City: Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis, 2000) 113-115.

between “development of doctrine” in the Catholic Church and ecumenical dialogue. John Paul himself would point out that speaking of Mary’s active collaboration in the work of the redemption is not a new concept, but deeply rooted in the tradition and has been developing for at least the second millennium:

At the end of the second century, St. Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp, already pointed out Mary’s contribution to the work of salvation. He understood the value of Mary’s consent at the time of the Annunciation, recognizing in the Virgin of Nazareth’s obedience to and faith in the angel’s message the perfect antithesis of Eve’s disobedience and disbelief, with a beneficial effect on humanity’s destiny. In fact, just as Eve caused death, so Mary, with her “yes”, became “a cause of salvation” for herself and for all mankind (cf. *Adv. Haer.*, III, 22, 4; *SC* 211, 441). But this affirmation was not developed in a consistent and systematic way by the other Fathers of the Church. Instead, this doctrine was systematically worked out for the first time at the end of the 10th century in the *Life of Mary* by a Byzantine monk, John the Geometer. Here Mary is united to Christ in the whole work of Redemption, sharing, according to God’s plan, in the Cross and suffering for our salvation. She remained united to the Son “in every deed, attitude and wish” (cf. *Life of Mary*, Bol. 196, f. 123 v.).

In the West St. Bernard, who died in 1153, turns to Mary and comments on the presentation of Jesus in the temple: “Offer your Son, sacrosanct Virgin, and present the fruit of your womb to the Lord. For our reconciliation with all, offer the heavenly victim pleasing to God” (*Serm. 3 in Purif.*, 2: *PL* 183, 370).

A disciple and friend of St. Bernard, Arnold of Chartres, shed light particularly on Mary’s offering in the sacrifice of Calvary. He distinguished in the Cross “two altars: one in Mary’s heart, the other in Christ’s body. Christ sacrificed his flesh, Mary her soul”. Mary sacrificed herself spiritually in deep communion with Christ, and implored the world’s salvation: “What the mother asks, the Son

approves and the Father grants” (cf. *De septem verbis Domini in cruce*, 3: PL 189, 1694).

From this age on other authors explain the doctrine of Mary’s special cooperation in the redemptive sacrifice. At the same time, in Christian worship and piety contemplative reflection on Mary’s “compassion” developed, poignantly depicted in images of the *Pietà*. Mary’s sharing in the drama of the Cross makes this event more deeply human and helps the faithful to enter into the mystery: the Mother’s compassion more clearly reveals the Passion of the Son.

By sharing in Christ’s redemptive work, Mary’s spiritual and universal motherhood is also recognized. In the East, John the Geometer told Mary: “You are our mother”. Giving Mary thanks “for the sorrow and suffering she bore for us”, he sheds light on her maternal affection and motherly regard for all those who receive salvation (cf. Farewell Discourse on the Dormition of Our Most Glorious Lady, Mother of God, in A. Wenger, *L’Assomption de la Très Sainte Vierge dans la tradition byzantine*, p. 407). ...

The Second Vatican Council, after stating that Mary “in a wholly singular way cooperated in the work of the Saviour”, concludes: “for this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace” (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 61), thus confirming the Church’s perception that Mary is at the side of her Son as the spiritual Mother of all humanity.⁷⁴

The question as to whether one calls Mary’s “sharing in Christ’s redemptive work” coredemption or something else is quite secondary. The approach of the “experts” would have effectively stifled any of the Marian dogmas already defined: Mother of God, Ever Virgin, Immaculate Conception and Assumption.

The “experts” were also clever in their selective citing of John Paul II. For instance, the International Theological Commission under the guidance of the then Cardinal Ratzinger produced a document

⁷⁴ *Inseg* XVIII/2 (1995) 934-937; ORE 1414:11.

entitled *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*⁷⁵ in 1999 as a preparation for the Jubilee Year of 2000 and it was followed up by John Paul II, who openly confessed the faults of the Church in the past and asked forgiveness for them.⁷⁶ The “experts” seized upon this terminology and proposed “a purification of the historical memory” and even more specifically of a “purification of language” i.e., “words or formulas which are not of ancient provenance or are not accepted by a great number of Catholic theologians” and which obviously “do not promote mutual understanding”. They had already stated that “terminology and images used by many theologians before Vatican II” should be eschewed. Then they went a step further and implied that such terminology as coredeemption and mediation should be avoided as a “purification of language” as if it were sinful. The fact is that John Paul II promoted none of this abandonment of classical mariological vocabulary in any way.

IX. CONCLUSION

No doubt the great majority of Catholics today might be tempted to think that what I have been presenting here is a “tempest in a teapot” and that it has nothing to do with the real world. Obviously, I don’t think that. What I see is a struggle between light and darkness: the temporal enmity between the Woman and the serpent also known as the dragon.⁷⁷ Without intending to identify any person or persons as working on the side of the enemy, I have felt it important to sketch the present situation in the Church as I see it. The odds are stacked very heavily against those of us who believe that the Woman, the Mother of the Lord, who is Mother and image of the Church, must be recognized for the mission that God envisioned for her in union with her Son before time began. She is the helpmate of the “New

⁷⁵ Documents of the International Theological Commission may be found on the Vatican website:
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_index-doc-pubbl_en.html

⁷⁶ *Inseg* XX/1 (2000) 351-355.

⁷⁷ Cf. Gen. 3:15; Rev. 12:1-17.

Adam”, the New Eve, but not his equal. Nonetheless, no creature is greater than she is. I am personally convinced that until we recognize her mission as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces and our Advocate after Jesus and the Holy Spirit, the chaos in the Church and in the world will not cease whereas the solemn recognition of her mission will help to usher in the triumph of her Immaculate Heart. Even if I do not live to see that triumph, I want to help bring it about.

Mother of Us All: Global Ramifications for a World in Crisis

Mark Miravalle, S.T.D.

Pope Francis has no difficulty in bringing up a topic which has become a staple of his papal teaching and preaching: *Satan*.¹⁰⁷

Why does the Successor of Peter discuss the evil one so much?

Perhaps it is because Satan is gaining ground in global society, global culture, and global politics in ways that may well be unprecedented since the time Christ walked the earth.

Much of humanity senses this. Most Christians sense this. Perhaps Pope Francis wants Catholics aware of Satan's historic advancements in the world and, to some degree, even within the Church.

This is precisely why the Church and the world *desperately need a Mother*. "Desperate" is not hyperbolic when looking at the present global scene, from the ominous wars between Russia and Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, and Sudanese genocide; to growing global economic instabilities; to the rise of abortion, euthanasia, human trafficking, and all attacks on human life; to unprecedented natural disasters; to schismatic dangers within the Church; to attacks on the true nature of marriage and family, and well beyond.

Yes, the world desperately needs a Mother. But the world has a Mother. She is the Mother given us by the Crucified Lord (cf. J

¹⁰⁷ Pope Francis' emphasis on Satan is already clear from the early years of his pontificate, cf. Andrea Tornielli, *Il Papa contra Satana*, <https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/it/2017/12/28/news/il-papa-in-lotta-contro-satana-1.34087676/>. (In English) *The Pope Against Satan* <https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/en/2017/12/28/news/the-pope-s-fight-against-satan-1.34087845/>.

19:26-27). She is the Woman clothed with the sun, who has been designated by God to wage the great spiritual battle against the dragon (cf. Rev. 12:1-20), who is the same biblical woman prophesied to crush the head of the serpent (cf. Gen. 3:15). She is the Immaculate Mother, given by God to lead today's spiritual battle against Satan for the salvation of souls and the future of humanity. This is why it is of historically paramount importance that the Church solemnly recognize Mary as our Spiritual Mother and her true ongoing role in salvation history *now*, in our present moment—to grant her our universal consent, through the voice of Peter, which will enable her to most fully intercede against the forces of Hell that are making vast diabolical strides today.

The Second Vatican Council identifies Christ's mother as "a mother to us in the order of grace."¹ Soon after the Council in his 1967 Apostolic Letter, *Signum Magnum*, Pope St. Paul VI identified Mary's Spiritual Motherhood, based upon her unique and intimate participation in Christ's redeeming sacrifice, as a *de fide* article of faith, and as such to be accepted by all Christians:

Indeed, just as no human mother can limit her task to the generation of a new man but must extend it to the function of nourishing and educating her offspring, thus the blessed Virgin Mary, after participating in the redeeming sacrifice of the Son, and in such an intimate way as to deserve to be proclaimed by Him the Mother not only of His disciple John but - may we be allowed to affirm it - of mankind which he in some way represents, now continues to fulfill from heaven her maternal function as the cooperator in the birth and development of divine life in the individual souls of redeemed men. This is a most consoling truth which, by the free consent of God the All-Wise, is an integrating part of the

¹ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 61.

mystery of human salvation; therefore it must be held as faith by all Christians.²

On January 10, 1979, months after he became the Roman pontiff, Pope St. John Paul II immediately began teaching the pre-eminence and universality of Our Lady's Spiritual Maternity:

Her spiritual motherhood (*quoad spiritum*) started at the same time as her physical motherhood (*quoad corpus*)...all men have her as Mother. They understand the words spoken from the Cross as addressed to each of them. [She is]The Mother of all men. *Spiritual motherhood knows no limits*. It extends in time and in space. It reaches so many human hearts. It reaches whole nations.³

One year after the assassination attempt on his life on May 13, 1981, Pope St. John Paul II made an initial consecration and entrustment of humanity to Our Lady at Fatima on May 13, 1982, invoking her, “O Mother of men and of peoples”⁴ and entrusting to her, “O Mother, all men and all peoples.”⁵ During his historic March 25, 1984 Consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart, St. John Paul II again invokes her, “O Mother of individuals and peoples.”⁶

The Totus Tuus pontiff officially teaches the centrality of Spiritual Maternity in his 1987 Marian encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, where he states:

² Pope St. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Signum Magnum*, May 13, 1967, Part I.1.

³ St. John Paul II, *General Audience*, January 10, 1979,

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19790110.html. [emphasis mine].

⁴ St. John Paul II, *Prayer of Entrustment and Consecration to the Virgin*, May 13, 1982, Fatima, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly English edition, May 24, 1982.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ St. John Paul II, *Act of Consecration of the World to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, St. Peter's Square, Vatican City, March 25, 1984.

The Mother of Christ, who stands at the very center of this mystery—a mystery which embraces each individual and all humanity—is given as mother to every single individual and all humanity. The man at the foot of the cross is John, the disciple whom he [Jesus] loved. But it is not he alone. Following Tradition, the Council does not hesitate to call Mary “*the mother of Christ and mother of mankind*... Indeed she is clearly ‘the mother of the members of Christ...since she cooperated out of love so that there might be born in the Church the faithful...Mary’s Motherhood is a gift: a gift which Christ himself makes personally to every individual.’⁷

In his January 1, 2007 World Day of Peace homily, Pope Benedict XVI continues this perennial papal teaching by referring to Our Lady as the “Spiritual Mother of all humanity.”⁸

Pope Francis consistently re-affirms Mary’s Spiritual Maternity, in teaching and in title as well. For example, in a 2019 homily on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, he teaches, “She is the Mother of us all.”⁹ In his 2020 World Day of Peace Address, he denotes Mary as the “Mother of all the peoples of the earth.”¹⁰ In his 2021 Message to

⁷ St. John Paul II, *Encyclical, Redemptoris Mater*, March 25, 1987, nn. 23,45.

⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, Homily of January 1, 2007, Solemnity of the Mother of God and 40th World Day of Peace, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070101_world-day-peace.html.

⁹ Pope Francis, Homily for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12, 2019, St. Peter’s Basilica, Vatican City, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20191212_omelia-guadalupe.html.

¹⁰ Pope Francis, *Message for the 53th World Day of Peace, January 1, 2020*, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20191208_messaggio-53giornatamondiale-pace2020.html.

the International Pontifical Marian Academy, Pope Francis confirms “...She is Mother of All, regardless of ethnicity or nationality.”¹¹

Let us now examine three dynamically relevant dimensions of Mary’s Spiritual motherhood for the Church and the world today. First, what is the essence of her universal Spiritual Motherhood and how does the expression, “Mother of us all” synthesize Our Lady’s overall relationship to humanity? Secondly, how does Mary’s role with and under Jesus in Redemption constitute the indispensable foundation of her Spiritual Maternity? Thirdly, how would the Church and world benefit from a solemn papal definition of Mary as the spiritual Mother of humanity in our present moment of ubiquitous global crises?

Universal Spiritual Motherhood

Motherhood is classically defined as when a woman gives birth to an offspring with a nature identical to her own, through the process of conception, gestation, and birth. However, it is not the biological generation of a child alone that normally and existentially constitutes authentic motherhood, but also the formation of the child—not only naturing, but also nurturing the child through sacrificial love, formation, and protection.

Spiritual maternity requires the same maternal functions in the order of grace. Jesuit theologian, Bertrand de Margerie explains:

Spiritual motherhood means a supernatural activity, received and subordinate, in the work of eternal salvation of another human being, by which a created person received and transmits to another person the divine life...the human being who is elevated to the level of spiritual motherhood receives from God the Father the possibility of engendering

¹¹ Pope Francis, *Message to the Participants of the 25th International Marian Congress of the Pontifical Marian Academy International (PAMI)* September 8, 2021, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2021/documents/20210822-messaggio-congressomariano.html>.

supernaturally those who are her brothers and sisters in the natural order.¹²

This is Mary's role in the supernatural order. It is a motherhood which firstly intervenes for the sake of our spiritual birth in Baptism by transmitting divine life to us, and then our ongoing spiritual nourishment and protection through her maternal intercession.

St. Augustine rightly testifies to this truth early in Church Tradition: "...she [Mary] is really mother of the members who we are, because she cooperated by charity so that there might be born in the Church believers, of whom He [Christ] is the head."¹³

The beginning of her Spiritual Maternity originates at the Annunciation. Her "let it be done" to give a human nature to Christ, Head of the Mystical Body, also conveys a "yes" to becoming a mother to the members mystically united to Christ the Head. Pope St. Pius X famously taught in his 1904 encyclical, *Ad diem illum*, that all Christians are mystically born from the "womb of Mary" and thus she becomes spiritual "Mother of us all:"

Is not Mary the Mother of Christ? She is therefore our Mother also....He acquired a body composed like that of other men, but as Savior of our race, He had a kind of spiritual and mystical body, which is the society of those who believe in Christ....Consequently, Mary, bearing in her own womb the Savior, may be said to have born all those whose life was contained in the life of the Savior. All of us, therefore...have come forth from the womb of Mary as a body united to its head. Hence, in a spiritual and mystical

¹² Bertrand de Margerie, S.J., "Can the Church Define Dogmatically the Spiritual Motherhood of Mary? Objections and Answers", *Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate, Theological Foundations: Towards a Papal Definition?* M. Miravalle, editor, (Santa Barbara, Queenship Publishing, 1995), p. 193.

¹³ St. Augustine, *De S. Virginitate* VI, PL 40, 399; Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 53.

sense, we are called children of Mary, and she is the Mother of us all.¹⁴

Mary's motherhood of humanity constitutes a real motherhood of the spirit, not simply symbolic nor metaphorical.

To perform this sublime task of directing humanity to spiritual birth and ongoing holiness, the Mother of all humanity had first to participate with her divine Son in the restoration of grace for the human race. Mary was the human New Eve with and under Jesus, the divine New Adam; she was the human Co-redemptrix with and under Jesus Christ, the divine Redeemer, in the historic mission of Redemption. This is the foundation of her true and authentic Spiritual Motherhood which required an unparalleled earthly life of maternal suffering and sacrifice.

The full institution of Mary's spiritual maternity takes place at Calvary. The words of the crucified Redeemer announce to the world that only at the end of paying the price for the world's sins, now and definitively, *humanity has a new mother*: "When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold your son! Then he said to the disciple, "behold, your mother!" (Jn. 19:26-27). These words *establish a new family order in God's kingdom*. We are no longer offspring only of Eve, a generational mother of the flesh who tragically gave her fiat to Satan's plan, through which grace is universally lost for her present and future children. Now, we have a *new and universal Mother of the spirit* who gives her fiat "let it be done" to the entirety of God the Father's plan, and thus cooperates like no other human being in restoring grace for her universal children.

Leo XIII rightly taught: "Now in John, according to the constant mind of the Church, Christ designated the whole human race, particularly those who were joined with him in faith."¹⁵ As the entire

¹⁴ St. Pius X, Encyclical, *Ad diem illum*, 1904, n. 10.

¹⁵ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Adiutricem populi*, September 5, 1895, No. 6, ASS 28, 1895-1896.

human race is represented in John, so, too the entire human race is entrusted to Mary by Christ. Pope St. John Paul II confirms:

The Mother of Christ, who stands at the very enter of this mystery—a mystery which embraces each individual and all humanity—is given as mother to every single individual and all humanity. The man at the foot of the Cross is John, “the disciple who Jesus loved.” But it is not he alone. Following tradition, the Council does not hesitate to call Mary “the Mother of Christ and all mankind...”¹⁶

Mary’s Spiritual Motherhood is as universal as Christ’s Redemption. Benedict XVI confirms: “Mary is the spiritual mother of all humanity, because Jesus on the Cross shed his blood for all of us, and from the Cross he entrusted us all to her maternal care.”¹⁷

Titles such as, “Mother of us all”, “Mother of all humanity” or “Mother of all peoples” accurately convey both the theological truth concerning Mary’s supernatural role to be exercised in the lives of all peoples, but at the same time capture the universality and appreciation of motherhood itself, esteemed and applauded in essentially all societies. Motherhood, like mediation, is also metaphysically and analogously rich, but the motherhood model possesses an immediate common appeal that no abstract theological or philosophical term could likewise offer. “Mother of us all” is a

¹⁶ Pope St. John Paul II, Encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, 1987, n. 23. N.B. With the November 21, 1964 declaration of Mary as “Mother of the Church” by Pope St. Paul VI, and its 2018 liturgical implementation by Pope Francis as an obligatory memorial on the Monday after Pentecost, Our Lady’s motherhood in the order of grace is undeniably established for the Church. Yet this motherhood also extends universally beyond the Church’s visible confines to all nations, all peoples, all individuals.

¹⁷ Benedict XVI, homily of January 1, 2007: https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070101_world-day-peace.html

mariological expression understood and appreciated by both head and heart.¹⁸

Moreover, Spiritual Motherhood can well facilitate as a metaphysical genus of Our Lady's three principal maternal functions, i.e., the *Mother Suffering (Co-redemptrix)*; the *Mother Nourishing (Mediatrice of all graces)* and the *Mother Interceding (Advocate)*, without stretching the category of maternity beyond its proper ontological limits. On the contrary, it contains and conveys what all good mothers do for their children in the natural order of maternal mediation: they suffer, they nourish, and they intercede. This is precisely what the Immaculate Mother does for humanity within her spiritual order of maternity.

The Foundation of Spiritual Motherhood: Mary's Role in the Redemption

It is obvious in the natural order that the exercise of motherhood necessarily involves suffering. Oftentimes, soon after pregnancy the pain of motherhood begins. This physical suffering is brought to its climactic stage with the labor of birth. Full motherhood does not cease at birth, but existentially continues in nurturing her child in a plethora of formative ways. A mother's emotional and psychological co-suffering with her child likewise continues in light of the connatural union of heart between mother and child.

Maternal suffering as the foundation for all other motherly functions is likewise true with Our Lady's Spiritual Motherhood.

Mary's Immaculate Conception is also essentially connected to her human coredemption with Christ. She is created "full of grace" by

¹⁸ While some may argue that there is a formal distinction between Maternal mediation and Spiritual Motherhood because the latter includes only "descending mediation," this would be to significantly underestimate the full metaphysical and analogical richness of Spiritual Maternity. Both in the natural and supernatural orders, motherhood is quintessentially mediational; naturally between father and child in generation and beyond; supernaturally in our Lady's prior mediatorial role with the Father and her constant mediation with and under Jesus, which is the very foundation of her relationship with us.

the heavenly Father precisely to be the perfect human companion with her Redeemer-Son. Mary *maintains* her “fullness of grace” through her heroic moment by moment ‘yes’ to God’s will *throughout her entire earthly life*. This free fidelity to her Immaculate Conception demanded perpetually heroic human effort, and was, in itself, a coredeemptive contribution for humanity. It also constituted Mary’s own personal victory over Satan and his seed of sin and temptation.

It is precisely this lifetime suffering with Jesus in his redemptive mission which leads to the climactic moment of Calvary, where, in the words of St. John Paul II, Mary is “spiritually crucified with her crucified Son”¹⁹ as the Co-redemptrix.²⁰ It is no accident of time that only *after* the completion of the suffering of the divine Redeemer and the human Co-redemptrix at Calvary (cf. Jn. 19:26-27), that Jesus announces to the world that we now have a new, definitive, and perpetual Spiritual Mother. The necessary foundation of Mary’s maternity of the spirit will always be her unique, and lifetime co-suffering with Jesus in the mystery of Redemption.

The mariological teachings of Pope St. John Paul II also offer magisterial confirmation of Mary’s unique role with Jesus in the *acquisition* of the graces of Redemption.²¹ Mary alone shared in the actual *obtaining* of the graces with Christ, whereas all other Christians are called to participate in the consequential release and distribution of the redemptive graces acquired at Calvary:

The collaboration of Christians in salvation takes place after the Calvary event, whose fruits they endeavor to spread by prayer and sacrifice. Mary, instead, cooperated in the event itself and in the role of mother; thus her cooperation embraces the whole of Christ’s saving work. She alone was

¹⁹ St. John Paul II, Homily at the Sanctuary of Guayaquil, Ecuador, Jan 31, 1985, English edition translation.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹Cf. Pope St. John Paul II, “Cooperator in the Redemption” Audience, April 7, 1997, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, April 16, 1997, 7; cf. also *Salvific Doloris*, 1984, 25; 1997 Papal Audience, October 25, 1995.

associated in this way with the redemptive sacrifice that merited the salvation of all mankind. In union with Christ and in submission to him, she collaborated in obtaining the graces of salvation for all humanity.²²

As Jesus mystically conveyed to St. Bridget: “My Mother and I saved man as with one heart only; I by suffering in my Heart and my flesh, she by the sorrow and love of her Heart.”²³

There is no mariological coherence in the concept of Mary’s Spiritual Motherhood separated from her foundational role with Jesus in Redemption. Mary is appropriately the Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate for all humanity, only because she was first the human Co-redemptrix with the divine Redeemer in uniquely participating in the historic acquisition of the graces of Redemption.

Why, then, is the concept of Mary as human Co-redemptrix so difficult for some to grasp?

One contributing factor is the contemporary neglect of the quintessential Christian concept of *participation*. Participation denotes when an inferior being shares in the being or qualities of a superior being, but without adding, subtracting or possessing equality with that superior being.²⁴ True participation, then, constitutes a partaking, a sharing in some real way, in the being of another greater being, without risk of equality, competition, or reduction.

The New Testament clearly establishes that all followers of Jesus Christ become, as St. Peter states, “partakers” in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), i.e., to participate in the very nature and being of God

²² Pope St. John Paul II, “Cooperator in the Redemption” Audience, April 9, 1997, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, April 16, 1997, 7.

²³ St. Bridget, *Revelationes*, IX, c. 3.

²⁴ For a classic discussion on the metaphysics of participation, see C. Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo San Tommaso d’Aquino* 3rd ed. (Torino: SEI, 1963).

himself. St. Paul likewise exhorts Christians to become “co-workers with God” (1 Cor. 3:9), and thus to personally cooperate in the salvific mission of Jesus Christ. In fact, St. Paul does not shy away from identifying himself in a role of coredeemption with Jesus by testifying to his own cooperation to “save” his fellow Jews when speaking to the Romans: “Now I am speaking to you Gentiles...I magnify my ministry in order to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them (Rom. 11: 13-14).”²⁵

St. Augustine was right: “God created us without us, but he did not will to save us without us.”²⁶ This points to the Christian imperative for humans to participate not only in their own salvation, but in the salvation of other human beings as well. Is this not the imperative of the New Evangelization?

Mary’s participation in the one mediation of Christ and his redemptive mission is incomparably beyond any other creature. Second century Mariology bears this out in the words of Church doctor St. Irenaeus, that the New Eve is the “cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race.”²⁷

Any position which holds that Mary’s role as human Co-redemptrix is *equal* to that of Jesus Christ, the world’s only divine Redeemer, would constitute logical, let alone theological, absurdity. Humanity equal to divinity on any level is impossible. Any concept of a human woman competing with a divine Savior is irrational. A human woman

²⁵ In fact, the Pauline doctrine of human participation in the saving mission of Christ, starting with the Apostle himself and extending by example to all Christians, is oftentimes undervalued. St. Paul repeatedly beckons the Christian to become “co-workers” (*synergoi*) in the salvific ministry of Jesus, a term he uses at least five times in five different epistles, including “co-workers in the Kingdom of God” (Col. 4:11); and “co-workers in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 16:3).²⁵ St. John joins St. Paul in this biblical teaching when he likewise refers to fellow Christians as “co-workers” in spreading the “Truth” of Jesus Christ (cf. 3 John 1:8).

²⁶ St. Augustine, *Sermo* 169, 11, 13: PL 38, 923.

²⁷ St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*. III, 22, 4: PG 7, 9S9 A; Harvey, 2, 123.

participating with a Divine Redeemer in the work of Redemption is biblical and historical. Clearly, God wanted a woman to participate in the greatest divine act of human history. Mary, amidst all the disciples of Christ of all times, uniquely did so.

The “Hermeneutics of Continuity,” as theologically promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI, should also apply to Mary’s role in the Redemption within contemporary theology. The rich Tradition of Marian coredeemption has been explicitly present in the Church since the 14th century, as well as substantially contained within the New Eve teaching of the first three Christian centuries. Mary’s unique cooperation with Jesus in the Redemption, taught by popes, saints, mystics, and theologians,²⁸ is simply not going away. Twentieth century Mariology championed the themes of Spiritual Maternity, Coredeemption, and Mediation, more than any other mariological topics.²⁹ Consistent papal teachings on these Mariological themes would also dominate the greater part of the twentieth century.³⁰

²⁸ Cf. J.B. Carol, *De corredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Rome, 1950; G. Roschini, *Maria Santissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, Vol. II, Isola Del Liri, Pisani, 144-155. For a survey of papal texts from Leo XIII to John Paul II, cf. A. Calkins, “The Mystery of Mary Co-redemptrix in the Papal Magisterium,” *Mary Co-redemptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today*, Queenship, 2002, 25-92; M. Perillo, F.I. and M. Somerton, F.I., “The Marian Coredeemption Through Two Millennia,” *Mary at the Foot of the Cross-II*, Ratcliffe College, England, 2002, Academy of the Immaculate, 79- 112.

²⁹ This is verifiable by a summary examination of the major Mariological journals in the major languages from the 1910’s to the 1960’s, as well as confirmation by recognized Protestant theologians, cf. G. Miegge, *La Vergine Maria, saggio del storia del dogma* (Torre Pellice: Editrice Claudina, 1950) p. 178, as cited by Carol, *Mariology*, Vol. 2, p. 377. Concerning Marian coredeemption alone, cf. Cf. J.B. Carol, “Marian Coredeemption,” Carol, ed., *Mariology*, Vol 2, 1957, p. 409. (17) For a survey of papal texts on Marian Coredeemption from Leo XIII to John Paul II, cf. A. Calkins, “The Mystery of Mary Co-redemptrix in the Papal Magisterium,” *Mary Coredeemptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today*, Queenship, 2002, 25-92; M. Perillo, F.I. and M. Somerton, F.I., “The Marian Coredeemption Through Two Millennia,” *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, Ratcliffe College, England, 2002, (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2002) 79- 112; Cf. J.B. Carol, *De corredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Rome, 1950; G. Roschini, *Maria Santissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, Vol. II, (Isola Del Liri, Pisani, 1969) 144-155.

³⁰ Papal teachings on these Marian themes are ubiquitous through 20th century papal encyclicals, apostolic letters, homilies, allocutions, etc. For papal and

Authentic Marian development of doctrine only increases—it does not decrease. The Holy Spirit, who commits no error, has inspired this Mariological doctrinal development since at least the 2nd century,³¹ There is no substantial reason to believe that the Spirit will cease its continuation and ultimate completion of this doctrinal development.

Solemn Definition of the “Mother of Us All”?

In 1915, the renowned Belgian prelate, Cardinal Désiré Mercier, initiated a movement for the solemn papal definition of Our Lady’s Spiritual Motherhood amidst the ongoing devastation of World War I. Mercier believed that a solemn papal recognition of Mary’s Spiritual Maternity (founded, as he taught, on her roles as Co-

magisterial references just for Co-redemptrix title, cf.) Congregation of Rites, Decretum quo festum Septem Dolorum B. M. V., Dominicæ tertiæ Septembris affixum, ad ritum duplicem secundæ classis elevatur pro universa Ecclesia (may 13, 1918) Acta Sanctæ Sedis, 41 [1908] in which the Congregation itself uses the Co-redemptrix title in granting the feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary to be raised to the rank of double class; the Congregation of the Holy Office also uses the title, Co-redemptrix, in a decree of June 26, 1913, Acta Apostolicæ Sedis [AAS] 5[1913], 364; and in another decree of January 22, 1914, AAS 6, [1914], 108. (19) Pope Benedict XV, Inter Sodalicia, AAS 10, 182. “... ut dici merito queat, Ipsam cum Christo humanum genus redemisse.” (20) Cf. Pius XI, Allocution to Pilgrims from Vicenza, Italy, November 30, 1933, L’Osservatore Roma no, Dec. 1, 1933, 1; Pius XI, Allocution to Spanish Pilgrims, L’Osservatore Romano, March 25, 1934, 1; Pius XI, Radio Message for the Closing of the Holy Year at Lourdes, L’Osservatore Romano, April 29-30, 1935, 1. (21) Pius XI, *Allocution to Pilgrims from Vicenza*, Italy, November 30, 1933, L’Osservatore Romano, Dec. 1, 1933, 1; See John Paul II General Audience, 10 December 1980 (Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo [Inseg] II, 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 L’Osservatore Romano, English ed., March 11, 1985.

³¹ Scholars maintain that the New Eve tradition is apostolic in its origins, being handed down, for example, from St. John the Apostle through St. Polycarp to St. Irenæus.

redemptrix and Mediatrix of all graces) would lead to a great historic release of grace and peace for the world. This gratuitous outpouring is based on the principle that the more we freely and officially honor Mary's motherly roles of supernatural intercession, the more she can providentially enact and empower these roles for humanity. By 1918, over 300 bishops joined by hundreds of thousands of priests, religious and faithful globally, had petitioned Pope Benedict XV for this fifth Marian dogma.

This Marian movement has continued throughout the 20th century. For example, from 1993 to 2000, an additional 650 bishops and over 7 million Catholic faithful from 180 countries would join in this petition for a fifth Marian dogma.³² Now in the 21st century, many contemporaries believe the world to be in even greater need of a supernatural intervention from the Mother of all humanity for world peace.

But why a new dogma? Presently, the four Marian dogmas, i.e., her Motherhood of God, her Perpetual Virginity, her Immaculate Conception, and her Assumption, all focus on personal prerogatives and their effects which God has given to Mary in relation to Jesus. Yet, none of the existing Marian dogmas denote *Mary's relationship to humanity*. ***To define as dogma that Mary is the "Mother of us all" is to manifest in the highest and most solemn manner the Church's acknowledgement and appreciation of her role as humanity's Spiritual Mother—that her unique human role with Jesus in our salvation and subsequent maternal relation to the human race merits to be raised to the same dogmatic recognition and honor as her other God-given privileges and roles.***

What, then, would be the potential fruits from a new dogma of Spiritual Motherhood?

³² . *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrix* Archives of cardinal and bishop endorsement letters received, filed, copied and submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith since 1993, as well as petitions of the lay faithful likewise submitted to the CDF, 48765 Annapolis Rd, Hopedale, Ohio.

Here are at least seven monumental ecclesial and global fruits that would come from a fifth Marian dogma of Mary as *Mother of us all*:

1. releasing historic graces of peace and conversion for the Church and the world, by fully activating Mary's maternal intercession through our free consent as exercised by the successor of Peter;
2. the completion of Marian dogma, by solemnly proclaiming Mary's relationship to humanity;
3. testifying to the redemptive value of human suffering, as seen both in the model of Mary Co-redemptrix and the call of all Christians to be "co-redeemers in Christ;"³³
4. highlighting the dignity of the human person and human freedom, by celebrating the human imperative to freely cooperate with God's grace;
5. proclaiming the true dignity of woman, by accentuating an authentic Christian feminism based on Our Lady;
6. exercising authentic Catholic ecumenism by proclaiming the whole truth about Mary in transparent ecumenical dialogue, and by affirming that no one better unites Christians than our universal Spiritual Mother;
7. responding to credible Marian private Revelation, where through numerous contemporary apparitions, Our Lady has

³³ Cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Allocution to the Sick at the Hospital of the Brothers of St. John of God*, April 5, 1981, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1981/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19810405_fatebenefratelli.html, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., April 13, 1981, 6; Address to the Sick following General Audience, January 13, 1982, 91 https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19820113.html; *Inseg.* V/1, 1982, 91; *Address to the Bishops of Uruguay*, May 8, 1988, n.7: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1988/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19880508_vescovi-nunziatura.html, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., May 30, 1988, 4.

communicated that God desires this fifth Marian dogma as the definitive key to the Triumph of her Immaculate Heart.³⁴

Recently, in a May 13, 2023 papal message for a Marian celebration in Sardinia, Pope Francis referred to “Mediatrice of all graces” as an “ancient Marian title,” and identified Mary as the “Advocate close to Jesus.”³⁵ Could these references to two of the three titles so closely associated with the worldwide petition for a new Marian dogma indicate a new openness on the part of Pope Francis? Only time and prayer will tell. In the meantime, the present Roman pontiff continues to teach the doctrine of Mary’s Spiritual Maternity and her unique role in the Redemption as he did, for example, his January 1, 2020 homily for the World Day of Peace: “From her, a woman, salvation came forth, and thus, there is no salvation without a woman.”³⁶

I believe the time has come to apply Pascal’s Wager to the fifth Marian Dogma. What is lost if every predicted global fruit—from Cardinal Mercier’s historic release of grace to Private Revelation’s description of a fifth Marian dogma as the necessary condition for the Triumph of Mary’s Heart and global peace— would not result from this proposed definition, but only a solemn proclamation of what we already believe of Our Mother as Catholics? Is not the

³⁴ Cf. Mark Miravalle, “*Apologia Pro Dogma Sua: Ecclesial, Anthropological, and Contemporary Global Fruits from a Potential New Marian Dogma*,” *Ecce Mater Tua*, Vol. 3, August 22, 2018,

<https://eccematertua.com/sites/eccc/files/miravalleemtvol3second.pdf>.

³⁵ Pope Francis, *Papal Address to Diocese of Sassari*, Sardinia, May 13, 2023, <http://www.arcidiocesisassari.it/2023/05/28/festa-del-voto-il-messaggio-del-santo-padre/> (accessed July 13, 2023).

³⁶ Pope Francis, *Homily of the Mass of the Solemnity of the Mother of God*, January 1, 2020, [\(https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200101_omelia-madredidio-pace.html#:~:text=Holy%20Mass%20on%20the%20Solemnity,\(1st%20January%202020\)%20%7C%20Francis&text=%E2%80%9CBut%20when%20the%20time%20had,\(Lk%20%3B21\)](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200101_omelia-madredidio-pace.html#:~:text=Holy%20Mass%20on%20the%20Solemnity,(1st%20January%202020)%20%7C%20Francis&text=%E2%80%9CBut%20when%20the%20time%20had,(Lk%20%3B21)) (accessed July 16, 2023).

proclamation of Marian truth meritorious in the eyes and heart of her Son?

But what if Mercier and Mary are right? What if all the fruits from Mercier's temporal peace to Mary's Era of Peace is truly conditional on this Marian proclamation? Is it not time to make that wager for world peace? Or should we wait for another series of regional wars, or perhaps even the full and fatal formalization of a nuclear third world war?

Conclusion

The battle in the book of Revelation is the battle of the *present moment*. The world urgently needs the fully activated intercession of the Woman clothed with the Sun, *the Spiritual Mother of us all*, to lead the present battle against Satan and his anti-culture of hatred, division, and war. This Woman *will* lead us to victory, the Triumph of her Immaculate Heart, for she will intercede to bring *Jesus anew* into the world through a new Pentecost—a new descent of his Spirit which alone can bring true and lasting peace to our troubled world.

The Woman awaits only one thing: our consent—a universal human consent for her most powerful intercession manifested through a solemn papal declaration of her Spiritual Maternity. No other can speak on behalf of all humanity except the Vicar of Christ.

Let us enter into a serious discussion within the Church and its hierarchy, in a true spirit of synodality, regarding a potential papal definition of the *Mother of us all*—a dogma which recognizes Our Mother for who she really is, and what she can do for a human family that needs her powerful maternal intercession *now*.

Maria, “Madre di Tutti Noi”: Ramificazioni Globali per un Mondo in Crisi

Mark Miravalle, S.T.D.

Papa Francesco non ha difficoltà a sollevare un tema che è diventato un punto fermo del suo insegnamento e della sua predicazione papale: Satana.¹ Perché il Successore di Pietro discute tanto del Maligno?

Forse perché Satana sta guadagnando terreno nella società globale, nella cultura globale, e nella politica globale in modi che potrebbero non avere precedenti dai tempi di Gesù.

Gran parte dell'umanità lo percepisce; la maggior parte dei cristiani lo percepisce; ed evidentemente Papa Francesco vuole che i cattolici siano consapevoli della presenza straordinariamente pericolosa e dei progressi di Satana nel mondo e anche, in una certa misura, all'interno della Chiesa.

Proprio per questo la Chiesa e il mondo hanno un *disperato bisogno di una Madre*. Il termine “disperato” non appare iperbolico se guardiamo all'attuale scena globale, dalla guerra tra Russia e Ucraina, all'aumento dell'aborto e dell'eutanasia, alle crisi migratorie, ai disastri naturali, agli attacchi al matrimonio e famiglia, e ben oltre.

Sì, il mondo ha un disperato bisogno di una madre. Ma, in realtà, il mondo ha una madre, donata da Gesù stesso (Gv 19,26-27). Ella è la donna vestita di sole (cfr Ap 12,1-20). che è stato designato da Dio per condurre la grande battaglia spirituale contro il Drago. Si tratta della stessa Donna profetizzata che schiaccerà la testa del Serpente (cfr Gen 3,15). Ella è la Madre Immacolata, donata da Dio per

¹ L'enfasi di Papa Francesco su Satana è chiara già fin dai primi anni del suo pontificato, cfr.

Andrea Tornielli, *Il Papa contra Satana*: <https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/it/2017/12/28/news/il-papa-in-lotta-contro-satana-1.34087676/>.

condurre l'odierna battaglia spirituale contro Satana per la salvezza delle anime e il futuro dell'umanità.

Questo è il motivo per cui è di fondamentale importanza storica che la Chiesa riconosca solennemente Maria come nostra Madre spirituale e il suo vero ruolo permanente nella storia della salvezza *ora*, nel nostro momento presente, per concederle il nostro consenso universale, attraverso la voce di Pietro, che consentirà affinché interceda nel modo più completo contro le forze dell'Inferno che stanno facendo grandi passi diabolici oggi.

Per questo è di fondamentale importanza che la Chiesa riconosca solennemente chi è Maria come nostra Madre Spirituale e le conceda il nostro solenne consenso ad intercedere pienamente e con la massima forza contro le forze dell'Inferno che sembrano fare passi da gigante in ogni momento.

Il Concilio Vaticano II identifica la Madre di Cristo come “una madre per noi nell'ordine della grazia”.² Subito dopo il Concilio, nella sua Lettera Apostolica *Signum Magnum* del 1967, Papa San Paolo VI identificò la maternità spirituale di Maria, basata sulla sua partecipazione unica e intima al sacrificio redentore di Cristo, come un *de fide* articolo di fede, e come tale da accettare da parte dei credenti. tutti i cristiani:

Come, infatti, ogni madre umana non può limitare il suo compito alla generazione di un nuovo uomo, ma deve estenderlo alle funzioni del nutrimento e della educazione della prole, così si comporta la beata Vergine Maria. Dopo di aver partecipato al sacrificio redentivo del Figlio, ed in modo così intimo da meritare di essere da lui proclamata madre non solo del discepolo Giovanni, ma—sia consentito l'affermarlo—del genere umano da lui in qualche modo rappresentato, Ella continua adesso dal cielo a

² Concilio Vaticano II, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 61.

compiere la sua funzione materna di cooperatrice alla nascita e allo sviluppo della vita divina nelle singole anime degli uomini redenti. E questa una consolantissima verità, che per libero beneplacito del sapientissimo Iddio fa parte integrante del mistero dell'umana salvezza; essa, perciò, dev'essere ritenuta per fede da tutti i cristiani.³

Il 10 gennaio 1979, mesi dopo essere diventato romano pontefice, Papa San Giovanni Paolo II iniziò immediatamente a insegnare la preminenza e l'universalità della maternità spirituale della Madonna:

Questa maternità “spirituale” (“*quoad spiritum*”) si è iniziata insieme con la maternità fisica (“*quoad corpus*”). ... E tutti gli uomini l'hanno come Madre. Essi comprendono le parole pronunziate dall'alto della Croce come rivolte a ciascuno. Madre di tutti gli uomini. *La maternità spirituale non conosce limiti*. Si estende nel tempo e nello spazio. Raggiunge tanti cuori umani. Raggiunge le intere nazioni.⁴

Un anno dopo l'attentato alla sua vita, San Giovanni Paolo II fece una prima consacrazione e affidamento dell'umanità alla Madonna a Fatima, il 13 maggio 1982, invocandola come “O Madre degli uomini e dei popoli”,⁵ e affidandole: “O Madre, di tutti gli uomini e di tutti i popoli”.⁶ Durante la storica Consacrazione del mondo al Cuore

³ San Paolo VI, Esortazione apostolica, *Signum Magnum*, 10 maggio 1967, I.1.

⁴ San Giovanni Paolo II, Udienza generale, 10 gennaio 1979, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19790110.html [sottolineatura mia].

⁵ San Giovanni Paolo II, Preghiera di Affidamento e di Consacrazione alla Vergine, Fatima, 13 maggio 1982, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/prayers/documents/hf_jp-ii_19820513_fatima.html.

⁶ Ibid.

Immacolato, il 25 marzo 1984, San Giovanni Paolo II la invocherà nuovamente: «O Madre degli uomini e dei popoli».⁷

Il pontefice Totus Tuus insegna ufficialmente la centralità della maternità spirituale nella sua enciclica mariana del 1987, *Redemptoris Mater*, dove afferma:

La Madre di Cristo, trovandosi nel raggio diretto di questo mistero che comprende l'uomo - ciascuno e tutti - , viene data all'uomo - a ciascuno e a tutti - come madre. Quest'uomo ai piedi della Croce è Giovanni, «il discepolo che egli amava». Tuttavia, non è lui solo. Seguendo la Tradizione, il Concilio non esita a chiamare Maria «*Madre di Cristo e madre degli uomini*»... anzi è veramente madre delle membra (di Cristo)..., perché cooperò con la carità alla nascita dei fedeli nella Chiesa» ... La maternità di Maria che diventa eredità dell'uomo è un dono: un dono che Cristo stesso fa personalmente ad ogni uomo.⁸

Nella sua omelia della Giornata Mondiale della Pace del 1° gennaio 2007, Papa Benedetto XVI continua questo perenne insegnamento papale facendo riferimento alla Madonna come “Madre spirituale di tutta l'umanità”.⁹

⁷ San Giovanni Paolo II, Atto di consacrazione del mondo al Cuore Immacolato di Maria, 25 marzo 1984, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/homilies/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19840325_giubileo-famiglie.html#:~:text=Si%20salutata%20tu%2C%20che%20sei,consacrazione%20e%20il%20nostro%20affidamento.

⁸ San Giovanni Paolo II, lettera enciclica, *Redemptoris Mater*, 25 marzo 1987, nn. 23,45.

⁹ Papa Benedetto XVI, Omelia del 1° gennaio 2007, Solennità della Madre di Dio e XL Giornata Mondiale della Pace, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/it/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070101_world-day-peace.html.

Papa Francesco riafferma costantemente la maternità spirituale di Maria, nell'insegnamento e anche nel titolo. Ad esempio, in un'omelia del 2019 in occasione della festa di Nostra Signora di Guadalupe, insegna: "Lei è la Madre di tutti noi".¹⁰ Nel suo discorso per la Giornata mondiale della pace del 2020, ha indicato Maria come la "Madre di tutti i popoli della terra".¹¹ Nel suo messaggio del 2021 alla Pontificia Accademia Mariana Internazionale, Papa Francesco conferma "...Lei è Madre di tutti, indipendentemente dall'etnia o dalla nazionalità".¹²

Esaminiamo ora tre dimensioni dinamicamente rilevanti della maternità spirituale di Maria per la Chiesa e il mondo di oggi. In primo luogo, qual è l'essenza della sua maternità spirituale universale e in che modo l'espressione "Madre di tutti noi" sintetizza la relazione complessiva della Madonna con l'umanità? In secondo luogo, in che modo il ruolo di Maria con e sotto Gesù nella Redenzione costituisce il fondamento indispensabile della sua maternità spirituale? In terzo luogo, come trarrebbero beneficio la Chiesa e il mondo da una solenne definizione papale di Maria come Madre spirituale dell'umanità nel nostro presente momento di crisi globali onnipresenti?

Maternità spirituale universale

¹⁰ Papa Francesco, Omelia nella Festa di Nostra Signora di Guadalupe, 12 dicembre 2019, Basilica di San Pietro, Città del Vaticano, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/homilies/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20191212_omelia-guadalupe.html.

¹¹ Papa Francesco, Messaggio per la 53ª Giornata Mondiale della Pace, 1 gennaio 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20191208_messaggio-53giornatamondiale-pace2020.html.

¹² Papa Francesco, Messaggio ai partecipanti al XXV Congresso Mariano Internazionale della Pontificia Accademia Mariana Internazionale (PAMI), 8 settembre 2021, <https://www.pami.info/events/25-congresso-mariologico-mariano-internazionale/>.

La maternità classicamente denotata è quando una donna dà alla luce una prole con un natura identica alla sua attraverso il processo di concepimento, gestazione e nascita. Tuttavia, non è soltanto la generazione biologica di un bambino che designa pienamente l'autentica maternità, ma anche la sua formazione – non solo “naturando” il bambino, ma anche “nutrendolo” attraverso la cura amorevole, il nutrimento, la formazione e la protezione.

La maternità spirituale richiede le stesse funzioni materne, ma nell'ordine della grazia. Il teologo gesuita Bertrand de Margerie fornisce questa definizione:

Per maternità spirituale si intende un'attività soprannaturale, ricevuta e subordinata, nell'opera di salvezza eterna di un altro essere umano, per la quale una persona creata riceve e trasmette ad un'altra persona la vita divina...l'essere umano elevato al grado di maternità spirituale riceve da Dio Padre la possibilità di generare in modo soprannaturale coloro che sono suoi fratelli e sorelle nell'ordine naturale.¹³

Questo è il ruolo di Maria nell'ordine soprannaturale. È una maternità che cerca innanzitutto la nostra nascita spirituale nel Battesimo, e poi il nostro nutrimento, formazione e protezione spirituale nella ricerca della santità cristiana.

Sant'Agostino insegna questa verità all'inizio della Tradizione della Chiesa quando afferma: “...ella [Maria] è realmente madre dei nostri membri, perché ha cooperato con la carità affinché nascessero nella Chiesa credenti, dei quali Egli [Cristo] è il capo.”¹⁴

¹³ Bertrand de Margerie, S.J., “Can the Church Define Dogmatically the Spiritual Motherhood of Mary? Objections and Answers”, *Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate, Theological Foundations :Towards a Papal Definition?* M. Miravalle, editor, (Santa Barbara, Queenship Publishing, 1995), p. 193.

¹⁴ Sant' Agostino, *De S. Virginitate* VI, PL 40, 399; Cfr *Lumen gentium*, 53.

L'inizio della sua maternità spirituale ha origine con l'Annunciazione. La sua "sia fatto" a donare la natura umana a Cristo Capo del Corpo, trasmette anche un "sì" a diventare madre delle membra misticamente unite a Cristo Capo. Papa San Pio X insegnò nella sua enciclica del 1904, *Ad diem illum*, che tutti noi cristiani siamo misticamente nati dal "grembo di Maria" e quindi diventiamo veri "figli di Maria":

Non è Maria la Madre di Dio? Dunque è anche nostra Madre. ... Egli ha un corpo come gli altri uomini: in quanto Redentore della nostra razza, ha un Corpo *spirituale* o, come si dice, *mistico*, il quale non è altro che la società dei cristiani legati a Lui dalla fede. ... e si può dire che Maria, portando in seno Gesù, vi portava anche tutti coloro la vita dei quali era contenuta nella vita del Salvatore. Dunque, tutti noi ... dobbiamo considerarci usciti dal grembo della Vergine come un corpo attaccato alla sua testa. Per questo in verità noi siamo chiamati, in un senso spirituale e tutto mistico, i figli di Maria ed Ella, per parte Sua, è madre di noi tutti.¹⁵

La maternità dell'umanità di Maria costituisce una vera maternità dello spirito, non qualcosa di meramente simbolico o metaforico.

Tuttavia, per svolgere questo compito di indirizzarci verso la nascita spirituale e il successivo nutrimento, la Madre di tutti gli individui e i popoli deve prima partecipare alla restaurazione della grazia per la razza umana. Ella è la Nuova Eva umana con e sotto il divino Nuovo Adamo. Ella è la Corredentrice umana con e sotto il divino Redentore, nella storica missione della Redenzione. Questo fondamento della vera ed autentica maternità richiederà una sofferenza materna d'amore senza pari.

¹⁵ San Pio X, Enciclica *Ad diem illum*, 1904, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/it/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_02021904_ad-diem-illum-laetissimum.html

La piena manifestazione della maternità spirituale di Maria avviene sul Calvario. Le parole del Redentore crocifisso annunciano al mondo che solo ora, finito di pagare il prezzo dei peccati del mondo, ora, definitivamente, l'umanità ha una nuova madre: «Quando Gesù vide sua Madre e accanto a lui il discepolo che amava, disse alla madre: 'Donna, ecco tuo figlio! Poi disse al discepolo: «Ecco tua madre!». (Gv 19,26-27). Queste parole *stabiliscono un nuovo ordine familiare nel regno di Dio*. Non siamo più solo figli di una madre generazionale della carne che ha detto “sia fatto” al disegno dell’Avversario, attraverso il quale la grazia viene tragicamente perduta per i suoi figli presenti e futuri. Ora abbiamo *una nuova e universale Madre dello spirito* che ha detto: “sia fatto” a tutti il progetto di Dio Padre per restituire la grazia ai suoi figli passati, presenti e futuri.

Leone XIII insegnò giustamente: “Or in Giovanni, secondo il pensiero costante della Chiesa, Cristo ha designato tutto il genere umano, particolarmente coloro che erano uniti a lui nella fede”¹⁶ Come in Giovanni è rappresentato l'intero genere umano, così anche l'intero genere umano è affidato a Maria da Cristo. Papa San Giovanni Paolo II conferma:

La Madre di Cristo, trovandosi nel raggio diretto di questo mistero che comprende l'uomo - ciascuno e tutti - , viene data all'uomo - a ciascuno e a tutti - come madre. Quest'uomo ai piedi della Croce è Giovanni, «il discepolo che egli amava». Tuttavia, non è lui solo. Seguendo la Tradizione, il Concilio non esita a chiamare Maria «*Madre di Cristo e Madre degli uomini ...*»¹⁷

¹⁶ Papa Leone XIII, Enciclica *Adiutricem populi*, 5 settembre 1895, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/it/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_05091895_adiutricem.html.

¹⁷ Papa San Giovanni Paolo II, Enciclica *Redemptoris Mater*, 1987, n. 23. Con la dichiarazione di Maria come “Madre della Chiesa” da parte di Papa San Paolo VI, il 21 novembre 1964, e la sua implementazione liturgica nel 2018 da parte di Papa Francesco come memoria obbligatoria il lunedì dopo Pentecoste, la maternità della Madonna nell'ordine della grazia è innegabilmente stabilito per la Chiesa. Tuttavia,

La maternità spirituale di Maria è universale quanto la Redenzione di Cristo. Papa Benedetto conferma: Maria è, infine, *Madre spirituale dell'intera umanità*, perché per tutti Gesù ha dato il suo sangue sulla croce, e tutti dalla croce ha affidato alle sue materne premure”.¹⁸

Titoli materni specifici come “Madre di tutti noi”, “Madre di tutta l'umanità” o Madre di tutti gli uomini” trasmettono sia la verità teologica riguardante il ruolo soprannaturale di Maria conferitole dalla Trinità da esercitare nella vita di ogni individuo e di tutti popoli, e allo stesso tempo provvedere pastoralmente a partire dalla comprensione e dall'apprezzamento universali della maternità, stimata e applaudita essenzialmente in tutte le società.

Anche la maternità, come la mediazione, è metafisicamente e analogamente ricca, ma la prima possiede un fascino universale immediato che nessun termine teologico o filosofico astratto potrebbe offrire. “Madre di tutti i popoli” è un'espressione mariologica compresa e accettabile sia dalla testa che dal cuore.¹⁹

Inoltre, per includere nel genere della Maternità Spirituale universale le tre principali funzioni materne della Madonna, cioè la *Madre Sofferente* (o “Corredentrice”); *la Madre che nutre* (o Mediatrice di tutte le grazie), e *la Madre che supplica* (o “Avvocata”) non deve “allungare”

questa maternità si estende universalmente anche oltre i confini visibili della Chiesa, a tutte le nazioni, a tutti i popoli, a tutti gli individui.

¹⁸ Papa Benedetto XVI, Omelia del 1° gennaio 2007.

¹⁹ Mentre alcuni potrebbero sostenere che esiste una distinzione formale tra mediazione materna e maternità spirituale perché quest'ultima include solo la “mediazione discendente”, ciò significherebbe sottostimare significativamente tutta la ricchezza metafisica e analogica della maternità spirituale. Sia nell'ordine naturale che in quello soprannaturale, la maternità è essenzialmente mediativa; naturalmente tra padre e figlio nella generazione e oltre; in modo soprannaturale nel previo ruolo di mediazione della Madonna presso il Padre e nella sua costante mediazione con e sotto Gesù, che è il fondamento stesso del suo rapporto con noi.

ontologicamente la categoria della Maternità oltre i suoi propri limiti metafisici. Al contrario, si tratta di manifestare ciò che fanno tutte le buone madri per i loro figli nell'ordine della mediazione materna e ciò che fa la Madre Immacolata di tutti noi per tutta l'umanità.

Il fondamento della maternità spirituale: il ruolo di Maria nella Redenzione

Possiamo vedere nell'ordine naturale che l'esercizio della maternità comporta necessariamente sofferenza. Spesso, subito dopo la gravidanza, inizia il dolore della maternità. Questa sofferenza fisica raggiunge il suo stadio culminante con il travaglio del parto. La piena maternità certamente non cessa alla nascita, ma esiste esistenzialmente continua ad allevare il figlio in una molteplicità di modi formativi. La co-sofferenza emotiva e psicologica di una madre con suo figlio continua allo stesso modo alla luce dell'unione di cuore infusa da Dio tra madre e figlio.

La sofferenza materna come fondamento di tutte le altre manifestazioni materne vale anche per la maternità spirituale di Maria.

L'Immacolata Concezione di Maria è essenzialmente collegata alla sua corredenzione. Ella è creata "piena di grazia" da Dio Padre proprio per prepararsi ad essere la perfetta compagna umana del suo Figlio Redentore. Maria *conserva* la sua "pienezza di grazia" attraverso il suo eroico "sì" momento per momento alla volontà di Dio *durante tutta la sua vita terrena*, che ha richiesto sforzi indicibili ed è stata, di per sé, corredentrica per l'umanità. La sua Immacolata Concezione e il suo mantenimento per tutta la vita furono la personale vittoria umana di Maria su Satana e sul peccato.

È proprio questa sofferenza di tutta la vita con Gesù nella sua missione redentrica che conduce al momento culminante del Calvario dove, secondo le parole di San Giovanni Paolo II, Maria è

“spiritualmente crocifissa col Figlio crocifisso”²⁰ come la corredentrice nel suo “ruolo corredentore”.²¹ Non è un caso che solo dopo il compimento della sofferenza del divino Redentore e dell'umana Corredentrice sul Calvario (cfr Gv 19,26-27), Gesù annunci al mondo che ora abbiamo una nuova, Madre Spirituale definitiva e perpetua. Il fondamento necessario della maternità dello spirito di Maria sarà sempre la sua unica e permanente co-sofferenza con Gesù nel mistero della Redenzione.

Gli insegnamenti mariologi di Papa San Giovanni Paolo II offrono anche una conferma magisteriale del ruolo unico di Maria con Gesù *nell'acquisizione* delle grazie della Redenzione.²² Solo Maria ha partecipato *all'ottenimento* effettivo delle grazie con Cristo come Corredentrice con il Redentore, mentre tutti i cristiani sono chiamati a partecipare alla conseguente liberazione e distribuzione delle grazie redentrici acquisite sul Calvario:

La collaborazione dei cristiani alla salvezza si attua dopo l'evento del Calvario, del quale essi si impegnano a diffondere i frutti mediante la preghiera e il sacrificio. Il concorso di Maria, invece, si è attuato durante l'evento stesso e a titolo di madre; si estende quindi alla totalità dell'opera salvifica di Cristo. Solamente Lei è stata associata in questo modo all'offerta redentrice che ha meritato la salvezza di tutti gli uomini. In unione con

²⁰ San Giovanni Paolo II, Omelia nel Santuario di Guayaquil, Ecuador, 31 gennaio 1985, n. 5, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/homilies/1985/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19850131_santuario-alborada.html.

²¹ Ibid., no. 6.

²² Cfr. Papa San Giovanni Paolo II, Udienza “*Maria singolare cooperatrice della Redenzione* (Gv 19, 25-26)”, 9 aprile 1997, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_09041997.html; cfr. anche *Salvifici Doloris*, 1984, 25; Udienza papale del 1997, 25 ottobre 1995.

Cristo e sottomessa a Lui, Ella ha collaborato per ottenere la grazia della salvezza all'intera umanità.²³

Come Gesù misticamente trasmise a Santa Brigida: “Mia Madre ed io salvammo l'uomo come con un cuore solo; Io con la sofferenza nel mio Cuore e nella mia carne, lei con il dolore e l'amore del suo Cuore”.²⁴

Non c'è alcuna coerenza mariologica nel concetto della maternità spirituale di Maria separata dal suo ruolo fondativo presso Gesù nella Redenzione. Maria è propriamente Mediattrice di tutte le grazie e Avvocata dell'intera umanità, solo perché è stata per prima la Corredentrice umana presso il divino Redentore partecipando in modo unico all'acquisizione storica delle grazie della Redenzione.

Perché il concetto di Maria come Corredentrice umana è difficile da comprendere per molti ai nostri giorni?

Un fattore che contribuisce è l'abbandono contemporaneo del concetto di *partecipazione* cristiana. La partecipazione denota quando un essere inferiore condivide l'essere o le qualità di un essere superiore, ma senza aggiungere, sottrarre o possedere l'uguaglianza con quell'essere superiore.²⁵ La vera partecipazione, allora, costituisce un prendere parte, una condivisione in qualche modo reale, dell'essere di un altro essere più grande, senza rischio di uguaglianza, competizione, riduzione.

²³ Papa San Giovanni Paolo II, Udienza “*Maria singolare cooperatrice della Redenzione (Gv 19, 25-26)*”, 9 aprile 1997, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_09041997.html.

²⁴ Santa Brigida, *Revelationes*, IX, c. 3.

²⁵ Per una discussione classica sulla metafisica della partecipazione, vedi C. Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo San Tommaso d'Aquino* 3a ed. (Torino: SEI, 1963).

Il Nuovo Testamento stabilisce chiaramente che tutti i seguaci di Gesù Cristo devono diventare, come afferma San Pietro, “partecipi” della natura divina (2 Pietro 1:4), cioè partecipi della natura stessa e dell’essere di Dio stesso. Allo stesso modo san Paolo esorta i cristiani a diventare “collaboratori di Dio” (1 Cor 3,9), e così a cooperare personalmente alla missione salvifica di Gesù Cristo. San Paolo, infatti, non esita a identificarsi in un ruolo cooperativo con Gesù per “salvare” i suoi fratelli ebrei, quando si rivolge ai Romani: “Ora mi rivolgo a voi, gentili...magnifico il mio ministero in per far ingelosire i miei compagni ebrei e salvarne così alcuni (Rm 11,13-14).”²⁶

Aveva ragione sant’Agostino: “Dio ci ha creati senza di noi, ma non ha voluto salvarci senza di noi.”²⁷ Ciò sottolinea l’imperativo cristiano che gli esseri umani partecipino non solo alla propria salvezza, ma anche alla salvezza di altri esseri umani. Non è forse questo l’imperativo della Nuova Evangelizzazione?

La partecipazione di Maria all’unica mediazione di Cristo e alla sua missione redentrice non è paragonabile a quella di nessun’altra creatura. La mariologia del II secolo lo conferma nelle parole del dottore della Chiesa, sant’Ireneo, che la dichiarò «la causa di salvezza per sé e per tutto il genere umano». ²⁸

²⁶ Infatti, la dottrina paolina della partecipazione umana alla missione salvifica di Cristo, a partire dallo stesso Apostolo e estendendosi con l’esempio a tutti i cristiani, è spesso sottovalutata. San Paolo invita ripetutamente il cristiano a diventare “collaboratori” (*synergoi*) nel ministero salvifico di Gesù, termine che usa almeno cinque volte in cinque diverse epistole, tra cui “collaboratori nel Regno di Dio” (Col 4:11); e “collaboratori in Cristo Gesù” (Romani 16:3). San Giovanni si unisce a San Paolo in questo insegnamento biblico quando si riferisce allo stesso modo ai fratelli cristiani come “collaboratori” nella diffusione della “verità” di Gesù Cristo (cfr 3 Giovanni 1:8).

²⁷ Sant’Agostino, Sermo 169, 11, 13: PL 38, 923.

²⁸ Sant’Ireneo, *Adversus Haereses*. III, 22, 4: PG 7, 9S9 A; Harvey, 2, 123.

Qualsiasi posizione secondo cui il ruolo di Maria come Corredentrica umana è uguale a quello di Gesù Cristo, l'unico Redentore divino, costituirebbe un'assurdità intellettuale, per non parlare di teologica. L'umanità è uguale alla divinità a qualsiasi livello? Impossibile. Una donna umana in competizione con il divino Salvatore? Irrazionale. Una donna umana *che partecipa* con un Divino Redentore all'opera della Redenzione? Provvidenziale. Chiaramente, Dio voleva che una donna partecipasse al più grande atto divino della storia umana. Maria, tra tutti i discepoli di Cristo, lo ha fatto in modo unico.

Inoltre, l'ermeneutica della continuità promulgata da Benedetto XVI deve essere incorporata e rispettata anche dalla teologia contemporanea riguardo al ruolo di Maria nella Redenzione. La ricca tradizione di Maria come Corredentrica umana è stata esplicitamente presente nella Chiesa fin dal XIV secolo (e in sostanza contenuta nell'insegnamento apostolico della Nuova Eva). La cooperazione unica di Maria con Gesù nella Redenzione, insegnata da papi, santi, mistici e teologi,²⁹ semplicemente non sta scomparendo. La mariologia del XX secolo ha sostenuto i temi della maternità spirituale, della corredenzione e della mediazione più di ogni altro argomento mariologico.³⁰ Anche gli insegnamenti papali coerenti su

²⁹ Cfr. J.B. Carol, *De corredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Roma, 1950; G. Roschini, *Maria Santissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, vol. II, Isola Del Liri, Pisani, 144-155. Per una rassegna dei testi pontifici da Leone XIII a Giovanni Paolo II, cfr. A. Calkins, "The Mystery of Mary Co-redemptrix in the Papal Magisterium," *Mary Co-redemptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today, Queenship*, 2002, 25-92; M. Perillo, F.I. e M. Somerton, F.I., "The Marian Coredemption through Two Millennia," *Mary at the Foot of the Cross-II*, Ratcliffe College, England, 2002, Academy of the Immaculate, 79- 112.

³⁰ Ciò è verificabile mediante un esame sommario delle maggiori riviste mariologiche nelle principali lingue dagli anni Dieci agli anni Sessanta, nonché conferma da parte di teologi protestanti riconosciuti, cfr. G. Miegge, *La Vergine Maria, saggio del storia del dogma* (Torre Pellice: Editrice Claudina, 1950) p. 178, come citato da Carol, *Mariology*, vol. 2, pag. 377. Circa la sola corredenzione mariana, cfr. Cfr. J.B. Carol, "Marian Corredemption", Carol, ed., *Mariology*, vol 2, 1957, p. 409. (17) Per una rassegna dei testi pontifici sulla corredenzione mariana da Leone XIII a Giovanni Paolo II, cfr. A. Calkins, "The Mystery of Mary Co-redemptrix in the Papal Magisterium", *Mary Corredemptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today, Queenship*, 2002, 25-

questi temi mariologici avrebbero dominato la maggior parte del secolo.³¹

L'autentico sviluppo mariano della dottrina non fa altro che aumentare, non diminuire. Lo Spirito Santo, che non commette errori, ha ispirato

92; M.Perillo, F.I. e M. Somerton, F.I., "The Marian Corredemption Through Two Millennia", *Mary at the Foot of the Cross-II*, Ratcliffe College, England, (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2002) 79-112; Cfr. J.B. Carol, *De corredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Roma, 1950; G. Roschini, *Maria Santissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, vol. II, (Isola Del Liri, Pisani, 1969) 144-155.

³¹ Gli insegnamenti papali su questi temi mariani sono onnipresenti attraverso le encicliche papali, le lettere apostoliche, le omelie, le allocuzioni, ecc. del XX secolo. Per i riferimenti papali e magisteriali solo per il titolo di Corredentrice, cfr.) Congregazione dei Riti, *Decretum quo festum Septem Dolorum B. M. V., Dominicæ tertiæ Septembris affixum, ad ritum duplicem secundæ classis elevatur pro universa Ecclesia* (13 maggio 1918) *Acta Sanctæ Sedis*, 41 [1908] in cui la Congregazione stessa si avvale della Corredentrice titolo nel concedere che la festa dei Sette Dolori di Maria venga elevata al rango di doppia classe; la Congregazione del Sant'Uffizio usa anche il titolo di Corredentrice, in un decreto del 26 giugno 1913, *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* [AAS] 5[1913], 364; e in altro decreto del 22 gennaio 1914, AAS 6, [1914], 108. (19) Papa Benedetto XV, *Inter Sodalicia*, AAS 10, 182. «... ut dici merito queat, Ipsam cum Christo humanum genus redemisse». (20) Cfr. Pio XI, Allocuzione ai pellegrini vicentini, Italia, 30 novembre 1933, *L'Osservatore Romano* n., 1 dicembre 1933, 1; Pio XI, Allocuzione ai pellegrini spagnoli, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 25 marzo 1934, 1; Pio XI, Radiomessaggio per la chiusura dell'Anno Santo a Lourdes, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 29-30 aprile 1935, 1. (21) Pio XI, Allocuzione ai pellegrini vicentini, Italia, 30 novembre 1933, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 1 dicembre 1933, 1; Cfr. Udienza generale Giovanni Paolo II, 10 dicembre 1980 (*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* [Inseg] II, III/2 [1980], p. 1646); Udienza generale dell'8 settembre 1982 (*Inseg* V/3 [1982], p. 404); Discorso dell'Angelus 4 novembre 1984 (*Inseg* VII/2 [1984], p. 1151); Discorso alla Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù del 31 marzo 1985 (*Inseg* VIII/1 [1985], p. 889-890); Discorso agli ammalati 24 marzo 1990 (*Inseg* XIII/1 [1990], p. 743); Discorso del 6 ottobre 1991 (*Inseg* XIV/2 [1991], p. 756). Inoltre, in un'omelia tenuta a Guayaquil, in Ecuador, il 31 gennaio 1985, Giovanni Paolo II parlò del "ruolo corredentore di Maria" (el papel corredentor de María: *Inseg* VIII [1985], p. 319), che è stato tradotto come "Il ruolo di Maria Corredentrice" in *L'Osservatore Romano*, ed. inglese, 11 marzo 1985.

questo sviluppo dottrinale mariologico almeno dal II secolo.³²Non c'è alcuna ragione sostanziale per credere che lo Spirito cesserà di continuare e completare definitivamente questo sviluppo dottrinale.

Definizione solenne della “Madre di tutti noi”?

Nel 1915, il famoso primate belga, il cardinale Desire Mercier, diede inizio a un movimento per la solenne definizione papale della maternità spirituale universale di Nostra Signora durante la devastazione della prima guerra mondiale. Mercier riteneva che un solenne riconoscimento e apprezzamento papale della maternità spirituale di Maria (compreso i suoi ruoli di Corredentrice e Mediatrix di tutte le grazie) porterebbero a una grande liberazione storica di grazia e pace per il mondo. Questa effusione gratuita si baserebbe sul principio che quanto più onoriamo liberamente i ruoli materni di intercessione soprannaturale di Maria, tanto più Lei può provvidenzialmente attuare e potenziare questi ruoli a beneficio dell'umanità. Nel 1918, oltre 300 vescovi affiancati da centinaia di migliaia di sacerdoti, religiosi e fedeli in tutto il mondo, avevano presentato una petizione a Papa Benedetto XV per questo quinto dogma mariano.

Questo movimento continuò per tutto il corso del XX secolo. Ad esempio, dal 1993 al 2000, altri 650 vescovi, per un totale di 7 milioni di fedeli cattolici provenienti da 180 paesi, si unirono a questa petizione per un quinto dogma mariano.³³ Ora, nel 21° secolo, molti credono che la famiglia umana abbia ancora più bisogno di un'invenzione soprannaturale da parte della Madre di tutti noi con le grazie necessarie per la pace globale.

³² Gli studiosi sostengono che la tradizione della Nuova Eva sia apostolica nelle sue origini, essendo tramandata, ad esempio, da San Giovanni Apostolo attraverso San Policarpo fino a Sant'Ireneo.

³³ Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrix Archivio delle lettere di approvazione di cardinali e vescovi ricevute, archiviate, copiate e presentate alla Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede [CDF] dal 1993, nonché delle petizioni dei fedeli laici presentate allo stesso modo alla CDF, 48765 Annapolis Rd, Hopedale, Ohio, USA.

Perché è necessario proclamare un nuovo Dogma? Attualmente, i quattro dogmi mariani, cioè la Maternità di Dio, la Verginità Perpetua, l'Immacolata Concezione e l'Assunzione, si concentrano tutti esclusivamente sulle prerogative personali che Dio ha dato alla Madonna e in relazione a suo Figlio. Tuttavia, nessuno dei dogmi mariani esistenti denota la relazione di Maria con l'umanità. **Definire come dogma che Maria è la “Madre di tutti noi” significa manifestare nel modo più alto e solenne il riconoscimento e l'apprezzamento da parte della Chiesa del suo ruolo di Madre spirituale dell'umanità – che il suo ruolo umano unico con Gesù nella nostra salvezza e nella conseguente maternità relazione alla razza umana merita di essere elevata allo stesso riconoscimento dogmatico e onore degli altri privilegi e ruoli che Dio le ha dato.**

Quali sarebbero i frutti potenziali di un nuovo dogma di maternità spirituale?

Eccone sette:

1. sprigionare grazie storiche di pace e di conversione per la Chiesa e per il mondo, attivando pienamente l'intercessione materna di Maria attraverso il nostro libero consenso esercitato dal successore di Pietro;
2. Il completamento del dogma mariano, proclamando solennemente il rapporto di Maria con l'umanità;
3. Testimoniando il valore redentore della sofferenza umana, come testimoniato sia da Maria Corredentrica, sia dalla chiamata di tutti i cristiani ad essere “corredentori in Cristo;”³⁴

³⁴ Cfr. Papa San Giovanni Paolo II, Allocuzione agli infermi dell'Ospedale dei Fratelli di San Giovanni di Dio, 5 aprile 1981, n. 4: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1981/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19810405_fatebenefratelli.html, *L'Osservatore Romano*, ed. inglese, 13 aprile 1981, 6; Discorso agli ammalati dopo l'udienza generale, 13 gennaio 1982, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1982/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_sp_19820113_ammalati.html

4. Evidenziare la dignità della persona umana e la libertà umana, celebrando l'imperativo umano di cooperare liberamente con la grazia di Dio.⁷
5. Proclamare la vera dignità della donna, accentuando un autentico femminismo cristiano basato sulla Madonna;
6. Esercitare un autentico ecumenismo verso Maria, proclamando giustamente che nessuno unisce i suoi figli cristiani meglio di Maria;
7. rispondendo alla credibile Rivelazione privata mariana, dove attraverso numerose apparizioni contemporanee, la Madonna ha comunicato che Dio desidera questo quinto dogma mariano come chiave definitiva per il Trionfo del suo Cuore Immacolato.³⁵

Recentemente, in un messaggio papale del 13 maggio 2023 per una celebrazione mariana in Sardegna, Papa Francesco ha fatto riferimento a “Mediatrice di tutte le grazie” come a un “antico titolo mariano” e ha identificato Maria come “Avvocata presso Gesù”.³⁶ Questi riferimenti a due dei tre titoli così strettamente legati alla petizione mondiale per un nuovo dogma mariano potrebbero indicare una nuova apertura da parte di Francesco? Solo il tempo e la preghiera lo diranno. Nel frattempo, l'attuale Romano Pontefice continua a insegnare la dottrina della maternità spirituale di Maria e

[ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19820113.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19820113.html), *Inseg.* V/1, 1982, 91; Discorso ai vescovi dell'Uruguay, 8 maggio 1988, n. 7: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1988/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19880508_vescovi-nunziatura.html, *L'Osservatore Romano*, ed. inglese, 30 de mayo de 1988, 4.

³⁵ Cfr. Mark Miravalle, “*Apologia Pro Dogma Sua*: Ecclesial, Anthropological, and Contemporary Global Fruits from a Potential New Marian Dogma,” *Ecce Mater Tua*, Vol. 3, August 22, 2018, <https://eccematertua.com/sites/eccce/files/miravalleemtvol3second.pdf>.

³⁶ Papa Francesco, Messaggio a Monsignor Gian Franco Saba, Arcivescovo di Sassari, Sardegna, 13 maggio 2023, <http://www.arcidiocesisassari.it/2023/05/28/festa-del-voto-il-messaggio-del-santo-padre/> (accesso il 26 agosto 2023).

del suo ruolo unico nella Redenzione, come ha fatto, ad esempio, nell'omelia del 1° gennaio 2020 per la Giornata Mondiale della Pace: “Da Lei, una donna, è venuta la salvezza, e quindi non c'è salvezza senza la donna.”³⁷

Credo che sia giunto il momento di applicare la scommessa di Pascal al quinto dogma mariano. Cosa andrebbe perduto se ogni frutto globale predetto – dalla storica liberazione della grazia del cardinale Mercier alla descrizione della Rivelazione privata di un quinto dogma mariano come condizione necessaria per il trionfo del Cuore di Maria e la pace globale – non risultasse da questa definizione proposta, ma solo da una proclamazione solenne di ciò che già crediamo di Nostra Madre come cattolici? L'annuncio della verità mariana non è meritorio agli occhi e al cuore del Figlio suo?

E se Mercier e Maria avessero ragione? E se tutti i frutti dalla pace temporale di Mercier all'Era di Pace di Maria fossero davvero condizionati da questo annuncio mariano? Non è forse giunto il momento di fare questa scommessa per la pace nel mondo? O dovremmo attendere un'altra serie di guerre regionali, o forse addirittura la piena e fatale formalizzazione di una terza guerra mondiale nucleare?

Conclusione

La battaglia nel Libro dell'Apocalisse è anche la battaglia del momento presente. *Il mondo ha un disperato bisogno di una Madre. Il mondo ha urgentemente bisogno dell'intercessione pienamente attivata della Donna vestita di Sole, la Madre Spirituale di tutti noi, per condurre l'attuale battaglia contro Satana e la sua anti-cultura di odio, divisione e guerra. Questa Donna ci condurrà alla vittoria, al Trionfo del suo*

³⁷ Papa Francesco, Omelia della Messa della Solennità della Madre di Dio, 1 gennaio 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200101_omelia-madredidio-pace.html (accesso il 16 luglio 2023).

Cuore Immacolato, perché intercederà per *riportare Gesù* nel mondo attraverso una nuova Pentecoste, una nuova discesa del suo Spirito che sola può portare la pace vera e duratura al nostro mondo travagliato.

La Donna attende solo una cosa: il nostro consenso, un consenso umano universale alla sua potentissima intercessione manifestata attraverso una solenne dichiarazione papale della sua Maternità Spirituale. Nessun altro può parlare a nome di tutta l'umanità se non il Vicario di Cristo.

Entriamo in una discussione seria all'interno della Chiesa e della sua gerarchia, in un vero spirito di sinodalità, riguardo a una potenziale definizione papale della Madre di tutti noi – un dogma che riconosca Nostra Madre per quello che è veramente e cosa può fare per una famiglia umana che ha bisogno *adesso* della sua potente intercessione materna.

Madre de Todos Nosotros: Ramificaciones Globales de un Mundo en Crisis

MARK MIRAVALLE, S.T.D.

El Papa Francisco no tiene dificultad en plantear un tema que se ha convertido en un elemento básico de su enseñanza y predicación papal: Satanás.¹ ¿Por qué el Sucesor de Pedro habla tanto del Maligno?

Quizás sea porque Satanás está ganando terreno en la sociedad global, la cultura global y la política global en formas que bien pueden no tener precedentes desde la época en que Cristo caminó sobre la tierra.

Gran parte de la humanidad lo siente. La mayoría de los cristianos sienten esto. Quizás el Papa Francisco quiera que los católicos estén conscientes de los avances históricos de Satanás en el mundo y, hasta cierto punto, incluso dentro de la Iglesia.

Precisamente por eso la Iglesia y el mundo *necesitan desesperadamente* una Madre. “Desesperada” no es hiperbólica cuando se analiza el escenario global actual, desde las siniestras guerras entre Rusia y Ucrania, Israel y Palestina, y el genocidio sudanés; a las crecientes inestabilidades económicas globales; al aumento del aborto, la eutanasia, la trata de personas y todos los ataques a la vida humana; a desastres naturales sin precedentes; a peligros cismáticos dentro de la Iglesia; a ataques a la verdadera naturaleza del matrimonio y la familia, y mucho más allá.

¹ El énfasis del Papa Francisco en Satanás ya es claro desde los primeros años de su pontificado, cf. Andrea Tornielli, *Il Papa contra Satana* :<https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/it/2017/12/28/news/il-papa-in-lotta-contro-satana-1.34087676/>. (En inglés) *El Papa contra Satanás* :<https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/es/2017/12/28/news/the-pope-s-fight-against-satan-1.34087845/>.

Sí, el mundo necesita desesperadamente una Madre. Pero el mundo tiene una Madre. Ella es la Madre que nos ha dado el Señor Crucificado (cf. Jn 19, 26-27). Ella es la Mujer vestida del sol, que ha sido designada por Dios para librar la gran batalla espiritual contra el dragón (cf. Ap. 12:1-20), que es la misma mujer bíblica profetizada que aplastaría la cabeza de la serpiente. (cf. Génesis 3:15). Ella es la Madre Inmaculada, dada por Dios para liderar la batalla espiritual de hoy contra Satanás por la salvación de las almas y el futuro de la humanidad.

Por eso es de suma importancia histórica que la Iglesia reconozca solemnemente a María como nuestra Madre Espiritual y su verdadero papel continuo en la historia de la salvación ahora, en nuestro momento presente, para otorgarle nuestro consentimiento universal, a través de la voz de Pedro, que permitirá ella para interceder más plenamente contra las fuerzas del infierno que están haciendo grandes avances diabólicos hoy.

El Concilio Vaticano Segundo identifica a la madre de Cristo como “una madre para nosotros en el orden de la gracia”.² Poco después del Concilio, en su Carta Apostólica *Signum Magnum* de 1967, el Papa San Pablo VI identificó la Maternidad Espiritual de María, basada en su participación única e íntima en el sacrificio redentor de Cristo, como un *de fide* artículo de fe, y como tal debe ser aceptado por todos los cristianos:

Porque, así como toda madre humana no puede limitar su misión a la generación de un nuevo hombre, sino que debe extenderla a las funciones de la alimentación y de la educación de la prole, lo mismo hace la bienaventurada Virgen María. Después de haber participado en el sacrificio redentor del Hijo, y ello en modo tan íntimo que mereció ser proclamada por Él Madre no sólo del discípulo Juan, sino -permítasenos afirmarlo- del género

² El Concilio Vaticano Segundo. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 61.

humano representado de alguna manera por él. Ahora, desde el cielo, ella continúa cumpliendo su maternal función de cooperadora en el nacimiento y en el desarrollo de la vida divina en cada una de las almas de los hombres redimidos. Ésta es una muy consoladora verdad, que por libre beneplácito del sapientísimo Dios forma parte integrante del misterio de la humana salvación: por ello ha de mantenerse como de fe por todos los cristianos.³

El 10 de enero de 1979, meses después de convertirse en pontífice romano, el Papa San Juan Pablo II inmediatamente comenzó a enseñar la preeminencia y universalidad de la Maternidad Espiritual de Nuestra Señora:

Esta maternidad “espiritual” (*quoad spiritum*) comenzó al mismo tiempo que la maternidad física (*quoad corpus*). ... Y todos los hombres la tienen por Madre. Estos entienden como dirigidas a cada uno, las palabras pronunciadas en lo alto de la cruz. [Ella es] Madre de todos los hombres. *La maternidad espiritual no conoce límites*. Se extiende en el tiempo y en el espacio. Alcanza a tantos corazones humanos. Alcanza a naciones enteras.⁴

Un año después del intento de asesinato contra su vida el 13 de mayo de 1981, el Papa San Juan Pablo II hizo una consagración inicial y encomienda de humanidad a Nuestra Señora en Fátima el 13 de mayo de 1982, invocándola, “Oh Madre de los hombres y de los pueblos”⁵ y encomendándole: “Oh Madre de todos los hombres y de

³ Papa San Pablo VI, Exhortación Apostólica, *Signum Magnum*, 13 de mayo de 1967, Parte I.1.

⁴ San Juan Pablo II, Audiencia General, 10 de enero de 1979, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/audiences/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19790110.html [el énfasis es mío].

⁵ *Ibid.*

todos los pueblos”.⁶ Durante su histórica Consagración del mundo al Inmaculado Corazón el 25 de marzo de 1984, San Juan Pablo II la invoca nuevamente, “Oh Madre de las personas y de los pueblos”.⁷

El pontífice *Totus Tuus* enseña oficialmente la centralidad de la maternidad espiritual en su encíclica mariana de 1987, *Redemptoris Mater*, donde afirma:

La Madre de Cristo, encontrándose en el campo directo de este misterio que abarca al hombre —a cada uno y a todos—, es entregada al hombre —a cada uno y a todos— como madre. Este hombre junto a la cruz es Juan, « el discípulo que él amaba ». Pero no está él solo. Siguiendo la tradición, el Concilio no duda en llamar a María « *Madre de Cristo, madre de los hombres* ». ... más aún, es verdaderamente madre de los miembros de Cristo por haber cooperado con su amor a que naciesen en la Iglesia los fieles ...

La maternidad de María ... es un don: *un don que Cristo mismo* hace personalmente a cada hombre.⁸

En su homilía del Día Mundial de la Paz del 1 de enero de 2007, el Papa Benedicto XVI continúa esta perenne enseñanza papal refiriéndose a Nuestra Señora como la “Madre espiritual de toda la humanidad.”⁹

⁶ San Juan Pablo II, Oración de ofrecimiento y de consagración a la Virgen de Fátima (13 de mayo de 1982)
Fátima, *L'Osservatore Romano*, edición semanal en inglés, 24 de mayo de 1982.

⁷ San Juan Pablo II, Acto de Consagración del Mundo al Inmaculado Corazón de María, Plaza de San Pedro, Ciudad del Vaticano, 25 de marzo de 1984.

⁸ San Juan Pablo II, Encíclica *Redemptoris Mater*, 25 de marzo de 1987, nn. 23,45.

⁹ Papa Benedicto XVI, Homilía del 1 de enero de 2007, Solemnidad de la Madre de Dios y XL Jornada Mundial de la Paz, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/es/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070101_world-day-peace.html

El Papa Francisco reafirma constantemente la maternidad espiritual de María, tanto en la enseñanza como en el título. Por ejemplo, en una homilía de 2019 en la Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, enseña, “María... es Madre de todos nosotros.”¹⁰ En su discurso para la Jornada Mundial de la Paz de 2020, señala a María como la “Madre de todos los pueblos de la tierra.”¹¹ En su Mensaje de 2021 a la Pontificia Academia Mariana Internacional, el Papa Francisco confirma “...Ella es Madre de Todos, sin importar etnia o nacionalidad ...”¹²

Examinemos ahora tres dimensiones dinámicamente relevantes de la maternidad espiritual de María para la Iglesia y el mundo de hoy. Primero, ¿cuál es la esencia de su Maternidad Espiritual universal y cómo la expresión “Madre de todos nosotros” sintetiza la relación general de Nuestra Señora con la humanidad? En segundo lugar, ¿cómo constituye el papel de María con y bajo Jesús en la Redención el fundamento indispensable de su Maternidad Espiritual? En tercer lugar, ¿cómo se beneficiarían la Iglesia y el mundo de una definición papal solemne de María como Madre espiritual de la humanidad en nuestro momento actual de crisis globales ubicuas?

¹⁰ Papa Francisco, Homilía para la Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, 12 de diciembre de 2019, Basílica de San Pedro, Ciudad del Vaticano, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20191212_omelia-guadalupe.html.

¹¹ Papa Francisco, Mensaje para la 53ª Jornada Mundial de la Paz, 1 de enero de 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20191208_messaggio-53giornatamondiale-pace2020.html.

¹² Papa Francisco, Mensaje a los participantes del XXV Congreso Mariano Internacional de la Pontificia Academia Mariana Internacional (PAMI) 8 de septiembre de 2021, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2021/documents/20210822-messaggio-congressomariano.html>.

Maternidad Espiritual Universal

La maternidad se define clásicamente como cuando una mujer da a luz a una descendencia de naturaleza idéntica a la suya, mediante el proceso de concepción, gestación y nacimiento. Sin embargo, no es sólo la generación biológica de un niño lo que normal y existencialmente constituye la auténtica maternidad, sino también la formación del niño: no sólo naturándolo, sino también nutrirlo a través del amor sacrificial, la formación y la protección.

La maternidad espiritual requiere las mismas funciones maternas en el orden de la gracia. El teólogo jesuita Bertrand de Margerie explica:

Maternidad espiritual significa una actividad sobrenatural, recibida y subordinada, en la obra de salvación eterna de otro ser humano, por la cual una persona creada recibe y transmite a otra la vida divina... el ser humano que es elevado al nivel de la maternidad espiritual recibe de Dios Padre la posibilidad de engendrar sobrenaturalmente a los que son sus hermanos en el orden natural.¹³

Éste es el papel de María en el orden sobrenatural. Es una maternidad que interviene en primer lugar por nuestro nacimiento espiritual en el Bautismo, transmitiéndonos la vida divina, y luego nuestro continuo alimento y protección espiritual a través de su intercesión materna

San Agustín atestigua con razón esta verdad desde el comienzo de la Tradición de la Iglesia: "...ella [María] es realmente madre de los miembros que somos, porque cooperó por la caridad para que

¹³ Bertrand de Margerie, S.J., "Can the Church Define Dogmatically the Spiritual Motherhood of Mary? Objections and Answers", *Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate, Theological Foundations: Towards a Papal Definition?* M. Miravalle, editor, (Santa Barbara, Queenship Publishing, 1995), p. 193.

nacieran en la Iglesia creyentes, de los cuales Él [Cristo] es la cabeza.”¹⁴

El inicio de su Maternidad Espiritual se origina en la Anunciación. Su “hágase” para dar naturaleza humana a Cristo, Cabeza del Cuerpo Místico, transmite también un “sí” a ser madre de los miembros místicamente unidos a Cristo Cabeza. El Papa San Pío X enseñó en su encíclica de 1904, *Ad diem illum*, que todos los cristianos nacen místicamente del “vientre de María” y, por lo tanto, se convierten en “Madre espiritual de todos nosotros”:

¿No es María Madre de Cristo? Por tanto, también es madre nuestra. ... [Cristo] fue dotado, como todos los hombres, de un cuerpo concreto; en cuanto restaurador de nuestro linaje, tiene un cuerpo espiritual, al que se llama místico, que es la sociedad de quienes creen en Cristo ... De manera que cuando María tenía en su vientre al Salvador puede decirse que gestaba también a todos aquellos cuya vida estaba contenida en la vida del Salvador. ... Así pues, todos ... hemos salido del vientre de María, como partes del cuerpo que permanece unido a la cabeza. De donde, de un modo ciertamente espiritual y místico, también nosotros nos llamamos hijos de María y ella es la madre de todos nosotros.¹⁵

La maternidad de María de la humanidad constituye una verdadera maternidad del espíritu, no simplemente simbólica ni metafórica.

Para realizar esta sublime tarea de dirigir a la humanidad al nacimiento espiritual y a la santidad permanente, la Madre de toda la humanidad tuvo que participar primero con su divino Hijo en la restauración de la gracia para la raza humana. María era la Nueva Eva

¹⁴ San Agustín, *De S. Virginitate* VI, PL 40, 399; Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 53.

¹⁵San Pío X, Encíclica *Ad diem illum*, 1904, ASS 36 (1904/1905), 452–453.
. <https://es.catholic.net/op/articulos/15046/cat/643/pio-x-ad-diem-illum-laetissimum.html#modal>

humana con y bajo Jesús, el Nuevo Adán divino; ella fue la Corredentora humana con y bajo Jesucristo, el divino Redentor, en la misión histórica de la Redención. Este es el fundamento de su verdadera y auténtica Maternidad Espiritual, que requirió una vida terrena sin igual de sufrimiento y sacrificio maternal.

La plena institución de la maternidad espiritual de María tiene lugar en el Calvario. Las palabras del Redentor crucificado anuncian al mundo que sólo después de pagar el precio de los pecados del mundo, ahora y definitivamente, la humanidad tiene una nueva madre: “Cuando Jesús vio a su madre, y al discípulo a quien amaba, que estaba cerca, dijo a su madre: ‘¡Mujer, ahí tienes a tu hijo! Luego dijo al discípulo: ‘¡Ahí tienes a tu madre!’” (Juan 19:26-27).

Estas palabras *establecen un nuevo orden familiar en el reino de Dios*. Ya no somos descendientes únicamente de Eva, una madre generacional de la carne que trágicamente dio su fiat al plan de Satanás, a través del cual se pierde universalmente la gracia para sus hijos presentes y futuros. Ahora tenemos *una nueva y universal Madre del espíritu* que da su fiat “hágase” a la totalidad del plan de Dios Padre, y así coopera como ningún otro ser humano a restaurar la gracia para sus hijos universales.

León XIII enseñó con razón: “Ahora bien, en Juan, según el pensamiento constante de la Iglesia, Cristo designó a todo el género humano, particularmente a los que estaban unidos a él en la fe.”¹⁶ Así como todo el género humano está representado en Juan, así también todo el género humano está confiado a María por Cristo. El Papa San Juan Pablo II confirma:

La Madre de Cristo, encontrándose en el campo directo de este misterio que abarca al hombre —a cada uno y a todos—, es entregada al hombre —a cada uno y a todos— como madre. Este hombre junto a la cruz es

¹⁶ Papa León XIII, Encíclica, *Adiutricem populi*, 5 de septiembre de 1895, n.º 6, ASS 28, 1895-1896.

Juan, « el discípulo que él amaba ». Pero no está él solo. Siguiendo la tradición, el Concilio no duda en llamar a María « *Madre de Cristo, madre de los hombres* ». ...¹⁷

La Maternidad Espiritual de María es tan universal como la Redención de Cristo. Benedicto XVI confirma: “María es la madre espiritual de toda la humanidad, porque Jesús en la Cruz derramó su sangre por todos nosotros, y desde la Cruz nos confió a todos a su cuidado maternal.”¹⁸

Títulos como “Madre de todos nosotros”, “Madre de toda la humanidad” o “Madre de todos los pueblos” transmiten con precisión la verdad teológica sobre el papel sobrenatural que María debe ejercer en la vida de todos los pueblos, pero al mismo tiempo capturan la universalidad y valoración de la maternidad misma, estimada y aplaudida esencialmente en todas las sociedades.

La maternidad, como la mediación, también es metafísica y análogamente rica, pero el modelo de maternidad posee un atractivo común inmediato que ningún término teológico o filosófico abstracto podría ofrecer del mismo modo. “Madre de todos nosotros” es una expresión mariológica comprendida y apreciada tanto por la cabeza como por el corazón.¹⁹

¹⁷ Papa San Juan Pablo II, Encíclica *Redemptoris Mater*, 1987, n. 23. N.B. Con la declaración de María como “Madre de la Iglesia” el 21 de noviembre de 1964 por el Papa San Pablo VI, y su implementación litúrgica en 2018 por el Papa Francisco como un memorial obligatorio el lunes después de Pentecostés, la maternidad de Nuestra Señora en el orden de gracia es innegablemente establecido para la Iglesia. Sin embargo, esta maternidad también se extiende universalmente más allá de los confines visibles de la Iglesia a todas las naciones, todos los pueblos, todos los individuos.

¹⁸ Benedicto XVI, homilía del 1 de enero de 2007:

https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/es/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070101_world-day-peace.html

¹⁹ Si bien algunos pueden argumentar que existe una distinción formal entre la mediación materna y la maternidad espiritual porque esta última incluye sólo la “mediación descendente”, esto sería subestimar significativamente toda la riqueza

Además, la Maternidad Espiritual bien puede facilitar como género metafísico las tres funciones maternas principales de Nuestra Señora, es decir, *la Madre Sufriente (Corredentora)*; *la Madre Nutridora* (Mediadora de todas las gracias) y *la Madre Intercedida* (Defensora), sin estirar la categoría. de la maternidad más allá de sus propios límites ontológicos. Al contrario, contiene y transmite lo que toda buena madre hace por sus hijos en el orden natural de la mediación materna: sufren, nutren e interceden. Esto es precisamente lo que la Madre Inmaculada hace por la humanidad dentro de su orden espiritual de maternidad.

El fundamento de la maternidad espiritual: el papel de María en la redención

Es evidente en el orden natural que el ejercicio de la maternidad implica necesariamente sufrimiento. A menudo, poco después del embarazo comienza el dolor de la maternidad. Este sufrimiento físico llega a su etapa culminante con el parto. La maternidad plena no cesa con el nacimiento, sino que continúa existencialmente criando a su hijo en una plétora de formas formativas. El sufrimiento emocional y psicológico de una madre con su hijo también continúa a la luz de la unión connatural de corazón entre madre e hijo.

El sufrimiento materno como fundamento de todas las demás funciones maternas es igualmente cierto con la Maternidad Espiritual de Nuestra Señora.

La Inmaculada Concepción de María también está esencialmente relacionada con su corredención humana con Cristo. Ella es creada “llena de gracia” por el Padre celestial precisamente para ser la

metafísica y analógica de la maternidad espiritual. Tanto en el orden natural como en el sobrenatural, la maternidad es esencialmente mediadora; naturalmente entre padre e hijo en la generación y más allá; sobrenaturalmente en el papel mediador previo de Nuestra Señora con el Padre y su mediación constante con y bajo Jesús, que es el fundamento mismo de su relación con nosotros.

perfecta compañera humana de su Hijo Redentor. María *mantiene* su “plenitud de gracia” a través de su heroico “sí” momento a momento a la voluntad de Dios a lo largo *de toda su vida terrena*. Esta libre fidelidad a su Inmaculada Concepción exigió un esfuerzo humano perpetuamente heroico y fue, en sí misma, una contribución corredentora para la humanidad. También constituyó la victoria personal de María sobre Satanás y su semilla de pecado y tentación.

Es precisamente este sufrimiento de toda la vida con Jesús en su misión redentora lo que conduce al momento culminante del Calvario, donde, en palabras de San Juan Pablo II, María es “espiritualmente crucificada con su Hijo crucificado”²⁰ como Corredentora.²¹ No es accidente que sólo después de la consumación del sufrimiento del divino Redentor y de la humana Corredentora en el Calvario (cf. Jn. 19, 26-27), Jesús anuncie al mundo que ahora tenemos una nueva Madre Espiritual, definitiva y perpetua. El fundamento necesario de la maternidad del espíritu de María será siempre su único y duradero co-sufrimiento con Jesús en el misterio de la Redención.

Las enseñanzas mariológicas del Papa San Juan Pablo II también ofrecen una confirmación magistral del papel único de María con Jesús en *la adquisición* de las gracias de la Redención.²² Sólo María participó en la obtención real de las gracias con Cristo, mientras que todos los demás cristianos están llamados a participar en la consiguiente liberación y distribución de las gracias redentoras adquiridas en el Calvario:

²⁰ San Juan Pablo II, Homilía en el Santuario de Guayaquil, Ecuador, 31 de enero de 1985, no. 6: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/homilies/1985/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19850131_santuario-alborada.html

²¹ Ibid.

²² Cf. Papa San Juan Pablo II, Audiencia “Cooperador en la Redención”, 9 de abril de 1997, *L'Osservatore Romano*, edición inglesa, 16 de abril de 1997, 7; cf. también *Salvific Doloris*, 1984, 25; Audiencia Papal de 1997, 25 de octubre de 1995.

La cooperación de los cristianos en la salvación se realiza después del acontecimiento del Calvario, cuyos frutos se comprometen a difundir mediante la oración y el sacrificio. Por el contrario, la participación de María se realizó durante el acontecimiento mismo y en calidad de madre; por tanto, se extiende a la totalidad de la obra salvífica de Cristo. Solamente ella fue asociada de ese modo al sacrificio redentor, que mereció la salvación de todos los hombres. En unión con Cristo y subordinada a él, cooperó para obtener la gracia de la salvación a toda la humanidad.²³

Como Jesús le transmitió místicamente a Santa Brígida: “Mi Madre y yo salvamos al hombre como con un solo corazón; Yo por el sufrimiento en mi Corazón y en mi carne, ella por el dolor y el amor de su Corazón.”²⁴

No hay coherencia mariológica en el concepto de Maternidad Espiritual de María separada de su papel fundacional con Jesús en la Redención. María es apropiadamente Mediadora de todas las gracias y Abogada de toda la humanidad, sólo porque fue primero la Corredentora humana con el divino Redentor al participar de manera única en la adquisición histórica de las gracias de la Redención.

¿Por qué, entonces, es tan difícil de comprender para algunos el concepto de María como Corredentora humana?

Un factor que contribuye es el abandono contemporáneo del concepto cristiano por excelencia de *participación*. La participación denota cuando un ser inferior comparte el ser o cualidades de un ser superior, pero sin sumar, restar o poseer igualdad con ese ser

²³Papa San Juan Pablo II, Audiencia “Cooperador en la Redención”, 9 de abril de 1997, n. 7: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/audiencias/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_09041997.html

²⁴ Santa Brígida, *Revelaciones*, IX, c. 3.

superior.²⁵ La verdadera participación, entonces, constituye participar, compartir de alguna manera real, en el ser de otro ser mayor, sin riesgo de igualdad, competencia o reducción.

El Nuevo Testamento establece claramente que todos los seguidores de Jesucristo se vuelven, como afirma San Pedro, “participantes” de la naturaleza divina (2 Pedro 1:4), es decir, participan de la naturaleza y el ser mismo de Dios mismo. San Pablo también exhorta a los cristianos a ser “colaboradores de Dios” (1 Cor. 3:9), y así cooperar personalmente en la misión salvífica de Jesucristo. De hecho, San Pablo no rehuye identificarse en un papel de corredención con Jesús al testificar de su propia cooperación para “salvar” a sus compañeros judíos cuando habla a los romanos: “Ahora os hablo a vosotros, los gentiles... Engrandezco mi ministerio para causar celos a mis hermanos judíos, y así salvar a algunos de ellos (Rom. 11: 13-14).”²⁶

San Agustín tenía razón: “Dios nos creó sin nosotros, pero no quiso salvarnos sin nosotros”.²⁷

Esto apunta al imperativo cristiano de que los humanos participen no sólo en su propia salvación, sino también en la salvación de otros seres humanos. ¿No es éste el imperativo de la Nueva Evangelización?

²⁵ Para una discusión clásica sobre la metafísica de la participación, véase C. Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo San Tommaso d'Aquino*, 3ª ed. (Turín: SEI, 1963).

²⁶ De hecho, muchas veces se infravalora la doctrina paulina de la participación humana en la misión salvífica de Cristo, comenzando por el mismo Apóstol y extendiéndose con el ejemplo a todos los cristianos. San Pablo llama repetidamente al cristiano a convertirse en “colaboradores” (*synergoi*) en el ministerio salvífico de Jesús, término que utiliza al menos cinco veces en cinco epístolas diferentes, incluyendo “colaboradores en el Reino de Dios” (Col. 4:11); y “colaboradores en Cristo Jesús” (Romanos 16:3). San Juan se une a San Pablo en esta enseñanza bíblica cuando también se refiere a sus compañeros cristianos como “colaboradores” en la difusión de la “Verdad” de Jesucristo (cf. 3 Juan 1:8).

²⁷ San Agustín, *Sermo* 169, 11, 13: PL 38, 923.

La participación de María en la única mediación de Cristo y en su misión redentora está incomparablemente más allá de cualquier otra criatura. La mariología del siglo II confirma esto en las palabras del doctor de la Iglesia San Ireneo, que la Nueva Eva es la “causa de salvación para ella y para todo el género humano”.²⁸

Cualquier posición que sostenga que el papel de María como Corredentora humana es *igual* al de Jesucristo, el único Redentor divino del mundo, constituiría un absurdo lógico, y mucho menos teológico. La humanidad igual a la divinidad en cualquier nivel es imposible. Cualquier concepto de una mujer humana compitiendo con un Salvador divino es irracional. Una mujer humana *participando* con un Divino Redentor en la obra de la Redención es bíblica e histórica. Claramente, Dios quería que una mujer participara en el mayor acto divino de la historia humana. María, entre todos los discípulos de Cristo de todos los tiempos, lo hizo de manera única.

La “Hermenéutica de la Continuidad”, tal como la promulgó teológicamente el Papa Benedicto XVI, también debería aplicarse al papel de María en la Redención dentro de la teología contemporánea. La rica Tradición de la corredención mariana ha estado explícitamente presente en la Iglesia desde el siglo XIV, y también está contenida sustancialmente en la enseñanza de la Nueva Eva de los primeros tres siglos cristianos. La cooperación única de María con Jesús en la Redención, enseñada por papas, santos, místicos y teólogos,²⁹ simplemente no va a desaparecer. La mariología del siglo

²⁸ San Ireneo, *Adversus Haereses*. III, 22, 4: PG 7, 9S9 A; Harvey, 2, 123.

²⁹ Cf. JB Carol, *De corredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Roma, 1950; G. Roschini, *María Santísima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, vol. II, Isla Del Liri, Pisani, 144-155. Para un estudio de los textos papales desde León XIII hasta Juan Pablo II, cf. A. Calkins, “The Mystery of Mary Co-redemptrix in the Papal Magisterium,” *Mary Co-redemptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today*, Queenship, 2002, 25-92; M. Perillo, F.I. y M. Somerton, F.I., “The Marian Coredemption Through Two Millennia”, *Mary at the Foot of the Cross-II*, Ratcliffe College, Inglaterra, 2002, Academy of the Immaculate, 79-112.

XX defendió los temas de la maternidad espiritual, la corredención y la mediación, más que cualquier otro tema mariológico.³⁰ Las enseñanzas papales consistentes sobre estos temas mariológicos también dominarían la mayor parte del siglo XX.³¹ El auténtico

³⁰ Esto es verificable mediante un examen resumido de las principales revistas mariológicas en los principales idiomas desde los años 1910 hasta los años 1960, así como la confirmación por parte de teólogos protestantes reconocidos, cf. G. Miegge, *La Vergine Maria, saggio del storia del dogma* (Torre Pellice: Editrice Claudina, 1950) p. 178, citado por Carol, *Mariology*, vol. 2, pág. 377. Sólo sobre la corredención mariana, cf. Cf. J.B. Carol, “Marian Coredemption”, Carol, ed., *Mariology*, Vol 2, 1957, p. 409. (17) Para un estudio de los textos papales sobre la corredención mariana desde León XIII hasta Juan Pablo II, cf. A. Calkins, “The Mystery of Mary Co-redemptrix in the Papal Magisterium, Queenship, 2002, 25-92; M. Perillo, F.I. y M. Somerton, F.I., “The Marian Coredemption Through Two Millennia”, *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, Ratcliffe College, Inglaterra, 2002, (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2002) 79-112; Cf. JB Carol, *De corredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Roma, 1950; G. Roschini, *Maria Santissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, vol. II, (Isola Del Liri, Pisani, 1969) 144-155.

³¹ Las enseñanzas papales sobre estos temas marianos son omnipresentes en las encíclicas papales, cartas apostólicas, homilías, alocuciones, etc. del siglo XX. Para referencias papales y magisteriales solo para el título de Corredentora, cf.) Congregación de Ritos, *Decretum quo festum Septem Dolorum B. M. V., Dominicæ tertiæ Septembris affixum, ad ritum duplicem secundæ classis elevatur pro universa Ecclesia* (13 de mayo de 1918) *Acta Sanctæ Sedis*, 41 [1908] en el que la propia Congregación utiliza la Corredentora título al conceder la fiesta de los Siete Dolores de María para ser elevada al rango de doble clase; la Congregación del Santo Oficio también utiliza el título Corredentora, en un decreto del 26 de junio de 1913, *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* [AAS] 5[1913], 364; y en otro decreto del 22 de enero de 1914, AAS 6, [1914], 108. (19) Papa Benedicto XV, *Inter Sodalicia*, AAS 10, 182. “... *ut dici merito queat, Ipsam cum Christo humanum genus redemisse*”. (20). Cf. Pío XI, Alocución a los peregrinos de Vicenza, Italia, 30 de noviembre de 1933, *L'Osservatore Roma* no, 1 de diciembre de 1933, 1; Pío XI, Alocución a los peregrinos españoles, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 25 de marzo de 1934, 1; Pío XI, Mensaje radial para la clausura del Año Santo en Lourdes, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 29-30 de abril de 1935, 1. (21) Pío XI, Alocución a los peregrinos de Vicenza, Italia, 30 de noviembre de 1933, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 1 de diciembre de 1933, 1; Véase Audiencia General de Juan Pablo II, 10 de diciembre de 1980 (*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo* [Inseg] II, III/2 [1980], p. 1646); Audiencia General de 8 de septiembre de 1982 (*Inseg* V/3 [1982], p. 404); Discurso del Ángelus del 4 de noviembre de 1984 (*Inseg* VII/2 [1984], p. 1151); Discurso en la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud el 31 de marzo de 1985 (*Inseg* VIII/1 [1985],

desarrollo mariano de la doctrina sólo aumenta, no disminuye. El Espíritu Santo, que no comete ningún error, ha inspirado este desarrollo doctrinal mariológico desde al menos el siglo II.³² No hay ninguna razón sustancial para creer que el Espíritu dejará de continuar y completar finalmente este desarrollo doctrinal.

¿Definición solemne de la “Madre de todos nosotros”?

En 1915, el renombrado prelado belga, Cardenal Desire Mercier, inició un movimiento para la definición papal solemne de la Maternidad Espiritual de Nuestra Señora en medio de la devastación en curso de la Primera Guerra Mundial. Mercier creía que un reconocimiento papal solemne de la Maternidad Espiritual de María (fundada, como él enseñada, sobre su papel de Corredentora y Mediadora de todas las gracias) conduciría a una gran liberación histórica de gracia y paz para el mundo. Este derramamiento gratuito se basa en el principio de que cuanto más libre y oficialmente honremos los roles maternos de intercesión sobrenatural de María, más podrá ella providencialmente representar y empoderar estos roles para la humanidad. En 1918, más de 300 obispos, junto con cientos de miles de sacerdotes, religiosos y fieles de todo el mundo, habían solicitado al Papa Benedicto XV este quinto dogma mariano.

Este movimiento mariano ha continuado durante todo el siglo XX. Por ejemplo, de 1993 a 2000, 650 obispos más y más de 7 millones de fieles católicos de 180 países se unirían a esta petición de un quinto

págs. 889–890); Discurso a los enfermos del 24 de marzo de 1990 (*Inseg XIII/1* [1990], p. 743); Discurso del 6 de octubre de 1991 (*Inseg XIV/2* [1991], p. 756). Además, en una homilía en Guayaquil, Ecuador, el 31 de enero de 1985, Juan Pablo II habló del “papel corredentor de María (el papel corredentor de María: *Inseg VIII* [1985], p. 319), que fue traducido como “Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix” en *L’Osservatore Romano*, ed. inglesa, 11 de marzo de 1985.

³² Los eruditos sostienen que la tradición de la Nueva Eva tiene orígenes apostólicos y se transmitió, por ejemplo, desde San Juan Apóstol, pasando por San Policarpo hasta San Ireneo.

dogma mariano.³³ Ahora, en el siglo XXI, muchos contemporáneos creen que el mundo necesita aún más una intervención sobrenatural de la Madre de toda la humanidad para la paz mundial.

Pero ¿por qué un nuevo dogma? Actualmente, los cuatro dogmas marianos, es decir, su Maternidad de Dios, su Virginitad Perpetua, su Inmaculada Concepción y su Asunción, se centran en las prerrogativas personales y sus efectos que Dios ha dado a María en relación con Jesús. Sin embargo, ninguno de los dogmas marianos existentes denota *la relación de María con la humanidad*. ***Definir como dogma que María es la “Madre de todos nosotros” es manifestar de la manera más elevada y solemne el reconocimiento y aprecio de la Iglesia por su papel como Madre Espiritual de la humanidad: que su papel humano único con Jesús en nuestra salvación y posterior maternidad a la raza humana merece ser elevada al mismo reconocimiento dogmático y honor que sus otros privilegios y funciones otorgados por Dios.***

¿Cuáles serían entonces los frutos potenciales de un nuevo dogma de Maternidad Espiritual?

He aquí al menos siete frutos eclesiales y globales monumentales que surgirían de un quinto dogma mariano de María como *Madre de todos nosotros*:

1. liberar gracias históricas de paz y conversión para la Iglesia y el mundo, activando plenamente la intercesión materna de María a través de nuestro libre consentimiento ejercido por el sucesor de Pedro;
2. la realización del dogma mariano, proclamando solemnemente la relación de María con la humanidad;

³³ *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici* Archivos de cartas de respaldo de cardenales y obispos recibidas, archivadas, copiadas y presentadas a la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe desde 1993, así como peticiones de fieles laicos también presentadas a la CDF, 48765 Annapolis Rd, Hopedale, Ohio .

3. testimoniando el valor redentor del sufrimiento humano, como se ve tanto en el modelo de María Corredentora como en el llamado de todos los cristianos a ser “corredentores en Cristo”;³⁴
4. Destacando la dignidad de la persona humana y la libertad humana, celebrando el imperativo humano de cooperar libremente con la gracia de Dios.
5. proclamar la verdadera dignidad de la mujer, acentuando un auténtico feminismo cristiano basado en Nuestra Señora;
6. ejercer el auténtico ecumenismo católico proclamando toda la verdad sobre María en un diálogo ecuménico transparente y afirmando que nadie une mejor a los cristianos que nuestra Madre Espiritual universal;
7. Respondiendo a revelación privada mariana creíble, donde a través de numerosas apariciones contemporáneas, Nuestra Señora ha comunicado que Dios desea este quinto dogma mariano como la clave definitiva para el Triunfo de su Inmaculado Corazón.³⁵

³⁴ Cf. Papa San Juan Pablo II, Alocución a los enfermos en el Hospital de los Hermanos de San Juan de Dios, 5 de abril de 1981, n. 4, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1981/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19810405_fatebenefratelli.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1981/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_es_speeches/1981/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19810405_fatebenefratelli.html); Discurso a los enfermos después de la Audiencia general, 13 de enero de 1982, *Inseg.* V/1, 1982, 91 https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19820113.html; Discurso a los obispos de Uruguay, 8 de mayo de 1988, n. 7: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1988/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19880508_vescovi-nunziatura.html *L'Osservatore Romano*, ed. inglesa, 30 de mayo de 1988, 4.

³⁵ Cf. Mark Miravalle, “Apología Pro Dogma Sua: Ecclesial, Anthropological, and Contemporary Global Fruits from a Potential New Marian Dogma,” *Ecce Mater Tua*, Vol. 3, August 22, 2018, <https://eccematertua.com/sites/ecce/files/miravalleemtvol3second.pdf>.

Recientemente, en un mensaje papal del 13 de mayo de 2023 para una celebración mariana en Cerdeña, el Papa Francisco se refirió a “Mediadora de todas las gracias” como un “antiguo título mariano” e identificó a María como la “Abogada cercana a Jesús”.³⁶ ¿Podrían estas referencias a dos de los tres títulos tan estrechamente asociados con la petición mundial de un nuevo dogma mariano indicar una nueva apertura por parte del Papa Francisco? Sólo el tiempo y la oración lo dirán. Mientras tanto, el actual pontífice romano continúa enseñando la doctrina de la Maternidad Espiritual de María y su papel único en la Redención como lo hizo, por ejemplo, en su homilía del 1 de enero de 2020 para la Jornada Mundial de la Paz: “De ella, mujer, surgió la salvación y, por lo tanto, no hay salvación sin la mujer”.³⁷

Creo que ha llegado el momento de aplicar la apuesta de Pascal al quinto dogma mariano. ¿Qué se perdería si todos los frutos globales predichos –desde la histórica liberación de la gracia del Cardenal Mercier hasta la descripción de la revelación privada de un quinto dogma mariano como condición necesaria para el Triunfo del Corazón de María y la paz global– no resultaran de esta definición propuesta, sino sólo de una ¿Proclamación solemne de lo que ya creemos de Nuestra Madre como católicos? ¿No es meritorio el anuncio de la verdad mariana a los ojos y al corazón de su Hijo?

³⁶ Papa Francisco, Discurso papal a la Diócesis de Sassari, Cerdeña, 13 de mayo de 2023, <http://www.arcidiocesisassari.it/2023/05/28/festa-del-voto-il-messaggio-del-santo-padre/> (consultado el 13 de julio de 2023).

³⁷ Papa Francisco, Homilía de la Misa de la Solemnidad de la Madre de Dios, 1 de enero de 2020, Pope Francis, *Homily of the Mass of the Solemnity of the Mother of God*, January 1, 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200101_omelia-madredidio-pace.html (consultado el 16 de julio de 2023).

Pero ¿y si Mercier y Mary tienen razón? ¿Qué pasaría si todos los frutos desde la paz temporal de Mercier hasta la Era de Paz de María estuvieran realmente condicionados a esta proclamación mariana? ¿No es hora de hacer esa apuesta por la paz mundial? ¿O deberíamos esperar a otra serie de guerras regionales, o tal vez incluso a la formalización total y fatal de una tercera guerra mundial nuclear?

Conclusión

La batalla en el libro de Apocalipsis es la batalla del *momento presente*. El mundo necesita urgentemente la intercesión plenamente activada de la Mujer revestida del Sol, *la Madre Espiritual de todos nosotros*, para liderar la batalla actual contra Satanás y su anticultura de odio, división y guerra. Esta Mujer nos *llevará* a la victoria, al Triunfo de su Inmaculado Corazón, porque intercederá para traer a Jesús nuevamente al mundo a través de un nuevo Pentecostés, un nuevo descenso de su Espíritu que es el único que puede traer paz verdadera y duradera a nuestro mundo atribulado.

La Mujer espera sólo una cosa: nuestro consentimiento, un consentimiento humano universal para su más poderosa intercesión manifestada a través de una solemne declaración papal de su Maternidad Espiritual. Ningún otro puede hablar en nombre de toda la humanidad excepto el Vicario de Cristo.

Entremos en una discusión seria dentro de la Iglesia y su jerarquía, en un verdadero espíritu de sinodalidad, sobre una posible definición papal de *la Madre de todos nosotros*, un dogma que reconoce a Nuestra Madre por quién es realmente y por lo que puede hacer. por una familia humana que necesita *ahora* de su poderosa intercesión materna.

There is no Salvation without the Woman: The Virgin Mary's Coredemptive Role in Salvation History

ROBERT FASTIGGI, PH.D.

Introduction

In his homily for the Solemnity of Mary, January 1, 2020, Pope Francis reflected on the importance of Mary for salvation history:

On the first day of the year, we celebrate this nuptial union between God and mankind, inaugurated in the womb of a woman. In God, there will forever be our humanity and Mary will forever be the Mother of God. She is both woman and mother: this is what is essential. From her, a woman, salvation came forth and thus there is no salvation without the woman. In her, God was united to us, and if we want to unite ourselves to him, we must take the same path: through Mary, woman and mother. That is why we begin the year by celebrating Our Lady, the woman who wove the humanity of God. If we want to weave humanity into this our time, we need to start again from the woman.¹

The Incarnation of the Word of God came in the “the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4). There is no salvation without the woman because God chose to join humanity to divinity through her mediation. Because God chose to come to us through her we must, as Pope Francis says, take the same path to God “through Mary, woman and mother.”

¹ Pope Francis, homily (January 1, 2020): https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2024/documents/20240101_omelia-madredidio-pace.html. I have slightly adjusted the translation changing “there is no salvation without **a** woman” to “there is no salvation without **the** woman” in light of the original Italian: “*non c’è salvezza senza **la** donna.*”

St. Louis de Montfort (1673–1716) also recognized the centrality of the Blessed Virgin for salvation history. He made it clear, however, that God had no absolute need of Mary:

With the whole Church I acknowledge that Mary, being a mere creature fashioned by the hands of God is, compared to his infinite majesty, less than an atom, or rather is simply nothing, since he alone can say, "I am he who is". Consequently, this great Lord, who is ever independent and self-sufficient, never had and does not now have any absolute need of the Blessed Virgin for the accomplishment of his will and the manifestation of his glory. To do all things he has only to will them.

However, I declare that, considering things as they are, because God has decided to begin and accomplish his greatest works through the Blessed Virgin ever since he created her, we can safely believe that he will not change his plan in the time to come, for he is God and therefore does not change in his thoughts or his way of acting.²

The key insight of both Pope Francis and St. Louis de Montfort is that it was God's choice to accomplish his greatest works through her. The Blessed Virgin Mary is at the center of salvation history because God chose to redeem the human race through her active role as Mother of the Word Incarnate and the New Eve. God had no absolute need of Mary just as He had no absolute need to create. He did, though, decide to create the universe—not out of any necessity but freely and out of love.

Mary: Predestined from Eternity

When, though, did God decide to include the Virgin Mary in his plan for the universe? The answer is that God chose Mary to be the

² St. Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Bay Shore, N.Y.: Montfort Publications) numbers 14–15, p. 6.

Mother of God from eternity. This is clear from Bl. Pius IX's papal bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, defining the Immaculate Conception:

God Ineffable — whose ways are mercy and truth, whose will is omnipotence itself, and whose wisdom “reaches from end to end mightily, and orders all things sweetly” — having foreseen from all eternity the lamentable wretchedness of the entire human race which would result from the sin of Adam, decreed, by a plan hidden from the centuries, to complete the first work of his goodness by a mystery yet more wondrously sublime through the Incarnation of the Word. This he decreed in order that man who, contrary to the plan of Divine Mercy had been led into sin by the cunning malice of Satan, should not perish; and in order that what had been lost in the first Adam would be gloriously restored in the Second Adam. From the very beginning, and before time began, the eternal Father chose and prepared for his only-begotten Son a Mother in whom the Son of God would become incarnate and from whom, in the blessed fullness of time, he would be born into this world.³

Vatican II, in *Lumen Gentium*, 61, also affirms the predestination of the Blessed Mother from eternity, and it links Mary's predestination to that of the Incarnate Word:

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

³ Pius IX, papal bull, *Ineffabilis Deus* (December 8, 1854), <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9ineff.htm>.

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.⁴

The Motive for the Incarnation, the Rebellion of the Bad Angels

Why did God decide to become man? St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274) recognized that there are different opinions on this question, but he believed that Scripture presents redemption from sin as the main reason for the Incarnation (cf. *Summa theologiae* III q. 1 a. 3). God, however, could have become man even if there had not been original sin. The Franciscan, Blessed John Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308), however, believed that God would have become man even if Adam and Eve had not sinned. Scotus' key argument for the predestination of the Incarnation is found in his *Ordinatio* III, dist. 7 q. 3. His main point is that something as great as the Incarnation should not depend on something less like sin.

The Jesuit, Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) agreed with Scotus, and he also argued that God's revelation of his intent to become man was the reason for the rebellion of Lucifer and the bad angels.⁵

The Spanish mystic, Ven. Maria of Ágreda (1602-1665), describes the fall of the bad angels as the result of their rejection of God's plan to become incarnate through the Virgin Mary. She also describes the great enmity of Lucifer towards Mary, the Woman:

⁴ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* (November 21, 1964), 61:

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

⁵ Francisco Suárez, *De angelis* 7.13, in *Opera omnia*: Vivès edition, vol. 2 (1856) pp. 881-891.

The angels were created in the empyrean heavens and in the state of grace by which they might be first to merit the reward of glory. ... They were informed that these were to stand in high favor, and that the second Person of the blessed Trinity was to become incarnate and assume their nature, raising it to the hypostatic union and to divine Personality; that therefore they were to acknowledge Him as their Head, not only as God, but as God and man, adoring Him and reverencing Him as God-man. ... To this command all the obedient and holy angels submitted themselves and they gave their full assent and acknowledgment with a humble and loving subjection of the will. But Lucifer, full of envy and pride, resisted and induced his followers to resist likewise, as they in reality did, preferring to follow him and disobey the divine command. ... When it was revealed to the angels that they would have to obey the incarnate Word, another, a third precept was given them, namely, that they were to admit as a superior conjointly with Him, a Woman, in whose womb the Only begotten of the Father was to assume flesh and that this Woman was to be the Queen and Mistress of all the creatures. The good angels by obeying this command of the Lord, with still increasing and more alert humility, freely subjected themselves, praising the power and the mysteries of the Most High. Lucifer, however, and his confederates, rose to a higher pitch of pride and boastful insolence. In disorderly fury he aspired to be himself the head of all the human race and of the angelic orders, and if there was to be a hypostatic union, he demanded that it be consummated in him.

The decree constituting him inferior to the Mother of the Incarnate Word, our Mistress, he opposed with horrible blasphemies. ... This proud boast so aroused the indignation of the Lord that in order to humble it, He spoke to Lucifer: "This Woman whom thou refuseth

to honor, shall crush thy head and by Her shalt thou be vanquished and annihilated (Gen. 3, 15). And if, through thy pride, death enters into the world (Wis. 2, 24), life and salvation of mortals shall enter through the humility of this Woman.⁶

We see in this vivid passage how God's free decision to become incarnate of the Virgin Mary set in motion the cosmic struggle between good and evil, which is concentrated in the enmity of Satan towards Mary, the Woman, who was predestined to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate from all eternity.

The Mystical Marriage Between God and Humanity and the Free Consent of Mary

God had no absolute need of the Virgin Mary just as He had no absolute need to create. God, however, in keeping with his goodness, chose to create, and He chose to unite himself to humanity through the Blessed Virgin Mary. The predestination of Mary was the free and sovereign choice of God. Through Mary, the Word of God became incarnate, and God was joined to humanity. God, however, did not wish to become incarnate without the free consent of the Virgin Mother. Pope Leo XIII, in his 1891 encyclical, *Octobri mense*, describes the Incarnation as a "mystical union" between Himself and the human race:

The Eternal Son of God, about to take upon Him our nature for the saving and ennobling of man, and about to consummate thus a mystical union (*mysticum ... conubium*) between Himself and all mankind, did not accomplish His design without adding there the free consent of the elect Mother, who represented in some sort all human kind, according to the illustrious and just opinion of St. Thomas, who says that the Annunciation

⁶ Ven. Maria of Ágreda, *The Mystical City of God*, Book One, chapter III, trans. Fiscar Marison, abridged edition (Charlotte, NC: Tan Books, 1978), pages 19–22.

was effected with the consent of the Virgin standing in the place of humanity (cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III, q. 30 a. 1).⁷

The actual text of St. Thomas Aquinas uses the term “*quoddam spirituale matrimonium*” to express the union between the Son of God and human nature, but the reference to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Leo XIII’s encyclical is directly from the text of the *Summa theologiae*: “Through the Annunciation the consent of the Virgin, in the place of all human nature (*loco totius humanae naturae*) was awaited.”⁸

This passage from St. Thomas—cited in Leo XIII’s encyclical—shows that the Incarnation is a type of mystical union or marriage between God and the human race. The Incarnation, as we know, is the “new and everlasting covenant” between God and the human race. This covenant can be understood in light of the Church as the Bride of Christ who joins with Christ, the Bridegroom. Mary assumes the role of the Bride. She is Israel saying yes to the coming of the Messiah. She is the Church saying yes to the coming of the Word made Flesh. She is the New Eve saying yes to the entrance of the New Adam into human history.

God’s free decision to unite himself to the human race through a type of mystical marriage required the free consent of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Just as in a human marriage there must be free consent on the part of the bride and the bridegroom so in the mystical marriage between God and the human race, Mary needed to give her free consent “in the place of all human nature.”

Vatican II, in *Lumen Gentium*, 56, highlights Mary’s free consent as the New Eve:

⁷ Leo XIII, encyclical, *Octobri mense* (September 22, 1891), as cited in Heinrich Denzinger and Peter Hünermann, eds, *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012) [henceforth D-H], no. 3274.

⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III, q. 30 a. 1 (Editio Leonina 11:315b).

The Father of mercies willed that the incarnation should be preceded by the acceptance of her who was predestined to be the mother of His Son, so that just as a woman contributed to death, so also a woman should contribute to life. That is true in outstanding fashion of the mother of Jesus, who gave to the world Him who is Life itself and who renews all things, and who was enriched by God with the gifts which befit such a role. It is no wonder therefore that the usage prevailed among the Fathers whereby they called the mother of God entirely holy and free from all stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.⁹

Mary's free consent to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate was an active contribution to the work of redemption. She was predestined to say yes freely to the invitation to become the Mother of the Word Incarnate. God insured her free consent by her Immaculate Conception so she would not be impeded by any sin, original or personal. Mary was free from sin and full of grace. Her Immaculate Conception does not make her less free but more free. God, after all, is free of all sin, but He is absolutely free. Vatican II, in *Lumen Gentium*, 56, expresses this truth beautifully:

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

⁹ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 56.

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."¹⁰

Mary's free assent to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate was active not passive. Her causality is not merely "receptive" but active.¹¹ Just as the first Eve freely sinned and became the "co-peccatrix" with Adam so Mary freely said yes to become "the cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race."¹² In this way, she became the co-redemptrix with Christ, the New Adam.

Mary as the Bridge Between God and Humanity

In giving her *fiat* to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate, Mary also became the mediating bridge between God and humanity. Pope Francis affirmed this truth in his homily for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, on January 1, 2021:

The heart of the Lord began to beat within Mary; the God of life drew oxygen from her. Ever since then, Mary has united us to God because in her God bound himself to our flesh, and he has never left it. Saint Francis loved to say that Mary "made the Lord of Majesty our brother" (SAINT BONAVENTURE, *Legenda Maior*, 9, 3). She is not only the bridge between us and God (*il ponte tra noi e Dio*); she is more. She is the road that God travelled in order to reach us, and the road that we must travel in

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The notion of Mary's "receptive causality" is linked to the German theologian, Otto Semmelroth, S.J. (1912–1979). See Otto Semmelroth, S.J., *Mary Archetype of the Church*, trans. Maria von Eros and John Devlin (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), 86.

¹² St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haers.* III, 22, 4: PG 7, 989A (A. Harvey 2, 123), as cited in *Lumen Gentium*, 56.

order to reach Him (*la strada che dobbiamo percorrere noi per giungere a Lui*). Through Mary, we encounter God the way he wants us to: in tender love, in intimacy, in the flesh. For Jesus is not an abstract idea; he is real and incarnate; he was “born of a woman”, and quietly grew. Women know about this kind of quiet growth. We men tend to be abstract and want things right away. Women are concrete and know how to weave life’s threads with quiet patience. How many women, how many mothers, thus give birth and rebirth to life, offering the world a future!¹³

As the bridge between us and God, Mary is the Mediatrix between God and the human race. Because she is the source of the human nature assumed by the Word of God, she enabled the “Lord of Majesty” to become our brother. She is the Mediatrix to the Christ, the one Mediator (1 Tim 2:5). In her own way, though, she is the Meditarix between God and us. This is because Christ, the Word of God, became man through her active mediation as the Mother of the Word made flesh.

To God through Mary, Mary as the Mediatrix of All Graces

In his January 1, 2021 homily Pope Francis says that Mary “is the road that God travelled in order to reach us, and the road that we must (*dobbiamo*) travel in order to reach Him.” Why is Mary the road we must travel to reach God? The answer is found in the will of God. Because God freely chose to enter into human history through Mary’s free and active cooperation, He also wills that Mary serve as the Mediatrix of all the graces merited by her divine Son. Mary’s mediation of grace is not separate from Christ, the one Mediator (1

¹³ Pope Francis, homily for the Solemnity of Mary and the World Day for peace (January 1, 2021): https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2021/documents/papa-francesco_20210101_omelia-madredidio-pace.html (I made some slight adjustments to the translation in light of the Italian original).

Tim 2:5). Her mediation is a participation and cooperation (*cooperationem*) in her divine Son's mediation.¹⁴

Since the eighteenth century, multiple popes have affirmed Mary as the Mediatrix of all graces. Benedict XIV, in his 1748 apostolic constitution, *Gloriosae Dominae*, refers to Mary as the “heavenly stream which brings to the hearts of wretched mortals all God’s gifts and graces.”¹⁵ In his 1854 bull defining the Immaculate Conception, Pius IX speaks of Mary as “the most powerful Mediatrix and Conciliatrix in the whole world.”¹⁶ In his 1891 encyclical, *Octobri mense*, Leo XIII states “that absolutely nothing from this immense treasury of all the graces brought forth by the Lord ... is imparted to us by the will of God, except through Mary.”¹⁷ In his 1894 encyclical, *Iucunda Semper Expectatione*, Leo XIII refers to Mary as the Mediatrix of all graces by citing St. Bernardine of Siena (1380–1444): “Thus is confirmed that law of merciful meditation of which We have spoken, and which St. Bernardine of Siena thus expresses: ‘Every grace granted to man has three degrees in order; for by God it is communicated to Christ, from Christ it passes to the Virgin, and from the Virgin it descends to us.’”¹⁸ St. Pius X, in his 1904 encyclical, *Ad Diem Illum*, extols Mary as the “Dispensatrix of all the gifts that Our Savior purchased for us by His death and by His blood.”¹⁹ Pius XII, in his 1954 encyclical, *Ad Caeli Reginam*, says that Mary, by her union with her Son, “receives the royal right to dispose all the treasures of the Divine Redeemer’s kingdom.”²⁰ St. John Paul II referred to Mary as the Mediatrix of all

¹⁴ See *Lumen Gentium*, 62.

¹⁵ Benedict XIV, apostolic constitution, *Gloriosae Dominae* (September 27, 1748) in *Our Lady: Papal Teachings*, trans. Daughters of St. Paul (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1961), p. 26, n. 4.

¹⁶ Pius IX, papal bull, *Ineffabilis Deus* (December 8, 1854): <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9ineff.htm>

¹⁷ D-H, 3274.

¹⁸ Leo XIII, encyclical, *Iucunda Semper Expectatione* (September 8, 1894), no.5: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_08091894_iucunda-semper-expectatione.html

¹⁹ Pius X, encyclical, *Ad Diem Illum* (February 2, 1904), no. 12:

²⁰ Pius XII, D-H, 3916.

graces at least nine times.²¹ Benedict XVI, in his January 10, 2013 letter to Archbishop Zimowski, commended his mission—as the Holy See’s representative for the World Day of the Sick—to Mary “the Mediatrix of all graces (*Mediatricis omnium gratiarum*).”²² More recently, Pope Francis, in his May 13, 2023 message for a Marian celebration in Sardinia, stated that “one of the ancient titles by which Christians have invoked the Virgin Mary is precisely ‘Mediatrix of all graces’” (*Uno degli antichi titoli con cui i cristiani hanno invocato la Vergine Maria è appunto “Mediatrice di tutte le grazie”*).²³

Mary’s Unique Participation in the Work of Redemption as Co-redemptrix

Mary’s mediation of all graces is certainly grounded in her role as the bridge between God and the human race. Her participation in the work of redemption, however, cannot be limited merely to her being the Mother of the Redeemer. As the New Eve she played an active role in the triumph over Satan. Bl. Pius IX, in his 1854 bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, explains how Mary’s immunity from original sin enabled her, as the New Eve, to triumph completely over the Devil:

And, indeed, it was altogether fitting that so venerable a mother, aglow with radiance, ever adorned with the splendors of a most perfect holiness and entirely immune from the stain of original sin, should have the most complete triumph over the ancient serpent. It was she to whom the Father willed to give his only Son, generated from his heart and equal to himself and whom

²¹ See article by Msgr. Arthur Calkins, S.T.D.: <http://www.motherofallpeoples.com/2010/11/mary-mediatrix-of-all-graces-in-the-papal-magisterium-of-pope-john-paul-ii/>.

²² Benedict XVI, letter to Archbishop Zimowski (January 10, 2013): https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/la/letters/2013/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20130110_card-zimowski.html.

²³ Pope Francis, Message to Archbishop Gian Franco Saba of Sassari, Sardinia, May 13, 2023, <http://www.arcidiocesisassari.it/2023/05/28/festa-del-voto-il-messaggio-del-santo-padre/>.

he loves as himself. And He wished to give Him in such a way that he would be, by nature, one and the same common Son of God the Father and the Virgin. And as the Son himself actually chose her to be his mother, just so the Holy Spirit willed and ordained that she should conceive and give birth to the one from whom he himself precedes.²⁴

As can be seen, Mary's immunity from original sin and most perfect holiness enables her to be the Co-redemptrix who triumphs over the ancient serpent, the Devil.

The recognition of Mary's unique participation in the work of redemption is testified by numerous Church Fathers, theologians, and spiritual writers. Here are a few examples:

- St. Ephraem of Syria (c. 306–373) says that God chose Mary to be “the instrument of our salvation.”²⁵ (*Opera Omnia*, Vol. III, Assemani, ed., 1832: 607);
- St. Epiphanius (c. 315–403) sees Mary as bringing forth ‘the Cause of life’ to the human race just as Eve brought the cause of death (*Adversus Haereses* 1. 3, t. 2; PG 42, 729);
- St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) exclaims that, through the Mother of God, “the devil is cast down from heaven” and “the fallen creature is raised up to heaven’ (*Hom. In Deiparam*; PG 65, 681).
- St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) speaks of the Virgin Mary’s “offering the divine Victim in the temple for our reconciliation with God” (*Serm. 3 de Purificatione*; PL 183, 370). Bernard also sees Mary making “satisfaction’ for the transgression of Eve” (*Homilia 2 super Missus est*; PL 183, 62).
- Bernard of Clairvaux’s disciple and friend, Arnauld of Chartres or Bonneval (d. ca. 1160) believed that Mary made a moral contribution to the work of redemption. Only Jesus

²⁴ D-H, 2801.

offers a bodily immolation on Calvary, but Mary unites her heart to her Son's offering. There is a complete union of wills between Jesus and Mary. At Calvary, Christ presents "both his own offering and that of his Mother to the Father" (Arnauld of Chartres, *De laudibus B. Mariae Virginis*; PL 189, 1694B–1694C).

- St. Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) speaks of Mary as the "Redemptrix of the human race" because she provides flesh to the Word and unites herself to her Son's sacrifice with "sorrow of body and mind" (*Oratio XI*).
- St. Bridget of Sweden (c. 1303–1373), in one of her revelations, hears Jesus say: "Therefore I can well affirm that my Mother and I saved man, as it were, with a single heart—I, by suffering in my heart and flesh, and she with the suffering and love of her heart" (*Revelationes*, IX, c. 3)

Many popes have also highlighted Mary's coredemptive role. Here are some notable examples (with emphases added):

- Benedict XV (1918): "... the fact that she was with Him crucified and dying, was in accord with the divine plan. For with her suffering and dying Son, Mary endured suffering and almost death. She gave up her Mother's rights over her Son to procure the salvation of mankind, and to appease the divine justice, she, as much as she could, immolated her Son, **so that one can truly affirm that together with Christ she has redeemed the human race.**"²⁶
- St. Pius X (1904): "When the supreme hour of the Son came, beside the Cross of Jesus there stood Mary His Mother, not merely occupied in contemplating the cruel spectacle, but rejoicing that her Only Son was offered for the salvation of mankind, **and so entirely participating in His Passion**, that if it had been possible she would have gladly borne all the torments that her Son bore (S. Bonav. 1. Sent d. 48, *ad Litt. dub.* 4). **And from this community of will and**

²⁶ Benedict XV, Letter, *Inter Sodalicia*, March 22, 1918, AAS 10 (1918), 182.

suffering between Christ and Mary she merited to become most worthily the Reparatrix of the lost world (Eadmeri Mon. *De Excellentia Virg. Mariae*, c. 9) and Dispensatrix of all the gifts that Our Savior purchased for us by His Death and by His Blood.”²⁷ ... We are then, it will be seen, very far from attributing to the Mother of God a productive power of grace - a power which belongs to God alone. Yet, since Mary carries it over all in holiness and union with Jesus Christ, and has been associated by Jesus Christ in the work of redemption, she merits for us *de congruo* (in a congruous manner) in the language of theologians, what Jesus Christ merits for us *de condigno* (in a condign manner) and she is the supreme Minister of the distribution of graces.”²⁸

- Pius XI (1928): And now lastly may the most benign Virgin Mother of God smile on this purpose and on these desires of ours; for since she brought forth for us Jesus our Redeemer, and nourished Him, and offered Him as a victim by the Cross, by her mystic union with Christ and His very special grace she likewise became and is piously called a **reparatress** (*reparatrix*). Trusting in her intercession with Christ, who whereas He is the "one mediator of God and men" (1 *Timothy* ii, 5), chose to make His Mother the advocate of sinners, and the minister and mediatrix of grace, as an earnest of heavenly gifts and as a token of Our paternal affection we most lovingly impart the Apostolic Blessing to you, Venerable Brethren, and to all the flock committed to your care.²⁹

²⁷ Pius X, encyclical, *Ad Diem Illum* (1904), no. 12:

https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_02021904_ad-diem-illum-laetissimum.html.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 14. Congruous merit is fitting or appropriate merit, which God is willing to accept. Condign merit is absolute merit in which there is a strict claim of justice between the meritorious act and the effect. Only Christ could merit redemption in a condign manner.

²⁹ Pius XI, encyclical. *Miserentissimus Rex* (May 8, 1928), no. 21:

https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19280508_miserentissimus-redemptor.html.

- Pope Pius XI (1933): "**By necessity, the Redeemer could not but associate His Mother with His work, and for this reason, we invoke her under the title of Co-redemptrix.** (*Il Redentore non poteva, per necessità, non associare La madre Sua alla Sua opera, e per questo noi la invociamo col titolo di Corredentrica*) She gave us the Savior, she accompanied Him in the work of Redemption as far as the Cross itself, sharing with Him the sorrows of the agony and of the death in which Jesus consummated the Redemption of all mankind."³⁰
- Pius XII (1954): "For just as Christ, because He redeemed us, is our Lord and king by a special title, so the Blessed Virgin also (is our queen), on account of the unique manner in which she assisted in our redemption, by giving of her own substance, by freely offering Him for us, by her singular desire and petition for, and active interest in, our salvation. ... From these considerations, the proof develops on these lines: **if Mary, in taking an active part in the work of salvation,** was, by God's design, associated with Jesus Christ, the source of salvation itself, in a manner comparable to that in which Eve was associated with Adam, the source of death, so that it may be stated that the work of our salvation was accomplished by a kind of "recapitulation," in which **a virgin was instrumental in the salvation of the human race, just as a virgin had been closely associated with its death;** ... and if, in truth, "it was she who, free of the stain of actual and original sin, and ever most closely bound to her Son, on Golgotha offered that Son to the Eternal Father together with the complete sacrifice of her maternal rights and maternal love, like a new Eve, for all the sons of Adam, stained as they were by his lamentable fall."³¹

³⁰ Pius XI Allocution to some pilgrims from Vicenza (November 30, 1933): (*L'Osservatore Romano*, December 1, 1933, p. 1.

³¹ Pius XII. encyclical, *Ad Caeli Regnam* (October 11, 1954); D-H, 3914–3915.

The Title Co-Redemptrix

A French hymnal of the 10th century includes in its litany of the saints an appeal to Mary in these words: “Holy redemptrix of the world pray for us”.³² The term ‘redemptrix’ was understood in subordination to Christ, the Redeemer just as *mediatrix* was understood in subordination to Christ, the one mediator (cf. 1 Tim 2;5; *Lumen Gentium*, 62). By the 15th and 16th centuries it became more common to speak of Mary as the *co-redemptrix* to show that she cooperates in the work of redemption with and under Christ. The use of *co* (derived from the Latin *cum* or with) was reflected in other medieval expressions about Mary such as she who ‘co-suffered’ with her Son and she who was ‘co-crucified’ with him.³³ A liturgical hymn from Salzburg of the 14th or 15th century might be one of the earliest usages of the term co-redemptrix when it addresses Mary as “*corredemptrix*.”³⁴

Papal approvals and references to the title, co-redemptrix

Since the nineteenth century, the Marian title, co-redemptrix, has been approved or used by popes. Here are the relevant references:

- 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 “coredemprix 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).

³² Mark Miravalle, “*With Jesus*” *The Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix* (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing, 2003), 82.

³³ René Laurentin,, *Le Titre de Corédemptrice: Étude historique*. Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines (1951), 15.

³⁴ Miravalle, 110, note 20.

- 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).
- Pius XI was 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).
- John Paul II publicly used the title, Co-redemptrix, at least six times: 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. The Italian translation, though, is closer to the Spanish, viz., *il ruolo corredentore di Maria*.

Why Did Vatican II Not Speak of Mary as Coredeptrix?

The drafting committee of the Marian schema at Vatican II decided to omit the term from what would become chapter VIII of *Lumen gentium*. The term, however was not rejected because it was false. In the *praenotanda* or explanatory note that accompanied the first 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.”³⁵ The title co-redemptrix, however, appears in two footnotes of the 1962 schema. Footnote 11 states that “the compassion of Mary has a connection with the redemption in such a way that she may rightly be called co-redemptrix.”³⁶ In the 1962 schema there was also a lengthy footnote explaining the meaning of terms such as Mediatrix and Coredemptrix as applied to Mary. This draft, with the *praenotanda*, was approved by the Council’s Theological Commission on November 10, 1962. The footnote (no. 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

³⁵ *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen I, Periodus Prima, Pars IV* [Vatican City, 1971], p. 100..

³⁶ *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen I, Periodus Prima, Pars IV*, 1971, p.105.

common day by day, as can be seen in the writings of St. Andrew of Crete, St. Germanus of Constantinople, 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 and 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 very many others with which Mary is greeted by the faithful of Christ. ...³⁷

Vatican II Teaches Marian Coredemption Without Using the Title

While Vatican II chose not to use the term, Coredemptrix, 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 Coredemptrix without using the term.³⁸ Vatican II, though, in *Lumen Gentium*, 58 and 62, affirms Mary’s coredemptive role under the Cross in this manner:

³⁷ *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen I, Periodus Prima, Pars IV*, 1971, pp., 108–109. Translation of note 16 by Fr. Joseph Komonchok, available at: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://unamsanctamcatholicam.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Blessed-Virgin-Mary.pdf>

³⁸ See J. Galot in *La Civiltà Cattolica* [1994] III: 236-237 and G. Cottier, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, June 4, 2002).

... 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.** Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross as a mother to His disciple with these words: "Woman, behold thy son" (no. 58).

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. (no. 62).

Some Catholics, though, maintain it is ecumenically more prudent to speak of Mary as the unique "associate" or "cooperator" with Jesus in the work of redemption rather than refer to her as "Coredemptrix." In 1951, the Marian scholar, Fr. René Laurentin, believed it would be "gravely temerarious" for a Catholic to attack the legitimacy of calling Mary "Coredemptrix" because of its papal

endorsement.³⁹ Msgr. Brunero Gherardini (who taught ecclesiology and ecumenism for 37 years at the Pontifical Lateran University) argued that, although the doctrine of Marian Coredemption has not been solemnly defined, it nevertheless deserves the theological note of a teaching “close to the faith” [*sententia proxima fidei*].⁴⁰ (cf.).

Conclusion

This essay began with Pope Francis’s statement that “there is no salvation without the woman.” This is most certainly true. The Blessed Virgin, as the predestined Mother of God, New Eve, and co-redemptrix was part of God’s salvific plan from eternity. There are several more reasons why the Virgin Mary was necessary for redemption according to the ordained will of God. The following can be mentioned:

- Mary was prepared for her role as the Mother of the Word Incarnate by being preserved from all stain of original sin in her Immaculate Conception.
- To be fully human Jesus, as the Word Incarnate, needed a human mother.
- God in his omnipotence could have redeemed the human race in many ways, but it was most fitting that He redeem us by becoming incarnate of the Virgin Mary.⁴¹
- Mary spoke on behalf of all human nature when she freely and actively said yes to the invitation of the angel to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate.
- As the New Eve, Mary is obedient and a cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race.

³⁹ René Laurentin, *Le Titre de Corédemptrice: Étude historique* (Rome: Editions “Marianum”; Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1951), p. 28: “*Il serait gravement téméraire, pour le moins, de s’attaquer à sa légitimité.*”

⁴⁰ Rev. J.B. Carol, OFM and Rev. Paul M. Haffner, in “Mary, Blessed Virgin (in Theology),” *New Catholic Encyclopedia, Supplement* 2010, p. 750.

⁴¹ See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III q.1, a. 2.

- Under the Cross Mary united herself to the sufferings of her divine Son and she also offered Him to the Father; she offered her sufferings and those of her Son.
- Mary's participation in the Passion of Christ is meritorious in a congruous or fitting sense.⁴²
- Mary's association with Christ in the work of redemption can be described as co-redemption.
- Mary can be rightly called the co-redemptrix. This title highlights her unique cooperation in God's plan of salvation; it neither takes away nor adds anything to Christ's dignity as the one divine Redeemer.
- In light of God's eternal plan of salvation, Mary played and still plays an essential role as spiritual Mother, Mediatrix of all graces, and Advocate with and under her divine Son.

⁴² See St. Pius X, encyclical, *Ad Diem Illum* (February 2, 1904); D-H, 3374.

The Question of "*Omnium Gratiarum*": Karl Rahner and Twentieth Century Thomism on Marian Mediation

ANDREW L. OUELLETTE, PH.D. CAND.

Introduction

If one were to begin studies in Catholic Mariology, they would not come to see the value of the Franciscan tradition with much difficulty. Even a cursory reading of the historical development of Marian doctrine and devotion will take note of the significant contributions made by Franciscans particularly in the defined dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the taught doctrine of Marian mediation. Beginning with Francis of Assisi's love for Mary, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, and continuing to the scholastic head of the Franciscan Order, Bonaventure, Mary's place as mother and queen of the Franciscan Order was never diminished. It is with the scholastic genius of Blessed John Duns Scotus that the theological difficulties of Mary's preservative redemption were given a proper response. Following the Anselmian principle of fittingness, Duns Scotus brought forward to the mind of the Church Mary, who through the perfect act of redemption was conceived in a state of original justice in virtue of the merits of her Son, the most perfect Redeemer. The Franciscans, especially after the contribution of Blessed Scotus, became known as the champions of Mary's Immaculate Conception - and what has been called the "Golden Thread" of the Franciscan order continued down through the ages with contributions to the cause of the Immaculate and her maternal mediation from figures such as Saint Lawrence of Brindisi, Saint Francis Anthony Fasani, Father Karlo Balic, Blessed Gabriele Allegra, and (most especially) Saint Maximilian Kolbe. While rightfully giving the Franciscan tradition its place of honor in the development of the Church's Marian doctrine, one would be remiss to not examine the contributions made by another mendicant-scholastic tradition beginning with the Common Doctor - Saint Thomas Aquinas. To say that the Thomistic Mariological tradition has been eclipsed by the Franciscan-Scotistic tradition by the fault of a vehement opposition by Thomistic commentators to the immaculate conception of Mary is

a centuries-old trope that is mixed with historical fact and interpretive exaggeration. While scholarship on the subject of the Immaculate Conception in the thought of Saint Thomas has generally argued that the Angelic Doctor consistently rejected the doctrine, still others (especially in the twentieth century) have taken a nuanced approach arguing for Thomas' own development of thought on the subject; eventually coming to affirm the doctrine towards the end of his life.¹ Moreover, recent discoveries have been made on the subject of Dominicans and the development of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception that challenge the general opinion of an almost universal rejection of the doctrine prior to *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854.² That being said, it would be wrong for us to dismiss the Thomistic contribution to Catholic Mariology - particularly in the development of the theology of Marian co-redemption and mediation.

This paper is an attempt to shed light on this Thomistic school of Mariology - in particular with regards to Mary's distribution of all graces, and to mend the "fractured domain" of faithful Catholics against faithful Catholics a domain that has been described by one theologian as a "circular firing squad" of orthodox theologians.³ The following paper has a two-fold aim in 1) providing an adequate theological explanation of the Marian title Mediatrix of All Graces (*Mediatrix Omnium Gratiarum*), and 2) doing so through the contribution of Thomistic theology - specifically from the early 20th

¹ Cf. Mandonnet, S. Th. Aq. opuscula omnia (Paris, 1927) pp. xix-xxii. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrangé, *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life* (Dublin: Golden Eagle Books, 1948), pp. 66-71.

² Cf. Alan Krieger, "Seventeenth Century Dominicans Supporting the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception", *RBSC ND* (January 17, 2022) <https://sites.nd.edu/rbsc/seventeenth-century-dominicans-supporting-the-doctrine-of-the-immaculate-conception/>.

³ Matthew Levering, in his endorsement of Matthew Miner's translation of *The Sense of Mystery* by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrangé writes, "If liberal theology is to be opposed in the twenty-first century Church, we will need both the neo-scholastics and the nouvelle théologie, whose insights can now be gleaned without condemning the one or the other. May the publication of this book signal an end to the circular firing squad of those who should be allies in the struggle against Catholic Troeltschian theology." (Reginald Garrigou Lagrangé. *The Sense of Mystery: Clarity and Obscurity in the Intellectual Life*. (Steubenville: Emmaus Academic, 2017)).

century to our present day. This will be done in three stages. First, we will examine the critiques of the *omnium gratiarum* from the writings of Karl Rahner and his “transcendental Thomism”. These critiques will largely revolve around ecumenical concerns, a Marian immanentism, and the question of Marian mediation in the graces of the sacraments. Second, we will expound on the Thomistic contributions to a theological understanding of Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces in the time leading up to the Second Vatican Council. Through the examples of Thomists of the French Dominican tradition, such as Édouard Hugon and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, we find a clear, reasonable, and sensible theological exposition of Catholic doctrine that provides an answer to the Rahnerian-concilium concerns. Finally, there will be a treatment on the subject of Marian mediation in the sacraments. For the treatment of Mary’s mediation of all graces in the sacramental economy we are most indebted to the late Spanish Thomist Joaquín Ferrer Arellano. Following the affirmation of Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces from Pope Benedict XVI⁴ and Pope Francis⁵, it is our hope that this paper will contribute to the new fervor and renewed interest in the subject of Mary’s maternal mediation and her distribution of all graces.

Rahner’s “Fundamental Principle” as an Interpretive Lens of “Mediatrix of All Graces”

While the topic of twentieth century Marian minimalism is broad, and its proponents numerous, our focus concerns the thought of Karl Rahner and (more specifically) his concerns with the theology of Mary, *Mediatrix Omnium Gratiarum*. It should be stated from the beginning that it would be wrong for those who might identify themselves as “Marian maximalists” or “Christotypical mariologists” to accuse those that are minimalist or ecclesiotypical in their mariology as theologically disinterested in Mary; and that this disinterest serves as basis for their downplaying of a Mariology and

⁴ Pope Benedict XVI, *Letter to H.E. Msgr. Zygmunt Zimowski, Special Envoy to the celebrations of the 21st World Day of the Sick*, February 11, 2013. Web.

⁵ Pope Francis, *Message on the Feast of the Vow to Bishop Gian Franco Saba*, May 13, 2023. Web.

Marian devotion that is considered “excessive”, “overly metaphysical”, or “superstitious”. The preponderance of texts on Mary in what has been considered the “Marian” age following the dogmatic definition of *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854, texts that emphasize these two (often grating) strands of Mariology, show that the minimalists are just as interested in Mary as the maximalists, if for different reasons. We can find a keen interest in the Virgin Mary in the self-identified “Marian minimalist” Karl Rahner. This interest in Mary for Rahner largely began with his reading of Heinrich Maria Köster’s 1947 book *The Handmaid of the Lord: Theological Essays and Observations*, and his assessment of the text as being both “one of the best 1940s-era Mariologies” and yet “sharing the propositionalism of Neo-Scholastic theologians”⁶. To rectify the issues that Rahner found in Köster’s text, and to provide a text on Mariology in light of the (at the time) looming prospect of a dogmatic state on Mary’s Assumption, Rahner began writing what is known as the *Assumptio-Arbeit* in the 1940s. Ultimately, this text would not be published until after his death due to multiple censorships from both Jesuit censors and the Holy Office. One will note the severity in the document issued by the Holy Office in 1952 criticizing Rahner’s “fundamental principle” [*Grundprinzip*] of Mariology:

What K. Rahner developed regarding the fundamental principle of Mariology, what one could express with the phrase: *Maria fuit perfectissimo modo passive et active salvata* [Mary was saved in the most perfect way, passively and actively], wholly displeases the censor.⁷

⁶ Cf. Peter Joseph Fritz, “Karl Rahner’s ‘Marian Minimalism’”, *Mary on the Eve of Vatican II*, ed. J. Cavadini, D. Peters (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017) pp. 156-178.

⁷ This Rahnerian “fundamental Marian principle” would be taken up again in Rahner’s *Theological Investigations* Vol. 1: “If we were to try and sum up what we have so far said about Mary in a concise formula, which expresses it all at one stroke by means of a concept whose theological validity requires no preliminary proof, then all we need say is: Mary is she who is most perfectly Redeemed.” See: K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 3:206 (St Louis: Herder & Herder, 1982).

What became an issue for the censors in Rahner's "fundamental principle" is a thesis that places emphasis on the public-ecclesial dimension of Mary that leaves out anything that might be considered of "private privilege". The emphasis that Rahner places on Mary as the most perfectly redeemed places her one among many - albeit singular and unique. The "fundamental principle" of Karl Rahner presents a Mariology for the modern world that springs from his theology of immanence and what Peter Joseph Fritz refers to as his "Chalcedonian Christological commitments" that puts a pause on any Mariology that - to the mind of Rahner - diminishes the two natures of Christ.

This "fundamental position" that Rahner establishes for himself informs his understanding of Marian mediation and - in particular - her distribution of the graces of Redemption. In his slim 1963 volume of Marian meditations entitled *Mary, Mother of the Lord*, Rahner devotes his penultimate chapter to the title of "Mediatrice of Graces". Here indeed we find the thread of Rahner's fundamental principle in his theology of Mary's mediation that emphasizes her public actions. Rather than referring to Mary's mediation role as an "office" or "privilege" of Mary, Rahner argues for Marian mediation as a function of the preeminent woman and model within the Church. While arguing that Mary as mediatrix is "not yet a definite doctrine", Rahner does affirm the doctrine through an emphasis on all members of the Mystical Body serving as mediators of grace and salvation:

God in Jesus Christ has so established grace within the human community's solidarity in history and eternal welfare and loss, that it reaches one member through another, even though in God's perspective, it is intended equally directly for each, in Jesus Christ, the head of the one human race.⁸

⁸ Karl Rahner, *Mary, Mother of the Lord: Theological Meditations* (St. Louis: Herder & Herder, 1962) p. 97.

Truly, Rahner's theological treatment of mediation through the lens of human solidarity takes up almost the entire chapter on Mary as the Mediatrix of Grace. Rahner, it must be stated, is not wholly dismissive of Mary's singular importance in salvation history as the Mediatrix of Grace. Rahner will argue that "none has had a profounder, more comprehensive function, or one more decisive for the whole divine plan, than the blessed Virgin, in the earthly history of redemption."⁹ One must be careful to note, however, Rahner's tone in treating Mary's singularity. The emphasis placed on Mary's "comprehensive function" and her mediatory role in the "earthly history of redemption", stresses Mary as mediatrix in bringing forth Jesus Christ as Savior into the world through her maternal fiat.¹⁰ It is in Mary as the feminine figure in the earthly history of redemption that she can be considered by Rahner as "Mediatrix of All Graces". He writes,

We can truly say of Mary, on account of what she did in the history of redemption, which has become eternal, that in the communion of saints she is the intercessor for all of us, the mediatrix of all graces.¹¹

The transcendence of Mary's mediation of the graces of redemption becomes associated, for Rahner, not with her private privileges of being the Immaculate Conception, her cooperating role in the Redemption, or in her queenship, but rather in connection to the saving work of Christ in the one historical event of his life, death, and resurrection. The "*omnium gratiarum*" for Rahner is grace personified - Jesus Christ - and the grace merited through the Paschal Mystery. Anything else concerning the distribution of actual graces, the singular grace of the present moment, and the graces of the sacraments does not fall under this Rahnerian theology of Marian mediation.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 100.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 101.

Rahner's de-emphasis of the Marian title of Mediatrix of All Graces is expounded on in greater detail in his multi-volume *Theological Investigations*. Arguing that the Church only teaches Mary's mediation of grace "theoretically"¹² Rahner will place such title and veneration until the stress that this role of mediation is given to Mary by Christ who alone is "the sole source and mediator of all grace." The titles given to Mary by chapter eight of the Second Vatican Council document *Lumen Gentium* - 'Advocate', 'Auxiliatrix', 'Adjutrix', and 'Mediatrix' - are considered by Rahner to be a "freer language of pious affection"¹³ and that Mary's function as Mediatrix "belongs to the plane of solidarity in salvation which is true of all the redeemed, not to the plane of Christ's sole mediatorship."¹⁴ Here it can be stated that Rahner's interpretation of Marian mediation runs counter to the physical-instrumental causality theory that considers Mary as the distributor of the graces of Redemption - using language such as channel, aqueduct, or neck of the Mystical Body. Against thinkers of this position such as Lepicier, Hugon, Roschini, and Garrigou-Lagrange, Rahner places all emphasis on Mary's intercessory role in view of her previous (historical) cooperation in the redemptive work of Christ.

Twentieth-Century Thomism and the Position of Marian Instrumental Causality

To provide a proper answer to Rahner's objections and his Marian minimalism with respect to Mary's role in the distribution of graces, it is worth examining the Thomistic theologies of the twentieth-century that could be classified as falling under the theory of "physical-instrumental causality". A preliminary observation of genuine importance in this matter is the question of Mary's position in the

¹² Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 9:171.

¹³ *Ibid*, 9:172.

¹⁴ *Ibid*. This leads Rahner to predict a future of the Church that moves away from what he refers to as a "quantitative augmentation of Marian dogma" - so that one forgets a future solemn definition of a Marian title like "Co-Redemptrix" or "*Mediatrix Omnium Gratiarum*".

order of grace and in what has traditionally been referred to as the “order of hypostatic union”. More broadly than the hypostatic union of Christ’s humanity and divinity in one person, the hypostatic order is all that is involved in this union - including Mary and her divine maternity as the Theotokos. As a human person who participates in the hypostatic order Mary is, as 17th century Dominican Louis Chardon writes in his magnum opus *The Cross of Jesus*, “a remarkable work...In a manner of speaking she exhausts the omnipotence of God.”¹⁵ The hypostatic union, Chardon continues, “is something far above the natural order, and by her maternity Mary entered into that divine order.”¹⁶ This does not mean that Mary is equal with Jesus in the hypostatic order. Rather, it places Mary under Jesus yet above the natural and common order of grace. Because of this placement of Mary within the hypostatic order, she is the human person fully divinized through her affinity to the divine. The Dominican Chardon is quite explicit in his affirmation of this writing that:

Mary constitutes an order all by herself somewhere between God by nature and God by participation...Jesus is God by nature of His divine Person; so far as they share in God’s nature, the saints and angels are gods by adoption. It follows then that Mary is God by affinity, since the bonds which make her His Mother touch the borders of divinity.¹⁷

Chardon will go even further in this theology of affinity in virtue of Mary’s placement within the hypostatic order when writing on Mary’s affinity with the Holy Spirit. Note in these words of Chardon two things: 1) their similarity to the Marian-pneumatology of Saint Maximilian Kolbe 300 years later¹⁸ and 2) their implications in our discussion of Mary as distributor of all graces:

¹⁵ Louis Chardon, *The Cross of Jesus* (Providence: Cluny, 2023), p. 123.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 124.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Cf. Saint Maximilian Kolbe, *The Writings of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe* (Florence: Nerbini International, 2022). n. 1318-1320.

May we not go further and say [Mary] contracts a sort of affinity with the person of the Holy Spirit, who is uncreated Love?...May we not say that the Holy Spirit communicated to her all His power and that while He gave Himself partially to other saints, He poured Himself forth in her to produce one of whom He was not the Father?¹⁹

This theology of affinity to the Holy Trinity from Chardon comes from a rich line of thought in the Thomistic tradition beginning as far back as Cajetan, who, in his commentary on St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*, wrote:

[Christ's] mother is said to be placed akin to [*affinis*] God. Now, not all those of such affinity deserve hyperdulia...but only the Blessed Virgin, who alone attained to the borders of the deity by her own natural operation when she conceived, bore, gave birth to, and gave to drink of her own milk.²⁰

From this theology of affinity comes - in essence - to what is referred to as Mary's physical-instrumental causality in the plan of redemption - and, more specifically, a Thomistic theology for Mary's mediation and distribution of grace through a reflection on her Divine Maternity. This Thomistic orientation to the "physical-instrumental" causality can (and should) be considered as being both in complementarity with the Scotistic presentation of meditation that stresses a moral-exemplary causality, and in contrast to the Rahnerian "fundamental principle" that begins Mariology not from the theology of Mary's divine maternity, but rather from the divine maternity in relation to her place as the preeminently redeemed among the redeemed Church.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 125.

²⁰ Cajetan, *Comm. II-II STh* q. 103, a. 4, n. 4

²¹ Rahner makes this clear in Volume 1 of his *Theological Investigations* where he writes, "As Mother of God, Mary is most perfectly redeemed, and vice versa. In

By starting from a theological preference of Mary's physical-instrumental causality based on her divine maternity, the Thomistic tradition - especially that of the 19th and 20th century Dominican strand of Thomism that has been called *neo-scholastic* (often pejoratively) - can have a solid foundation in its theology of Mary's mediation and her distribution of all graces. Two witnesses from this tradition that stand out are Édouard Hugon (1867-1929) and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964). Thanks to the extraordinary research of Manfred Hauke, we know that both of these French Dominicans, and founding members of the Angelicum, were involved in the Roman Theological Commission in 1924-1925 to study the question of a dogmatic definition of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces.²² In his seminal text of Mariology entitled *Mary, Full of Grace* Hugon writes on how Mary is (like Christ and only in relation to him) an exemplar, meritorious, satisfactory, and intercessory cause in the redemption. Placing emphasis on the fundamental relationship between Mary's active part in the redemption of the world, Hugon argues that, "The role of our Mother in the distribution of graces is the consequence of the role which she had in their acquisition."²³ The affirmation of Hugon of this link between what can be called ascending mediation (in acquiring the graces of redemption in the sacrificial offering of Jesus Christ to the Father) and descending mediation (the distribution of these graces of redemption in the building up and sanctification of the Mystical Body) is absent in Rahner's mariology that stresses Mary's singular grace of being "most perfectly redeemed" and, therefore an intercessory of special significance. Mary, as Hugon writes, "is, after Christ, the all-powerful one who pleads our cause, the one through whom every prayer must rise and every grace descend."²⁴

short, for the faith of the Church Mary is she who is most perfectly Redeemed, the example and exemplar of redemption simply speaking." (no. 207).

²² See Manfred Hauke, *Mary, Mediatrix of Grace: Mary's Universal Mediation of Grace in the Theological and Pastoral Works of Cardinal Mercier* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate 2004).

²³ E. Hugon, *Mary: Full of Grace* (Providence: Cluny, 2019) p. 132.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

In his argument for Mary as being the cause of merit and satisfaction, Hugon begins with a scholastic distinction of the “acts of the just” as having a “threefold worth: that they are meritorious, satisfactory, and intercessory”. With regards to the theology of merit, Hugon emphasizes the traditional distinction between condign merit (*de condigno*) and the merit of fittingness (*de congruo*). As merit *de condigno* is the merit not achieved by the human person but by the grace of God operating in us—so that the crowning of our merits is (in reality) the crowning of God’s own gifts—the application of this condign merit can only be done by God alone. As Hugon writes concerning this type of merit, “[As] the universal principle of salvation, he [Christ] becomes our justice by attributing to us his merits, just as he is our life by giving us his grace.”²⁵ Condign merit, while given to the role of Christ as this “universal principle of salvation”, does not eliminate a merit of fittingness (*de congruo*) that is based upon the right of friendship which Hugon calls “sovereign and efficacious”. Completely joined to and under her Son in the saving economy, “the Blessed Virgin merited by a claim of fittingness all that which Christ merited in strict justice.” (*B. Virgo de congruo meruit quod Christus de condigno*). This assertion is in harmony with St. Thomas’ statement concerning Mary’s fiat at the Annunciation, “In the Annunciation the Virgin’s consent was besought in lieu of that of the entire human race.”²⁶ Hugon’s affirmation of both Christ’s unique role as sole Mediator between God and humanity - the unique savior of the world - and Mary’s participation with and under her Son’s saving work in a singular way goes beyond a theology of merit to its implications in a theology of both satisfaction and intercession. This is evident in the corollary statement of Hugon that “already supposing the plenary satisfactions of Christ, Mary was able to offer for all our faults a fitting satisfaction.”²⁷ (*B. Virgo satisfecit de congruo ubi Christus de condigno*). Because Mary’s place of fittingness is united to the merit and satisfaction obtained by Christ through justice, Mary is therefore united to her Son in regards to intercession and (in

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 138.

²⁶ *STh* III, q. 30, a. 1.

²⁷ Hugon, *Mary: Full of Grace*, p. 143.

particular) the distribution of grace. Hugon comments on this connection of merit and satisfaction to intercession and distribution writing:

The power of intercession advances along with meritorious or expiatory worth, for it is due, just like them, to the state of grace and the dignity of the person. One's mediation in heaven depends upon the merits acquired here below. Since in Mary the power of merit and satisfaction attained to a secondary degree all that which Christ Jesus abstained as the principle cause and in strict justice, it is fitting that the secondary intercession of the Mother of Christians extend just as far as the principal intercession of the Savior, that is to say to all graces without exception...[Mary] must distribute all to us, albeit through a secondary mediation and in union with Jesus.²⁸

This theological position of Hugon leads to his affirmation of the title *Maria collum Ecclesiae* - Mary, as the mystical neck of the Church, is "all things dependent upon Christ...and is the efficacious organ that would link him to the other members of his body."²⁹

This affirmation of Mary as the "neck of the Church" is shared by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance who argues for justification of this title based on Saint Thomas' writings concerning the humanity of Christ being a "physical instrumental cause of grace."³⁰ While Saint Thomas does not write on this subject in relation to Mary's distribution of grace, Garrigou-Lagrance will argue that there is no contradiction in this line of thought, as "what [Aquinas] says about the Head may be affirmed of her who is the neck which unites the Head to the members and transmits the vital impulse to them."³¹

²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 162-163.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 166.

³⁰ Cf. *STh* III, q. 62, a. 1.

³¹ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance (RGL), *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life* (Dublin: Golden Eagle Books, 1948) p. 235.

These vital impulses are all graces that are distributed to us from the hands of Mary. Garrigou-Lagrange, in defending the title of Mary as “omnipotentia supplex” - the one all-powerful in the order of supplication through an assertion (that Garrigou-Lagrange finds support for in STh II-II, q. 83, a. 2) writes that “the intercession of the saints is proportioned to their degree of glory in heaven, or of union with God.”³² Therefore, Garrigou-Lagrange argues, “it follows that Mary whose glory surpasses that of all the saints, must have all power in intercession.”³³ This theology of the power of intercession is also applied to Mary’s power of distribution of all graces. Garrigou-Lagrange writes:

The Church turns to Mary to obtain graces of all kinds, both temporal and spiritual; among these last, from the grace of conversion up to that of final perseverance, to say nothing of those needed by virgins to preserve virginity, by apostles to exercise their apostolate, by martyrs to remain firm in their faith...Not only every kind of grace is distributed to us by Mary, but every grace in particular...[including] the grace of the present moment. This grace is the most individual of graces; it varies with each of us, and for each one of us at every moment...Mary knows our spiritual needs at every instant, and prays for us, and obtains for us all the graces that we receive.³⁴

Mary’s Distribution of Sacramental Graces

These twentieth-century Dominican Thomists, and many others, will go further in affirming that Mary’s distribution of all graces extends beyond the aforementioned individual graces to even sacramental graces. Father Garrigou-Lagrange writes in *The Three Ages of the Interior Life* , “All kinds of graces are distributed by her even, in a sense,

³² Ibid. p. 230

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ RGL, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life* Vol. 1 (Rockford: TAN, 1947), p. 127.

those of the sacraments; for she merited them for us in union with Christ on Calvary. In addition, she disposes us, by her prayer, to approach the sacraments and to receive them well.”³⁵ Writing a position paper to the Roman Commission on the question a dogmatic definition of Mary’s mediation and distribution of graces, Garrigou-Lagrange treats the question of Mary’s distribution of the graces of the sacraments using the language of *de congruo/decondigno* merit, writing:

The effect of the sacraments of the New Law is not to be excluded from [Mary’s] universal influence...for Mary has for *de congruo quae Christus de condigno*, and moreover she indirectly influences the effects of the sacraments...and bestows upon us the actual grace by which we are rightly disposed to a fruitful reception of sacramental grace.³⁶

This statement from Garrigou-Lagrange is of a similar vein to Hugon’s affirmation that “Each grace...even of sacrament grace...is due to the constant intercession of the Blessed Virgin...for it is the Mother of God who procedures for us the ministers of the sacrament and the dispositions to be admitted to the sacred ritual with profit.”³⁷

The theology of Mary’s mediation and distribution of the graces of the sacraments is developed further in the writings of Joaquín Ferrer Arellano, who develops with great clarity the Thomistic mariological

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ My translation. Source: Hauke, *Mary, Mediatress of Grace: Mary's Universal Mediation of Grace in the Theological and Pastoral Works of Cardinal Mercier*.

Imo a praedictis universalis influxu non excludendus est effectus sacramentorum Novae Legis, ex opere operato productus; nam Virgo nobis meruit de congruo quae Christus de condigno, et insuper indirecte influit ad effectum sacramentorum prout nobis obtinet validam sacramentorum administrationem et nobis elargitus gratiam actualem qua recte disponamur ad gratiam sacramentalem fructuose recipendam.

³⁷ Hugon, *Mary: Full of Grace*, p. 148.

tradition. Moving beyond the category of instrumental causality that is so affirmed by writers like Hugon and Garrigou-Lagrange, Arellano proposes a notion of “transcendental participation of the Immaculate in the mediation of headship of Christ, i.e. as ‘Maternal Mediatrix in the Mediator’”³⁸ This “transcendental participation” posited by Arellano holds that Mary—because of her association with the sacrifice of her son on the Cross—has her participation extended down through the ages in the sacrifice of the Mass. For this reason, Arellano affirms, “[Mary’s] presence during Holy Mass is as real as her presence in the sacrifice of Calvary...The mediation of Mary, in effect, includes the very highest form of participation in the Mediation of Christ: sacerdotal, prophetic and kingly, a participation superior - not only in degree, but in kind, because pertaining to the order of the hypostatic union - to that of the ministerial priesthood.”³⁹ Mary’s presence in the Eucharist is a presence of mediation as it cannot be separated from Mary’s role at the foot of the cross in which she, as *Lumen Gentium* affirms, “joins herself with his sacrifice in her mother’s heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim.” Arellano, in his defense of Mary’s mediation of sacramental graces, reminds us of a sacramental theology that affirms the central place of the Eucharist. This primary place is written on by Saint Thomas who states that, “The common spiritual good of the whole Church is contained substantially in the sacrament itself of the Eucharist.”⁴⁰ Arellano is keen to give the reminder that this teaching of Saint Thomas was incorporated into the Catechism of Saint Pius V: “every salvific effect of the sacraments derives from the Eucharist (*Eucharistia fons, coetera sacramento rivuli* - The Eucharist is the source, the other sacraments streamlets). This would be considered “too extreme” for an ecclesiotypical theology of Mary that is, as we find in Karl Rahner, totally immanent placing Mary within the Church as a unique one among many. Arellano will counter this Marian immanentism by the affirmation that Mary belongs “to an order far superior to ours, namely the hypostatic order *relatively*, and beneath that of Jesus Christ, which is a hypostatic order

³⁸ MFC vol. 3

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ STh III q. 65 a. 3. R. 1

substantially.⁴¹ In virtue of Mary's *relative* relation to the hypostatic order she is the one who alone can bear the title Mater Eucharistiae.

Conclusion

While the Thomistic mariological tradition has diverging points of emphasis from a Franciscan-Scotistic school, there exists a real complementarity in which a mutual affirmation is stressed of Mary's divine maternity in a proper theological understanding of Marian mediation. Moreover, against the mariology of Karl Rahner - that stresses a Marian immanentism that places the uniqueness of Mary the redeemed woman as (at best) on par with her divine maternity or (at worst) above it - both the Thomistic and Franciscan-Scotistic schools of mariology recognize a uniqueness in the Mother of God that transcends the natural order of grace. With the affirmation of Mary's divine maternity in providing a basis for Marian mediation, Thomists like Hugon will write that supernatural maternity requires an action renewed without ceasing. This is following a long line of Thomistic understanding that can be drawn from the Angelic Doctor himself and his commentary on the Angelic Salutation:

The plenitude of grace in Mary was such that its effects overflow upon all men. It is a great thing in a Saint when he has grace to bring about the salvation of many, but it is exceedingly wonderful when grace is of such abundance as to be sufficient for the salvation of all men in the world, and this is true of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin.⁴²

⁴¹ MFC vol. 3

⁴² Aquinas, *Expositio Salutationis Angelicae*.

The Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary

MICHAEL SCHERSCHLIGT, S.T.D.

Introduction

Pope St. Paul VI in 1974 wrote that:

It is sometimes said that many spiritual writings today do not sufficiently reflect the whole doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit. It is the task of specialists to verify and weigh the truth of this assertion, but it is our task to exhort everyone, especially those in the pastoral ministry and also theologians, to meditate more deeply on the working of the Holy Spirit in the history of salvation, and to ensure that Christian spiritual writings give due prominence to His life-giving action. Such a study will bring out in particular the hidden relationship between the Spirit of God and the Virgin of Nazareth and show the influence they exert on the Church.¹

Paul VI was pointing out that the pneumatological dimension of how the Blessed Virgin Mary mediates grace has not been sufficiently presented. Therefore, in this article I will suggest one way to understand the mediation of the Holy Spirit and then clarify the “hidden relationship” between the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin Mary in order to demonstrate her essential role in the economy of salvation.

What is Mediation? St. Thomas explained that a mediator carries out two functions: a mediator unites or reconciles separated parties; and a mediator distributes or communicates to one that which belongs to the other.²

¹ Pope St. Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, 1974, a. 27.

² ST. III, q. 26, a. 2

Mediation in the Trinity

To understand the mediation of the Holy Spirit we must begin with the Trinity. The Father is the source and origin of the whole divinity. He is the giver. And he has only one gift to give, that of his divine being. The Father generates the Son, giving divine being to him. The Son is begotten from the Father, receiving divinity from the Father and giving divinity to the Holy Spirit. In this sense the Son is both a receiver and giver of divinity. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son.³ The Spirit receives divinity from both the Father and the Son. We can say the Holy Spirit is a pure capacity to receive divine being. In this way each person in the Trinity acts as a mediator. The Father acts as a mediator by giving; the Son by receiving and by giving; and the Holy Spirit acts as a mediator by receiving the gift of the Father and the Son, uniting the Father and the Son as the bond of love in person.⁴ For this reason Cardinal Ratzinger called the Holy Spirit the “absolute mediator.”⁵

Mediation in the World

As we move from the immanent to the economic Trinity, Scripture reveals and the Church teaches that the Son and the Spirit have a joint mission in the world, in which the two are distinct but inseparable.⁶ St. Irenaeus described this poetically saying God does everything in the world with his own hands, that is, the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁷ The Catechism states that “When the Father sends his

³ Cf. John 15:26; CCC 246-248

⁴ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *S.Th* 1, Q 39, a. 8, cons 2; Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, Herder Book Co. 1951, p. 183.

⁵ “Satan is the absolute destroyer, undermining every relationship: man’s relationship with himself and man’s relationship to one another. Thus, he is the exact opposite of the Holy Spirit, who is the absolute “mediator” who guarantees the relationships in which all the others are rooted and whence they spring: the trinitarian relationship by which the Father and Son are One, one God in the unity of the Spirit.” Messori, Vittorio, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*, Ignatius Press, 1985, p. 151.

⁶ CCC 743.

⁷ St. Irenaeus, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching 11* (cited in CCC 704).

Word he always sends his Breath.”⁸ And John Paul II called it a “Double Rhythm” of the Son and Spirit.⁹ This is a vital point, from the beginning to the end of time, whenever God sends his Son, he always sends his Spirit: their mission is conjoined and inseparable.¹⁰

The Mission of the Son

The mission of the Son in the world is manifest in Jesus and it reflects his procession in eternity. Jesus receives from the Father and he gives his life to save the world. He stated this saying, “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hands” and “The Son came to give his life as a ransom for many.”¹¹

There are three key aspects of his mission. The Son reveals the Father,¹² he expresses the Father,¹³ and he gives his life to save the world.¹⁴ Therefore, the Son mediates, he unites God and man by receiving from the Father and giving his life for the world.

The Mission of the Spirit

Like the Son, there are three key aspects to the mission of the Spirit, each of which count as mediation, since every aspect of the Spirit’s mission in the World, like that of the Son, is geared towards uniting humanity with God.

First, the Holy Spirit Reveals the Son. Again, at the Last Supper Jesus tells the disciples the Spirit of Truth will bear witness to him¹⁵ and that the Spirit will take what belongs to the Son and declare it to the

⁸ CCC 689.

⁹ DeV 63.

¹⁰ CCC 743.

¹¹ John 3:35; Mark 10:45

¹² John 17:25-26

¹³ John 14:9

¹⁴ For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:45

¹⁵ John 15:26

world.¹⁶ Moreover, both Tradition and the Magisterium teach that it is precisely the mission of the Spirit to reveal to men who Jesus is.

Second, the Holy Spirit Disposes us to welcome or to receive the Son.¹⁷ As the Spirit receives the Son in the Trinity, in a similar way, the Spirit dwells in Mary at her Immaculate Conception, disposing her, that is, giving her the capacity to receive the Son at the Annunciation. Likewise, the Spirit dwells in the souls of believers disposing or giving them the capacity to receive the Son at Pentecost and in Baptism.¹⁸

Third, the Holy Spirit Mediates in a Maternal Way. Jesus himself testifies that the Christian “must be born of water and the Spirit.”¹⁹ Jesus is speaking of the divine generation in which we become children of God through Baptism. The parallelism between a divine generation and a human procreative one is not exact. However, one is born from both a father and a mother, and since the Holy Spirit is not God the Father, the Spirit must take the role of the feminine parent.

St. Paul in Romans says, “The spirit you received...is the spirit of adoption, and it makes us cry out, 'Abba, Father!’”²⁰ Again, adoption is the work of a Father and a mother. God is our Father. Christ is the Son in whom we share the life of “sons” of the Father. The Spirit then must take the role of the mother.

Paul, in I Corinthians 12, ascribes to the Holy Spirit the mission to form Christ in Christians and so build up the Body of Christ. This too is a maternal mission. Forming and cultivating the body, mind and soul of those who are young are precisely (though not exclusively) what mothers do in pregnancy and the rearing of a child.

¹⁶ John 16:14; see also CCC 152

¹⁷ CCC 687.

¹⁸ Pope Leo XIII *Divinum Illud Munus* 9-10.

¹⁹ John 3:5-16

²⁰ Romans 8:16

Yves Congar, toward the end of his three-volume work on the Holy Spirit in Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium describes the Holy Spirit as the repository of God's maternal and feminine characteristics:

The part played in our upbringing by the Holy Spirit is that of mother – a mother who enables us to know our Father, God, and our brother, Jesus. The Spirit also enables us to invoke God as our Father and he reveals to us Jesus our Lord, introducing us gradually to his inheritance of grace and truth. Finally, the Spirit teaches us how to practice the virtues and how to use the gifts of a son of God by grace. All this is part of a mother's functions...The Spirit...completes the contribution made by the Word by making it interior and present here and now in the course of time. The Spirit does this by an intimate educative activity and a kind of impregnation and, so that the seal may be set on this work, the Spirit's maternal and feminine part is combined with the function of the Father and that of the Son.²¹

Let me make a point that should be obvious, but unfortunately may not be, the Holy Spirit is not a woman. God is pure spirit - neither man nor woman. God transcends the human distinctions between the sexes.²² However, we can attribute specific characteristics to the mission of the Son and the Spirit. The Son became man and the Bridegroom. Likewise, we can attribute certain feminine and maternal characteristics to the mission of the Holy Spirit.

What is the Relationship of the Holy Spirit and Mary?

The Catechism, especially in paragraphs 721-726, teaches that the Holy Spirit carries out the three aspects of His mediation through Mary. First, the Holy Spirit reveals the Son through Mary. The

²¹ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. 3, p. 161-162.

²² Cf. CCC 239; 370.

Catechism states: “Theophanies (manifestations of God) light up the way in salvation history. God’s Word allowed himself to be seen and heard in these theophanies, in which the cloud of the Holy Spirit both revealed and concealed him in its shadow.”²³ An example of this would be the Burning Bush in the Exodus. Then in paragraph 724 the Catechism says, “In Mary, the Holy Spirit manifests the Son of the Father, now become the Son of the Virgin. She is the burning bush of the definitive theophany. Filled with the Holy Spirit she makes the Word visible...she makes him known.”²⁴ A theophany means the Holy Spirit revealing the Word. The Catechism says Mary is the definitive theophany. She is the definitive way the Holy Spirit reveals the Word.’

Second, the Holy Spirit disposes us to receive the Son through Mary. Paragraph 723 of the Catechism tells us the Holy Spirit disposed or gave humanity the capacity to receive the Son through Mary in the Incarnation.²⁵ Likewise, the Catechism states that the Holy Spirit disposes or gives us the capacity to receive the Son through Mary: “Through Mary, the Holy Spirit begins to bring men...into communion with Christ...shepherds, magi, Simeon and Anna, the bride and groom at Cana, and the first disciples.”²⁶ Here, the Catechism illuminates the Biblical pattern in which the Spirit disposes people to welcome the Son through Mary.

At the Visitation, Elizabeth and John the Baptist receive Jesus from the Spirit and through Mary. At the Nativity the shepherds and the Magi receive Jesus from the Holy Spirit through Mary. At the Presentation Simeon and Anna receive the Son from the Spirit through the hands of Mary. And at Cana, the Holy Spirit launched the public ministry of the Son and disposed the disciples to believe for the first time. Again, this takes place through Mary.

²³ CCC 707.

²⁴ CCC 724.

²⁵ CCC 723 “With and through the Holy Spirit, the Virgin conceives and gives birth to the Son of God.”

²⁶ CCC 725.

Third, the Spirit acts in a maternal way through Mary. Following Tradition,²⁷ the Catechism in paragraph 726 draws a correlation between the Annunciation and Pentecost to teach us the Holy Spirit acts in a maternal way through Mary to form Jesus in her womb and to form Jesus in the souls of his disciples.

To give a greater understanding, the Catechism with the cross-reference directs the reader to 2617 which states: “Before the Incarnation of the Son of God, and before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, her (Mary’s) prayer cooperates in a unique way with the Father’s plan of loving kindness: at the Annunciation, for Christ’s conception; at Pentecost, for the formation of the Church, his Body.”²⁸ The Annunciation and Pentecost indicate that the Holy Spirit mediates in a maternal way to form Christ in the womb of Mary and in the souls of believers through the presence and prayer of Mary.

Pope St. John Paul II confirms this when he writes:

In the redemptive economy of grace, brought about through the action of the Holy Spirit, there is a unique correspondence between the moment of the Incarnation of the Word and the moment of the birth of the Church. The person who links these two moments is Mary: Mary at Nazareth and Mary in the Upper Room at Jerusalem. In both cases her discreet yet essential presence indicates the path of "birth from the Holy Spirit."²⁹

Who gives birth to Christians? The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit acts as a Mother. Through whom? Mary! The Annunciation and Pentecost show us that the maternal mission of the Spirit to engender Christ in us is carried out through Mary. It was the Holy Spirit and

²⁷ Cf. Leo XIII *Divinum Illud Munus* 8; to *Lumen Gentium* 59 and *Ad Gentes* 4, to *Redemptoris Mater* 24.

²⁸ CCC 2617

²⁹ *Redemptoris Mater* 24.

Mary who formed Jesus in her womb; and it is the Holy Spirit and Mary who form Jesus in the souls of his disciples.

Pope St. Paul VI remarks in *Marialis Cultus* that the early Church turned to Mary to receive Jesus from the Holy Spirit. He writes that they “had recourse to the Virgin’s intercession in order to obtain from the Spirit the capacity for engendering Christ in their own soul.”³⁰ This was attested to by St. Ildephonsus in the seventh century in the prayer: “I beg you Holy Virgin that I may have Jesus from the Holy Spirit, by whom you brought Jesus forth. May my soul receive Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, by whom your flesh conceived Jesus.”

Through the Catechism the Church is teaching that in the joint mission of the Son and Spirit, the mission of the Son is manifest in Jesus; and the mission of the Spirit is manifest in Mary. And since Mary is not the incarnation of the Spirit, we can conclude Mary is the perfect human expression of the Spirit.

In a conference given February 5, 1941, St. Maximilian Kolbe writes:

The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity never took flesh; still our human word "spouse" is far too weak to express the reality of the relationship between the Immaculata and the Holy Spirit. We can affirm that she is, in a certain sense, the "incarnation" of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that we love in her; and through her we love the Son. The Holy Spirit is far too little known.³¹

In a personal conversation with the prior director of the Kolbianum, Fr. Gregorz Bartosik, one of the greatest living scholars on the pneumatological thought of St. Maximilian Kolbe said:

According to Kolbe, “Mary and the Holy Spirit are two separate persons, but their union is so close, that though Kolbe called Mary the “Spouse of the Spirit” it was not

³⁰ *Marialis Cultus* 26.

³¹ Manteau-Bonamy, H.M., O.P., *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit*, Franciscan Marytown Press, 1975, p. 50.

adequate. In fact, Kolbe preferred to call Mary the “Quasi-Incarnation” of the Holy Spirit. Kolbe said the Son became manifest in Jesus and the Holy Spirit became manifest in Mary.

Fr. René Laurentin, after more than 50 years of theological reflection summed up his thoughts on the relationship of the Holy Spirit and Mary saying: “What the Holy Spirit does as God, Mary does with Him: she participates with Him as His visible sign. Mary is the sensible visible presence of the Holy Spirit.”³² And “Mary is, precisely, the most perfect visible image or expression of the Holy Spirit in this world, illuminated as she is by the Spirit from within.”³³

Pope St. John Paul II, during a General Audience Address of December 9, 1998 as he reflected on Mary's co-operation with the Holy Spirit in the work of salvation suggested that in Mary we see the face of the Holy Spirit: “From the Cross the Savior wished to pour out upon humanity rivers of living water, that is, the abundance of the Holy Spirit. But he wanted this outpouring of grace to be linked to a mother's face, his Mother's.”³⁴

Mary is the Sacrament of the Spirit

We have seen how the Annunciation and Pentecost suggested a correlation between the divine activity of the Holy Spirit and the human activity of Mary, indicating that the Holy Spirit is the chief protagonist who works through Mary to give birth and form Christ and Christians. Since Mary participates in and expresses the economic activity of the Spirit, and activity tells us something about the person, then Mary gives us an insight to the intrinsic character of the Holy Spirit.³⁵

³² Personal conversation with this author in July of 2003.

³³ Laurentin, *The Meaning of Consecration Today*, p. 151.

³⁴ Wednesday Audience December 9, 1998, L'Osservatore Romano, publisher date December 16, 1998, p. 19.

³⁵ See CCC 267

If the activity of Mary expresses the action of the Holy Spirit, then by watching Mary we may see who the Holy Spirit is because we know a thing by the way it acts. The activity of Mary is maternal; and Mary is maternal because she is feminine, bride and virgin.

This tells us something about the Holy Spirit. The mission of the Holy Spirit has characteristics that are feminine, maternal, bridal and virginal. In this sense, Mary is the perfect human expression of the person and activity of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, I would like to suggest that Mary is the sacrament of the Holy Spirit. The Catechism 1131 defines the sacrament as having three essential parts: sacraments are efficacious signs, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.³⁶ Sacraments as efficacious signs do two things: first, they make present what they signify. Mary is the sign of the Holy Spirit. By her presence she makes the Holy Spirit present to us. Second, efficacious signs make happen what they signify. Mary makes the maternal mission of the Holy Spirit happen in us. Therefore, when we turn to Mary, the Holy Spirit enables us to receive Jesus and forms Him within us. Mary is the sign that signifies the Holy Spirit and makes the maternal mission of the Spirit take place in us.

Second, sacraments are instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church. Mary as our spiritual mother was instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church when from the Cross Jesus looked down at the beloved disciple and proclaimed, “Behold, your mother.” Jesus said, “Behold, your mother” and Mary receives the mission to make the maternal action of the Holy Spirit present in our lives.

Third, a sacrament is a sign that dispenses divine life to us. The Son *gives* his life through the Liturgy and sacraments. The Holy Spirit disposes us to *receive* the divine life of Jesus. The Spirit does this through Mary. On her own, Mary cannot do this. Only the Spirit can give us the capacity to receive the Son. But the Spirit disposes us to

³⁶ CCC 1131

receive with and in and through Mary. This is how Mary distributes all grace. Therefore, if a sacrament is a sign that signifies and makes present the grace proper to it, Mary signifies and makes present the maternal mission of the Spirit to form Jesus within us.

We may find a certain confirmation in this idea when Cardinal Ratzinger defines the role of Mary as “moral mediation by intercession ... [and] ... physical: Mary is ontologically the place of passage of all graces, that is therefore supra-sacrament [Übersakrament]... . Between the function of Mary and all other Christians, there is no essential difference, but only a gradual one, which can also be great! ... Every Christian is a mediator of all grace! Especially Mary.”³⁷ And when I suggested to Fr. Bartosik this idea of Mary as the sacrament of the Holy Spirit, he responded, “That is exactly how Kolbe understood it.”

Is Mary the Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix of All Graces, and the Advocate?

Lumen Gentium stated that Mary’s “spiritual motherhood extends to all men...in whose generation and formation she cooperates with a mother’s love.”³⁸ It also declared, “She cooperated...in the Savior’s work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason, she is a mother to us in the order of grace.”³⁹ Therefore, “the Blessed Virgin Mary is invoked under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix.”⁴⁰

As we have said, the Holy Spirit and the Son are joint, inseparable agents in the mission of bringing humanity into union with God. One cannot assert that any part of Christ's work, however small, is done

³⁷ Emery de Gaál, “Mariology as Christology and Ecclesiology: Professor Joseph Ratzinger’s Only Mariology Course,” in *Joseph Ratzinger and the Healing of Reformation-Era Divisions*, eds. Emery de Gaál and Matthew Levering (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2019), p. 109.

³⁸ *Lumen Gentium* 63

³⁹ *Lumen Gentium* 61

⁴⁰ *Lumen Gentium* 62

without the Holy Spirit's active involvement. If, therefore, Jesus is the Redeemer, Mediator, and Advocate, then the Holy Spirit is His divine partner in all this. Furthermore, we have established that the mission of the Spirit is a maternal mediation. The Spirit acts as a mother, which means the Holy Spirit is, so to speak, the first Mother and the *divine* Co-redeemer, Co-mediator, and Co-Advocate. However, since Mary is the human expression of the Holy Spirit's mission, she must be the spiritual mother of all people and the Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate.

Conclusion: Three Mothers

It is commonly asked: "Why do we need Mary when we have Jesus?" But in fact, a more fundamental question would be this: "Why do we need the Holy Spirit when we have Jesus?" In the one joint mission of the Son and the Spirit, the Son *gives* his divine life through His death and resurrection, which is made present in the liturgy and the Sacraments. The Holy Spirit *receives* the Son in, with, and, through Mary in the Incarnation and in souls. The Holy Spirit and Mary come to dwell within the souls of believers to dispose them to receive Jesus by means of consecration to Mary. This consecration enables the faithful to live in union with her and with Jesus. This union is sustained by prayer, especially the Rosary, which John Paul II has called the School of Mary.

One final question exists: where does the Church fit in? The joint mission of the Son and the Spirit continues in the Church as the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ.⁴¹ In fact, "The Church's mission is not in addition to that of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but is its sacrament in her whole being and in all her members..."⁴²

We could express the continuation of the joint mission of the Son and the Spirit in the Church in this way: in each liturgical and

⁴¹ CCC 789; 808.

⁴² CCC 738.

Sacramental action of the Church, the Church is both Bridegroom and Bride, giver and receiver. The Church is a continuation of the mission of the Son giving his life through the ministerial priesthood; and the Church is a continuation of the Spirit disposing the faithful to receive the Son.

However, neither the Spirit, nor Mary, nor the faithful are simply receivers. We receive in order to bear fruit by giving to others. Therefore, the Spirit, Mary and believers receive the Son and share him with others. This is precisely why St. Paul stated in his letter to the Galatians, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.”⁴³ And that is why the essential mission of the Church is to go and make disciples of all nations.

So, there are three mothers who work together: the Holy Spirit, Mary and the Church. The Holy Spirit on the divine level, Mary on the human, and the members of the Church who receive the Son, bear him in their souls and lives and work to bring him to birth in others.

⁴³ Galatians 4:19