

## **Editor's Introduction**

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On the days of May 3-7, 2005, six cardinals from five diverse continents hosted a theological symposium on the Mariological theme, "*Maria: Unica Cooperatrice Alla Redenzione*" (Mary: Unique Cooperator in the Redemption) in the hallowed Marian sanctuary of Fatima, Portugal.

The host cardinals, their Eminences, Telesphore Cardinal Toppo, Édouard Cardinal Gagnon, Luis Cardinal Aponte Martínez, Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, and Ernesto Cardinal Corripio Ahumada were joined in participation by several other cardinals, either by presenting in person or sending papers or endorsements, including Tomáš Cardinal Špidlík, S.J., Jorge Cardinal Medina Estévez, and Antonio Cardinal González Zumárraga. Some 25 archbishops and bishops from all parts of the world were likewise in attendance.

Many of the cardinals and archbishops present or represented at the symposium held major Roman curial positions, i.e., prefects and secretaries of Roman dicasteries, including the Congregation for the Clergy, Pontifical Council for the Family, and the Apostolic Signatura.

These esteemed members of the Catholic Hierarchy presented a series of theological and pastoral treatises on Our Lady's role as unique human Co-redemptrix with and under Jesus Christ, the sole divine Redeemer, from a multiform variety of aspects: from authentic Catholic Inter-religious Dialogue, to the New Evangelization; from its undeniable grounding in the sources of Public Revelation, to its dynamic presence in the Fatima apparitions.

At the close of the Symposium on May 7, several cardinals raised the possibility of a *votum*, or formal petition to the newly elected Benedict XVI for the solemn definition of Our Lady's Spiritual Motherhood, founded upon her role as Co-redemptrix, and exercised in her subsequent roles as Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate.

The *votum* for the dogma of Our Lady's Spiritual Motherhood of all peoples, founded upon her Coredemption, was unanimously approved by the 33 members of the Catholic Hierarchy present at that extraordinary Fatima Symposium. The *Acta*, along with the unanimous *votum* which came

forth from these global representatives of the Church's Magisterium for the solemn definition of the Spiritual Motherhood as a fifth Marian dogma was personally presented to Pope Benedict XVI in private audience by Cardinal Toppo in October 2005.

The *Acta* from the 2005 Fatima Symposium comprising the individual presentations by prelates and theologians were never published for public distribution, but rather privately published and distributed principally for participating members of the symposium. It is the honor and privilege of *Ecce Mater Tua* to now publish, with permission, the principal presentations from that extraordinary Marian symposium.

This present volume of *Ecce Mater Tua* will publish papers and presentations offered *by members of the Hierarchy* from the 2005 Fatima Symposium, followed in subsequent volumes of EMT with selected papers by attending theologians and philosophers. All papers will be published here in their original language of presentation, i.e., Italian, Spanish, or English, with the Introduction by the six host cardinals translated into English from its original Italian.

This esteemed global group of cardinal and bishop contributors could in no legitimate sense be categorized as “ecumenically insensitive,” “pre-Vatican” or “ecclesiological fringe.” To attempt to do so would be to manifest an unseemly bias, an a priori *ad hominem* that does not befit the honest theologian.

These prelates from a wide spectrum of the Church and world represent an authentic Catholic voice raised in honor of their universal Mother and Queen, seeking to solemnly acknowledge her unique cooperation with Jesus in the historic work of Redemption. They do so in due diligence to and application of the Hermeneutics of Continuity profoundly articulated by Benedict XVI. They do so with ardent hope of a new historic release of grace from such a dogmatic proclamation, that they believe would lead to the full exercise of Our Lady's roles of maternal intercession for a Church in grave crisis and for a beleaguered humanity in desperate need of a Mother.

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