

Ecce Mater Tua

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The Annunciation of Our Lord

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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.

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Introduction to Volume Six

This issue of *Ecce Mater Tua* coincides with Pope Francis's historic consecration of all of humanity—and Russia and Ukraine in particular—to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The text of Pope Francis's "Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary" is included in this issue to mark this historic appeal to the Mother of Mercy. United with this solemn act of consecration, we all hope that, through Mary's Immaculate Heart, peace will dawn once more—not only in Ukraine but throughout the world.

There have been prior papal consecrations to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On October 31, 1942, in the midst of World War II, Pius XII consecrated the whole world to Mary's Immaculate Heart. On July 7, 1952, the same pope consecrated the Russian people to Mary's Heart. Sister Lucia of Fatima, however, made it clear that Our Lady wished Russia to be consecrated to her Immaculate Heart by the Roman Pontiff *in communion* with the bishops of the whole world. Pope St. John Paul II carried out this consecration on March 25, 1984. Sister Lucia personally confirmed that this act of consecration corresponded to what Our Lady wished when she wrote: "*Sim, está feita, tal como Nossa Senhora a pediu, desde o dia 25 de Março de 1984*" —"Yes it has been done just as Our Lady asked, on 25 March 1984" (Letter of November 8 1989).

In the second *Commentario* article, Dr. Mark Miravalle makes some critical clarifications and corrections of factual errors regarding an article by an Italian theologian. Dr. Miravalle's article is followed by two important essays on Marian co-redemption. Luciana Graff offers a synthetic overview of Mary as co-redemptrix, and St. Mary of the Immaculate Heart, O.P., probes the mystery of our Lady's profound association with Jesus in the work of redemption.

The *Articles* section of this issue begins with an essay co-authored by Doctors Miravalle and Fastiggi on how the efforts of St. Athanasius to reach consensus on Christ's divinity in the fourth century can provide a model for reaching consensus on Mary's role in redemption today. This is followed by two outstanding articles—one by the late Fr. Peter Damian Fehlner and the other by Msgr. Arthur Burton Calkins—that appeared in the 2005 volume, *Mary "Unique Cooperator in the Redemption"* based on the May 3–7 Symposium held in Fatima on the mystery of Marian co-redemption. In the same section, Dr. Paul Kabay examines the question of how Mary's preservation from the stain of original sin relates to the

foreseen merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race. This article is followed by an original English translation of a text by the late Belgian Jesuit, Jean Galot. This text—translated by Dr. John Mark Miravalle—offers a detailed look on Mary and ecumenism with due attention to Orthodox, Protestant, and Anglican perspectives. The final article in this issue is an illuminating textual study of the treatment of Mary in the Gospel of Matthew as found in the Codex Veronensis of the Bible. In his scholarly analysis, Fr. Robert Nixon, O.S.B., provides a careful comparison of the Marian passages of Matthew's Gospel as found in St. Jerome's Vulgate with the Latin text of the Codex Veronensis.

Commentario

Prayer of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

HIS HOLINESS, POPE FRANCIS¹

O Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, in this time of trial we turn to you. As our Mother, you love us and know us: no concern of our hearts is hidden from you. Mother of mercy, how often we have experienced your watchful care and your peaceful presence! You never cease to guide us to Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Yet we have strayed from that path of peace. We have forgotten the lesson learned from the tragedies of the last century, the sacrifice of the millions who fell in two world wars. We have disregarded the commitments we made as a community of nations. We have betrayed peoples' dreams of peace and the hopes of the young. We grew sick with greed, we thought only of our own nations and their interests, we grew indifferent and caught up in our selfish needs and concerns. We chose to ignore God, to be satisfied with our illusions, to grow arrogant and aggressive, to suppress innocent lives and to stockpile weapons. We stopped being our neighbour's keepers and stewards of our common home. We have ravaged the garden of the earth with war and by our sins we have broken the heart of our heavenly Father, who desires us to be brothers and sisters. We grew indifferent to everyone and everything except ourselves. Now with shame we cry out: Forgive us, Lord!

Holy Mother, amid the misery of our sinfulness, amid our struggles and weaknesses, amid the mystery of iniquity that is evil and war, you remind us that God never abandons us, but continues to look upon us with love, ever ready to forgive us and raise us up to new life. He has given you to us and made your Immaculate Heart a refuge for the Church and for all humanity. By God's gracious will, you are ever with us; even in the most troubled moments of our history, you are there to guide us with tender love.

We now turn to you and knock at the door of your heart. We are your beloved children. In every age you make yourself known to us, calling us to conversion. At this dark hour, help us and grant us your comfort. Say to us once more: "Am I not here, I who am your Mother?" You are able to untie

¹ On March 22nd, 2022, the Holy See delivered this prayer to the bishops of the world in anticipation of the Holy Father's consecration of Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on March 25th, 2022.

the knots of our hearts and of our times. In you we place our trust. We are confident that, especially in moments of trial, you will not be deaf to our supplication and will come to our aid.

That is what you did at Cana in Galilee, when you interceded with Jesus and he worked the first of his signs. To preserve the joy of the wedding feast, you said to him: "They have no wine" (Jn 2:3). Now, O Mother, repeat those words and that prayer, for in our own day we have run out of the wine of hope, joy has fled, fraternity has faded. We have forgotten our humanity and squandered the gift of peace. We opened our hearts to violence and destructiveness. How greatly we need your maternal help!

Therefore, O Mother, hear our prayer.

Star of the Sea, do not let us be shipwrecked in the tempest of war.

Ark of the New Covenant, inspire projects and paths of reconciliation.

Queen of Heaven, restore God's peace to the world.

Eliminate hatred and the thirst for revenge, and teach us forgiveness.

Free us from war, protect our world from the menace of nuclear weapons.

Queen of the Rosary, make us realize our need to pray and to love.

Queen of the Human Family, show people the path of fraternity.

Queen of Peace, obtain peace for our world.

O Mother, may your sorrowful plea stir our hardened hearts. May the tears you shed for us make this valley parched by our hatred blossom anew. Amid the thunder of weapons, may your prayer turn our thoughts to peace. May your maternal touch soothe those who suffer and flee from the rain of bombs. May your motherly embrace comfort those forced to leave their homes and their native land. May your Sorrowful Heart move us to compassion and inspire us to open our doors and to care for our brothers and sisters who are injured and cast aside.

Holy Mother of God, as you stood beneath the cross, Jesus, seeing the disciple at your side, said: "Behold your son" (Jn 19:26.) In this way he entrusted each of us to you. To the disciple, and to each of us, he said: "Behold, your Mother" (v. 27). Mother Mary, we now desire to welcome you into our lives and our history. At this hour, a weary and distraught humanity stands with you beneath the cross, needing to entrust itself to you and, through you, to consecrate itself to Christ. The people of Ukraine and Russia, who venerate you with great love, now turn to you, even as your heart beats with compassion for them and for all those peoples decimated by war, hunger, injustice and poverty.

Therefore, Mother of God and our Mother, to your Immaculate Heart we solemnly entrust and consecrate ourselves, the Church and all humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine. Accept this act that we carry out with confidence and love. Grant that war may end and peace spread throughout the world. The "Fiat" that arose from your heart opened the doors of history to the Prince of Peace. We trust that, through your heart, peace will dawn once more. To you we consecrate the future of the whole human family, the needs and expectations of every people, the anxieties and hopes of the world.

Through your intercession, may God's mercy be poured out on the earth and the gentle rhythm of peace return to mark our days. Our Lady of the "Fiat," on whom the Holy Spirit descended, restore among us the harmony that comes from God. May you, our "living fountain of hope," water the dryness of our hearts. In your womb Jesus took flesh; help us to foster the growth of communion. You once trod the streets of our world; lead us now on the paths of peace. Amen.

Clarification and Dialogue Regarding the Movement for a Fifth Marian Dogma and the Reported Amsterdam Apparitions

MARK MIRAVALLE, S.T.D.

In the 2021 issue of *Marianum* (released January 2022), an article entitled, “La Controversa Questione delle ‘Apparizioni Mariane di Amsterdam’ e Il Tema della Mediazione e della Reiterata Richiesta del V Dogma Mariano” (“The Controversial Question of the ‘Marian Apparitions of Amsterdam’ and the Theme of Mediation and the Repeated Request for the V Marian Dogma”)² was authored by Italian theologian, Fr. S. Perrella, S.M. While the over seventy-page article poses numerous theological statements that certainly lend themselves to further dialogue and debate, there are also certain hypotheses presented in the article which, unfortunately, are based on complete and serious factual and historical errors.

I will here offer a synthesized clarification in seven points to certain theological arguments presented in the article, inclusive of the necessary correction of direct factual errors hypothetically asserted by the author. These corrections are important for anyone who seeks an objective and honest analysis of the international Catholic movement, *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici*, which seeks the solemn definition of the Virgin Mary as the Spiritual Mother of All Peoples. They are likewise essential for those truly and sincerely interested in an objective and theologically professional evaluation of the reported Amsterdam apparitions in pursuit of a just and proper application of the 1978 norms of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in evaluating private revelation.

1. The *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici* movement constitutes an international Catholic movement spanning five continents with an international representation of over 180 countries. The movement has the support of over 600 cardinals and bishops, and over 8 million faithful globally. To represent this movement, therefore, as an “American” movement of “soliciting” petitions (p. 264), could give the mistaken impression that this movement is predominantly American in nature and scope, rather than a documented global movement which has received

² Salvatore M. Perrella, “La Controversa Questione delle ‘Apparizioni di Amsterdam’ e il Tema della Mediazione e della Reiterata Richiesta del V Dogma Mariano,” *Marianum* 83 (2021): 257–328.

more petitions in a quarter century than any other petition movement in the history of the Catholic Church.

The article reports a response of “justified perplexity” (p. 265) by the Holy See and the Pontifical Marian Academy [PAMI]³ to this international petition drive. If accurate, this response is puzzling. Why would a worldwide request of the People of God in the form of 8 million petitions—joined by hundreds of global cardinals and bishops—constitute a reason for “justified perplexity” on the part of the Holy See and PAMI? Should it not rather be a response of “ecclesial openness” and “synodal listening” to the largest per annum petition drive in Catholic history? This seemingly dismissive response appears to run antithetical to the current “synodal way” which is so strongly being directed by the Holy See. Moreover, this apparently negative disposition runs contrary to the esteemed counsel of St. John Henry Cardinal Newman, so consistently referenced at the Council, who in his famous 1859 treatise on “Consulting the Faithful on Matters of Doctrine” instructs that when examining the possibility of a dogma related to devotional elements (as is the case concerning the potential definition of Our Lady’s Spiritual Motherhood), that the *voice of the laity should be specifically consulted and preeminently respected*: “In most cases when a definition is contemplated, the laity will have a testimony to give; but if ever there be an instance when they ought to be consulted, it is in the case of doctrines which bear directly upon devotional sentiments.”⁴

2. All bishops and theologians of the *Vox Populi* Movement who have written in support of a new Marian dogma have likewise been ardent supporters of the Second Vatican Council, and have consistently articulated the Council’s clear and unambiguous teaching on Our Lady’s unique, active and subordinate cooperation in the Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ.⁵

It seems unfair and misleading to assert that theological and episcopal “advocates” of this new dogma are guilty of an “underestimation”

³ PAMI = Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis.

⁴ John Henry Newman, “Consulting the Faithful on Matters of Doctrine,” *The Rambler*, p. 33. (penultimate page in most editions).

⁵ See, for example, the three Mariological volumes of *Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations I, II, III*, Queenship Publishing, 1997-2001; and the nine volume Mariological series, *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, Academy of the Immaculate, 2000-2009.

of the teachings of the Council (pp. 265-266). The rationale posited for this assertion is the alleged failure of fifth Marian dogma supporters to integrate adequately Mary's cooperation in the Redemption and her mediation of grace "with her multiform maternal intercession of grace, mercy, example, and spiritual maternity."⁶ Such an accusation, however, fails to see that supporters of the new dogma find much support for their position in the council itself. Vatican II, for example, articulates Mary's active cooperation in the overall redemptive mission of Christ, which necessarily includes the Redeemer's role in the historical acquisition of redemptive graces. *Lumen Gentium*, 56, 57, 58, and 61 all refer to Mary's active cooperation in the Redemption, as numerous texts and articles of supporters of the Fifth Marian Dogma, once again, dynamically and repeatedly articulate.⁷ *Lumen Gentium* does not limit itself to Mary's "application and distribution" of graces. It also affirms her active participation in the objective historical obtaining of grace with and under Christ. To fail to see this would, ironically, be an actual underestimation of the Council's Marian teaching. St. John Paul II's papal commentary on Vatican II's Marian teaching authoritatively reiterates that Mary's subordinate role with Jesus culminating at Calvary "contributed to the Redemption of all."⁸ St. John Paul's encyclical teaching, which remains the mouthpiece of the ordinary and universal papal magisterium, likewise teaches that Mary "shares in the gift which the Son makes of himself" on Calvary, and that she "offers Jesus" for the same redemptive goal—both acts which constitute a true cooperation in the one-time historic attainment of the graces human redemption:

Standing by the cross of Jesus" (Jn. 19:25), Mary shares in the gift which the Son makes of himself: *she offers Jesus, gives*

⁶ Perrella, 266. It should be noted that Fr. Perrella, in the same article also acknowledges Mary's role in the acquisition of grace: "Coredemption (historical-messianic cooperation) and Mediation (celestial cooperation) are always relative and successive one to the other, and together they express the two significant and supportive moments of Mary's spiritual maternity towards humanity, namely—to express it in the classical language—: the *action of the acquisition of Grace* and that of its *application* to individual men and women redeemed by Christ" (p. 321).

⁷ See the three Mariological volumes of *Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations I, II, III*, Queenship Publishing, 1997-2001; and the nine volume Mariological series, *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, Academy of the Immaculate, 2000-2009.

⁸ St. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Salvific Doloris*, Feb. 11, 1984, no. 25.

him over, and begets him to the end for our sake. The "yes" spoken on the day of the Annunciation reaches full maturity on the day of the Cross, when the time comes for Mary to receive and beget as her children all those who become disciples, pouring out upon them the saving love of her Son: "When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" (Jn. 19:26).⁹

3. The *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici* petition requests the solemn definition of Mary's singular doctrinal role as Spiritual Mother of All Peoples, inclusive of her three maternal functions as Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate. The article asserts that the petition for a fifth Marian dogma requests the "dogmatization of the titles of Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate" which "have their own history and their own different content between them, and for this reason cannot be used indifferently" (p. 263). This objection fails to recognize that the three titles of Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate denote *three specific expressions of the one common doctrine of Mary's spiritual Motherhood*. In harmonized unity, Mary's role as human Co-redemptrix constitutes her maternal suffering with Christ (cf. LG 58) in order to "restore supernatural life to souls" (LG 61). Her role as Mediatrix of all graces manifests her function as "mother to us in the order of grace" (LG 61), that "taken up to heaven, she did not lay aside her saving office, but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal life" (LG 62). Her role as "Advocate" (LG 62) expresses her maternal function of protection and defense for humanity through her motherly intercession.¹⁰

Three maternal roles do not conclude to three mothers. Nor are her three specific maternal functions within her overall spiritual maternity interchangeable. Rather, this doctrinal truth reveals one mother, the Mother of all humanity, who manifests her powerful spiritual maternity at the service of both Christ and humanity as the Mother Suffering, the Mother nourishing, the Mother pleading in seeking, as true subordinate mediation demands "to unite man to God."¹¹

⁹ St. John Paul II, Encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, March 25, 1995, n. 103.

¹⁰ It should be noted that various Mariologists have used the three titles in reference to Mary's role in the work of redemption, her mediation of grace, and her advocacy as spiritual Mother. See J.M. Friethoff, OP, *A Complete Mariology* (London, 1958) and G. Alastruey, *Tratado de la Virgen Santissima* (Madrid, 1952).

¹¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, Q. 26, a. 1.

The international Vox Populi *votum* does not constitute a “triple dogma” request of three unrelated Marian titles, any more than the three complimentary aspects of *virginitas ante partum*, *virginitas in partu*, and *virginitas post partum*, contained in the dogma of Our Lady’s Virginité constitute a “triple dogma.” Only a failure to understand the organic complementarity of these three specific maternal aspects of her one spiritual Motherhood in relation to humanity would lead to the mistaken conclusion of its non-definability in a single dogmatic declaration.

4. The 20th century movement for a fifth Marian dogma was initiated by the renown prelate and scholar, Désiré Cardinal Mercier, a cardinal of international pre-eminence during the first decades of the 20th century. Mercier’s Mariological-petition movement, which itself gathered hundreds of cardinal and bishop endorsements, as well as hundreds of thousands of petitions from clergy, religious, and faithful, similarly petitioned for the dogmatic definition of Our Lady’s universal mediation of grace under various formulations.¹² In his many documents, Mercier associated the theological foundation of her Spiritual Maternity upon Marian coredemption.¹³ The three papal commissions established by Pius XI to study the definability of the Mercier petition reportedly accumulated well over 2500 pages of theological support for the proposed Marian dogma.¹⁴ Once again, the principal Mariological foundation for her spiritual maternity by world class Mariologists (e.g., the Spanish Jesuit, José Bover) was her role as human Co-redemptrix with the Redeemer.¹⁵

It would be unjustly minimizing to the Mariological and historical significance of the stature and magnitude of Mercier’s movement for a fifth Marian dogma to dismiss it with only a passing comment as to its “theological”, “linguistic”, “pastoral” and “ecumenical” inadequacies (p. 259). In fact, the international meeting of Mariologists in Rome on Dec. 1,

¹² NB: “Universal Mediation of Grace”, “Mediatrice of all graces”, and “Spiritual Motherhood” were also common formulations related to the proposed fifth Marian dogma used by Mercier and others at the time over the years of petitioning from 1906 to 1925, cf. Manfred Hauke, *Mary, Mediatrix of Grace, Mary’s Universal Mediation of Grace in the Theological and Pastoral Works of Cardinal Mercier*, Academy of the Immaculate, 2004, pp.17-91.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 86.

¹⁵ Ibid.

1950 chose to continue the essence of the Mercier petition with a collective *votum* to Pope Pius XII for the dogmatic definition of Our Lady's universal mediation, and that just one month following the dogmatic definition of the Assumption. Moreover, over 400 hundred bishops sought the continuation of the heart of the Mercier petition for defining Mary's mediation under various Mariological formulations at the initial stages of the Second Vatican Council.¹⁶ To assert, therefore, that the substantive 20th century Mercier movement for a fifth Marian dogma just "faded away" after his death in 1926 would be both historically and theologically inaccurate.

There is, furthermore, a critical imperative for contemporary post-conciliar Mariology to incorporate the papal wisdom and instruction of Pope Benedict XVI for a positive and unifying "hermeneutic of continuity," rather than a negative and divisive "hermeneutics of rupture." This should be substantively implemented between pre-conciliar and post-conciliar Mariology in general, and the pre-conciliar and post-conciliar petition for the dogma of Mary's Spiritual Maternity in specific.

The historic precedent of the dogma of the Assumption, first requested by hundreds of bishops at the First Vatican Council, then declined due to a judgement of inopportuneness, only later to be solemnly defined in the century to follow, serves as one fruitful example of an authentic Mariological hermeneutic of continuity.

5. The Co-redemptrix title has been used in papal addresses on at least 9 occasions by Pope St. John Paul II XI and Pius XI before him.¹⁷

¹⁶ Cf. Michael O'Carroll, "Mediation" in *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Michael Glazier, 1982, p. 242.

¹⁷ Cf. Pius XI, *Allocution to Pilgrims from Vicenza, Italy*, November 30, 1933, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 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.

¹⁷ Pius XI, *Allocution to Pilgrims from Vicenza, Italy*, November 30, 1933, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 1, 1933, 1; see also Domenico Bertetto, S.D.B., ed. *Discorsi di Pio XI* 2:1013; 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-

Lumen Gentium 25 speaks about the “frequency” of papal statements as a criterion in indicating its authoritative level.¹⁸ The Co-redemptrix title was approved three times by congregations of the Holy See under the pontificate of Pope St. Pius X (twice directly by the Holy Office).¹⁹ Pope Leo XIII had already approved a laud of Mary as the “co-redemptrix of the world” in 1885.²⁰

René Laurentin stated earlier in his theological career that in light of the papal usage of the Co-redemptrix title, it “would at least be gravely temerarious to attack its legitimacy.”²¹ Laurentin went on to conclude that in light of its repeated papal-magisterial incorporation “it is certain that the use of co-redemptrix is now legitimate,”²² and this long before John Paul’s six time repetition of the title.

The co-redemptrix term constitutes a single word denotation of the doctrine of Marian coredemption. Marian coredemption is consistently

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. Cf. also A. Calkins, “Pope John Paul II’s Ordinary Magisterium on Marian Coredemption,” *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, Vol. II, New Bedford, MA, Academy of the Immaculate, 2002.

¹⁸ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, n. 25.

¹⁹ Congregation of Rites, *Decretum quo festum Septem Dolorum B. M. V., Dominicae tertiae Septembris affixum, ad ritum duplicem secundae classis elevatur pro universa Ecclesia* (May 13, 1908) *Acta Sanctae 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 Apostolicae Sedis* [AAS] 5[1913], 364; and in another decree of January 22, 1914, AAS 6, [1914], 108.

²⁰ See Pope Leo XIII’s approval of Lauds to Jesus and Mary on July 18, 1885. One laud refers to Mary as “co-redemptrix of the world” (*corredentrice del mondo*). See *Acta Sanctae Sedis* [ASS] 18 [1885] p. 93.

²¹ René Laurentin, *Le Titre de Corédemptrice: Étude historique*, Editions “Marianum; Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, Rome, 1951, p. 28: “Il serait gravement téméraire, pour le moins, de s’attaquer à sa légitimité.”

²² Ibid., p.36: “Ce qu’il y a de certain, c’est l’emploi de *corredemptrice* est dès maintenant légitime.” N.B. Clearly, Laurentin’s position changed on the subject in later years, but his personal change of position does not in itself negate the legitimacy of his earlier theological rationale in defense of the Co-redemptrix title.

taught in conciliar teaching and even further developed in the Papal Magisterium of St. John Paul II.²³ It is therefore surprising to see a certain pattern by some mariologists of methodologically “passing over” the vast Mariological contribution of St. John Paul II when discussing post-conciliar Mariology in general and Marian coredemption in specific, and instead returning back to St. Paul VI’s *Marialis Cultus* of 1974, almost as if it were the last relevant papal post-conciliar instruction in Mariology. This, too, would represent a certain unwarranted selectivity regarding papal discourse on authentic Mariological development.

On the topic of Marian papal teaching and possible selectivity, the article presents long, complete quotations of the 3 addresses in which our present Holy Father, Pope Francis, adds *ex tempore* comments, negative in connotation, concerning the Co-redemptrix title, which were offered “off the cuff” in two homilies and one Wednesday audience. Yet, the article contains no papal quotations of the six usages of the Co-redemptrix title by Pope St. John Paul II, which were at times surrounded by a rich Mariological commentary on the Council’s treatment on Marian coredemption in *Lumen Gentium* 58;²⁴ nor quotations of the three papal references of Pius XI, one of which includes an actual explanation and defense of the Co-redemptrix title.²⁵ This, then, could give the appearance of a theological double standard regarding the significance, or lack thereof, of non-encyclical papal texts.

6. The historical and personal motivations for the origins of the *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici* movement have, in fact, absolutely no intrinsic relevance to the question of a solemn definition of Spiritual mediation. The

²³ Cf. A. Calkins, “Pope John Paul II’s Ordinary Magisterium on Marian Coredemption,” *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, Vol. II, New Bedford, MA, Academy of the Immaculate, 2002; A. Calkins, “Pope John Paul’s Teaching on Marian Coredemption,” *Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate Theological Foundations II: Papal, Pneumatological, Ecumenical, Queenship*, Santa Barbara, pp. 113-149.

²⁴ For example, 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, within the context of five paragraphs of rich Mariology on Marian coredemption in light of *Lumen Gentium* 58.

²⁵ Cf. Pius XI, *Allocution to Pilgrims from Vicenza, Italy*, November 30, 1933, *L’Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 1, 1933, 1.

latter issue must be based on a) the doctrine's solid presence in the sources of divine revelation; and b) its opportuneness, with the ultimate discernment coming from the Successor of Peter. With this expressed disclaimer as to the theological irrelevance of this issue, I will succinctly identify the original motivation for initiating this movement for the sake of factual clarification in light of mistaken postulations.

Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici was initiated after reading numerous Mariology texts of the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's which spoke of the definition of variations of Our Lady's mediation with such manifest certainty that several treatises concluded with the implication of not "if" but rather "when" this doctrine would soon be solemnly defined.²⁶ It was after reading several such articles that I decided, in October 1991, to meet with the curial cardinal, Edouard Cardinal Gagnon, at past President of the Pontifical Council on the Family as well as President of the Pontifical Committee for Eucharistic Conference in Rome, who at that time had already submitted a significant number of episcopal endorsements for the fifth Marian Dogma to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. It was at that time decided to essentially revive the Mercier campaign for a fifth Marian dogma through Mercier's threefold approach of theological support, ecclesiastical support from the hierarchy, and petitions from the lay faithful. It is a matter of historical fact that the *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici* movement *was neither founded nor based upon any private revelation*. It was only in the years following the 1991 meeting with Cardinal Gagnon, as word spread of the VPMM movement, that I was first introduced to the reported Amsterdam apparitions.

It is therefore a gross historical and factual error, completely bereft of any evidence, to propose the "disturbing hypothesis" (p. 286 ff) that *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici* was in any way founded or influenced by the wildly heretical, absurdly false apparitions claimed by the Canadian woman, Marie-Paule Giguère and her pseudo-apparitional "Army of Mary" movement.²⁷ I had absolutely no knowledge of these flagrantly false mystical claims throughout the early years of the *Vox Populi* Movement. Only years later did

²⁶ For two such examples, cf. S. Robichaud, S.M., "Dispensatrix of All Graces" in J.B. Carol, *Mariology*, Volume II, Bruce Publishing, pp. 426-458; J.B. Carol "Marian Coredemption", J.B. Carol, *Mariology*, Volume II, pp. 377-424.

²⁷ On Marie-Paule Giguère and the Army of Mary, see Robert Fastiggi, "The Rise and Fall of the Army of Mary (*L'Armée de Marie*)" *Marian Studies* Volume LXIII (2012): 121-155.

I first hear of this unfortunately troubled woman who thought herself the reincarnation of Mary, and further perceived that herself and Mary combined constituted the “fourth person of the Trinity”!

I must unequivocally state that this hypothetical assertion in the above-mentioned article with absolutely no evidence to support it (nor could there be in light of its utter falsity) constitutes a theological and ethical violation of the norms of authentic scholarship, fundamental respect for personal dignity and reputation, let alone the dictates of Christian charity. Unfounded hypotheses may be acceptable in abstract philosophy or investigative fiction, but they have no legitimate place in respected journals of Theology such as the *Marianum*. Standard ethical norms of secular journalism, let alone the Christian responsibility and theological scholarship that should govern Catholic scholarly journals, rightly call for a complete public retraction of this slanderous, fictitious assertion by both author and publisher.

Let us, therefore, return to a theologically and factually based dialogue and analysis of the fifth Marian dogma issue, to be evaluated on its own merits or lack thereof in responsible avoidance of *ad hominem*, *post hoc propter hoc*, or all other forms of fallacious distractions.

7. The reported Amsterdam apparitions presently hold the status of a *non constat de supernaturalitate* apparition (i.e., the supernatural character has not been confirmed) in light of the December 30, 2020 statement of Bishop Henricks of Harlem-Amsterdam. This statement sought to return the previous 18 year standing status of *constat de supernaturalitate*, i.e., consisting of a supernatural origin (as declared by his predecessor, Bishop Josef Punt on May 31, 2002) back to a 1974 position of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. The 1974 CDF statement is not one of *constat de non supernaturalitate*, a category still in use at the time, which indicates that an alleged apparition is not supernatural. This return to the 1974 status fails to take into consideration over 40 years of positive development, which includes several written statements by the CDF itself to the Diocese of Haarlem in support of a more positive stance regarding the devotion to the reported apparitions;²⁸ as well as the active participation of numerous

²⁸ Cf. Bishop Josef Punt, “Bishop Answers Request For Clarifications Regarding the Amsterdam Apparitions,” *Mother Of All Peoples*, <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/bishop-answers-request-for-clarification-regarding-the-amsterdam-apparitions>, September 15, 2020.

cardinals and bishops in the annual Lady of All Nations Prayer days in Amsterdam during this nearly two decade period. It remains an interesting canonical/ecclesiastical question as to whether a succeeding bishop has the authority to overturn a declaration of a preceding bishop. Certainly, the CDF has such authority according to the 1978 CDF norms of evaluation²⁹ after a new objective investigation of the designated apparition (which, incidentally, does not appear to have taken place in this case). But in the Amsterdam case, it was not the CDF that officially changed the new Amsterdam status, but rather a declaration by the succeeding bishop. Could then, for example, Fatima's *constat de supernaturalitate* status be legitimately overturned by a future succeeding bishop of Leiria-Fatima?

Amsterdam, therefore, is not a condemned “non-apparition”, but a reported apparition whose supernatural authority has not been confirmed or “fixed”, along with a present restriction on the promulgation of the message, according to the German, French, Spanish, and Italian references to the 1974 CDF statement recorded on the Vatican website.³⁰ These reported apparitions should rightly receive a comprehensive theological, scientific and psychological analysis to justify any juridical change in canonical status—something similar to the comprehensive process undergone regarding the reported Medjugorje apparitions, which likewise presently possess the *non constat* status.

Unfortunately, the article does not truly provide a substantial contribution to a much-needed objective and impartial theological/scientific/psychological analysis of the reported Amsterdam event according to CDF Norms. For example, in the place of a professional theological analysis of the reported message based on primary sources, the author instead quotes an extended secondary source summary of the reported message/event (pp. 286-289), and then uses over 10 pages of text in discussing, once again, the blatantly false Army of Mary event and the pseudo-visionary, Marie-Paule Giguère (pp 289-299ff).

²⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Norms of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in the Manner of Proceeding in Examining Alleged Apparitions and Revelations*, Feb. 25, 1978.

³⁰ Cf. For various translations of 1974 CDF Statement on Amsterdam status, cf. Dr. Robert Fastiggi, “The Amsterdam Apparitions: Where Are We now?”, Mother of All Peoples, <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/the-amsterdam-apparitions-where-are-we-now> posted March, 2021.

The principal justification for the article's perennial effort to associate Amsterdam with the Army of Mary is that the pseudo-visionary, Marie-Paule, made repeated efforts to connect herself with the Amsterdam visionary, Ida Peerdeman and with the reported Amsterdam message (pp.299ff). To posit this as justifying a thesis of essential connection between the two alleged apparitions would be a failure to acknowledge the all-too-common occurrence of false visionaries who seek to associate themselves with true visionaries for the obvious sake of credibility. At Lourdes, for example, numerous false visionaries sought to associate themselves with St. Bernadette and the authentic supernatural events, beginning in April 1858 and extending for months, as confirmed by Fr. Clos and in several cases by the local bishop, Msgr. Laurence.³¹ Should St. Bernadette be discredited, or the Lourdes apparitions considered false, due to the efforts of pseudo-visionaries to associate themselves with the authentic Lourdes visionary and Marian apparitions?

To suggest a causal relation, then, between the reported Amsterdam apparitions and the hopelessly fraudulent "Army of Mary" Canadian event is once again to posit an unfounded claim which does not serve a legitimate theological/scientific/psychological analysis on the former. To yet further hypothesize the possibility that the reported Amsterdam visionary, Ida Peerdeman may have actually "contaminated" Marie-Paule (p. 296) constitutes yet another serious violation of theological professionalism and ethical respect for the dignity of person and reputation of the reported Amsterdam visionary, who was in fact buried with public honor and reverence by presiding Haarlem-Amsterdam bishop of the time, Msgr. Bomers in 1996.

Conclusion

True Mariology is never divorced from the real world. The powerful intercession of the Mother of the Church and the Mother of all peoples commands an immediate relevance to the present global situation. Far from an ivory tower doctrine, the truth of Our Lady as spiritual Mother of all peoples holds critical significance to the present historic moment, as the contemporary world needs its Mother's *fullest possible intercession*, which, I

³¹ Cf. *False Visions Which Followed Lourdes*, <http://theotokos.org.uk/false-visions-which-followed-lourdes/> posted 2020.

believe, will require a formal recognition of this divinely designated Marian role for humanity.

Let the international Mariological community therefore seek, to the best of our abilities, the greatest possible unity and consensus³² in understanding, defending, and proclaiming the full truth about humanity's universal Mother. Mothers unite children in ways they cannot do on their own. The Mother of all peoples can unite nations in ways we cannot do on their own.

It is past the time for simply cultural Mariology. Let us articulate and invoke the Mother of all peoples, based on sound conciliar theology and devotion, through which we effect the maximum grace and peace for a troubled world.

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³² M. Miravalle, *The Athanasian Solution to Mary's Role in Redemption*, <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/the-athanasian-solution-to-mary-s-role-in-redemption>, motherofallpeoples.com, January 2022. See also Mark Miravalle and Robert Fastiggi, "Raggiungere il consenso sul ruolo di Maria nella redenzione: la soluzione atanasiana" in *La Theotokos: Portale di Mariologia* (26 Febbraio, 2022): <https://www.latheotokos.it/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=2256>.

Ecce Mater Tua

The Blessed Virgin Mary as Co-Redemptrix

LUCIANA GRAFF

Because our fallen state moved God, the Word became flesh¹ in the divine person of Jesus Christ,² true God and true Man,³ “in order to save us by reconciling us with God,” “so that thus we might know God’s love,” and make us “partakers of the divine nature.”⁴ Thus, the Word of God “for us men and for our salvation... came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”⁵

The profession of our faith regarding the Incarnation of Christ shows us who the Virgin Mary is, since “what the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ,”⁶ and “all the titles and greatness of Mary stem from the colossal fact of her divine motherhood.”⁷ Thus, the Church extracts from it her Marian doctrine, especially expressed in the dogmas, namely: the divine maternity,⁸ the Immaculate Conception,⁹ the perpetual virginity,¹⁰ and the Assumption of Our Lady.¹¹ This paper’s goal is not to discuss the Marian dogmas; however, they are all rooted in Mary’s divine maternity, the source of her spiritual motherhood of all humanity. Mary acts as our spiritual mother in

¹ *The Holy Bible - Revised Standard Version*, Second Catholic Edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), bk. Jn 1:14.

² *The Holy Bible - Revised Standard Version*, bk. Jn 1.

³ Heinrich Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, 43rd Edition (Ignatius Press, n.d.), para. 301; CCC, para. 469.

⁴ CCC, paras. 457–460.

⁵ CCC, para. 456. See also the Nicene Creed.

⁶ CCC, para. 487.

⁷ Antonio Royo Marín, *Teología de la perfección cristiana*, 1st edition (Madrid: Biblioteca Autores Cristianos, 1954), para. 70.

⁸ Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, para. 251.

⁹ Pius IX, “Ineffabilis Deus (1854),” December 8, 1854, https://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_pi09id.htm.

¹⁰ Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, para. 503.

¹¹ “Munificentissimus Deus (November 1, 1950) | PIUS XII,” accessed September 22, 2021, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus.html.

three specific ways: as advocate, as mediatrix, and as co-redemptrix, the object of this work.¹² The privileges of Our Lady are summed up in her major titles,¹³ and “Mary is immaculate, full of grace, Co-redemptrix of humanity, she ascended body and soul to heaven to be there the Queen of heaven and earth and the universal Mediatrix of all graces, because she is The Mother of God,”¹⁴ and, by God’s will, “the world’s spiritual mother.”¹⁵

“It would be sad indeed for anyone to attempt to deprive Mary of a title which Saints and doctors have conferred upon her, at the same time it is of importance, even in a devotional point of view for us to know what we mean by a title which certainly conveys a real truth and a truth which could not very easily be otherwise expressed.”¹⁶ Based on these words of Father Faber, this paper will investigate the veracity of the co-redemptrix title attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Co-Redemptrix

The Catholic Doctrine on Mary’s co-redemption presents the title Co-redemptrix referring to “Mary’s unique personal cooperation in Jesus’ work of Redemption.”¹⁷ However, to better understand the term co-redemptrix, it is necessary first to do an etymological analysis. The Latin prefix “co” means “with.” The word “redeem” comes from “redimere” in Latin and means “to buy back.” The Latin suffix “trix” is a female suffix.¹⁸ Therefore, the term “co-redemptrix” literally means “the woman who buys back with.”¹⁹ However, it is necessary to ask: “with whom?” There is only

¹² Mark Miravalle, *Lecture 22 Spiritual Motherhood* (Franciscan University of Steubenville), sec. 0'18"-1'37", accessed September 30, 2021, <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/24A18pZqaOos>.

¹³ Hans Urs von Balthasar and Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Mary: The Church at The Source: The Mother of God, The Footprints of God, The Story of Salvation From Abraham To Augustine*, Kindle, n.d., 45, accessed October 31, 2021.

¹⁴ Marín, *Teología de la perfección cristiana*, para. 70.

¹⁵ Mark Miravalle, *Meet Your Mother* (Gabriel Press, 2013), 4.

¹⁶ Fr Frederick William Faber, *At the Foot of the Cross; or, The Sorrows of Mary*, ed. Paul A. Boer Sr, 1st edition (Veritatis Splendor Publications, 2014), 436.

¹⁷ Judith Marie Gentle and Robert Fastiggi, eds., *De Maria Numquam Satis: The Significance of the Catholic Doctrine on the Blessed Virgin Mary for All People*, Kindle, n.d., 130, accessed October 29, 2021.

¹⁸ Mark Miravalle, *With Jesus: The Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix*, n.d., 101.

¹⁹ Mark Miravalle, *Lecture 24 Coremptrix in Scripture and Tradition*, sec. 0'41"-1'21", accessed October 6, 2021, <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/kz7QrSi3VVCJ>.

one answer to it: with the Redeemer, Jesus Christ.²⁰ As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, “by his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ had “opened” heaven to us,”²¹ thus, the co-redemptrix helped Jesus “to open heaven’s door.” In other words, the Co-Redemptrix suffered with Jesus to get “the grace that saves us and makes us holy” – the sanctifying grace.²² It is also worthy to highlight that the above definition makes clear that Co-redemptrix does not imply in any way a person who possess a divine nature, a goddess.²³

The Catholic Church infallibly teaches that Christ is the one mediator between God and man,²⁴ however, “this does not exclude a secondary mediatorship, subordinated to Christ.”²⁵ To verify it, it is crucial to look into the term used by St Paul when transmitting to us this truth: the term “Eis.”²⁶ Differently from the other Greek word used for “one,” “monos,” “which indicates one and only,”²⁷ “eis” “has the denotation of first of many.”²⁸ Thus, the title Co-redemptrix “must not be conceived in the sense of an equation of the efficacy of Mary with the redemptive activity of Christ, the sole Redeemer of humanity.”²⁹

St John Paul II, commenting about St Paul’s statement regarding Christ as the one Mediator, says that “indeed, according to St Paul, the unique mediation of Christ is meant to encourage other dependent, ministerial forms of mediation. By proclaiming the uniqueness of Christ’s mediation, the Apostle intends only to exclude any autonomous or rival

²⁰ CCC, para. 616,617,622,1026.

²¹ CCC, para. 1026.

²² Miravalle, *Meet Your Mother*, 56.

²³ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 78.

²⁴ *The Holy Bible - Revised Standard Version*, bk. 1 Tm 2:5; Dr. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Patrick Lynch (Baronius Press, 2018), 228; CCC, paras. 613–614.

²⁵ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 228.

²⁶ Jay P. Green, *The Interlinear Bible - Hebrew, Greek, English*, trans. Jay P. Green (Hendrickson, 2018), bk. 1 Tm 2:5.

²⁷ Mark Miravalle, *Lecture 23 Maternal Mediation* (Franciscan University of Steubenville), sec. 3’51"-3’56", accessed September 30, 2021, <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/tRpLeRdjaCu6>.

²⁸ Miravalle, sec. 3’45"-3’51".

²⁹ Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 229.

mediation, and not other forms compatible with the infinite value of the Saviour's work."³⁰

The distinction made by the Pilgrim Pope bring us to realize that mediation and redemption are related, although they are distinct.³¹ "The word 'mediation' comes from the Latin word 'medius,' or 'middle.' The Latin verb 'mediare' means to stand in the middle for the purpose of communication or reconciliation."³² "A mediator is a person who intervenes between two other persons or two parties with the goal of uniting those two respective persons or parties. So, a mediator intercedes for the sake of unity."³³

In sum, a mediator is the one who "stands in the middle," and a redeemer is the one who "buys back." The one mediation of Christ, which buys us back, "encourage other dependent forms of mediation," then Christ's "perfect mediation calls others to participate in that perfect mediation. It does not exclude, but it calls, because it is perfect, for others to be able to, in a secondary way, cooperate or participate in the one mediation of Jesus Christ."³⁴ Thus, Mary's mediation, which is rooted in her divine maternity,³⁵ becomes action through her cooperation with redemption, which means being co-redemptrix (see footnote for the other ways of Mary's mediation).³⁶

Still, considering "other dependent forms of mediation,"³⁷ it is essential to distinguish between the objective redemption and subjective redemption. "Whereas the creation of the world depends solely on the fiat

³⁰ John Paul II, "General Audience" (Vatican, October 1, 1997), para. 4, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_01101997.html.

³¹ Robert L. Fastiggi and Michael O'Neill, *Virgin, Mother, Queen: Encountering Mary in Time and Tradition* (Ave Maria Press, 2019), 1322.

³² Fastiggi and O'Neill, 1341.

³³ Miravalle, *Lecture 23 Maternal Mediation*, sec. 1'48"-2'10".

³⁴ Miravalle, sec. 4'30"-4'48".

³⁵ Fastiggi and O'Neill, *Virgin, Mother, Queen*, 1341.

³⁶ Miravalle, *Lecture 22 Spiritual Motherhood*. At this point it is worthy to highlight that there are three specific ways by which the Virgin Mary mediates: acting as co-redemptrix, mediatrix, and advocate. As Co-redemptrix, being a mother who suffers for humanity; As Mediatrix, being a mother who nourishes humanity in the spiritual order; As Advocate, being who pleads and protects, intercedes on behalf of humanity back to the throne of Christ the King.

³⁷ John Paul II, "General Audience," para. 4.

of the Father, that of its salvation depends also on the world's cooperation."³⁸ The Catholic Church insists that the mediation of Christ does not exclude but includes in a certain order a subordinate mediation of the redeemed. In the order of divine providence such cooperation hinges on the fiat of Mary, who is actively involved not merely in the distribution of divine blessings once acquired by the Redeemer, but also actively associated with him in their acquisition, in the so-called "objective redemption."³⁹

In order to clarify how the Virgin Mary is actively associated with Christ's redemptive work to the point of being correctly called "co-redemptrix," it is of the greatest importance to consider the explanation of Father Lino Cignelli, O.F.M. He says:

The objective redemption of Christ therefore is constituted by two elements: 1) by the Passion and death of Christ and 2) by the intention with which Christ offered his life to the Father. The first of these two elements is common to both Mary and to all the other redeemed; the second, on the contrary (which is the principal element in the objective redemption), is different. The first intention of Christ was that of redeeming Mary with preservative redemption; the second intention of Christ, instead, was to redeem, along with Mary (the New Adam with the New Eve) all the others with liberative redemption.

This double intention is implicit in the double mode of redemption: preservative for the Virgin and liberative for all the rest. Otherwise (or without this double intention) these two undeniable modes of redemption would be inexplicable. The end then for which the Redeemer intended first to redeem the Virgin (with preservative redemption) is precisely so that the Virgin would be in a position to be able to cooperate with him in the (liberative) redemption of all the others. In short: Immaculate because Co-redemptrix.⁴⁰

To elucidate the matter, it is worthy of considering that, at least from the beginning of the last century, theologians have treated both Mary's

³⁸ Mark Miravalle, *Mariology - A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons* (Seat of Wisdom Books, 2007), 5051.

³⁹ Miravalle, 5051.

⁴⁰ Miravalle, 8294–8318.

role as co-redemptrix and as mediatrix together, under one general title of mediation. The first part of Mary's mediation would be her collaboration in the work of redemption, and the second part would be her mediation, which means Mary's distribution of grace. Father Gabriele Roschini, for instance, argues that even Mary's role as Co-redemptrix, her active cooperation in the work of redemption, is a proper mediation, since "it is a participation in the mediatorial work of Christ." Nonetheless, these two phases are often differentiated as "objective" and "subjective."⁴¹

Mary is Co-redemptrix, alone with Christ in the objective redemption, firstly by God's will and then by her fiat, she "alone participates in the acquisition of the graces of redemption."⁴² On the contrary, "subjective redemption is the process of bringing the graces of the redemption to be received by the human heart,"⁴³ a role that we all are called to fulfill, as it will be explained later.

The Doctrine of Co-Redemptrix

Doctrine means "the action of teaching or instructing; instruction; a piece of instruction, a lesson, precept."⁴⁴ Considering the goal to understand Mary as the only Co-Redemptrix, it is crucial to understand the Catholic Church doctrine regarding this subject.

Firstly, it is crucial to establish that a correct Mariology, which means the truth about the Virgin Mary, "both safeguards orthodox Christology and also legitimate Ecclesiology,"⁴⁵ since "what is true first about Jesus, is in a second dimension true about the Mother of Jesus, and,

⁴¹ Mother of All Peoples, "Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces, in the Papal Magisterium of Pope John Paul II," *Motherofallpeoples* (blog), October 31, 2021, <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/mary-mediatrix-of-all-graces-in-the-papal-magisterium-of-pope-john-paul-ii>.

⁴² Mark Miravalle, *Lecture 29 Coredeemers in Christ*, sec. 6'40"-6'45", accessed October 6, 2021, <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/1IIXghaOJT7V>.

⁴³ Miravalle, sec. 7'24"-7'28".

⁴⁴ OED Online, ed., "Doctrine" (Oxford University Press, n.d.). "doctrine, n." OED Online. September 2021. Oxford University Press. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/56322?rskey=GZHWf6&result=1> (accessed November 05, 2021).

⁴⁵ Mark Miravalle, *Lecture 1 Introduction* (Franciscan University of Steubenville), sec. 5'09"-5'17", accessed November 5, 2021, <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/QM4XpBpjezuy>.

in a third dimension, true about the members of the Church.”⁴⁶ “Without Mariology, the Church is in danger of losing the feminine dimension altogether. The Blessed Virgin helps guarantee the understanding that the Church is “not an organization, but an organism of Christ.”⁴⁷

It is still necessary for this work to remember the transmission of divine revelation. “In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature.”⁴⁸ God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth: that is, of Christ Jesus.”⁴⁹ Thus, Christ, commanded the apostles to preach the Gospels, “source of all saving truth and moral discipline.”⁵⁰ Yet, “in order to keep the Gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the Apostles left bishops as their successors, “handing over” to them “the authority to teach in their own place.” This sacred tradition, therefore, and Sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God, from whom she has received everything, until she is brought finally to see Him as He is, face to face.”⁵¹ “In summary, on divine revelation, Scripture, Tradition, as interpreted by the Magisterium is a requirement for the fullness of Christian truth of us. The Bible alone, as beautiful and as inspired and as inerrant as it is, is not the fullness of revelation without sacred Tradition.”⁵²

Considering then the Church’s doctrine sustained in a Tripod - Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium - the identification of the Marian doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning the co-redemption of Mary in the divine revelation as interpreted by the Magisterium becomes imperative.

The Co-Redemptrix in Sacred Scripture

⁴⁶ Miravalle, sec. 4’58”-5’09”.

⁴⁷ Dr Mark Miravalle, *Lecture 1 Introduction*, sec. 5’09”-5’17”, accessed November 5, 2021, <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/QM4XpBpjezuy>.

⁴⁸ Paul VI, “Dei Verbum,” November 18, 1965, para. 2, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

⁴⁹ CCC, para. 74.

⁵⁰ CCC, para. 75; Paul VI, “Dei Verbum,” para. 7.

⁵¹ Paul VI, “Dei Verbum,” para. 7.

⁵² Mark Miravalle, *Lecture 4 Scripture, Tradition, Magisterium*, sec. 19’41”-20’09”, accessed November 5, 2021, <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/MK53fbfFuf6Y>.

Genesis 3:15 – “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”⁵³ “I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.”⁵⁴

Undoubtedly, there is a pronoun controversy regarding this passage. Although for fifteen centuries, the Papal Magisterium interpreted the verse as “she,” and also St Jerome in translating the Sacred Scriptures into Latin⁵⁵ used “she,” the fact is that, regardless of the pronoun, “the crushing of Satan and sin will be through the power of the seed... The woman will be victorious insofar as she cooperates with the seed of victory over Satan and sin.”⁵⁶ “Mary’s participation in the Redemption is by the power of Jesus Christ. So, technically, the pronoun is not the key to the clarity that the woman is on the side of the seed and has the same mission as her offspring, because they are put in enmity with Satan and his seed.”⁵⁷ Thus, considering solved the pronoun’s issue to this work’s goal, let’s go deeper in finding the co-redemptrix doctrine in this passage.

Firstly, in the context of Genesis 3, there is only one woman: the one who sinned with Adam. Consequently, the text refers to Eve. As for the woman's offspring, there are all men and women who would be faithful

⁵³ *The Holy Bible - Revised Standard Version*, bk. Gen 3:15.

⁵⁴ Douay Rheims, *Douay-Rheims Bible : Catholic Bible Translated from the Latin Vulgate*, n.d., bk. Gen 3:15.

⁵⁵ John Bergsma, *THE619 Divino Afflante Spiritu*, sec. 13'53"-15'07", accessed November 1, 2021, <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/qmlydAih0o4f>; Pius XII, “Divino Afflante Spiritu,” September 30, 1943, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_30091943_divino-afflante-spiritu.html. As Dr. Bergsma explains, “Trent proclaimed that the Latin Vulgate was the authentic version of the Sacred Scripture. The authenticity of the Vulgate was not affirmed by the Council particularly for critical reasons but rather because of its legitimate use in the churches throughout so many centuries, by which use indeed show to be free from any error whatsoever in matters of faith and morals. The Latin Vulgate is free from any error in faith and morals. As the Church itself testifies and affirms, it may be quoted safely and without fear of error and disputations in lectures and in preaching. So its authenticity is not specified primarily as critical but rather as juridical.”

⁵⁶ Mark Miravalle, *Lecture 18 Immaculate Conception in Scripture* (Franciscan University of Steubenville), sec. 5'10"-6'23", accessed September 14, 2021, <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/2p1h1Et2oqxd>.

⁵⁷ Miravalle, sec. 6'24"-6'48".

to God throughout the ages. They must wage battle against the Seducer and his followers, the final victory belonging to the lineage of the good. This would be the literal sense. However, biblical hermeneutics recognize that the words of the sacred author may have a meaning deriving from the text itself but not perceived by the human author. Applying this principle to the passage in Genesis 3:15, it can be said that the descendant of the woman is Jesus, the Redeemer, as previously shown. Thus, the full meaning points to Mary, Mother of Jesus, and Jesus Christ as the protagonists of the decisive struggle against the serpent and its descendants. Thus, just as Genesis 3:2-7 presents the woman Eve involved with the Tempter and sin to humankind's ruin, Gen 3:15 presents the woman, the New Eve, Mary, intimately associated with the Messiah in the work of the Redemption. Thus, as the first woman brought sin into the world, the "New Eve" will bring the Savior into the world. The role of Eve is recapitulated in Mary. Finally, Genesis 3:15 contains, even if implicitly, the nucleus of all Mariology, that is, the strict nexus between the Redeemer, the New Adam, and His Mother, the New Eve.⁵⁸

To help in the understanding of the passage as source of co-redemptrix doctrine, it is worthy to cite Cardinal Ratzinger, pope emeritus Benedict XVI, and Hans Urs Von Balthasar, who brightly consider Jesus as

[T]he seed that bears fruit through the centuries, the fruitful answer in which God's speech has taken living root in this world. ... The seed actually sinks into the earth, assimilates the earth's energies, and changes them into itself... It carries the earth in itself and turns the earth into fruit. The grain of wheat does not remain alone, for it includes the maternal mystery of the soil – Mary, the holy soil of the Church, as the Fathers so wonderfully call her, is an essential part of Christ. The mystery of Mary means precisely that God's Word did not remain alone; rather it assimilated the other – the soil – into itself, became man in the "soil" of his Mother, and then, fused with the soil of the whole of humanity, returned to God in a new form." Yet, they consider: "to be soil for the Word means that the soil must allow itself to be absorbed by the seed, to be assimilated by the seed, to surrender itself for the sake of transforming the seed into life. Mary's maternity means

⁵⁸ Estevão Bettencourt, *Curso de Mariologia* (Escola Mater Ecclesiae, n.d.), 5–6.

that she willingly places her own substance, body and soul, into the seed so that new life can grow.⁵⁹

Thus, considering Genesis 3:15, the proto-Evangelium,⁶⁰ it means the “first great prophecy of the redemption,”⁶¹ and considering that, as said above, Mary willingly placed her own substance into the seed so that new life could grow, it is clear that the Virgin Mary participates actively in the redemption due to her divine motherhood. Referring to this same passage, Pope Pius IX also attests to the Virgin Mary’s participation in the definitive and complete triumph of the Redeemer over the evil serpent and his seed, crushing evil’s head with her immaculate foot,⁶² grounding the doctrine of Mary as co-redemptrix.

Isaiah 7:14 – “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

In this prophecy the coming of the saving Messiah is foretold. Through a virgin-mother, the Emmanuel will enter the world to effect its salvation. As St John Paul II tells us,

[T]he divine plan of salvation is eternal and it is also eternally linked to Christ. The plan of salvation in itself comprises all men; but it reserves a unique place for the "woman" who was the Mother of the One to whom the Father entrusted the work of salvation. As explained by the Second Vatican Council, “Mary “is already prophetically foreshadowed in that promise made to our first parents after their fall into sin”, and “Likewise she is

⁵⁹ Balthasar and Ratzinger, *Mary: The Church at The Source: The Mother of God, The Footprints of God, The Story of Salvation From Abraham To Augustine*, 13–14.

⁶⁰ Paul VI, “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church - Lumen Gentium,” The Holy See, Vatican, November 21, 1964, para. 55, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html. “she is already prophetically foreshadowed in the promise of victory over the serpent which was given to our first parents after their fall into sin.”

⁶¹ Mark Miravalle, *Mary - Coredeptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate* (Queenship, n.d.), 1.

⁶² Pius IX, “Ineffabilis Deus - Papal Encyclicals,” para. Interpreters of the Sacred Scripture, accessed September 14, 2021, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9ineff.htm>.

the Virgin who is to conceive and bear a son, whose name will be called Emmanuel,” according to Isaiah's words
Thus, the Old Testament prepares that "fullness of time" when God would send "his Son, born of a woman..., that we might receive adoption as sons.”⁶³

Luke 1:26-38 – The Annunciation account

The Annunciation is the starting point of Mary's mission. Jesus' biological Mother was also the Mother of the Messiah. Mary gave herself entirely to God; thus, through her, the Word became flesh, the “Redemption begun.”⁶⁴

As said in the beginning, our fallen state moved God, and by His divine will, “the Son came into the world as the Redeemer of the world.”⁶⁵ However, God in His omniscience willed to depend on a Virgin to put His plan in action, and the Virgin Mary gave her “fiat” to the Father’s plan. Not a passive acceptance, but a “fiat” that expressed “her active and joyful desire to participate in the divine plan.” Thus, “as the Incarnation is the ‘Redemption begun’, so too is Mary’s fiat the ‘Co-redemption begun.’”⁶⁶

St John Paul II says that

Mary... is not the dawn of our Redemption as an inert, passive instrument. At the dawn of our salvation, her free response resounds, her fiat, her unconditional yes to the cooperation that God expected of her... The saving initiative is certainly of the Holy Trinity. The perpetual virginity of Mary - faithfully reciprocated by Saint Joseph, her virginal spouse - expresses that priority of God: Christ, as man, will be conceived without male participation. But that same virginity that will last in childbirth and after childbirth is also an expression of Mary’s absolute availability to God’s plans... The joyous “fiat” of Mary testifies to her interior freedom, her confidence, and

⁶³ John Paul II, “Redemptoris Mater,” March 25, 1987, para. 7, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater.html.

⁶⁴ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 356.

⁶⁵ Miravalle, *Mary - Coredeptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, 4.

⁶⁶ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 377.

serenity. She did not know how the Lord's plans would be carried out in particular. But far from fear and anguish, she appears sovereignly free and available. Her "yes" to her Annunciation signified both the acceptance of the proposed motherhood and Mary's commitment to the mystery of Redemption. This was the work of her Son. But Maria's participation was real and effective. By giving her consent to the angel's message, Mary agreed to collaborate in the entire work of reconciling humanity with God. She acts consciously and unconditionally. She is willing to serve God.⁶⁷

Mary's fiat allows her to become the Mother of the Redeemer. She gave Jesus His Body, His Blood, instrument of our salvation that, as explained previously, penetrated the earth and gave fruit: the victory over death. "In virtue of the intimate and sublime salvific gift, body to Body, heart to Heart, Mother to Son, the Immaculate Virgin begins her role as Co-redemptrix in the donation of human nature – from the Co-redemptrix to the Redeemer."⁶⁸

St George, Archbishop of Nicomedia, even adds, that Jesus Christ grants to his mother all her petitions, as if to satisfy the obligation that he is under to her for having caused, by her consent, that the human nature should be given him. Wherefore, St. Methodius, the martyr exclaims: Rejoice, oh Mary, that a Son has fallen to thy lot as thy debtor, who gives to all and receives from none. We are all debtors to God for whatever we possess, since everything is his gift; but God has wished to make himself a debtor to thee, taking from thee his body and becoming man. So also St. Augustine says: Mary having merited to give flesh to the Divine "Word, and by that to furnish the price of the divine redemption, that we might be delivered from eternal death; therefore, is she, says the same doctor, more powerful than any other to help us and obtain for us eternal salvation."⁶⁹ In

⁶⁷ John Paul II, "Santa Misa En El Santuario de Nuestra Señora de La Alborada, En Guayaquil (Ecuador)," trans. author, January 31, 1985, para. 4, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/homilies/1985/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19850131_santuario-alborada.html. Translated by the author.

⁶⁸ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 377.

⁶⁹ Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Glories of Mary*, n.d., 129.

fact, the Virgin Mary with her “let it be done to me” “becomes cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race.”⁷⁰

Luke 2:35 – “...and a sword will pierce through your own soul...”

This account's context places us in the acknowledgment by Simeon and Ana of the Child Jesus as the Redeemer. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Simeon then prophesies Mary's “intimate sharing in the redemptive work of her Son of her,” through a sword that would pierce her own heart. “The coredeeming Mother of the Savior was eternally predestined to sacrifice and suffering in her election by the Heavenly Father.”⁷¹

John 19:26-30 – “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!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. ...When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished;” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

The entire mission of Jesus was to surrender to the Father in the fulfillment of the saving plan that would lead to His death on the Cross. Mary shared, as Mother, this surrender to God the Father, suffering with Jesus. “The Virgin did not suffer for herself, for she was the All Beautiful, the always Immaculate; she suffered for us, since she is the Mother of all. Just as Christ “took upon Himself our diseases and bore our pains,” she too was overwhelmed by the birth pains for an immense motherhood that regenerates us for God. The suffering of Mary, New Eve, alongside the New Adam, Christ, was and continues to be the real path of the reconciliation of the world.”⁷²

Still,

... after the events of her Son's hidden and public life, events which she must have shared with acute sensitivity, 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 mysterious 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

⁷⁰ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 377.

⁷¹ Miravalle, *Mary - Coredeptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, 9.

⁷² John Paul II, “Angelus,” April 1, 1984, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pt/angelus/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_ang_19840401.html.

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 Saint 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.”⁷³

Moreover, at the foot of the Cross, suffering in a profound way with her only-begotten Son, Mary associated herself with a mother's heart with Christ's sacrifice and lovingly consented to the immolation of this victim which she herself had brought forth. Thus, although Christ is the one Savior of the human race, Mary by God's will, associated herself with his sacrificial offering in a unique and singular way. In this sense, she may be understood as the Co-Redemptrix — the one who cooperated in a unique and singular way with the Redeemer.⁷⁴

The Co-Redemptrix in the Tradition

“The apostles entrusted the “Sacred deposit” of the faith, contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church. By adhering to this heritage, the entire holy people, united to its pastors, remains always faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers.” (CCC 84). Thus, after recognizing in Sacred Scripture the foundations for the doctrine of Mary as Co-Redeemer, let us investigate this doctrine concerning Tradition.

In the words of St John Paul II, “at the end of the second century, St. Irenaeus, (...) already pointed out Mary's contribution to the work of salvation.”⁷⁵ St Irenaeus, Father of the Church, a disciple of St. Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle St. John, saw the Virgin Mary as “the perfect antithesis of Eve, (...) with a beneficial effect on humanity's destiny. In fact, just as Eve caused death, so Mary, with her “Yes,” became “a cause

⁷³ John Paul II, “Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris*,” February 11, 1984, para. 25, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_11021984_salvifici-doloris.html.

⁷⁴ Fastiggi and O'Neill, *Virgin, Mother, Queen*, 1322.

⁷⁵ Miravalle, *Mariology - A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, 362.

of salvation” for herself and for all mankind.”⁷⁶ In fact, to be “cause of salvation for herself and the entire human race” is clearly co-redemption. Mary helped Jesus to save souls like no other creature.⁷⁷

In the first centuries of the Church, there is St Melito of Sardis, bishop and apologist, who “clearly refers to the participation of the Mother in the saving sacrifice of Jesus, the slain lamb of God,” in one of his homilies. Also, Tertullian describes the Virgin’s role as the way “through whom we recovered the way to salvation.” St Ambrose, Doctor of the Church “and spiritual father of St. Augustine, teaches that the Virgin Mother of Christ brought forth redemption for the human race; that she bore in her womb the remission of sins; and that she conceived redemption for all.”⁷⁸

In the tenth century, with John the Geometer, through his work *Life of Mary*, there was a further development of doctrine through the recognition of Mary’s union with Christ at Calvary. “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 with.”⁷⁹

In the twelfth century, St Bernard comments on Mary’s offer in the Temple at the Presentation of Jesus. He says, “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.”⁸⁰ Arnold of Chartres, St Bernard’s disciple, “can rightly be considered the first author who formally expounds the explicit doctrine of Mary Co-redemptrix at Calvary.”⁸¹ 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.”⁸² Thus, it is possible to say that “Mary is not passive at Calvary, she is active.”⁸³

⁷⁶ Miravalle, 362.

⁷⁷ Miravalle, *Lecture 24 Coredeptrix in Scripture and Tradition*, sec. 11'41"-11'53".

⁷⁸ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 842.

⁷⁹ Miravalle, *Mariology - A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, 362.

⁸⁰ Miravalle, 363.

⁸¹ Miravalle, 366.

⁸² Miravalle, 363.

⁸³ Miravalle, *Lecture 24 Coredeptrix in Scripture and Tradition*, sec. 7'57"-7'59".

St Catherine of Siena, fourteenth century Doctor of the Church, also called the Virgen Mary, both in virtue of giving birth to the Word and for her sorrow with Jesus, the “Redemptrix of the human race.”⁸⁴

Considering the liturgical maxim “lex orandi, lex credendi,” it is important to cite as part of the Church Tradition, some ancient Christian liturgies which testify about the tradition of Mary as Co-redemptrix. Besides the Ethiopian and Coptic liturgies, there is the Armenian liturgy, for example, which invokes Mary as “salvatrix” and “liberatrix,” and it dates back to the fifth century.⁸⁵ Also, in the Akathistos, a hymn usually recited by Eastern Catholic Christians, the faithful praise the Virgin Mary’s role in the Redemption praying, “Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded, the world’s salvation...who saved the world from the flood of sin. Rescue us from temptation.”⁸⁶

The Co-Redemptrix in the Magisterium

The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.⁸⁷

Bishops, teaching in communion with the Roman Pontiff, are to be respected by all as witnesses to divine and Catholic truth. In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent. This religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter may be known either from the character of the

⁸⁴ Miravalle, *Mariology - A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, 370.

⁸⁵ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 879.

⁸⁶ Gentle and Fastigi, *De Maria Numquam Satis: The Significance of the Catholic Doctrines on the Blessed Virgin Mary for All People*, 136.

⁸⁷ CCC, para. 85.

documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking.⁸⁸

Ultimately, “the papal pronouncements... bring the doctrine to the ranks of the ordinary teaching of the Church’s Magisterium.”⁸⁹ Therefore, it is essential to look into the Papal teaching regarding the doctrine of Marian Coredeemption.

Pope Pius IX in 1854, although did not use the term Co-Redemptrix recalls Mary’s “coredemptive battle with the Serpent”⁹⁰ presented in the Scriptures, Genesis 3:15, and taught by the Church’s Fathers, saying that “They (the Fathers) also declared that the most glorious Virgin was Reparatrix of the first parents, the giver of life to posterity; that she was chosen before the ages, prepared for himself by the Most High, foretold by God when he said to the serpent, “I will put enmities between you and the woman” -unmistakable evidence that she crushed the poisonous head of the serpent.”⁹¹

The term “Co-redemptrix” was officially used by the Magisterium for the first time during the pontificate of Pope St. Pius X (1903-1914), although, as Pius IX, Pope Leo XIII had explicitly presented Mary’s suffering at Calvary in the Rosary Encyclical *Jucunda Semper* of September 8, 1894, approving the title in a direct way.⁹² As part of the papal vocabulary, the term first occurs in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Years later, it was the turn of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office to use the word “Co-redemptrix” regarding the Virgin Mary in its declarations.⁹³

In 1918 in the letter *Inter Sodalicia*, pope Benedict XV wrote that “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

⁸⁸ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 25.

⁸⁹ Gentle and Fastiggi, *De Maria Numquam Satis: The Significance of the Catholic Doctrines on the Blessed Virgin Mary for All People*, 145.

⁹⁰ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 2033.

⁹¹ Pius IX, “Ineffabilis Deus - Papal Encyclicals.”

⁹² Mother of All Peoples, *Mariology Without Apology - 11. Mary Co-Redemptrix IS Doctrine: Interview with Dr. Robert Fastiggi*, 2021, sec. 25’23”, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgF50IH_w14.

⁹³ Miravalle, *Mariology - A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, 374–76.

depended on her, offered her Son to placate divine justice; so, we may well say that she with Christ redeemed mankind.”⁹⁴

Pope Pius XI was the first pope to use the term “Co-redemptrix” to refer to the Virgin Mary. He used the precise term in three different occasions in official declarations from 1933 to 1935.⁹⁵ He said:

“From the nature of his work, the Redeemer ought to have associated his Mother with his work. For this reason, we invoke her under the title of Co-redemptrix. 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 mankind.” Also, in a radio message, the pope prayed, “Mother most faithful and most merciful, who as Coredemptrix and partaker of thy dear Son’s sorrows didst assist him as he offered the sacrifice of our redemption on the altar of the Cross... preserve in us and increase each day, we beseech thee, the precious fruits of our redemption and thy compassion.”⁹⁶

Regarding the Virgin Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix, although Pope Pius XII did not use the term explicitly, he declared the doctrine with clarity and precision many times. Among many documents that it is possible to present, the Encyclical *Haurietis aquas*, with the “Motive and Foundation for Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus,” deals beautifully with the “Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” It is written:

Let the faithful see to it that to this devotion (to the Sacred Heart of Jesus) the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God is closely joined. For, by God’s will, in carrying out the work of human redemption the Blessed Virgin Mary was inseparably linked with Christ in such a manner that our salvation sprang from the love and the sufferings of Jesus Christ to which the love and sorrows of his Mother were intimately united. It is, then, entirely fitting that the Christian people – who received the divine life from Christ through Mary – after they have paid their debt of honor to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, should also offer to the most loving Heart of their

⁹⁴ Miravalle, 377.

⁹⁵ Mother of All Peoples, *Mariology Without Apology* - 11. *Mary Co-Redemptrix IS Doctrine*, sec. 23’.

⁹⁶ Miravalle, *Mariology - A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, 378–79.

heavenly Mother the corresponding acts of piety, affection, gratitude, and expiation.⁹⁷

It is important to recognize the pope saying that “by God’s will,” “our salvation sprang from the love and the sufferings of Jesus Christ to which the love and sorrows of his Mother were intimately united.”⁹⁸

After the apparition of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in 1830 and the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, the Marian devotion reached an apex, the “Age of Mary,”⁹⁹ and it is in this situation that the Second Vatican Council was convoked.¹⁰⁰ In the preparation for the Council, pope St John XXIII asked the future Council Fathers for suggestions regarding the themes that should be treated at the Council. “Approximately four hundred requests by bishops for a dogmatic definition of Our Lady’s mediation, which included her cooperation in the Redemption, and particularly her role as Mediatrix of all graces,” arrived. The Council, however, was a “predominantly pastoral in character,” not a dogmatic one. Therefore, although Chapter Eight of *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, deals with “The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God in The Mystery of Christ and The Church,” the title Co-Redemptrix was not used. The explanation was: “Certain expressions and words used by Supreme Pontiffs have been omitted, which, in themselves are absolutely true, but which may be understood with difficulty by separated brethren. Among such words may be numbered the following: Co-redemptrix of the human race...”¹⁰¹ Indeed, this is a sad justification since the Catholic Church defends the truth, the whole truth, and there is no doubt about the veracity of this doctrine. Therefore, the fact that the term could be “understood with difficulty by the separated brethren” is insufficient to omit the truth.

Still, having not used the term Co-redemptrix, the Council presented in *Lumen Gentium*, not a complete doctrine on Mary, but undoubtedly the doctrine of Co-redemptrix, especially in paragraph 58,

⁹⁷ Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, para. 3926.

⁹⁸ Miravalle, *Mariology - A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, 381.

⁹⁹ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Miravalle, *Mariology - A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, 381.

¹⁰¹ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 102.

presenting Mary “co-suffering; co-sacrificing; co-satisfying; co-redeeming.” It is written:

“In the public life of Jesus, Mary makes significant appearances. This is so even at the very beginning, when at the marriage feast of Cana, moved with pity, she brought about by her intercession the beginning of miracles of Jesus the Messiah. In the course of her Son's preaching she received the words whereby in extolling a kingdom beyond the calculations and bonds of flesh and blood, He declared blessed those who heard and kept the word of God, as she was faithfully doing. After this manner the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, grieving exceedingly with her only begotten Son, uniting herself with a maternal heart with His sacrifice, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth. 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.””¹⁰²

“John Paul II's official and repeated use of the title Co-redemptrix quickly remedies the silence at the Council.”¹⁰³

Pope John Paul II “was a participant in the Council; not as a peritus but as a bishop, and then as an archbishop towards the end, and then from 1967 on, he was a cardinal. He did not hesitate to use the title co-redemptrix; (...) he used the title at least six times – in 1980, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1990 (2x), 1991. (...) Then, also when he was in Ecuador, he spoke of the co-redemptive role of Mary, which was then translated in the English of the *L'Osservatore Romano* as her role as co-redemptrix. He gives the example that Vatican II did, though it didn't use the title, taught the doctrine. The title is perfectly legitimate to use if the supreme roman pontiff is using it. (...) The mystery is why he stopped using the title after 1991.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *Lumen Gentium*, 58.

¹⁰³ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 2562.

¹⁰⁴ Mother of All Peoples, *Mariology Without Apology* - 11. *Mary Co-Redemptrix IS Doctrine*.

Although Pope Benedict XVI did not use the term explicitly, he indeed spoke of “Mary’s participation in the Passion of her Son in fulfillment of her fiat at the Annunciation.”¹⁰⁵

Nonetheless, it is necessary at this moment to consider some of Pope Francis’s comments regarding this matter.

On 12 December 2019, Pope Francis said:

Mary as a woman, Mary as a Mother, without any other essential title. The other titles — let us think of the Litanies of Loreto — are titles sung by children in love with their Mother, but they do not mention the essential nature of Mary’s being: woman and mother.

And the third word that I would attribute to her as I gazed upon her: she wanted to be a mestiza (mixed race) for us, she chose to appear as a mestiza. And not only to Don Juan Dieguito but also to the people. She chose to appear as a mestiza in order to be the Mother of all. She made herself mixed for all of humanity. Why? Because she made a mestizo of God. And this is the great mystery: Mother Mary made a mestizo of God, true God and true man, in her Son.

When they tell us that we should declare her as such or come up with another dogma, let us not lose ourselves in chatter. Mary is a woman, she is Our Lady, Mary is the Mother of her Son and of the Holy Mother hierarchical Church and Mary is mestiza, a woman of our people, one with a “mixed-race” God.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Gentle and Fastiggi, *De Maria Numquam Satis: The Significance of the Catholic Doctrines on the Blessed Virgin Mary for All People*, 147.

¹⁰⁶ Francis, “Homily during the Holy Mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe,” December 12, 2019, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20191212_omelia-guadalupe.html.

On March 24, 2021, the pope said: “Christ is the Mediator, the bridge that we cross to turn to the Father (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2674). He is the only Redeemer: there are no co-redeemers with Christ.”¹⁰⁷

Having proven that Mary as Co-Redemptrix is a true doctrine both present in the Divine Revelation (Sacred Scriptures and Tradition) and taught by the Magisterium, also considering that our “religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking ex cathedra; that is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will,”¹⁰⁸ how should we understand these previously cited statements of Pope Francis?

Firstly, it is mandatory for any text understanding, to consider the context, the “manner of speaking,” as well as the intention of the author. Pope Francis, within the context, it is not denying Virgin Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix, nor considering the title worthless, or despicable. He is saying that “if the Marian title “Co-redemptrix, makes Mary into a goddess, we would need to reject it as a blasphemy. (...) Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix never challenges the unique role of Christ, the God-man, who is the divine Redeemer of the human race.”¹⁰⁹

The fact that Pope Francis is not denying Mary’s role as Co-Redemptrix can be proven through other Pope Francis’ writings. In 2013, for example, he cites the *Lumen Gentium* stating that “the Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity, and the perfect union with Christ”¹¹⁰ For certain, Mary’s perfect union with Christ “finds its

¹⁰⁷ Francis, “General Audience of 24 March 2021 - Catechesis on Prayer: 27. Praying in Communion with Mary,” March 24, 2021, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2021/documents/papa-francesco_20210324_udienza-generale.html.

¹⁰⁸ Paul VI, “Lumen Gentium,” para. 25.

¹⁰⁹ Mother of All Peoples, “Observations on Pope Francis’ ‘March 24’ Comments,” *Motherofallpeoples* (blog), March 25, 2021, <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/pope-francis-s-general-audience-of-march-24-2021-mary-is-our-mother-not-a-goddess>.

¹¹⁰ Francis, “General Audience of 23 October 2013 | Francis,” October 23, 2013, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20131023_udienza-generale.html.

culmination on Calvary: here Mary is united to the Son in the martyrdom of her heart and in the offering of his life to the Father for the salvation of humanity.”¹¹¹ As Pope Francis continues, “Mary’s “yes”, already perfect from the start, grew until the hour of the Cross. There her motherhood opened to embrace every one of us, our lives, so as to guide us to her Son. Mary lived perpetually immersed in the mystery of God-made-man, as his first and perfect disciple, by contemplating all things in her heart in the light of the Holy Spirit, in order to understand and live out the will of God.”¹¹²

Finally, Pope Francis’s belief in Mary as the Co-Redemptrix is also expressed in his prayer for protection during the COVID pandemic. The Pope asks the entire Church to pray with him and addresses the Virgin Mary saying, “...We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick. At the foot of the Cross, you participated in Jesus’ pain, (...) You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need (...)”¹¹³ In this prayer is clear the doctrine of Mary as Co-Redemptrix.

The Co-Redemptrix in the writings of the Saints

Although the writings of the saints cannot be solely used for a definition of a doctrine, it is necessary to agree that “the mind of a saint is supernaturally disposed to the truth.”¹¹⁴ “The testimony of the saints and blessed represents the highest, most trustworthy level of *sensus fidelium* – that common consensus of Christian faith found within the People of God, which is in its own way inspired and protected by the Spirit of Truth.”¹¹⁵ Therefore, it is due to answer St John Paul II invitation to “penetrate into the depth of the Mystery of Jesus by uniting to “theological investigation” resourcing to “that great heritage which is the ‘lived theology’ of the saints.””¹¹⁶ Thus, it is worth to look into the Saint’s writings regarding Mary’s role as Co-Redemptrix.

¹¹¹ Mother of All Peoples, “Observations on Pope Francis’ ‘March 24’ Comments.”

¹¹² Francis, “General Audience of 23 October 2013 | Francis,” para. 1.

¹¹³ Watkins, “Covid-19: Pope Offers Prayer to Virgin Mary for Protection - Vatican News,” March 11, 2020, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-03/pope-francis-prayer-our-lady-protection-coronavirus.html>.

¹¹⁴ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 2846.

¹¹⁵ Miravalle, 2846.

¹¹⁶ Mother of All Peoples, “Marian Coredemption in the Light of Saint Therese of Lisieux,” October 31, 2021, <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/marian-coredeemption-in-the-light-of-saint-therese-of-lisieux>.

Undoubtedly, a mind supernaturally disposed to the truth was St John Eudes' mind. About the saint, Pope Pius XI, during his canonization in 1925, declared: "His voice thundered through all Gaul... the most gifted herald of eternal truths, he would deliver innumerable spoils from the ancient enemy of the human race, and restore them to the divine Redeemer."¹¹⁷ St John Eudes did not use the term "co-redemptrix," but the doctrine is explicit in his writings about Mary's heart. The saint writes:

"What is Calvary? It is the place where the Cross of Jesus was raised. And was the Cross of Salvation not raised first of all in Mary's holy Heart? What is Calvary? It is the place stained with the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. But Mary's Heart was bathed with It through love and compassion, and the Precious Blood of her beloved Son penetrated and impregnated His Mother far more than it soaked the soil of Calvary."

On Calvary, we behold the thorns that wounded the adorable head of our Savior, the nails that pierced His hands and feet, the lance that opened His Heart, the ropes that bound Him, the gall and vinegar He was given to drink, and the wounds which covered His body from head to foot. We can see the same wounds in the maternal Heart of His saintly Mother. St. Jerome quotes St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, as saying: "All the wounds which covered the body of Jesus, had their counterpart in Mary's Heart. The whips, the thorns, the nails which pierced and tore the Savior's body, ran through His holy Mother's Heart and shattered it. Every blow rending the body of the Son had its cruel echo in the Heart of His Mother. (...)

Finally, it was on Calvary that our Redeemer accomplished and consummated the work of our salvation, in which His Mother's Heart cooperated so faithfully.

St. Leopold Mandic, canonized by St John Paul II in 1983, was internationally known as a great confessor. In fact, the hand with which he administered the absolution of sins remains uncorrupted and is exposed in the church where he is buried in Padua, Italy. "St Leopold referred to the Mother as "Co-redemptrix of the human race" (...) and above of one of his images he once wrote the following personal testimony: "I, friar Leopold

¹¹⁷ Pius XI, "Solemnis Canonizatio Ioannis Baptistae Vianney et Ioannis Eudes, Pius XI, Homilia," May 31, 1925, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/la/homilies/documents/hf_p-xi_hom_19250531_vianney-eudes.html. Translated by the author.

Mandic Zarevic, firmly believe that the most Blessed Virgin, insofar as she was Co-redemptrix of the human race, is the moral fountain of all grace, since we have received all from her fullness.”¹¹⁸

Another great saint, and doctor of the Church who teaches the doctrine of Mary as Co-redemptrix is St Alphonsus Maria de Liguori. In his work *The Glories of Mary*, after saying that “Mary, in bringing forth Jesus, who is our Saviour and our life, brought forth all of us to life and salvation,” the saint continues:

“The second time in which Mary brought us forth to grace was, when on Calvary, she offered to the eternal Father with so much sorrow of heart the life of her beloved Son for our salvation. (...)

“It is true that, in dying for the redemption of the world, Jesus wished to be alone. I have trodden the wine-press alone. But when God saw the great desire of Mary to devote herself also to the salvation of men, he ordained that by the sacrifice and offering of the life of this same Jesus, she might co-operate with him in the work of our salvation, and thus become mother of our souls. And this our Saviour signified, when, before expiring, he saw from the cross his mother and the disciple St. John both standing near him, and first spoke to Mary: Behold thy son, as if he said to her: Behold the man who, by the offering thou hast made of my life for his salvation, is already born to grace. And then turning to the disciple, he said: Behold thy mother. By which words, says St. Bernardino of Sienna, Mary was then made mother not only of St. John, but of all men, for the love she bore them.”¹¹⁹

There are many other saints that present the belief in Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix, for instance, St Jose Maria Escrivà who “vigorously defends our Lady as the Co-redemptrix,” and St. Pio of Pietrelcina, who in one of his letters wrote: “Now I seem to be penetrating what was the martyrdom of our most beloved Mother... Oh, if all people would but penetrate this martyrdom! Who could succeed in suffering with this, yes, our dear Coredeptrix? Who would refuse her the good title of Queen of Martyrs?”¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 2922.

¹¹⁹ Liguori, *The Glories of Mary*, 27.

¹²⁰ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 2966–90.

Finally, as a seal to confirm the saint's belief in the Virgin Mary's role as Co-Redemptrix, it is indispensable to present St Teresa of Calcutta's letter of support for the dogmatic definition of Mary Co-redemptrix:

Mary is our Coredemptrix with Jesus. She gave Jesus his body and suffered with him at the foot of the Cross.

Mary is the Mediatrix of all grace. She gave Jesus to us, and as our Mother she obtains for us all his graces.

Mary is our Advocate who prays to Jesus for us. It is only through the Heart of Mary that we come to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.

The papal definition of Mary as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate will bring great graces to the Church.

All for Jesus through Mary.

The Co-Redemptrix in the Apparitions

Throughout the ages, there have been so-called 'private' revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church. They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith. It is not their role to improve or complete Christ's definitive Revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history. Guided by the Magisterium of the Church, the *sensus fidelium* knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church."

Marian apparitions are usually accompanied by some kind of message that Our Lady wishes to communicate to us for our own salvation. Assumed into Heaven the Virgin Mary remains our Mother, guiding us to her divine Son. In order for an apparition to be credible, that is, accepted by the Catholic Church, it must be approved by the local bishop where the apparition took place. Thus, among the more than twenty apparitions of the Virgin Mary recognized by the Church, this paper will cite just few to show that the doctrine of Mary as Co-Redemptrix is also present in this supernatural reality called "private revelation."

Our Lady of Fatima is one of the most known Virgin Mary's apparition. Her message is direct connected with both Mary's role as co-

redemptrix and the faithful's role as co-redeemers in Christ. In Fatima, Our Lady invites the three children to offer sacrifices and prayers to God, in order to obtain graces, such as the end of the war, the world's peace, and the conversion of sinners.

In her book, *Calls From the Message of Fatima*, Sister Lucia, one of the three shepherdesses, wrote: "The Christ's heart-beats are those of the heart of Mary, the prayer of Christ is the prayer of Mary, the joys of Christ are the joys of Mary; it was from Mary that Christ received the Body and Blood that are to be poured out and offered for the salvation of the world." Still, Fatima's call to holiness brings forth Sister Lucia reflection regarding our contribution to Redemption:

"And our own contribution? It is our humble prayer, our poor little acts of self-denial which we must unite with the prayer and sacrifice of Jesus Christ and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in reparation, and for the salvation of our poor brothers and sisters who have wandered away from the one true path that leads to Life."¹²¹

Another apparition clearly connected to the Virgin Mary's role as Co-redemptrix it is a controversial and not so spread one: Our Lady of All Nations.¹²² In short, "Our Lady of All Nations appeared fifty-six times over the course of fourteen years to Ida Peederman, an industrial office worker in Amsterdam. Our Lady entrusted her with a large set of prophecies, as well as an image and prayer that we now know as the holy card of Our Lady of All Nations. The revelations Ida received from Our Lady included future events leading to declared Marian dogmas, especially the Immaculate Conception and Mary as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate. Mary also emphasized the importance of the Eucharist."¹²³

¹²¹ Miravalle, *With Jesus*, 3258.

¹²² Mother of All Peoples, "Comment on Statement from Bishop of Amsterdam Responding to CDF Letter on the Lady of All Nations," Motherofallpeoples, January 24, 2021, <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/comment-on-statement-from-bishop-of-amsterdam-responding-to-cdf-letter-on-the-lady-of-all-nations>. In full obedience to the new instruction of Bishop Hendriks of the Diocese of Haarlem, all references to the Our Lady of All Nations in this paper must be used for theological, historical, or research purposes only. The cited comment is suggested for a deeper understanding of the matter.

¹²³ Chelby Mayer, "The Ultimate Guide to Marian Apparitions," *Ascension Press Media* (blog), May 31, 2020, <https://media.ascensionpress.com/2020/05/30/the-ultimate-guide-to-marian-apparitions/>.

Dr. Robert Fastiggi, dealing with the matter of the Amsterdam Apparition, explains the essence of the devotion saying that it has been twofold.

First, it is the praying the prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit over our wounded world. We can still pray the Prayer of the Lady of All Nations, privately and publicly. Secondly, the devotion includes confidence in the promise of Our Lady, that if the Church —especially in a dogmatic formulation — would honor her with all the greatness the Lord has granted her as our Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate, then she will be allowed by God to save the world from a great global catastrophe. We can still honor Our Lady as our Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix, as these titles are an integral and long-standing part of Catholic Tradition. We must, however, avoid associating these titles with approval of the supernatural character of the Amsterdam apparitions.¹²⁴

In fact, there are many other Mary's apparitions that would be possible to cite, even the apparition in Medjugorje, which is still happening. Nonetheless, the important point is the fact that “all seem to share the common themes of prayer, penance, and a call to return to Christ.”¹²⁵ Indeed, in the same way that Our Lady wholly united herself with the suffering of her Son and offered Him to the Father for our salvation, she remains united with God's will “who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”¹²⁶

Mary's unique role as Co-redemptrix

As it was attested by now, Mary is the unique Co-redemptrix, firstly, by the will of God, and this understanding is vital to the sake of this doctrine. It is known that theologically speaking, it is possible to err both by excess and by the absence of the honor due to someone, especially to God and His Mother.¹²⁷ It would be wrong, even heretical, for us to elevate the saints,

¹²⁴ Mother of All Peoples, “The Amsterdam Apparitions: Where Are We Now? | Robert Fastiggi,” *Motherofallpeoples* (blog), September 11, 2021, <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/the-amsterdam-apparitions-where-are-we-now>.

¹²⁵ Fastiggi and O'Neill, *Virgin, Mother, Queen*, 2194.

¹²⁶ *The Holy Bible - Revised Standard Version*, bk. 1 Tim 2:4.

¹²⁷ Mark Miravalle, *Lecture 12 - Mary in Early Church* (Franciscan University of Steubenville, n.d.), <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/IWbMNMNXChoJ>; Mark

even St. Joseph himself, to the same honor due to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Likewise, failing to honor the Virgin Mary for the sake of ecumenism, for instance, would be contrary to the Catholic belief.¹²⁸ Therefore, it must be considered a severe error to deny Mary any privilege or grace just because it is not shared by the other members of Christ's Mystical Body.¹²⁹

“The title Co-redemptrix refers to Mary’s unique personal cooperation in Jesus’ work of Redemption, and “in its weakest possible formulation,” refers to her unique role in giving birth to the Redeemer, and in virtue of that act, giving to the Redeemer his body, the very instrument of Redemption.”¹³⁰ The Messianic prophecy of Genesis 3:15 read “in the light of Sacred Tradition and the Magisterium, highlights Mary’s unique role of cooperation in the divine plan of salvation.”¹³¹ She is the New Eve, the Mother of all living, as the Fathers and doctors of the Church preached.

Fr. Frederick Faber, St Newman’s friend, defends that, although St Paul calls all Christians “to co-suffer with Jesus in the distribution of graces of Redemption,” the Blessed Virgin Mary has the unique role in “the historic obtaining of redemptive graces.”¹³² Excellently, he points out:

“She (Mary) co-operated with our Lord in the Redemption of the world in quite a different sense, a sense that can never be more than figuratively true of the saints. Her free consent was necessary to the Incarnation, as necessary as free will it to merit according to the counsels of God. ... She consented to his Passion; and if she could not in reality have withheld her consent, because it was already involved in her original consent to the Incarnation, nevertheless, she did not in fact withhold it, and so he went to Calvary as her free-will offering to the Father. ... Lastly, it was a cooperation of a totally different kind from that of the saints. Theirs was but the continuation and application of a sufficient redemption already accomplished, while hers was a condition requisite to the accomplishment of that redemption. One was a mere consequence of an event which the

Miravalle, *Lecture 31 RM Pt. 1*, accessed October 29, 2021, <https://app.vidgrid.com/view/V117Gq9IIwTe>.

¹²⁸ Mother of All Peoples, *Mariology Without Apology - 11. Mary Co-Redemptrix IS Doctrine*.

¹²⁹ Miravalle, *Lecture 31 RM Pt. 1*, sec. 7'12"-7'50".

¹³⁰ Gentle and Fastiggi, *De Maria Numquam Satis: The Significance of the Catholic Doctrines on the Blessed Virgin Mary for All People*, 130.

¹³¹ Gentle and Fastiggi, 109.

¹³² Gentle and Fastiggi, 145.

other actually secured, and which only became an event by means of it. Hence it was more real, more present, more intimate, more personal, and with somewhat of the nature of a cause in it, which cannot in any way be predicated of the cooperation of the saints.”¹³³

What then did St. John Paul II mean when he, speaking for the sick said: “And that therefore you too, associated with Him (Jesus) in the passion, can be co-redeemers of humanity?”¹³⁴ Still, what did Pope Benedict XVI mean when he called the sick people in Fatima to be “redeemers in the Redeemer”¹³⁵?

In addition to being necessary to return to the concept of subjective redemption already presented, remembering that it means “the process of bringing the graces of the redemption to be received by the human heart,”¹³⁶ it is necessary to consider the Communion of Saints to answer this question. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches us:

“The life of each of God’s children is joined in Christ and through Christ in a wonderful way to the life of all the other Christian brethren in the supernatural unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, as in a single mystical person. In the communion of saints, “a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth. Between them there is, too, an abundant exchange of all good things.” In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others. Thus recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified of the punishments for sin.”¹³⁷

¹³³ Gentle and Fastiggi, 145; Faber, *At the Foot of the Cross; or, The Sorrows of Mary*, 439.

¹³⁴ John Paul II, “Aos Funcionários Do Hospital ‘Fatebenefratelli’ de Roma,” April 5, 1981, para. 4, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pt/speeches/1981/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19810405_fatebenefratelli.html. Translated by the author.

¹³⁵ Benedict XVI, “Apostolic Journey to Portugal on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Beatification of Jacinta and Francisco, Young Shepherds of Fátima - Holy Mass on the Esplanade of the Shrine of Our Lady of Fátima,” May 13, 2010, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20100513_fatima.html.

¹³⁶ Miravalle, *Lecture 29 Coredeemers in Christ*, sec. 7'24"-7'32.

¹³⁷ CCC, paras. 1474–1475.

Thus, the answer for the above question is: As St Peter tells us, “Like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”¹³⁸ We are called to be saints,¹³⁹ and, through the offer of spiritual sacrifices, by God’s grace, obtain for ourselves and others the grace that Jesus, and the Virgin Mary as Co-redemptrix, deposited in the treasure of the Church. Only united to the Church, we, as People of God, can exercise the communion of saints and intercede to have the graces of the Church’s treasure spread out in favor of ourselves or others. A great example of how we can be “co-redeemers in the Redeemer” is the indulgence that we can obtain for the purgatory souls.¹⁴⁰ We are not Co-redeemers. We, as People of God, are “co-redeemers in Christ. Co-Redeemer in Christ.”¹⁴¹ Undoubtedly, the words of the Second Vatican Council must be considered as well. The Council teaches us that “the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source (Jesus, the only Redeemer).”¹⁴² Thus, it is essential for the sake of the doctrine, to understand the faithful’s role in this matter and do not separate our role as People of God from Christ. Once again in order not to make a mistake for excess or defect, this expression needs to be kept entire: “co-redeemer in Christ.”

The expression “co-redeemers in Christ” associate us with the subjective redemption. “Subjective redemption is the process of bringing the graces of the redemption to be received by the human heart. (...) None of us participated in the historic acquisition of grace done by Jesus and Mary, done for all time, done in an infinitely perfect and inexhaustible fashion. All of us as “co-redeemers in Christ” have the opportunity to intercede for the release of the graces of redemption.”¹⁴³ Differently of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix, we do not exercise an objective redemption. “Objective redemption is the historical completion of the work of redemption by Jesus, the New Adam, and Mary, the New Eve. Objective redemption is complete, and it is inexhaustible. It is infinitely meritorious, as accomplished by Jesus and secondarily by Mary. Mary alone,

¹³⁸ *The Holy Bible - Revised Standard Version*, bk. 1 Pet 2:5.

¹³⁹ *The Holy Bible - Revised Standard Version*, bk. 1 Pet 1:15; Mt 5:48.

¹⁴⁰ CCC, paras. 1478–1479.

¹⁴¹ Miravalle, *Lecture 29 Coredeemers in Christ*, sec. 2'20"-2'30".

¹⁴² Paul VI, “Lumen Gentium,” para. 62.

¹⁴³ Miravalle, *Lecture 29 Coredeemers in Christ*, sec. 7'24"-8'05".

as a creature, participates in objective redemption. Mary alone participates in the acquisition of the graces of redemption.”¹⁴⁴

Thus, due to the perennial link of charity that exist and unite all people of God, the communion of saints, we faithful, children of God, are able to accomplish our role as “co-redeemers in Christ.” Again, we are not Co-redemptrix or Co-redeemers as the Virgin Mary; we do not merit the grace of redemption in any level, but enjoy the treasure of the Church, merited by Christ and in a secondary level by His Mother. In this sense, “all of us will have the opportunity to intercede for the release of the graces of redemption.” This is the meaning of being “co-redeemers in Christ,” a role that we all must fulfill to “complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church.”¹⁴⁵

Final Thoughts

According to what was presented in this essay, it is possible to attest that the Virgin Mary’s role as Co-Redemptrix is present both in the Divine Revelation and Tradition, as the Magisterium has interpreted and authenticated during Church’s history. The Co-redemptrix doctrine undoubtedly is presented in the truth of Mary as the New Eve, as St. Irenaeus in the second century pointed out. Her “fiat” at the Incarnation and both the offering and suffering of Our Lady at the foot of the Cross of her divine Son make her partaker in the work of Redemption of Jesus, by the will of God. Thus, the New Adam, Jesus, has the New Eve accompanying Him. Yet, the frequency of papal teaching and the number of petitions for this doctrine declaration at the Second Vatican Council, besides the words of so many saints, and even the private revelations of Our Lady, confirm the truth about the Co-Redemptrix doctrine.

“Because Mary uniquely participates in the acquisition of the graces of Calvary, she is given the task by Jesus to distribute the graces obtained at Calvary. She is Mediatrix because she is first Co-redemptrix.”¹⁴⁶ Then, let us pray to the Virgin Mary, so that she, through her role of Co-Redeemer, mediates and advocate in our favor, in order to the Church declare the fifth dogma and the world find peace and be preserved from various catastrophes and perils, which many of us believe we are already living.

¹⁴⁴ Miravalle, 6'07"-6'45".

¹⁴⁵ *The Holy Bible - Revised Standard Version*, bk. Col 1:24.

¹⁴⁶ Miravalle, *Lecture 24 Coredemptrix in Scripture and Tradition*, sec. 9'25"-10'07".

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Probing the Mystery of Our Lady's Co-redemption in Christ

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Introduction

Jesus tells us, "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mt 12:50). The context of this quote is a short incident recorded in all three synoptic Gospels.¹ Jesus is engaged in teaching a group of disciples. When informed that his mother and other relatives from Nazareth are outside the house, wishing to speak with him, Jesus points to the disciples around him as his true kinfolk.

It would be easy to read this incident according to our everyday experience. Given the fourth commandment to honor one's mother, surely Jesus meant no disrespect towards Mary. But children grow up, leave home, and make their way in the world. Mary did her part in giving birth to Jesus; now he must leave her behind to devote himself totally to the mission given to him by the Father. Others, recalling Our Lady's *fiat* at the Annunciation, might reach a different conclusion. Far from distancing himself from his mother, Jesus is indirectly pointing out her true greatness. More than any other disciple, she always listens attentively to the Word of God, giving to it the obedience of faith.²

In like fashion, there are two ways we might view Our Lady's presence at the foot of the cross as given in John 19:25-27. One way is to draw upon our human experience: "Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?" (Is 49:15) According to a natural bond of kinship, Mary is supporting her son in his great hour of need, as any kind, loving mother would do. However, since only Jesus can satisfy God's justice by meriting *de condigno*, Mary is not contributing anything to our redemption. Another way to view Our Lady's presence there is to look more closely at the text, carefully noting what Jesus first

¹ Mt 12:46-50; Mk 3:31-35; Lk 8:19-21

² One comment on this passage: "Far from undermining the role of Mary, Jesus reveals the true greatness of her divine maternity. After all, she was not merely his *natural* mother through generation, but she became the Mother of God precisely by embracing the Father's will (Lk 1:38, 43). Her relationship to Jesus—physical and spiritual—is thus magnified by Jesus' statement." *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The New Testament*, intro., commentary, and notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010) 30.

says to his mother (Woman, behold, your son!) and then to his beloved disciple (Behold, your mother!). It would seem that Jesus is asking Mary to become the mother of all his beloved disciples, whom the unnamed Saint John merely represents here.³ Therefore, in her subordinate, feminine role as “woman” and “mother,” and in a way not yet formally defined by the Church, Our Lady is cooperating with Jesus in our redemption.⁴

Which view is correct? Based on John 19:25-27 can Our Lady rightly be called the “Co-redemptrix,” or is this a pious overstatement of her role in the Church based on a misguided reading of the text? Without an authoritative definition of its true meaning the term “Co-redemptrix” could carry a negative connotation, as if putting a created person on the same level with a divine Person, or by implying that Jesus’ sacrifice was somehow not enough to save us. It could raise valid concerns that Jesus’ unique place as the one mediator between God and man might be obscured if another person was said to participate in the Redemption. On the other hand, there is something clearly special about Mary’s relationship with Jesus, and this is reflected in the many ways she is given hyperdulia by the faithful. Four of Mary’s special privileges have been solemnly defined by the Church, three of which—her divine Motherhood, her Immaculate Conception, and her Assumption—are celebrated with major liturgical feasts. The popular devotion of the Rosary invites the faithful to ponder with Mary the primary mysteries of Jesus’ life on earth. The Douay translation of Genesis 3:15 reflects an ancient tradition that a woman will one day crush the serpent’s head, a view supported by the interpretation of various Old Testament figures—such as Jael, Esther and Judith—as types foreshadowing Our

³ One example of this view: “The dying Christ, addressing Mary and John, saw in John the personification of all men, for whom He was shedding His blood. As this word, so to speak, created in Mary a most profound maternal affection, which did not cease to envelop the soul of the beloved disciple, this supernatural affection extended to all of us and made Mary truly the spiritual mother of all men.” Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life: Prelude to Eternal Life*, trans. M. Timothea Doyle, vol. 1 (St. Louis: B. Herder Book, 1947)125-126.

⁴ “For no creature could ever be counted as equal with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer. Just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by the ministers and by the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is really communicated in different ways to His creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source. The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary.” Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 62. www.vatican.va.

Lady's eventual victory over Satan.⁵ Our Lady is hailed as "Holy Queen," again an honor foreshadowed by an Old Testament type, that of the Queen-Mother in Israel's Davidic dynasty.

I believe Our Lady should be crowned as the Co-redemptrix, but that John 19:25-27 is not, in itself, sufficient to explain why she has this role within the Church. It is necessary to probe what lies hidden beneath the obvious human relationship Mary has with Jesus as his mother. Scripture assures us "God has done great things" for Mary (Lk 1:49). What are these great things? Surely the greatest one is her divine maternity, her flesh and blood relationship with the Incarnate Son of God.⁶ But we must not overlook the plenitude of graces needed to fulfill such a high office as Queen-Mother to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Of this plenitude Pope Pius IX once wrote that "under God, one cannot even imagine anything greater, and which, outside of God, no mind can succeed in comprehending fully."⁷ Such fullness of grace, by making Our Lady an adopted "son" of God—and a perfect, sinless adopted son at that—also establishes spiritual and mystical bonds between herself and Jesus *as the Christ*. These, in turn, have a direct bearing upon her ability to cooperate with Jesus in our redemption. If Our Lady is immediately placed "in" Christ at her immaculate conception, then she is empowered to always work "with" Christ, even at the foot of the cross. But of course this remains always—and only—"under" the headship which Christ enjoys over his whole Mystical Body, the Church. What is said of all Christians especially applies to Our Lady, the preeminent member of the Church: "The Son of God is one with God by nature; the Son of Man is one with him in his person; we, his body, are one with him sacramentally. Consequently those who by faith are spiritual members of Christ can truly say that they are what he is: the Son of God and God himself. But what Christ is by nature we are as his partners; what he is of himself in all fullness, we are as participants.

⁵ These three women all defeated an enemy of Israel by striking at the head of their opponent. See Jgs 4:21; Esth 7:10; Jdt 13:8.

⁶ "All the titles and glories of Mary stem from her divine maternity. She is immaculate, full of grace, co-redemptrix and mediatrix because she is the Mother of God. Her divine maternity places her on such an exalted level that St. Thomas did not hesitate to say that it bestowed upon her a certain infinite dignity. And Cajetan says that Mary touches the boundaries of divinity. There is no other creature that has as great an affinity with God." Antonio Royo and Jordan Aumann, *The Theology of Christian Perfection* (Dubuque, IA: Priory Press, 1962) 212.

⁷ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, 1854.

<https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9ineff.htm>.

Finally, what the Son of God is by generation, his members are by adoption.”⁸

Through this paper I hope to allay any fears that honoring Mary could take something away from Jesus. On the contrary, because all that she ever does is *in Christ*, the Holy Spirit who ever *anoints Christ*, enters into the Redemption in a way which I suspect many overlook. At least I know I have overlooked it. It is only after many years of wrestling to explain why I believe Our Lady is the Co-redemptrix that I can present my thoughts here. But once we see that the Holy Spirit is busy at the heart of the Redemption, it all makes sense that Our Lady should not be excluded from this saving act, since all God ever does is a work of love, and such divine and perfect love always generously makes room for the other.

Mary's Threefold Relationship with Jesus

From the opening chapter of the Gospel of Saint Luke it is clear that Mary of Nazareth is the human mother of Jesus. On the surface there is nothing extraordinary about a woman bearing a child, not even an exceptionally gifted child. What sets this relationship apart from all others is something we cannot see: the holiness of both mother and child.

To probe this unique relationship let us turn again to the text of John 19:25-27 and note how there are three other persons standing by the cross with Mary.⁹ One can be considered a blood relative, though most likely by

⁸ Isaac of Stella, *Sermo* 42, as given at “Office of Readings, Friday of the Fifth Week of Easter” in *The Liturgy of the Hours: According to the Roman Rite*, trans. International Commission on English in the Liturgy, vol. 2 (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1976) 856-857. Scripture assures us God the Father has “destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ” (Eph 1:5). In the Incarnation, Jesus remains what he was—a divine Person with a divine nature—and becomes what he was not—a human being participating in our human nature. When the grace of Christ is bestowed upon us, we remain what we were—human persons with a human nature—and become what we were not—the children of God (1 Jn 3:1) participating in Jesus’ divine nature. “O marvelous exchange!” the Church sings at Christmas, “Man’s Creator has become man, born of a virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.” Antiphon 1 at “Evening Prayer 1 for January 1” in *The Liturgy of the Hours*, vol. 1, 477. Also see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 460.

⁹ It is not certain if “his mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas” is one or two women. But, in either case, some kind of blood relationship is being indicated.

marriage, an extended family member: his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas. Another is a notorious sinner, a woman who had once fallen into grave sin but had been released from bondage to Satan when Jesus cast out from her seven demons: Mary Magdalene. The third is the beloved disciple, John, one of the first disciples of Jesus, and the one privileged to lean upon Jesus' breast at the Last Supper. We have here examples of three ways one might relate to Jesus. The first way is seemingly by chance to be one of his relatives according to the flesh. This type of bond doesn't guarantee oneness of mind and heart, as demonstrated by Jesus' extended family thinking him mad (Mk 3:21), or trying to throw him off the brow of a cliff (Lk 4:29). The second way is in the spiritual realm, a bond of love and gratitude towards one's savior, as demonstrated by Mary Magdalene washing Jesus' feet with her tears and wiping them with a costly ointment. The third way is that of discipleship. John and the other apostles were called to follow Jesus during his public ministry. It was a training period preparing them for the time when the Holy Spirit would empower them to carry on Jesus' mission of preaching. Thus after Pentecost they became cooperators in the work of saving souls.

If we think about it, these three relationships correspond to the three sacraments of Christian initiation, though in a slightly different order. First is the spiritual bond: one must be baptized, thus becoming an adopted son of God. To the newly baptized is then granted the great privilege of eating the flesh and blood of Jesus in the Eucharist. Finally, through Confirmation one is strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit to give faithful witness to Jesus; one is empowered to cooperate in the life and mission of the Church as a mature Christian, regardless of chronological age.

If we view Mary's relationship to Jesus in a linear fashion, according to historical events, it would seem that she follows this same progression. First, in view of the foreseen merits of Jesus, the grace of filial adoption is extended to her as she is conceived without the stain of original sin. Then, after her consent at the Annunciation, Jesus is conceived within her womb as her flesh and blood Son. Finally, she is present in the upper room with the other followers of Jesus as the Holy Spirit descends at Pentecost (Acts

Likewise, it is not certain if Mary Magdalene is the same woman who anointed Jesus' feet in the home of a Pharisee, but surely she must have been grateful to Jesus for casting out the seven demons, or she would not have helped to provide for his means. See Lk 7:36-38; 8:2-3. Also see William P. Barker, *Everyone in the Bible* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1966) 230.

1:14; 2:1-4). From this time onwards, even after her Assumption into heaven, she has cooperated in the mission of the Church through her powerful intercessory prayer, which the Church has never ceased to implore.

This is all true as far as it goes, but we have to be careful here not to misconstrue why this similarity between Mary and the rest of us as members of the Church exists. She needed to be redeemed from the stain of original sin; so do we. She was privileged to receive Jesus into her body; so are we through the Eucharist. She had a life-long journey of faith to make; so do we. She ever advocates for us in heaven, thus cooperating in the spread of the Gospel; we, too, according to our various personal vocations, are called to cooperate in the apostolic work of the Church. “Obviously,” we might conclude, “there is no difference between Mary and us. She is just one more member of the Church, no better than any of us. That means, of course, that she could never contribute anything to our redemption, because no descendent of Adam ever could. She most definitely is *not* the Co-redemptrix!”

The problem here is that we do not think out what this downplaying of Mary’s role in the Church implies. If, as the children of Adam we are all sinners, then Mary, too, at the deepest part of her being, must also be a sinner. God foresaw that she would be like all of us and sin, but this would prove no obstacle, for his grace would dress her up in holiness and prevent her from committing what she would have done if he had not intervened. It is as if any woman would do to bear God’s son; by random God chose Mary. But the *sensus fidei* recoils at the thought of Mary having any connection, however remote, with sin! She is the Immaculata, the ever holy Mother of God. By attempting to bring Mary down to our level, we miss the whole point of the Redemption. Through Jesus’ sacrificial death upon the cross, God wants to make us *like Mary, to bring us up to her level*, “holy and blameless before him” (Eph 1:4). This is why Mary is a type of the Church.¹⁰ The more we realize “who” she is, the more we will come to see “who” we are in Jesus Christ! Sin does not have the last word—Jesus Christ does. His grace can recreate us to be what God intended us to be from all

¹⁰ “As St. Ambrose taught, the Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity, and perfect union with Christ. For in the mystery of the Church, which is itself rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar both of virgin and mother.” *Lumen Gentium*, 63.

eternity: a human family of adopted sons in the Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

We can therefore confidently accept Mary as our Co-redemptrix, or spiritual mother, because, through sheer grace, she is the exemplary Christian, the one with the closest familial ties to Jesus, hence the one who, after Jesus, always perfectly fulfills the Father's will. Jesus is a divine *Person*; Mary is *personally* the Mother of God. What we have through our baptism—a personal and loving relationship with the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, such that we can cry out, “Abba! Father!” (Gal 4:6)—Our Lady has in virtue of her essential role in the Incarnation. Jesus is truly God. Mary, through the plenitude of grace bestowed upon her in view of her divine maternity, is truly the most godlike creature. In a most wondrous fashion, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, she is like the Father in bringing forth the Son. But the Father is *always* generating the Son; hence Mary not only brings forth the Son in the flesh at a unique historical moment, but is also granted the grace to always cooperate with the Holy Spirit in bringing forth Jesus Christ *in her soul*. She lives in Jesus because Jesus lives in her.¹¹ In this sense, she is a *spiritual brother* to Jesus, because, alongside Jesus, and through that sheer grace lavished upon her, she is always a partaker of the divine life and nature of the Father.

Finally, although he is God, Jesus is also *fully human* and not a demigod, or some strange being half-God and half-man. As our Redeemer he is the New Adam, sent to repair the harm our human nature incurred through the sin of the first man. But Adam did not act alone. The woman also clearly sinned, even handing the forbidden fruit to her husband. And Mary is also *fully human*, but as “woman”, specifically designed by God to be a helper fit for the man, Jesus Christ. Since there is an ontological difference between man and woman, there is no threat to Jesus' divine person in him receiving Mary's help.¹² Woman comes forth from man; the man is clearly the origin

¹¹ “Supernatural life is the life of Jesus Christ Himself *in my soul*, by Faith, Hope and Charity . . . By this life, Jesus Christ imparts to me *His Spirit*. In this way, He becomes the principle of a superior activity which raises me up, provided I do not obstruct it, to think, judge, love, will, suffer, labor with Him, by Him, in Him and like Him. My outward acts become the manifestations of this life of Jesus in me.” Jean-Baptiste Chautard, *The Soul of the Apostolate*, trans. A Monk of Our Lady of Gethsemani (Trappist, KY: Abbey of Gethsemani, 1946) 12.

¹² “When the Book of Genesis speaks of ‘help’, it is not referring merely to *acting* but also to *being*. Womanhood and manhood are complementary *not only from the*

and head of the woman, and in that sense always holds first place in the natural hierarchy established by God at our creation.

We come here to the heart of the “great mystery” of the marriage covenant between the Lamb and his Bride, the Church.¹³ As the New Adam, Jesus bears the penalty assigned to the man and dies upon the tree of the cross. As the New Eve, Mary bears the penalty assigned to the woman and suffers alongside her Son. It is the pangs of childbirth, something *only a woman by nature* can endure. So Jesus’ agony resonates within the depths of Mary’s most compassionate being, and becomes her agony. A soldier’s lance pierces his side and the prophesied sword mystically pierces her soul. Water and blood gush forth from Jesus’ Sacred Heart; as his lifeless body is taken down from the cross, Mary enfolds him once more in her arms, pressing his wounded, bloodied body against the altar of her Immaculate Heart. There are two hearts, but one sacrifice engendering grace within souls, for God’s infallible Word has declared it so, “Behold, your son; behold, your mother.” Yet all remains wrapped in mystery as the three sacraments of Christian initiation are unveiled: Baptism, in the water; the Eucharist, in the blood; Confirmation, in the handing over of the Spirit of Jesus. And Mary is there, not as a “poor sinner” under the dominion of Satan, but as the free-woman already redeemed by Christ. She is there precisely as the predestined New Eve, formed from the side of Christ, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone,¹⁴ *mystically Jesus’ sister*, in her one person representing all the redeemed who will ultimately form *the corporate New Eve*, the Church. For if the mother comes forth from the side of Christ immaculately pure, then all the children mystically within her come forth from the side of Christ immaculately pure, discovering their true self as the adopted children of God through the one sacrifice of Jesus and Mary. *And that’s the Redemption, the buying back of spiritual relationships broken and seriously wounded by sin.*

physical and psychological points of view, but also from the *ontological*. It is only through the duality of the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’ that the ‘human’ finds full realization.” John Paul II, 1995 *Letter to Women*, 7. www.vatican.va.

¹³ See Eph 5:21-33 and Rev 19:7 for the marriage feast; Gen 3:16-19 for the penalty due to sin; Jn 19:34 and Lk 2:33-35 for the piercing of the two hearts; Jn 19:30 for the handing over of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴ Remember: no male seed was involved in the conception of Jesus. The Holy Spirit acted directly upon Mary’s body to create the Sacred Humanity of Jesus; the bodily mother-child relationship between Mary and Jesus is therefore purer than of that which exists when a child is conceived in the ordinary way.

If Mary is ever crowned then as the Co-redemptrix, it will certainly include recognition of her role as the New Eve.¹⁵ This in turn rests upon her unique relationship to Jesus, who—at one and the same time—is her Son, her God and Savior, and the origin and head of her own graced-filled humanity, because he is the perfect man, whose very flesh is ever holy and life-giving.

Mary, the Woman Created as Jesus' Helper

Having considered the similarities between Mary and all the other members of the Church, *it is crucial to now consider what sets her apart from everyone else*. If we don't grasp this difference, we will find it very difficult to concede that she is rightly called the Co-redemptrix. Simply put, Our Lady is uniquely the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Those who agree that this term (Spouse of the Holy Spirit) fittingly applies to Mary commonly assume it is because of her role in the Incarnation, as given in Scripture: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Lk 1:35). Or, as we profess in the Apostle Creed, "He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the Virgin Mary." But something is being overlooked here. Although Mary is *personally* the mother of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is not *personally* the father of Jesus. Only the Eternal Father fulfills the role of begetting the Son. So where does that leave Mary in relation to the Holy Spirit? What union exists between them such that it is fitting for Jesus to be conceived in the womb of Mary?

Note how the word "fitting" is deliberately being used here. There is no need for God to create anything, much less a woman full of grace. All of creation is sheer gift and we must humbly bow in adoration before God's absolute freedom to bring forth such a gift by his almighty power and infinite goodness. Nonetheless he has been pleased to act "outside" of himself this way, and has given us the means of probing so deep a mystery by speaking in terms of "fittingness." Here one could go off in endless directions, for everything God wills, or permits to be, will in the end be

¹⁵ "Mary is called in all Greek and Latin tradition the new Eve, Mother of all men in regard to the life of the soul, as Eve was in regard to the life of the body. It stands to reason that the spiritual mother of all men ought to give them spiritual life, not as the principal physical cause (for God alone can be the principal physical cause of divine grace), but as the moral cause by merit *de congruo*, merit *de condigno* being reserved to Christ." Garrigou-Lagrange, *Three Ages*, 124.

seen to “fit” together. Therefore, to keep within the scope of this paper, I must limit my remarks to points judged most relevant to Our Lady as Co-redemptrix. Creation, of course, involves more than material objects. Sanctifying grace, a supernatural quality of the soul, something we cannot see or measure, is a created reality. The Sacred Humanity of Jesus—his body, blood and soul—is also a created reality. As part of the divine economy it is therefore a “common work of the three divine persons. For as the Trinity has only one and the same nature, so too does it have only one and the same operation: ‘The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not three principles of creation, but one principle.’ However each divine person performs the common work according to his unique personal property.”¹⁶ In the Incarnation the Eternal One enters into time, without, however, disturbing the inherent relations between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father, as the First Person of the Trinity, continues to generate the Son. So he remains the origin of this common work by sending the Son to redeem us. At the same time the Father remains the head of this common work by accepting, on behalf of the whole Trinity, the Son’s sacrifice *according to the flesh*, as expiation for the sins of the whole world. The Holy Spirit continues to proceed from the Father through the Son, and is therefore likewise sent by the Father, such that, wherever the Son is, the Holy Spirit also is. In his personal property as the Holy *Spirit*, the Third Person of the Trinity does not become incarnate. For, as his name suggests, his personal property is to forever exist as “spirit”, eternally *dwelling in* other persons—first of all, in the Father and the Son—but without any materiality. In a profound mystery, one before which we must tread lightly, the Holy Spirit anoints Jesus, making him uniquely “the Christ,” and, *precisely as man*, forever bonded to the Father in an unbreakable love-union of perfect holiness.

How does the Second Person of the Trinity perform his contribution to this common work, according to his personal property? We are drawing closer now to considering the fittingness of Our Lady as Co-redemptrix with the one Redeemer. To do so we need to turn to the figure which, in the eternal plan of God, most closely foreshadows the ever sinless Jesus, namely Adam, *but in his pristine state*, before the Fall marred what had started out as so good and beautiful.¹⁷

¹⁶ CCC, 258

¹⁷ In terms of time, Adam precedes Jesus; because Adam sinned, we needed to be redeemed. We therefore tend to assume that Adam came first in the mind of God and Jesus came second, as a way of rescuing the fallen human race. But in terms of

Adam is created in the image of God because Jesus, as the Eternal Son, is the Uncreated Image of God. Adam is given dominion over all other creatures on the earth because Jesus, as God, is above all creatures in the whole universe. Adam is given the task of high priest in the sanctuary of the Garden of Eden¹⁸ because Jesus, in his sacrificial death, is destined to be the High Priest through whom all creation will be offered back to the Father in love. Adam is extended the preternatural gift of immortality because Jesus, through his resurrection, will receive the gift of unending life as a man. Adam receives a full measure of grace through the original justice because Jesus, as the God-man, will have the absolute fullness of grace possible. Adam, as the first man, has primacy of place over all other human beings to be created because Jesus, as the firstborn of all creation, is the ultimate reason why anything else is created, for as Scripture tells us, “all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:16-17).

So when God declares that it is not good for Adam to be alone, he is revealing that it is not good for Jesus to be alone; Adam needs a helper because Jesus needs a helper. From God’s point of view, there is a big problem *with only one Person* of the Trinity standing out (as it were) as *somehow different* from the other Two by taking human flesh, when Father, Son and Holy Spirit are co-eternal, co-equal, consubstantial, in a perfect unity of operation. But, as previously mentioned, it is not fitting for the Holy Spirit to become incarnate. For a similar reason, it is not fitting for the Father to become incarnate. The Father generates the Son in a most pure, and wholly spiritual and virginal way; there is no materiality to his begetting of the Son. It is, however, fitting for the Son to take human flesh because his personal

the dignity of their persons, Scripture assures us that in “everything” Jesus is “pre-eminent” (Col 1:18). To try to see things from God’s point of view, it is necessary to “read” Adam in the light of Jesus. “Only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ, the Lord.” Vatican II, *Gaudium et spes*, 22. www.vatican.va.

¹⁸ From Genesis 1:27-28, man is created in God’s image and given dominion over the other creatures. But “Genesis is also depicting Adam as a *priestly* figure, commissioned to serve in Eden, the primordial garden-sanctuary.” John Bergsma and Brant Pitre, *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018) 103. See CCC 375, 376 for the original justice and accompanying gift of immortality.

property is to image the Father, and an image can be stamped into a created nature.

We might not think any of this is a big deal, and likewise judge it as having little relevance to the Redemption. Because of the Fall, we are very protective of the ego; it seems that only being “number one,” or being seen as above others in one way or another, is important. But all the power plays we so easily fall prey to—jealousy, envy, rivalry, jockeying for the number one spot—are foreign to the mindset of the Trinity. God is only “above” creation because he chose to bring into being something outside of his Trinitarian life. Therefore, regardless of how marvelous it is, all creation gives God but an accidental glory. God’s true glory, one he will never set aside, is his inner life as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So what matters to God is love, not any kind of love, but divine love, his very own being as a perfect communion between Persons in one nature. In this communion, or “family,” each Person is known, cherished, and respected for his unique personhood (or “place”) within the whole. The Father eternally delights in the Son he begets, who so perfectly images himself, the source of all good as God. The Son eternally delights in the Father from whom he receives all that is good, namely his very being as God. Father and Son delight in their one Spirit eternally breathed forth in love, finding in this Spirit a divine conception of their likeness to each other, which is so holy, perfect and good, because it is God. The Holy Spirit eternally delights in the Father and the Son from whom he proceeds as sheer gift uniting the Two as One, finding in himself the power which animates the whole, because he, too, is God. What a mystery!

So a solitary Jesus simply will not do! He is coming from a world vastly different from the one we know, with a whole different set of values than what we hold dear. Here we also bump into God’s omniscience. What we laboriously try to grasp through distinctions and discursive reasoning is simply all of one piece in the mind of God. God sees the Incarnation and the Redemption as inseparable because both are equally and freely chosen by him to happen in time. It is fitting that the Redemption be rooted in the Incarnation, for only one who is both God and man can atone for sin. At the same time the Redemption perfects the Incarnation; which is to say, the need to redeem us makes it fitting for the Incarnation to take place, so that the Son’s personal property of imaging the Father can be brought to full perfection in the flesh.

To try to unpack this further consider: just as the Son eternally comes forth from the Father, it is fitting that *in the flesh* he be seen as coming forth from another person. Hence he is born of the Virgin Mary. This much all agree upon, but let's push the matter further. As Son, Jesus eternally images the Father. It is fitting that *in the flesh* he, in turn, has a created image of himself; which is to say that he “fathers” (or is the origin of) another in divine life, without losing his place as “number two” within the Trinity. God is pure spirit; it is fitting that this image of the Son be in essence *a spiritual reality*, a participation in the life and nature of God, a supernatural quality imparted to the soul of the created image. But grace is not a person; the point of the fullness of grace is to make *the whole person*, body and soul, eminently holy, virginal as the Eternal Father is virginal, and thus shielded from contracting any sin, whether in thought or in deed. Jesus though true man *remains true God*; it is fitting that there be some kind of *clear distinction* between Jesus and his created image, as Jesus is a divine Person and the created image is a created person; hence the ontological distinction between “Bridegroom” and “Bride.” Although the Father begets the Son solely by his own Person, he does not bring forth the Holy Spirit without the help of the Son, their mutual bond of love being so utterly intimate and perfect as to breathe forth but one Spirit between them. *It is fitting therefore that in the flesh Jesus does not redeem us solely by himself*, but following the pattern inherent within the Trinity, he has the help of another person—his most beloved, grace-filled Mother—to breathe forth in love his whole Mystical Body the Church at the cross. Father and Son breathe forth the Holy Spirit. Jesus and Mary breathe forth the Church. It is a pattern established in human nature from the very beginning of time in the institution of human marriage from which springs our familial life.

If Adam prefigures Jesus, then Eve prefigures Mary. It is easy to see that Jesus is much greater than his type, for Jesus is God and Adam is merely a man. It is also easy to see that Eve is in a marriage covenant with Adam, for Scripture explicitly calls her Adam's wife (Gen 2:25). It is not so easy to see how Mary is much greater than her type, for both are women. Nor is it easy to explain exactly what type of marriage covenant Mary is in, such that she is rightly called the Holy Mother of God. Who is her spouse?

If Mary is the mother of Jesus, and Jesus is God, then she is personally the Mother of God. The first thought might be to conclude she is somehow wedded to God the Father, the one who personally begets the Son. They both bring forth the same Person. But, of course, this simply cannot be

true. As previously mentioned, God the Father has no spouse when he begets his Son. Furthermore there is no materiality to his virginal generation of the Son within the Godhead, and, as a created reality, the Sacred Humanity of Jesus is a common work by all Three Persons of the Trinity.

We might then turn to the Son in the search for Mary's spouse. This seems to make more sense. Adam and Eve are known to be in a marriage covenant, and since they foreshadow Jesus and Mary, Jesus and Mary must also be wedded together somehow. The "somehow" is still mysterious, for though Mary is the mother of Jesus, Eve is not the mother of Adam. The foreshadowing does not seem to exactly match. It must be in a hidden way, as something "mystical," that the two—Almighty God and his little handmaid—become one.

Remember it is God who judges it most fitting for Jesus to have a helper. God thinks up the idea, not any man. Accordingly Adam, here representing all mankind, is cast into a deep sleep (Gen 2:21). We are all passive before God's absolute freedom to give his gifts as he desires. Each divine Person, according to his unique personal property, performs the common work of creating a perfect woman. From all eternity the Father predestines Mary to be the human mother of his Incarnate Son. Since like comes from like, he further wills that she, in her very person, be a partaker of the divine nature, so that a most godly man might come forth from a most godly woman. Her soul, envisioned by God as so full of grace and lightsome, rightly makes her whole person an adopted son of God, even though she is feminine to the core of her being as "mother," for here "sonship" refers to the divine filiation which is a spiritual reality. This grace is extended to her through *the foreseen merits of the Incarnate Son*. Hence Eve's birth (coming forth) from Adam in time foreshadows Mary's predestined spiritual birth (coming forth in grace) from Jesus. Eve is formed from Adam's rib, from his bosom, because Mary's grace-filled person is a sheer gift from the heart of God, just as Jesus' divine Person eternally resides in the bosom of the Father (Jn 1:18).

But to speak of Jesus' infinite merits being applied to Mary may trigger an immediate association with the Redemption, and all that I have been saying here may suddenly be cast into doubt. Aha! That old problem! Mary cannot be the Co-redemptrix because (remember!) she needed to be redeemed like everyone else from the stain of original sin. But Jesus' death upon the cross is not the only source of his infinite merits. It is the

crowning act of his life, but everything else Jesus does as God-made-man merits, because it is God who is using his human nature to do it. His baby coos and cries merits. His first faltering steps merits. His hard labor beside Saint Joseph merits. His contemplative prayer in solitude merits. His ministry of preaching and healing merits. There are plenty of infinite merits to draw upon by the very fact of the Incarnation itself.¹⁹

What is the source of Mary's fullness of grace? Her relationship with Adam is true but quite remote. Centuries have passed since Adam sinned. Her relationship to Jesus, by contrast, is the closest one any creature can ever have with God. She is his true mother; he took flesh within her womb and nestled there for nine months. Only one life was between them on both the natural and supernatural level. Mary's blood nourished her own body and that of the growing enfant within, while Jesus' plenitude of grace as the New Adam ever overflowed to nourish Mary's soul. In other words, Mary never *becomes* a Christian; she simply *is* one from the moment of her conception in time. As the Most Holy Mother of God, the perfect adopted son of God, she receives her life from the Father through the Son, just as the Holy Spirit receives his life from the Father through the Son. "Image" connotes a one-to-one relationship; the Son directly reflects the Father. "Likeness," on the other hand, is associated with a pattern,²⁰ the Holy Spirit being the Uncreated Pattern of how divine life is extended beyond the Father-Son relationship: through the gift of love between the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit, we might say, is the sweetness, the unction, the holy oil enflaming the love between the Father and the Son. We are treading here on very deep waters, but it is important to try to grasp the source of Our Lady's holiness. Mary is the created pattern of how divine life is extended in time beyond the eternal Father-Son relationship existing within the Trinity itself. All grace—which in essence empowers created persons to participate in the inner life of God—comes from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. To make clear this unique pattern, upon which the Church as a communion of the elect will be modeled, the Holy

¹⁹ "Nothing is little in the life of Jesus. The Eternal Father looks upon the smallest action of Christ with more delight than He looks upon the whole universe." Columba Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries*, trans. M. St. Thomas, 3rd ed. (London: Sands, 1939) 7.

²⁰ According to the Word Study for Gen 1:26 in the *Ignatius Study Bible: Genesis*, image often denotes a physical "representation" of something in two or three dimensions, while likeness refers to a "pattern," or visible "resemblance" of something. This distinction between the two terms is being utilized here.

Spirit takes Mary into a spousal relationship with himself. She is always “full of grace” because the Spouse of her soul is the Holy Spirit, who, unlike a mere human spouse bound by time and matter, is never without the power to make her fruitful with more and more grace.

Let’s examine this more closely. All human beings, even Adam, are not totally created out of nothing. God takes a preexisting material—some mud—and breathes into it to make Adam a living being. God takes Adam’s rib and forms out of it the woman. In the mystery of new life, when any man and woman come together in the marital act, we now know that sperm and egg come together to form the material element of a new human being. There is still not a human person until God does his part and, out of nothing, creates the human soul which he immediately infuses into the body.²¹ God cannot create anything sinful. The human soul is therefore without any sin at its creation, but once infused into a body genetically connected to Adam and Eve it is immediately stained with the original sin. This sin affects the whole person. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, but stayed in friendship with God, God would have judged it fitting to likewise grace with original justice the children produced within this communion of love between himself and man.²² But since Adam and Eve listened to the Serpent and did his bidding—eating from the forbidden tree—they placed themselves, and all their descendents, in a bond of friendship with the Serpent. It is certainly not fitting that the children of such an unholy alliance receive grace at the creation of their souls. Hence the “original sin” of Adam and Eve is passed onto their children as a lack of something which God intends to be there but which has been lost: namely an intimate loving union with God. Though physically alive such progeny are spiritually dead, because they are deprived of the gift of sanctifying grace. But there is also the wound to our nature caused by the original sin, which makes itself felt in the flesh of the human person through the disordered downward pull towards concupiscence—a sorry state indeed for the whole person. One can never climb out of the mire of sin and death.

²¹ “The Church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God—it is not ‘produced’ by the parents.” CCC, 366

²² “All know that the father of the whole human race was constituted by God in so exalted a state that he was to hand on to his posterity, together with earthly existence, the heavenly life of divine grace. But after the unhappy fall of Adam, the whole human race, infected by the hereditary stain, lost their participation in the divine nature.” Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 12. www.vatican.va.

What I am proposing is this: when God creates Mary's soul, in view of the infinite merits of Jesus and her personal connection to him as his mother, he immediately floods *her soul* with the grace of her divine motherhood. The Holy Spirit, unbounded by time or matter, exercises his personal property of dwelling in another person. He does this by uniting himself to Mary's soul, sanctifying it and making it fully alive with his grace. Since the soul is the form of the person, the most essential part, it takes precedence over the bodily material she is about to be infused into. It is simply not fitting for so holy a soul, one anointed with the Holy Spirit's power, to be infused into material tainted with original sin, and which would pass onto her a downward tendency to concupiscence, making it very difficult for her to stay in a state of grace. But this is no problem for God. Again, in view of the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, and foreseeing that Jesus will be conceived within Mary's womb, God redeems *the flesh* into which Mary's soul is about to be infused into. Jesus will stay begotten of the Father, but, at the same time, will be miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit at work within Mary's body. For remember: although the spiritual marriage between the Holy Spirit and Mary's soul is a mystical, or hidden reality, Mary's complete person is a body-soul composite. In a marriage covenant there is an exchange of goods, namely that of the two persons in the marriage itself. The Holy Spirit does not become Incarnate, but takes to himself a "body", the holy material or "seed" of the Church, through his spiritual marriage bond with the predestined Mother of God, just as Saint Joseph will become the virginal human father of Jesus through his human marriage with Mary.

It is important here to stress the marital relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary, which is one of complete freedom. The Holy Spirit never *uses* Mary to bring about the Incarnation. Rather, he *loves* Mary, and lavishes his choicest graces upon her person, thus empowering her to utter, in all simplicity, and with fully loving cooperation, her *fiat* at the Annunciation.²³ It is also important to stress the *indissolubility* of this marriage between the Almighty one and his little handmaid: "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mt 19:6). The least sin would destroy this marital union; therefore the grace of Mary's divine motherhood is immediately granted to her soul even before its infusion into her body,

²³ "The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins" (Esth 2:17). "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women'" (Lk 1:41-42).

preventing any entryway to Adam's sin to through her human parents.²⁴ By not waiting for the Incarnation, but immediately consummating the marriage at Mary's conception, the Holy Spirit would never think of acting in so an ungodly way as to abandon his Beloved at any future moment in time. For such an action on his part would be a betrayal of his commitment to love her as his Spouse. It would leave her bereft of his power to ward off the temptations of the evil one and require her to act on her own, in a merely human mode, which might produce some good works but without any merit in God's eyes. So when Mary stands by Jesus at the foot of the cross, what we outwardly behold is the human mother of Jesus. What we don't so easily behold, unless we read the scene through the window of the Incarnation, is the mystical reality of Mary's spousal union with the Holy Spirit. This spiritual relationship with the Holy Spirit empowers her to fully and lovingly cooperate with Jesus in the redemption of mankind, to merit *de congruo* what Jesus merits *de condigno*. The Church teaches, "It is love 'to the end' that confers on Christ's sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction. He knew and loved us all when he offered his life."²⁵ Our Lady, as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, was likewise filled with such overflowing divine love.²⁶ She had no need to merit her own salvation; she was confirmed in grace at the moment of her conception. All of her merits, therefore, could be joined to Jesus' infinite

²⁴ In a natural marriage, husband and wife might physically consummate their union in a way open to life, but without being able to conceive a child for many years. They are not any less married for that, for it is God who ultimately opens the womb with the gift of a child. The Holy Spirit's union with Our Lady is of a much higher order, being a spiritual and supernatural reality, yet it does not seem unreasonable to suggest they are indeed "wedded" together long before Jesus is conceived in Mary's womb. Note, too, how at the Annunciation Gabriel does not ask Mary if she wants to bear God's Son—he simply announces that she will do so (Lk 1:31), as if knowing that she is already in a love-union with the Holy Spirit. Our Lady's faith-filled, unconditional *fiat* is another indication that the Holy Spirit is at work in her soul.

²⁵ CCC, 616

²⁶ "Herein lies the essence of the mystery of the redemption. In union with her Son on Calvary, Mary satisfied for us by a satisfaction based, not on strict justice, but on the rights of the infinite friendship or charity which united her to God. . . . she was a martyr, not only for Christ but with Christ; so much so, that a single cross sufficed for her Son and for her. She was, in a sense, nailed to it by her love for Him. She was thus the co-redemptrix, as Pope Benedict XV says, in this sense, that with Christ, through Him, and in Him, she bought back the human race" Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages*, 123-124.

merits in obtaining our redemption. Truly, not only as “Woman,” or the New Eve, but also as the Immaculate Conception, the woman in a unique spousal relationship to the Holy Spirit because she is the Holy Mother of God, Our Lady is rightly called the Co-redemptrix.

Co-redemptrix in Order to Become Our Mother

If sound theological reasons can be offered to show why it is fitting that Our Lady participates in Jesus’ sacrifice as the Co-redemptrix, there is now the lived experience of two thousand years in which Our Lady’s maternal presence has been active within the Church. She has appeared in numerous places, times and cultures to invigorate the Faith in hearts grown cold. She has converted millions of people to Christianity (think of Guadalupe!), won crucial battles for the survival of Christendom, and produced miraculous springs to heal both body and soul. She has inspired the founding and renewal of numerous religious orders, given us the Rosary to help us meditate upon the mysteries of her Son, and provided tangible proofs of her motherly concern through various sacramentals, one being so powerful as to be dubbed “the miraculous medal.” She has been the mainstay of persecuted families, such as the Catholic Irish during the penal days, and even in our own times when many churches became shuttered due to the coronavirus. As any good mother would do, she has not been afraid to warn of us the consequences which will befall us if we persist in our sinful ways, but always urges us to repent, to make reparation, to receive Jesus worthily in the Eucharist, and to pray, pray, pray, but with fervent faith, hope, love and devotion, after her own example.

But how can Our Lady *act* as our mother unless she *is, in fact*, our mother? And how can she truly be our mother unless she somehow gave birth to us? And since it is through baptism into Jesus’ death and resurrection that we are born again, how can Our Lady give birth to us unless she is present at the cross, actively participating in Jesus’ sacrifice as his Co-redemptrix? When Abraham demonstrated his intent to obey God’s command to sacrifice his son, Isaac, God said to him, “Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore” (Gen 22:17). When Our Lady likewise did not withhold from God the one treasure she loved most in this world, but obediently offered her flesh and blood Son to the Father in expiation for the sins of the world, uniting her own sufferings to his, how much more

could God bless her and multiply her children, which is to say, make her the mother of his family of adopted sons in the one Son, Jesus Christ!²⁷

But why do we need a spiritual mother? It is because grace builds on nature, and God has so designed human nature that we all need a mother. Actually, since our nature is stamped with familial relationships, we need both parents: a father and a mother. We need our parents because God will not create us without their cooperation in providing the material he infuses our souls into. We need our parents because we cannot flourish as persons without them protecting us, providing for us, nurturing us, teaching us and correcting us, for years and years on end, until we finally grow into mature adulthood.

In the First Letter to the Corinthians we read that “he [man] is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. (For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man)” (1 Cor 11:7-9). Given today’s cultural milieu, with its preoccupation of pushing inclusiveness, it can seem outdated, even insulting, to bring up such a text. But this is the holy Word of God and must be taken seriously. What great truth is Saint Paul expounding here?

If we read in between the lines and see in “man” the perfect man, Jesus Christ, then certainly he is the image and glory of God. If we see in “woman” the perfect woman, Mary, then certainly she is the glory of the whole human race, for she is higher than the angels, next only to her Son in the whole created universe. But it is also true in a general way of our human nature. Man images God in the sense that he has a self-contained inner life through a rational soul which is able to know and love. But the glory of God is his personal begetting of divine life in other persons. Man is therefore also the glory of God because his body is ordered to fatherhood, entrusted with an exterior capacity to beget new life, with the accompanying role of protector and provider, of teacher and law giver. Woman, on the other hand, is the glory of man because she is ordered to love and to

²⁷ “It was she, the second Eve, who, free from all sin, original or personal, and always more intimately united with her Son, offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam, sin-stained by his unhappy fall, and her mother’s rights and her mother’s love were included in the holocaust. Thus she who, according to the flesh, was the mother of our Head, through the added title of pain and glory became, according to the Spirit, the mother of all His members.” Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 110.

interpersonal relationships. It is through loving woman, and being loved by her in return, and by the further gift of God blessing their union with a child, that what is in potency—an image of God’s fatherhood—comes to perfection in act. Without woman man cannot find his true self as an image of God, but woman herself is patterned on God’s inner Trinitarian life, a life of receiving in love from the other and giving back in love to the other. The woman receives from the man and, with “the help of the Lord” (Gen 4:1), gives back to the man a child in the man’s “own likeness” and after his “image” (Gen 5:3).

But the woman also needs the man in order to go from potential motherhood to actually bearing a child, thus bringing to perfection a potential little trinity we call the family. Herein lays a grave danger. The woman’s very body is always in potency to receive from another. Who she receives from should be her husband and ultimately God himself, since new life ultimately comes from the Creator. What is true in bodily terms is likewise true about the human soul, regardless of the sex of the person. The soul is in potency to receive truth and love from God. Sanctifying grace, with all the infused virtues and gifts, raises this potency to the supernatural level. In order for this potency to be in act, the human person must continually cooperate with actual graces until the happy moment when the soul is confirmed in grace as one of the elect in heaven. Before the soul is confirmed in grace there is always the possibility of rejecting actual graces and losing a loving relationship with God. This is because one chooses to accept a lie instead of the truth, which leads one to love in a disordered way. God is the greatest good and should be loved first, above all else. A soul tainted with sin makes self the greatest good and the highest authority and so loves self above God.

We know the first man was put into the Garden of Eden “to till it and keep it” (Gen 2:15). He was also told, along with the woman, to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:28). Finally, he was told to *not* eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil *or he would die* (Gen 2:17). In the Fall all three commandments, two positive and one negative, were broken. It is important to note this. If we jump immediately to the man taking the forbidden fruit we miss the triple concupiscence at work here, namely “the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life” which are “not of the Father” (1Jn 2:16). In a threefold descent Adam went from imaging God the Father to imaging the one whom Jesus calls a “murderer” and the “father of lies” (Jn 8:44).

The first fall is through the pride of life. A humble person obeys; a proud person stiffens his neck and cannot do so, imitating Lucifer's defiant boast, "I will not serve!" The Garden of Eden is a sanctuary, a holy place where God and man commune together (Gen 3:8). The exterior garden perceived by the senses points to an interior reality: the garden of Adam's soul. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?" (1 Cor 6:19) Adam is not only to guard this sacred place—to keep his thoughts chaste and centered on God—but to also give attention to its flourishing with life, by putting into act virtuous deeds which merit an increase in grace. How can we tell that this inner sanctuary has been defiled by pride? It is through the presence of the evil Serpent, who suddenly appears in the exterior garden conversing in a friendly way with the woman, for she shows no fear of him. Adam is present but silent. Therefore, although Adam has the obligation to engage the Serpent in spiritual combat, he disobeys God and chooses not to. This leaves the woman alone to defend herself against the vile creature's seductive, though seemingly innocent question, which subtly hides a deadly poison.

By not exercising his manly role of protecting the garden, Adam's soul becomes fertile ground for the next fall in the lust of the eyes. The woman sees that the forbidden tree is "good for food" and "a delight to the eyes," that it is desirable "to make one wise" (Gen 3:6). Why does she see it this way? It is because through her unguarded intercourse with the Serpent she has just been bitten by him. The poison he carries is in his mouth; he has just uttered a lie in total contradiction to God's word. God had said you will die; the Serpent says you won't die (Gen 3:4). Again Adam is silent. Why shouldn't the woman swallow the Serpent's lie if Adam, the head of their relationship, does nothing to uphold God's word? Adam's on-going silence, therefore, indicates that he, too, finds the forbidden fruit good, delightful and desirable. Lust starts to mar their once loving relationship because he cunningly lets the woman be the first to take the fruit they both want. In a reversal of roles she initiates their mutual rebellion against God. Instead of the man giving his seed to the woman to bring forth new life, the woman takes the seed-bearing fruit of a death-dealing tree and hands it to the man

for him to eat.²⁸ Without any protest Adam does so—another indication that he wants what she is offering.

“You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons” (1 Cor 10:21). By *eating* the forbidden fruit in the *presence* of the Serpent *they seal their relationship with him* and break their covenant with God.²⁹ The evil one has now clearly “fathered” them with his own rebellious spirit. As a consequence they are now marked with the lust of the flesh because their very bodies have been used in a way contrary to their marital covenant. We know this because before they eat they are unashamed of their bodies (Gen 2:25). After they eat they try to cover their same bodies with fig leaves (Gen 3:7). Their relationship as male and female cannot be broken, for it is stamped into their nature as body-soul composites. Instead the intimate communion between them is wounded by a basic insecurity and the fear of being used. “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9) God asks the man and the woman. They hide from this question because they have fallen from the “place” they were originally created in—a state of grace—and therefore no longer know “who” they are meant to be. Shame and guilt leads each one to defensively blame the “other” to somehow prove “I am still good and loveable.”

Scott Hahn has suggested “the reason why Adam succumbed to pride and disobedience was because of his fear of suffering and his unwillingness to die, even for the love of his Father and bride.”³⁰ I would nuance this and say it was because of Adam’s unwillingness to *die to self in becoming a father*,

²⁸ “A general theme of chapter 3 is the *inversion of norms*. Everything is turned upside down.” Bergsma and Pitre, *Catholic Introduction to the Bible*, 105.

²⁹ “But ungodly men by their words and deeds summoned death; considering him a friend, they pined away, and they made a covenant with him” (Wis 1:16). I am suggesting Adam and Eve broke their covenant with God by forging a new covenant with the Serpent. “When one of the parties to a covenant was a group of people, one person could step forward to represent the group and undertake the rituals on their behalf; such a person may be termed a mediator. A familial meal typically followed, which consumed the sacrificial animal and expressed the covenant kinship that had just been established by means of the oath.” Bergsma and Pitre, *Catholic Introduction to the Bible*, 64. Adam has always been understood as the first mediator between God and the human race; Eve, in turn, can be thought of as a mediatrix, for as the first person coming forth from Adam’s body, she represents all of Adam’s descendants.

³⁰ Scott Hahn, *A Father who Keeps his Promises: God’s Covenant Love in Scripture* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1998) 64.

just as Eve selfishly didn't want to *die to self in becoming a mother*. They listened to the Serpent seductive lie—they could decide for themselves what was good and bad for them to do—and therefore *redefine their marriage*. Clinging to their idyllic existence in the garden, having the freedom to do whatever they wanted to and whenever they wanted to do it, staying the number one man, king of the garden, and the number one woman, the sole object of Adam's desire—all this was good. Having children, shouldering the burden of caring for the little ones, having their time and energy consumed by teaching their offspring how to live a holy life, incurring the moral obligation to lead a perfectly holy life themselves in order to teach by their example, perhaps losing their cherished number one spot by bearing someone greater than themselves (for who knew what God might think up in the future), or, on the other hand, facing the heartache of a rebellious child who would not obey them no matter how hard they tried to teach them the right way (and how would they ever fix such a horrible situation?)—all this was bad, for it meant sacrificing themselves over and over again, and even making themselves vulnerable to suffering. So they made the choice to keep their delightful mini-paradise all for themselves by remaining childless, refusing to consummate their marriage in a godly way, one open to the gift of new life, in clear opposition to God's command to be fruitful and multiply.³¹ In other words, through some bodily action, such as the sin of Onan (Gen 38:9), our first parents indicated they did not want to be tied down with children. Like the Serpent they would not serve. Like so many couples today they would enjoy sex while seeking to avoid the conception of a child. They would make room for us neither in the Garden of Eden nor in their hearts. But in trying to save their life this way they of course lost it, and likewise frustrated God's purpose in creating us in the first place.

³¹ The scope of this essay does not permit a more detailed discussion of the Fall of our first parents. Suffice to note, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not necessarily a literal tree, or its fruit something like an apple. Ps 1:3 compares a man to a tree; in Prov 3:18 wisdom, personified as a woman, is said to be a "tree of life"; sons in Ps 127[126]:3 are spoken of as "the fruit of the womb." The language of Genesis 3 is understood to be symbolic, so why overlook the obvious? There is a man and a woman who, clearly cooperating together, fall into sin, a sin so grave as to mark all their children with the sign of their original disobedience to God. Whatever the Fall actually entailed, its deadly consequences has clearly been passed onto the whole human race through human procreation.

“A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden locked, a fountain sealed” (Song 4:12). In reparation for Adam’s neglect of protecting the sanctuary, the Holy Spirit zealously guards the enclosure of Mary’s Immaculate Heart from the first instance of her conception. A new dwelling place of God with mankind has secretly begun, something virginally pure, holy, and totally at enmity with the evil one. It is the consecrated Ark of the New Covenant, which no man is to touch and mar with the sin of Adam, because into this chosen vessel of grace will be placed the living manna, the very Word of God come in the flesh, the One who is destined to be both Victim and High Priest in a new and everlasting covenant between God and man.

At the proper time the angel Gabriel is sent from God to speak his word to Mary. The angel says, “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!” (Lk 1:28) He could have just as easily have said, “Hail, New Eve,” or “Hail, Immaculate Conception,” or “Hail, Mother of God,” or “Hail, Immaculate Heart.” All these words point to the same mystical reality, but he knows it will take centuries of theological debate to properly understand such sublime titles and wisely points to the underlying source of all her titles: “full of grace.” Eve had listened to a fallen angel and swallowed his lie. Mary listens to a holy angel, believes God’s word, utters her total obedience to God’s will and conceives the Son of God.

The mystery unfolds further and now it is the just man, Joseph, who has his part to play in the Redemption by his virginal fatherhood over Mary’s son. Adam let the lust of the eye sully his relationship with the woman; he used her to get the forbidden fruit. Joseph ever remains the chaste husband of Mary, loves her with all his heart, and treats her with utmost respect as his sister. At the same time he fulfills the manly role of protector and provider for the Holy Family, which he humbly does not presume upon, but only undertakes once God’s will is made clear to him through the word of an angel. Remember, Adam had swallowed the Serpent’s lie, just like Eve had. Joseph believes an angel, just like Mary does. The wound between masculinity and femininity begins to heal within the basic unit of human society—the family—through God blessing Joseph and Mary with a child, albeit in a most wondrous and miraculous way.

Eve had handed her husband Adam the forbidden fruit with its deadly poison. Mary hands her human husband, Joseph, and all the children of Adam he symbolizes, the fruit of her womb, her life-giving seed, Jesus the

Redeemer. Not just once, but always. Where she is, the Holy Spirit, her Spouse, is. Where the Holy Spirit is, Christ is, in the sense of his Mystical Body being made present through grace. So everything Our Lady does for Jesus, she does for us, the Church; everything she does for the Church, she does for Jesus, her God. Whatever merits she has belongs to her, but also to the Holy Spirit through his marriage bond with her. Whatever graces he gives to souls come from him, yet also from Our Lady through her marriage bond with him.

Who can fully understand the depths of such a profound relationship? But likewise, who can fully understand the Holy Spirit, much less his action within souls? How do we picture him who is all spirit? How can we come to know him who, unlike the Word, is personally silent, yet speaks through the prophets? The Redemption gives us a window into God as love. It puts a face, as it were, to the Holy Spirit, not through an incarnation of his person but by a marriage covenant with Our Lady. The Redemption is primarily a work of love, but how would we know this unless Mary is there by the cross, participating in Jesus' sacrifice?

Thus, when the time for Jesus' public mission arrives, Mary sends him away in peace, with her motherly blessing. We know this from her attitude at Cana. She doesn't reproach him for leaving the carpenter shop to form a preaching band of disciples, but shows her loving concern for all, "They have no wine" (Jn 2:3). True, physically they will be separated as Jesus preaches near and far, but spiritually Mother and Son are of one mind and heart in fulfilling the Father's will. So when the time comes for the immolation of the Lamb, she bravely follows her Son along the painful way of the cross. The insults, the mockery, the derision heaped upon him likewise fall upon her most compassionate and sorrowful Heart. Gladly she would have suffered in his place, but knows that only he, as God, can make complete satisfaction for all sin.

Finally Jesus is lifted up upon the cross, making it the true tree of life. Outwardly we perceive but a man who, as both Victim and High Priest, is offering himself to the Father, agreeing by this to bear the full weight of our sins. In his very real thirst and anguish he cries out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46) But this true man does not cease to be true God, even at this supreme moment of apparent abandonment. The Father continues to fulfill his mission of generating his Son, and so is present at this sacrifice, not as one sent, but as one doing the sending. The

Holy Spirit, ever proceeding from the Father and Son, continues to fulfill his mission of anointing the humanity of Jesus, binding Jesus and the Father together in one perfect act of merciful love, while making Jesus' flesh the sacramental source of all grace.

Jesus, as the New Adam, thus fulfills his mission of imaging the Father, the source of all life, by giving his own flesh "for the life of the world" (Jn 6:51). He dies upon the cross and his heart is pierced open. The veil separating God and man is abolished; atonement is made. The power of the Holy Spirit is poured forth in water and blood to cleanse the world of its sin and to sanctify souls for eternal life in heaven. It seems nothing needs to be added to the sacrifice—but what about Our Lady, standing there by the cross? What is her mission as the most grace-filled creature, higher even than the seraphim, those "burning ones" ever standing before the throne of God? Can she have no part in the Redemption, when she has already come forth from the heart of Jesus at her immaculate conception, anticipating the grace to be offered to all at Jesus' death? Is she unable to merit, when she has never committed the least sin or imperfection, and is always supernaturally moved by the Holy Spirit, her faithful Spouse?

At the Incarnation Mary is told, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Lk 1:35). At the cross Mary is told, "Woman, behold your son!" (Jn 19:26). At Jesus' birth Mary's bodily integrity is not disturbed; she remains a virgin before, during and after bringing forth her child, without any birth pangs. But it is different with Mary's virginal motherhood over these children "born of water and the Spirit" (Jn 3:5). Outwardly her body is not rent, but rather it is the depths of her being, her "soul" (Lk 2:35) or Immaculate Heart, which is mystically pierced open by a sword of sorrow, in order to receive a new spiritual motherhood over all people. She mystically dies *with Christ* because she is always *in Christ*; which is to say, by obediently bearing the pangs of childbirth, Our Lady has crushed every temptation to self-seeking under her foot, and so is no longer Mary of Nazareth, but truly the New Eve, or "mother of all living" (Gen 3:20), called to exercise a maternal role within the Church until the end of time. What good mother abandons her little ones once they are born? If she should ever do so, they would wither and die. No, a good mother sacrifices herself over and over for the good of her children: teaching them, nourishing them, loving them, consoling them, encouraging them to be good and to do good. If God had excluded Mary

from participating in the Redemption, then she would not really be our mother in the order of grace, and we would have been deprived of her ongoing mothering of the Church. What a tragedy! We would still be deprived of something precious—the pure, unconditional love of a mother, which is so close to the heart of God, because God is not only omnipotent power but love.

In Conclusion: Why a Fifth Dogma on Mary's Co-redemption is Timely

In the Protestant Reformation we have an example of what happens when Our Lady's maternal influence is mistakenly rejected. Sacramental life is weakened, or disappears all together. Division follows division, for although Scripture is still revered, there is no authoritative interpretation of it all can agree upon. Surely one benefit we will receive from the proclamation of a fifth Marian dogma defining Our Lady's role within the Church as our Co-Redemptrix, or spiritual mother, has to do with reclaiming Christian unity. And since the Catholic Church itself is now beset with much turmoil and confusion, such a dogma would likewise bring clarity and unity among all the faithful.

But another important reason for such a declaration has to do with the current diabolical attack against the family. In the widespread acceptance of artificial contraception which has taken hold of the once Christian West, we have an example of where the rejection of children leads human society. All sorts of deviant sexual behavior become the legalized norm, abortion becomes the ultimate birth control, and children grow up with the constant insecurity of divorce and remarriage, if they even feel welcomed at all. Human persons, created in the image and likeness of God, are manufactured through artificial means (i.e. test tube babies), or killed to harvest their stem cells and body parts. Such inhumanity can only be stopped by the power of God, awakening in us the horror of what we have become through such blatant self-seeking. Our Lady has such power to awaken us, for she is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit and can always obtain from him that which is for our good. Furthermore, as our mother, the mother of all peoples, she certainly wants us to repent of these evils and turn back to God, or she would not have manifested herself in recent times through so many apparitions and locutions.

And finally, because Our Lady's Co-redemption is always carried out *in* Christ, crowning her with this title will actually *reinforce* Jesus' unique place as the one Redeemer. For if in the past there was a strong, though necessary, emphasis on the satisfactory aspect of Jesus' sacrifice, stressing how only he as both God and man could appease God's justice, now there seems to be a much too great emphasis on God's mercy, with even the worship due to God labeled a "non-essential" activity. God is so good he will overlook everything, and somehow, in the end, everyone will be saved. So there is no need to actually be *in* Christ, as the only way to eternal life with the Father, or, once baptized, to work *under* Christ and *with* Christ for the salvation of souls. Our Lady's Co-redemption demonstrates how all of us are called, as the adopted sons of God in Jesus Christ, to "make up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, the church" (Col 1:24). For if Jesus tells us, "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother," he likewise assures us that "this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life" (Jn 6:40). Our Lady invites us to have such faith in Jesus and, according to our various personal vocations, help to spread this faith to others.

Articles

Reaching Consensus on Mary's Role in Redemption: The Athanasian Solution

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Since the late 19th century, Catholic theologians have devoted much attention to the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the work of redemption. From the early 20th century, there have also been many petitions for a dogmatic definition on Mary's mediation of all graces and/or her coredemptive role with and under her divine Son. Prior to Vatican II, many bishops petitioned for such a dogmatic definition, but St. John XXIII made it clear that he did not want any new dogmatic definitions at the council. After Vatican II, some in the Church have tried to reduce the role of the Virgin Mary to that of an exemplary disciple who, like all of the faithful, is simply a member of the Church. Some Catholic theologians have likewise minimized Mary's active role in the work of redemption, and some have even resisted her status as universal spiritual Mother and Mediatrix of grace.

In light of the present confusion and controversy over Mary's coredemptive role, it might be helpful to consider the example of the Church Father, St. Athanasius (295–373), who sought a Catholic consensus on the divinity of Christ during the Arian controversy. Amidst the 4th century heretical Arian pandemic for which St. Jerome bemoaned his famous lamentation, “the whole world groaned, astonished to find itself Arian,” orthodoxy's champion, St. Athanasius, had an inspiration. By 360, the Christological battle reached a dire entrenchment. The varied positions regarding the relationship between the Son and the Father became essentially grounded upon a single term. The pro- Nicene Homoeuseans defended the term, *homoousios* (“of one substance”). The “moderate” Homoeouseans supported *homoiousios* (“of a similar substance”). The Arian Anomeans asserted *anomoios*, (“unlike” [the Father]). The Homoeans landed on the term, *homoios* (“like” [the Father]), for they maintained that since terms like “substance” and “essence” had not been explicitly revealed in Scripture, they should never be used by the Church.¹

In response to these seemingly irreconcilable Christological differences, St. Athanasius called a “peace conference” in Alexandria (362

¹ Leo Davis, S.J., *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Collegeville, Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 1983) pp. 51-80.

A.D.). He invited representatives of the battling camps to set aside the specific terms and titles for the moment, and rather to focus instead on the *foundational doctrine behind the terms*.

Athanasius offered a series of theological propositions, for which a simple “yes” or “no” response sufficed. For example, the Nicene hero asked the assembled representatives the doctrinal meaning behind the term, one *hypostasis* in relation to Son and Father: did they mean one substance or *ousia* (essence), because the Son is of the one substance as the Father? If they answered in the affirmative (along with a negative response to Sabellian modalism), Athanasius accepted them into full communion with the Church.

After a series of such propositions, Athanasius objectively and charitably articulated what each camp theologically stood for, thus making clear that, despite the different title-camp associations that had developed, the Nicenes and most Moderates really believed the same doctrinal truth and had no essential ground for disagreement.² The Athanasian solution led to a historic unity between Nicene and Moderate bishops (and their respective theologians), a collegial union that consequently paved the way for the pro-Nicene Christological victory at the Council of Constantinople I.

Presently, similar theological entrenchments surround the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Redemption and their respective responses to the term, “Co-redemptrix.” One contemporary position interprets 1 Tim. 2:5 to signify that Jesus Christ is the “one mediator” and the *only* mediator, thus excluding Mary’s subordinate mediation in Redemption.³ Another group holds that Mary was “receptive” at Calvary, but not actively participating in the Redemption accomplished by Christ.⁴ Yet another

² Ibid., pp. 102-103.

³ While this position reflects most Protestant theologians, a few Catholic prelates and theologians have also voiced a variation of this fundamental position. This includes the notable Fr. René Laurentin, who in his final years quoted 1 Tim. 2:5 against any legitimate concept of Marian coredemption, cf. *Personal Correspondence with Author*, June 2014.

⁴ The “moderate” position of “receptive coredemption” first initiated by Heinrich Köster, *Die Magd des Herrn* (Limburg, Lahn-Verlag, 1947); cf. Manfred Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, trans. Richard Chonak (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021) p. 330.

group maintains that Mary actively and uniquely participated in the Redemption, from her fiat at the Annunciation, throughout her earthly life, and reached its culmination in her active participation with Jesus at Calvary.⁵

A further ecclesio-political difficulty exists regarding the “Co-redemptrix” title and its identification with an international Catholic movement seeking the solemn definition of Our Lady’s Spiritual Motherhood, inclusive of her co-redemptive role. For those not in favor of a proposed fifth Marian dogma, the public association of the Co-redemptrix title with this movement provides a further and potential doubt towards the term itself.

Perhaps the Athanasian solution could be fruitfully applied to the current controversy concerning Mary’s role in Redemption.

Let us speculatively place to the side, for the moment, the Co-redemptrix title, and *focus* rather on *what constitutes the authentic doctrinal role of Mary in historic act of Redemption*.

We are bereft of a St. Athanasius in our day. Yet we have, in his stead, something greater—an ecumenical council. How does the Second Vatican Council denote the true doctrinal role of Mary in Redemption?

A priori, the Council defends the critical principle that creatures, i.e., human beings, can in fact participate in the unique work of the one divine Redeemer and Mediator:

No creature could ever be counted along with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer; but just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by his ministers and the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is radiated in different ways among his creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifest *cooperation* which is but a sharing in this one source.⁶

⁵ This group would be identified as maintaining the traditional doctrine on Mary’s role in the Redemption, oftentimes referred to as “Marian coredemption.”

⁶ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 62 (emphasis author’s).

Vatican II confirms that Christians indeed *must cooperate* and *share* in the one, unique, all-sustaining, and all-necessary mediation of Jesus Christ, which takes nothing away from the mediation of divine Redeemer, but rather “manifests its power.”⁷

Lumen Gentium 62 goes on to apply this principle of subordinate Christian mediation specifically to Mary:

The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary, which it constantly experiences and recommends to the heartfelt attention of the faithful, so that encouraged by this maternal help, they may the more closely adhere to the Mediator and Redeemer.⁸

Mary’s subordinate role with Christ the Mediator and Redeemer, the Council states, is a truth which the Church “does not hesitate to profess.” Is this Vatican II teaching being implemented today by its followers? Are otherwise faithful disciples of the Council “hesitating” to profess Mary’s subordinate role with the Redeemer in contemporary theological and pastoral discourse?

Mary’s free and active cooperation in the mystery of Redemption is explicitly taught in *Lumen Gentium* 56, based here on the testimony of the Fathers of the Church:

Thus, the daughter of Adam, Mary, consenting to the word of God, became the Mother of Jesus. Committing herself wholeheartedly and impeded by no sin to God’s saving will, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of the Redemption, by the grace of Almighty God. 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.”⁹

The Council’s confirmation of St. Irenaeus’ teaching of Mary as

⁷ *Lumen Gentium*, n. 60

⁸ *Lumen Gentium*, n. 62.

⁹ *Lumen Gentium*, 56; St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* III, 22, 4: PG 7, 959 A, Harvey, 2, 123.

“cause of salvation” (*causa salutis*) for all humanity, even if secondary, instrumental, and incarnational, remains a clear Patristic and magisterial testimony to the unique Marian cooperation in Redemption.

Lumen Gentium 57 refers to the Mother of Jesus’ unique salvific role with the Redeemer for his entire earthly life: “This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ’s virginal conception up to his death.”¹⁰

The Council culminates its extraordinary magisterial teaching on Marian cooperation in Redemption in *Lumen Gentium* 58, where the Council Fathers testify to Mary’s endurance of suffering in union with Christ’s redemptive sacrifice, as well her active “consent” to the immolation of her Victim-Son:

Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in 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, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother’s heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which was born of her. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross with the words: “Woman, behold thy son (Jn. 19:26-27).”¹¹

In providing post-conciliar papal commentary on the nature and efficacy of Mary’s role with Jesus at Calvary as testified by the Council, John Paul II underscores the objective historic contribution of Mary’s suffering with Christ which was supernaturally and universally fruitful for all humanity:

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...It was on Calvary that Mary’s suffering, beside the suffering of Jesus, reached an intensity which can hardly be imagined from a human

¹⁰ *Lumen Gentium*, n. 57.

¹¹ *Lumen Gentium*, n. 58.

point of view, but which was mysteriously and supernaturally fruitful for the Redemption of the world.¹²

Uniquely prepared by the Father through her Immaculate Conception¹³ and in free, obedient consent to his plan, Mary faithfully persevered with the unparalleled suffering of her maternal heart—an immaculate heart completely united with the sacrifice of the heart and body of her Son, like a New Eve with a New Adam—for the one single goal of redeeming the world.

From this substantive teaching of the Second Vatican Council, let us, in Athanasian format and intent, derive a few essential propositions that capture the essence of the Church's teaching on the role of the Virgin Mary in the Redemption, which can in turn be considered amidst today's theological discussion:

1. Do you believe that Christians can subordinately cooperate in the unique mediation of Jesus Christ, the one and only divine Redeemer?

If yes...

2. Do you believe that Mary uniquely cooperated with and under Jesus Christ in the work of Redemption by giving birth to the Redeemer?

If yes...

3. Do you believe that Mary uniquely cooperated with and under Jesus Christ, from the event of Christ's virginal birth, throughout her life, and culminating with her suffering with Jesus at Calvary for the redemption of the world?

If you can faithfully answer in the affirmative to these 3 questions, then you believe, in essence, what the Church positively teaches on Mary's unique cooperation in Redemption. For the greater part of the last 100 years, this position has been referred to as the doctrine of Marian coredemption.

¹² John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Salvifici Doloris*, n. 25.

¹³ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 53.

As German Mariologist, Fr. Manfred Hauke states: “Coredemption is nothing other than cooperation with the Redemption.”¹⁴ Fr. Gabriele Roschini, founder of the *Marianum* Theological Faculty in Rome and one of the 20th Century’s most renowned Mariologists, denotes what specifically constitutes Marian “cooperation” in Redemption:

To “cooperate” means to unite one’s own action to that of another, so as to produce, with him, a common work which is the result of two causes, distinct in principle, but associated in their activity and in effect, the end of their action. The work in which the Virgin united her action to that of Christ is the Redemption of the human race.¹⁵

The Belgian theologian Fr. Jean Galot, S.J. (1919–2008)—who was a consultant to the Holy See —articulates the legitimacy of Christian coredemption doctrine as a universal Christian call based on St. Paul’s teaching on participation in Christ (as published in the semi-official *La Civiltà Cattolica*):

The coredemption assumes a unique form in Mary, by virtue of her role as mother. Nevertheless, we must speak of coredemption in a much broader context in order to include all who are called to unite themselves to the work of Redemption. In this context, all are destined to live as “co-redeemers,” and the Church herself is a co-redemptrix. In this regard we cannot forget the affirmations of Paul in our participation in the Redemptive path of Christ: in baptism, we are “buried with Christ” (Rom. 6:4); in faith we are already “raised up with” him (Col. 2:13;3:1); “God made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:5-6).” This participation results from the sovereign action of the Father, but it implies equally on our part a personal involvement. Having been made participants in the new

¹⁴ Manfred Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, p. 329.

¹⁵ Gabriele Roschini, *Maria Santissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, Isola Del Liri, Pisani, 1969, Vol 2, p. 120; Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, p. 329.

life of Christ, we are capable of cooperating in the work of salvation. St. Paul has a consciousness of his declaring: “We are God’s co-workers (1 Cor. 3:9).”¹⁶

It is indeed remarkable, and rarely noted, how comfortable and recurrent St. Paul is with the concept of “co-workers” (*synergoi*) as applied to Christian ministry, a term he uses at least five times in five different epistles¹⁷, including “co-workers in the Kingdom of God” (Col. 4:11); and “co-workers in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 16:3). He is in good New Testament company: St. John likewise refers to fellow Christians as “co-workers in the Truth” (3 John 1:8).

When Pope Pius XI made the first public papal reference to Mary as “Co-redemptrix” in a 1933 allocution, his explanation of the Co-redemptrix title focused on two essential elements: 1) giving birth to the Redeemer; and 2) Mary’s suffering with Jesus in the sorrow and sacrifice which led to the Redemption of humanity:

By necessity, the Redeemer could not but associate (*non poteva, per necessità di cose, non associare*) his Mother in his work. For this reason, we invoke her under the title of Co-redemptrix. 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. And truly under the Cross, in the final moments of his life, the Redeemer proclaimed her our mother and the universal mother.¹⁸

Entirely human yet entirely unique due to her unparalleled fullness of grace, Mary’s free and active cooperation in giving flesh to the Redeemer, and her continuous free and active cooperation with Jesus in the mission of Redemption, culminating in her sorrow united with his sacrifice

¹⁶ Jean Galot, S.J., “Maria Corredentrice: Controversie e problemi dottrinali”, *La Civiltà Cattolica* 145 (1994, quaderno 3459-3460) p. 215 (translation, Msgr. Arthur Calkins).

¹⁷ Cf. 1 Cor. 3:9; Romans 16:3; 2 Cor. 1:24; Col. 4:11; Philemon 1:24.

¹⁸ Pius XI, *Allocution to a group of pilgrims from Vicenza, November 30, 1933*, *Insegnamenti Pontifici* – 7. *Maria SS.*, 2a edizione aggiornata, Edizioni Paoline, Roma 1964, p. 242; *L’Osservatore Romano*, December 1, 1933, p. 1.

at Calvary—these two biblical events, made entirely unique — constitute the essence of Marian coredemption. It is precisely these two unique and inseparable aspects of the life of the Immaculate Mother, as confirmed by Pius XI, *which have always traditionally and faithfully been denoted and embodied in the single Marian title, Co-redemptrix, the doctrinal basis of which is evidenced in the teachings of Vatican II.*

Certainly, there are other related questions regarding Marian coredemption, for example, the question of Mary's merit in relation to that of Christ. But even here, theological consensus can be reached through, for example, Pius X's "*de congruo*" designation of Marian merit in the order of fittingness.¹⁹ It is of paramount importance to recall that *not every related question to a given doctrine must be settled in order to confirm that doctrine as an essential Christian truth revealed by God.* The *debitum peccati* issue in relation to the Immaculate Conception dogma, and the "death" of Mary issue in relation to the Assumption dogma, prove this true.

In the final analysis, titles like Co-redemptrix truly serve the mystery which they embody, as do other ecclesial titles such as Mother of God, Transubstantiation, and Papal Infallibility. They only lead to confusion when the doctrine they denote experiences a lack of faith. These titles fulfill a dynamic purpose in the proper safeguarding and understanding of the saving doctrines of faith behind them. Titles defend truth.

As 4th century Christological battles raged on, the feuding parties were shocked with a dramatic and unforeseen event: the newly elected Emperor, Julian, now sought to return the newly Christianized Roman Empire to former pagan, worldly ways. It was neither charity nor justice that led Julian the Apostate to return the exiled Athanasius to Alexandria. It was rather Julian's notion—scandalous but at times true—that "no wild beasts were so hostile to men than were the Christians to one another."²⁰

Catholic theologians should strive for greater unity rather than greater hostility. Regarding Mary's coredemptive role and her mediation of grace, there is more consensus than many realize. For example, the Roman

¹⁹ Pius X, Encyclical, *Ad diem illum*, 1904.

²⁰ Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, p. 101.

Mariologist, Fr. Salvatore Perrella, SM, has affirmed the essential link between Marian coredemption and mediation in her spiritual maternity:

Coredemption (historical-messianic cooperation) and Mediation (celestial cooperation) are always relative and successive one to the other, and together they express the two significant and supportive moments of Mary's spiritual maternity towards humanity, namely—to express it in the classical language—the *action of the acquisition of Grace* and that of its *application* to individual men and women redeemed by Christ.²¹

Pope Francis has also affirmed the unique role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the work of redemption. In his January 1, 2020 homily for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, he states that “there is no salvation without the woman”:

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.²²

In his September 15, 2021 homily for the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, Pope Francis referred to Mary as “the Mother of Compassion” who “shared in her Son’s mission of salvation, even to the foot of the Cross.” This is the essential doctrine of Marian coredemption.²³

²¹ Salvatore M. Perrella, “La Controverosa Questione delle ‘Apparizioni di Amsterdam’ e il Tema della Mediazione e della Reiterata Richiesta del V Dogma Mariano,” *Marianum* 83 (2021) 321

²² Pope Francis, homily, January 1, 2020:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200101_omelia-madredidio-pace.html (accessed January 28, 2022).

²³ Pope Francis, homily, September 15, 2021:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2021/documents/20210915-omelia-sastin.html> (accessed January 28, 2022).

Pope Francis has likewise spoken of Our Lady's unique role as the bridge between us and God, which is another way of affirming her role as Mediatrix. In his January 1, 2021 homily for the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, the Holy Father said:

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 joining us to God; she is more. She is the road that God travelled in order to reach us, and the road that we must travel in order to reach him. Through Mary, we encounter God the way he wants us to: in tender love, in intimacy, in the flesh.²⁴

When we consider the teachings of Vatican II and these statements of Pope Francis, there are signs of a fundamental consensus on Mary's unique role in redemption. At our present historical moment, when the Church and the world so gravely need the full and powerful intercession of Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, let us seek the greatest unity of faith and charity possible within magisterial and theological circles regarding Our Lady's unparalleled role in our Redemption and her consequent role as the Spiritual Mother of all people. We may have more formidable worldly opponents to face than each other.

²⁴ Pope Francis, homily, January 1, 2021: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2021/documents/papa-francesco_20210101_omelia-madredidio-pace.html (accessed January 28, 2022).

Mariae Advocatae Causa: The Marian Issue in the Church Today

PETER DAMIAN M. FEHLNER, F.I. (1931-2018)¹

I have chosen to entitle this final, concluding conference of our symposium, the “Cause of Mary, Advocate”. Etymologically, cause is a legal term. If its use to summarize our discussion of the mystery of Mary Immaculate and of her unique place in the divine counsels governing the economy of salvation retains a legal scent, that is quite intentional. For the cause of Mary in the economy of salvation: the place she occupies from eternity in the divine counsels of salvation and the crucial role she fulfils so perfectly in bringing these counsels to pass at the Incarnation, on Calvary and in the Church, as well as the recognition of the part she plays by the Church and by every soul redeemed and delivered from sin by her Saviour-Son, viz., by those whose salvation in fact hinges upon the successful prosecution of that cause, are very much today a matter of intense dispute. Those who would promote her cause and those who, either violently oppose it or who just as adamantly want to hear nothing of it, are locked in battle.

That battle for souls is very much at the centre of what is commonly called the “crisis of faith” in the Church, in times past, what was called her “falling into ruin”. “Crisis of faith”, like the older phrase “falling into ruin” is used analogically, not univocally. From the point of view of the “enemy” the crisis of faith is the fruit of that cause understood as the case (the original sense of *causa* in Latin) of Mary and of her children: viz., of putting Mary and her supporters on trial. From Mary’s vantage point as Advocate that crisis is but an aspect of a process of discernment, sorting out “the thoughts of many hearts”: for or against Christ in view of their willingness to be or not to be children of Mary, above all at the foot of the Cross, therefore children of the Immaculate Coredemptrix (cf. Lk 2: 34-35).

¹ Father Peter Damian M. Fehlner, O.F.M., Conv. (1931-2018) delivered this address at the 2005 International Symposium on Marian Co-redemption, held in Fatima, Portugal. At the time, Father Fehlner was a member of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculata, an institute of pontifical right. He would return to his community of Conventual Franciscan in 2016 before his death in 2018.

Apropos a very similar situation at the time of the Protestant reform the great English convert and apologist, G. K. Chesterton, made this observation: When in the midst of all the din of controversy, with rights and wrongs on all sides, there was heard the mocking and demeaning of the “Virgin Mother mild”, at that moment one distinctly began “to hear the little hiss that only comes from hell”. (cf. his *A Party Question: Collected Works*, vol. XI). In one form or another the entire history of the Church has always been marked by this controversy, an aspect of the battle between the Woman and the dragon, sketched so accurately in the 12th chapter of the Apocalypse. Recalling that heavenly scene revealed to the beloved disciple and apostle especially consecrated to Mary as her child by the Saviour Himself should remind us of another aspect of this cause of Mary. She is not in the first instance an object of legal disputation either in the Church or outside. She is rather in her own right and before all others an Advocate, our Advocate in the final settlement of all claims bearing on who owns us: Christ or the anti-Christ. And her intervention or less is the decisive factor. Against that Advocate the Prince of this world and his brood, heavenly or earthly, avail nothing.

That aspect of the enmity between the Woman and the serpent foretold in the Protoevangelium reveals in a special way both the distinctive tactics and weak points of “the liar and murderer from the beginning” (cf. Jn 8: 44). He has a certain sophisticated cleverness enabling him to excel in prevarication and seduction of men and so take charge of this world, but he has neither the courage nor the means to confront directly the invincible Woman, the Mother of Truth, which will make you free, viz., from sin (cf. Jn 8: 32; Mt 1: 21). The dragon can only attack the Woman to the extent he can persuade her children, the “rest of the brethren of her First-born” (cf. Apoc 12: 17), therefore His friends (cf. Jn 15: 12-17), that she is not the Mater et Magistra Veritatis, and so her “cause” is either irrelevant or downright counterproductive: respectively the position of those indignantly indifferent to it or violently opposed to it.

If, to the contrary, her children are convinced that she is just this: “Pre-eminent Member of the Church” because “super-eminent” as the original Latin of the Council indicates (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 53), the dragon’s anti-cause is finished. For, other than sensational “bluff”, the dragon has no other effective means of blocking her, but these, so long as She makes our cause Hers. The last great miracle of the sun here at Fatima, 13 Oct., 1917, should be more than enough to prove beyond argument: 1)

that real control of the “forces” of nature is in the hands of the heavenly Woman, the Immaculate Virgin, the Queen of the Angels, with Michael commanding the hosts of heaven in her service, and 2) that the actual powers of the common enemy: of Her and of us, do not extend beyond the theatrical, or perhaps not even the melodramatic, of producing a great deal of noise, of smoke, of unpleasantness, effective only as a means to “convince” us we ought to accept his “philosophy of life”, the one peddled to our first parents and in every seduction to sin, especially against chastity and humility. Mary is indeed the strong Woman foretold in Proverbs 31. She is indeed the courageous Mother “joining a man’s heart to a woman’s thought” (cf. II Mach 7: 21) sustaining her sons in their victorious martyrdom, as she once supported her first-born Son on Calvary. On Oct. 17, 1917, St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe with six confreres founded the Militia of the Immaculate in Rome. About two weeks later the arch-enemy of the Immaculate made his counter-move and set up an anti-Marian militia in the once Marian Cathedral of the Assumption in the Kremlin. In this flash, in this opening of the heavens, we are able to glimpse the true state of affairs in the Church and in the world: the Woman is always ahead of the dragon. All his plans and tactics are constrained within limits closely defined by the systematic intervention of this mysterious, but for us so wonderful personage.

One might ask: 1) why, and 2) how is her cause bound up with ours? The answer to the “why” is: because she consented to be and is the Theotokos, the Mother of God on whom she imposed the name, Jesus: God (Yahweh – He Who Is) Saviour-our Salvation. Therefore, the answer to the “how” is: because in making God’s will hers, She has made our cause Her cause (cf. Lk 1: 38): our salvation, our liberation from the prince of this world is her cause, because that is the Father’s will, this is how he has loved the world so much that he could not love it more: he commanded his Son to be born of the Woman to save us in the most perfect way possible in any possible world, however perfect, viz., in sacrificing Himself for Her and at Her request and so through Her for us who are her children. Or with St. Maximilian we might also say: God has saved us because this is what Mary asked him to do (cf. Jn 2: 1-12). In a word, she is “Our Advocate”, our Defender at the bar of eternal justice, and the Defender of our faith in *via*. Since Pentecost the Church has always believed this, because in the words of St. Francis of Assisi, she is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, the other Paraclete (Advocate), “incomparably” beautiful. This is why Bl. John Duns Scotus calls her the “perfect fruit of a perfect

redemption by a most perfect Redeemer” (cf. III Sent., d. 3, q. 1). This is why St. Thomas (cf. S.T. I, q. 25, a. 4) calls the Divine Maternity (together with the Incarnation and our Salvation) one of the three “quasi-infinites”.

How the Church on this Marian basis is constituted so as to operate efficaciously and fruitfully to the parousia, is definitively portrayed in the Cenacle on Pentecost: the Mother of Jesus in the midst of the Apostles and the faithful awaiting the promised Spirit of holiness and truth. There is a clear parallel here with the scene in the holy House of Nazareth on the day of the Annunciation, where the Virgin full of grace and of the Spirit is shown to be the key conduit whereby that Spirit will anoint the flesh to be assumed hypostatically by the Son of God. So, too, throughout that historical process whereby the Church, the People of God and Body of Christ is anointed in preparation for her final glorification on the day of Christ’s final coming, the same Mediatrix of all graces: because Theotokos and victorious Coredemptrix, occupies centre stage. Any deviation from this structural arrangement necessarily tends to paralyse the Church. Or any “decentralizing” of the Spouse of the Holy Spirit in the Church, any minimizing of her role as Immaculate Mediatrix because Mother Coredemptrix must necessarily initiate a process of deconstruction and crisis within the Church and world. She is so effective an Advocate, because like the Holy Spirit she not only intercedes with her Son, but intervenes directly in the economy of salvation to realize that holiness made possible to the Church by the redemptive sacrifice of her Son.

The reason why the Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Spirit can exercise such a mediatory role in the Church and so make possible the multiple forms of ecclesial mediation (institutional-sacramental and charismatic) of the Church as a kind of extension of the Virgin-Mother in the order of grace is to be found in that sanctificatory mediation exercised by her in the Incarnation: she made (in the words of St. Francis) the Lord of majesty our brother (St. Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior*, 3; 7; 9). In giving birth to the Son of God, viz., in bearing a divine person, the Immaculate Virgin made the Word, eternally consubstantial with the Father consubstantial with us (cf. Leo the Great, Letter 31), and so that nature was sanctified in Him and in each of His members sanctified by a rebirth similar to His Birth of the Virgin. This dual mediation of the Virgin (respectively in the objective and subjective redemption) makes possible both 1) the victimhood of that Son (in actu primo et secundo) and 2) our rebirth as adoptive, but truly sons of the Father. That is why her maternal presence at

the heart of the Church, as the recently deceased successor of St. Peter, Pope John Paul II, said, is more crucial than that of the Pope himself. That presence is nothing else but her maternal mediation. She can thus mediate because as Virgin-Mother and Co-redemptrix actively sharing her Redeemer Son's victory of the Cross she has been assumed body and soul into heaven and there gloriously crowned Queen. All this, because she is the Immaculate Conception.

This is our great good fortune, that she who was so loved by the Blessed Trinity, should also have loved us. That is why we have a Redeemer and a perfect redemption.

Now, this is why we should quite consciously and deliberately make her cause our cause. It is what Our Lord expects, as he made so clear to the seers of Fatima. The triumph of the Immaculate Heart must be a primary goal of the Church. That triumph is the only way the victory over the serpent can be made total and final: in the immaculatizing of the Church: *sine macula et sine ruga* as that is clearly formulated by St. Paul (Eph 5: 27). At the request of His Father and His Mother Christ died that the Church might share, not just any level of holiness, but the most perfect level, that of the superabundance of grace (cf. Rom 5: 15) in that Virgin whose name is "Full of grace" (cf. Lk 1: 28; Eph 1: 4). But it is also true that when Catholics fail to believe this enthusiastically and Church policy fails to be articulated about this absolute Marian priority, the devil is well on his way to sowing the bad seed successfully and harvesting a bumper crop.

This is also the point where we note how the cause of Mary, instead of being the Saviour's primary, active instrument of our salvation, has been made an object of acrimonious debate, the moment when instead of the axiom: *de Maria numquam satis*, the life of the Church is conducted as though the axiom read: *de Maria numquam*, the moment when, with the wisdom of the Cross (cf. I Cor 1-2) and the prudence of the little ones who have made themselves children of Mary (cf. Mt 11: 25 ff.), the "little hiss that only comes from hell" can plainly be discerned. This is how the efficacy of the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus in souls and in the Church is negated. This is also why the cause of "Our Advocate" must in theory and in practice enjoy absolute priority for the entire Church, for all the baptized, for all who yearn for salvation, because only thus is the primacy of Jesus rendered absolute in our hearts and works. Instead, her cause seems presently, in theory and in practice, to be on trial, the object of doubt, and

the subject of censure by theologians and of silencing by ecumenists, precisely under her title of Immaculate Coredemptrix and Mediatrix of all grace.

This hardly corresponds to the normative vision of the Church presented to us at Pentecost and in the first assemblies of the believers to celebrate the Eucharist, “one heart and soul” (Acts 4: 32) about the Mother of God, Super-eminent Member of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 53), because Immaculate, preservatively Redeemed and so Mother Coredemptrix.

Hence, to the degree that the serpent can successfully persuade us to continue to debate the issue: whether the Church and all her members should publicly acknowledge the universal mediation of Mary, rather than resolve it in her favour, to that degree he has staved off final defeat. Only this, absence of a positive conclusion in the form of a dogma, not a negative judgment, is all he needs.

Conversely, once such a public acknowledgment has been made, the entire tide of battle will be reversed from what looks like an advancing crisis in the Church with no end in sight, to what not only looks like, but is what St. Paul describes as “being snatched from the jaws of hell and transported into the kingdom of light” (cf. Mt 16: 17; Col 1: 13). *Roma locuta, causa finita*. The cause “finished” will be that of Mary as total victory of the Church; but the cause finished will also be that of the devil in total defeat.

Obviously, such an analysis supposes that the mystery of Marian mediation in the Church is basic to an understanding of her history. St. Bonaventure says as much in his famous *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, c. 14, n. 17, when he writes: “In paradise there were two trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and thus is signalled how in all the mysteries of Scripture are explained Christ with His body [the Church] and the anti-Christ with his body [the anti-church]” The conflict between Cain and Abel, says the Seraphic Doctor citing St. Augustine (*City of God*), typologically describes the battle, initiated in the garden of Eden over the absolute primacy of Jesus and His Immaculate Mother, but continued in virtue of the redemptive dispositions of the Lord manifested in the prophecy in Gen 3: 15 of a Redeemer and Coredemptrix, possible because of the joint predestination of Jesus and Mary. This is the battle

consummated on Calvary, perpetuated in the Eucharistic sacrifice, with the offering of the Last Abel by the New Eve, the Real Isaac by the First Believer, prefigured by Abraham, “our father in faith”.

In this regard the Seraphic Doctor tells us (*Collationes in Hexaemeron*, c. 13, n. 20) that in one way or another Mary is to be discovered in every verse of Scripture because of the unique role she plays as Mediatrix in this great drama: in giving birth to the price of our redemption, in offering on Calvary the price of our redemption, in being in the Church absolute proprietress of the price of our redemption (*protulit, persolvit, possedet pretium redemptionis nostrae*: cf. *Collationes in septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, c. 6). If not verbally, in fact the Seraphic Doctor has here described the universal mediation of Mary in virtue of her Immaculate Conception at the moment of the Incarnation (divine Maternity), at the moment of redemption consummated on Calvary (coredemption), in the time of the sanctification of the Church and believers (mediation of all grace).

The victorious prosecution of the struggle in the glorification of the Church is accomplished in a certain order and according to a certain arrangement of the persons involved: of Christ, of Mary, of the Church and of her members. St. Bonaventure formulates this order thus: the Virgin Mother is our Mediatrix with Christ as Christ is our Mediator with the Father (cf. *III Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2). This is because our only way to the Saviour is through her by whom He first came and continues to come to us (cf. *Commentarius in Evangelium Lucae* I, 70). For the Saviour-God she is “gate to earth”; for us sinners, singly and assembled, she is “gate to heaven”. Or still more practically the Seraphic Doctor tells us that the praises of Mary during Our Lord’s public ministry, when he was accused of being in league with Beelzebub, prince of devils, both by that good woman and by our Lord, are intended to reveal to us how the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Mary are in net contrast with the opposite seven vices of Satan in the enemies of Christ leading them to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. From this horrendous slavery there is no liberation except through the Virgin full of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Commentarius in Evangelium Lucae*, II, 58-63).

Practically, this translates thus: we can only know and understand Jesus and the Church and participate efficaciously in the battle between Christ and the anti-Christ to the degree that 1) the Immaculate Coredemptrix-Mediatrix of all grace is operative in the Church and in the lives of each of us; and that 2) we consciously and willingly and deliberately

and unconditionally cooperate with her. This is what is meant by total consecration to the Immaculate Heart. The attempt to serve the Church and to “know the surpassing love of Christ Jesus” (cf. Eph 3:19) with neglect of the second condition and worse with grudging acknowledgment or even express repudiation of her maternal mediation can only aggravate an already advanced crisis of faith and introduce those so living more and more, not to Christ, but to the anti-Christ and his body.

We have enjoyed hearing over the past few days a wonderful overview of the mystery of Marian coredemption in theology and in the history of theology. This stupendous mystery of the Immaculate Coredemptrix on Calvary and at the Altar (Arnold of Chartres) is the very centre on which turn all her other activities as Mediatrix in the Church: Advocate and Mother in so unique and powerful and indispensable a way. In a comprehensive way this overview is a description of the Immaculate Virgin’s precise place in that fundamental strategy designed in heaven to make possible our effective cooperation in that plan of battle. In a word her preservative redemption in view of the foreseen merits of her Son and Saviour is the active, personal instrument of our liberative redemption and cooperation. The coredemptive mediation of Mary Immaculate, foretold by Simeon in the prophecy of the sword to pierce the Mother’s heart enables us to discern “the thoughts of many hearts” (cf. Lk, 2: 35), viz., of their faithful cooperation or want of cooperation in filling up what is lacking to the sufferings of Christ for the Church (cf. Col 1: 24). What is true of individuals is true also of communities.

Filling up what is lacking to the sufferings of Christ for the Church might be summarized in a single phrase: total consecration to the Immaculate Heart. The grounds for this observation are to be found in the New Testament as well as in many private revelations accorded to the Saints, precisely in two shining examples: St. Joseph (cf. Mt 1: 18-25) and St. John the Evangelist (cf. Jn 19: 25-27). The virginal spouse of the Immaculate illustrates what that consecration to the Immaculate Heart means in reference to the Mediatrix of all grace as Theotokos. The beloved disciple represents what that consecration or filling up what is lacking to the sufferings of Christ for the Church means in reference to the Mediatrix of all grace as Coredemptrix. In both cases consecration centres on the redemptive sacrifice of the Son of God become the Son of Mary and so Son of Man (Adam), as the Redeemer pointed out on the night before He died (cf. Jn 17: 1-25). Consecration to Him and so through Him to the

Father on our part is conditioned by consecration to the Immaculate and so through Her to Christ. This is what St. Bonaventure means when he tells us that Mary is our Mediatrix with Christ as Christ is our Mediator with the Father. This, it may be noted is one of the earliest ways of recapitulating in a few words the entire theology and spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi.

Let us see how the current situation of the Church appears in the light of this mystery and in the light of the history of the Church and of the human family interpreted as St. Augustine and after him St. Bonaventure understand the guiding principle of all history embedded in the prophecy of Gen 3: 15. In the light of this approach we shall see why the counsels of those who would wish to silence all promotion of this mystery because equivocal or because something purely marginal to the Church today are erring counsels and why active promotion of this mystery must become part of the present agenda of the Church.

The fact of a Marian issue in the Church Today

I do not think very many people would seriously attempt to deny that the Church, particularly in what for many centuries has been known as the Christian West, is in a state of crisis. One may argue over the choice of term to describe a condition not exactly ideal or normative. But that the word “crisis” does describe the present condition with some degree of accuracy is generally conceded. Since most of us here are quite familiar with the components of what makes up this “crisis” it will suffice merely to list a number of the more important of these, and then go on to some more precise considerations drawn from the mystery of the Church and of its history, to enable us to go on to a second consideration: the centrality of the Marian issue as coredemptive.

Crisis as a fact of life

Whatever the formulation, an accurate delineation of what is meant by crisis in the Church (in the west) today would include the following elements:

- crisis of faith: Satanism; atheism, syncretism (“new-age”), false ecumenism, denial of truths of faith; chaotic theological formation; poor and sometimes bad catechesis and preaching;
- crisis of vocations: loss of priests, absence of new vocations, closing of seminaries, chaotic religious life; sale of monasteries and

convents, feminization of the Church and especially the clergy; use of church administrative organs to subvert belief and discipline;

- crisis of prayer and of penance: plummeting figures for Sunday Mass attendance, for confession, for praying rosary; unauthorized liturgical innovation; closure and razing of church edifices (or sale for profane use), hedonism, consumerism and Sunday commerce;
- crisis of morals: loss of sense of sin; widespread practice of contraception among Catholics; higher divorce rate among Catholics than among non-Catholics, pansexualism, nudism, pornography, filthy language, abolition of public moral standards
- crisis of social order: legal positivism, prioritisation of commerce and industry, disintegration of family, legalization of "same sex marriage" hunger, economic discrimination;
- crisis of family: infidelity, separation, divorce, co-habitation, homosexual marriage, pre-marital sex;
- crisis of life: abortion, contraception, euthanasia, war, genocide, terrorism;
- crisis of youth: drugs, sexual indulgence, pre-marital sex, sodomy, aids, pedophilia.

One may be tempted to remark that this resembles the typical laundry list of the professional moralist or apocalyptic preacher. But closer examination will bring to our attention a single factor in a sense linking all these disparate phenomena and providing the starting point not only for understanding how so tragic a situation should have come to pass in what was not so many decades ago a still flourishing part of Christendom, but also for perceiving the key to a happy resolution of the crisis. That factor is the mystery of Mary. Whether we consider the crisis of faith, or the crisis of vocations, or of prayer and penance, of morals, of the family, or of any of the many other areas that might be added, the crisis in the Church always occurs wherever and whenever the faithful, clerical and lay alike, abandon devotion to Mary, not only ritually but practically in the abandonment of chastity and humility. The recent clerical scandals afflicting the Church in the United States abundantly illustrate this observation.

Or in other words: crisis is a consequence of failure to marianize the Church, souls, and indeed the whole of human culture: not merely of the failure as a fact of life, tragic as this is especially among the clergy, but of an attempt to rationalize that failure by downgrading Mary Immaculate. Surely reflection of this kind prompted Pope Paul VI to once remark that

one can smell the smoke of Satan within the Church, a thought akin to Chesterton's about "the little hiss that only comes from Hell". In one way observation of the crisis confirms this insight. Everything has been tried for 40 years or more to resolve the situation for the prosperity of Holy Mother Church and the salvation of souls, everything but prioritising marianization, or Totus tuus as key to the solution: not merely by one person (the Pope) or a few religious orders, but by the entire Church, formally, consciously, deliberately, with a Fiat matching that of the Immaculate.

Does not this tell us something? The smoke of Satan cannot be expelled except with the support and under the direction of Mary Immaculate. But with Her that purgation can be accomplished quickly and expeditiously. We may also confirm the principle still more clearly, and in the process understand why the mystery of the coredemption today is that Marian mystery germane to this particular moment of the crisis linked to the on-going battle between the Woman and the serpent in view of the rest of His brethren (cf. Apoc 12: 17).

Historical Perspective

One of the most effective ways of testing the validity of this kind of observation on a current situation is to test it historically. Have there been in the past similar periods of crisis and was the Marian factor the crucial one in these, for better or for worse? The answer to both questions is affirmative.

Let us begin a brief survey with the rise of Christian culture in western Europe (whence the name Christian west to denote any culture anywhere organized along those lines) and the gradual leading role Latin Christianity assumed within the Church. That began not on the day of Pentecost, but long after, viz., after the conquest of the Christian-Catholic peoples of the near and middle east and north Africa by the Mohammedans and the beginning of the great schism of east and west in 1054, consummated with the sack of Constantinople in 1204. Before this period the centre of Catholic life was not in the west, but in the east and in Africa, where devotion to the Panhaghia understood as uniquely immaculate from her conception was already flourishing, but only in this form began to flourish in the west after St. Anselm of Canterbury and his secretary Eadmer. It is not unreasonable in this context to regard the well-known

Oratio 52 of St. Anselm in honour of the holiness of the Virgin “greater than which none could be in any possible world” (IDEM, *De Conceptu Virginis*, 21) as a providential statement of the key to any christianisation: the Fiat of the All Holy Theotokos. Fully expounded the Panhaghia is personally defined by her first moment, her Immaculate Conception. We need not be concerned that St. Anselm himself did not see or work out all the implications. In synthesizing the Marian tradition of the west and of St. Benedict in particular at this juncture of history, he also laid down the principle by which theoretically and practically the unique role of the Immaculate Mediatrix would come to be acknowledged or challenged in the history of the second millennium.

What brought about the shift in the religious-cultural axis from east to west? In the east a negative factor, which we might sum up in one word, the triumph of iconoclasm in the Islamic conquest of the Christian east, a conquest facilitated by the popularity among Christian believers of monophysitism, or what today we might call a Christus solus soteriology, or more exactly, a form of the “anti-Marian” syndrome, the little hiss from hell.

But that by itself would not have translated into the rise of the Christian west, even with the success of the Frankish empire in resisting the Muslim advance from Spain, or of the crusades later in halting the advance of the Muslims into Europe from the East. That required not only a completion of the work of evangelization of Europe, but also of a two-pronged renewal and consolidation of the Church in relation to the state (read “empire”) or civil power and in relation to her own holiness.

The first was carried out with striking success by a series of Popes between St. Gregory VII and Innocent III, and made the difference between a Christian order and what today is called “secularisation” (of which perhaps the Emperor Frederick II is an exceptional symbol, to be followed by Philip the Fair of France inaugurating a reversal of direction ultimately culminating in exactly this). And yet precisely during the Pontificate of Innocent III Christ himself, ordering St. Francis from the Crucifix of San Damiano in Assisi to “repair His Church because it was falling down”, would describe the condition of the Church as one of imminent collapse, viz., in crisis. Whatever did He mean? The external, or social, institutional aspect of the Church was imposing. But within that social order there existed critical situations, which if not corrected, would

lead to a rapid collapse of the entire edifice, as was made clear to Innocent III in his dream showing St. Francis holding up Lateran. The crisis of faith (Puritanism, or a western version of false soteriology) centring on a denial of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, in Italy and southern France was acute. It involved a heresy whose immediate consequences in the moral order were disastrous and according to St. Bonaventure inhuman: the radical denial of the nature of matrimony and the identification of blessedness with self-indulgence of the ego. It was already clear to the Popes that the mind-set fueling this crisis was radically anti-clerical, thriving on the publicity given to clerical scandals and clerical materialism.

That mind-set at its root was anti-Marian, more exactly specifically anti-Marian mediation. The contrast is nowhere so plainly reflected as in the confrontation of St. Bernard with Berengarius over the mystery of the Eucharist and then with Abelard over the relation of faith and reason in theology. In both instances the mysteries of faith are characterized primarily by a Marian mode because Mary is Mother of the Church, whereas denial of these mysteries turns on the rejection of this premise. The collapse of the Church threatened precisely by the failure to deal with the essential point in a practical way: the anti-Marian mentality in many places was overtaking the Marian. When St. Francis addresses the Mother of God, the fore-chosen of the Father, consecrated by him with the Son and the Holy Spirit, to be the “Full of grace”, in whom is “all Good”, he salutes her (a kind of gloss on the original Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum) as “His palace, His dwelling, His tabernacle, His vestment, His handmaid, His Mother”, this should signal to us what makes the difference between a house of God standing or falling down: the degree of identity or lack thereof with the Immaculate Temple of the Holy Spirit. Mary’s presence or absence in the Church and the life of her members is absolutely the Issue in every phase of the Church’s history.

According to numerous scholars the Protestant reformation would have occurred three centuries earlier leaving western Christian culture still born, had it not been for the stupendous work of two Marian saints, Dominic and Francis, in renewing the Church from within, and expanding it without via dynamic missionary work throughout the world. According to St. Bonaventure the mystery of Mary, our Mediatrix with Christ, as Christ is our Mediator with the Father, stands at the heart of Francis’ theology, spirituality and missionary zeal. The 13th century may have with a certain exaggeration been described during the neo-scholastic revival of

the last century as the greatest of centuries. But there is no doubt that the turn-about in the fortunes of the Church in the west during that century, and the almost unique golden age of theology is something more than a merely natural accomplishment. The hand of the Mother of the Church is evident here. It is she who made it possible for Francis to be perfectly conformed to Christ and so support the Church, for St. Dominic to be so effective a preacher and catechist among heretical factions. Her involvement will become even more so in subsequent events.

At the beginning of the next century, the 14th, we may note a series of interesting coincidences. Bl. John Duns Scotus launched his now famous theological explanation and defence of the Immaculate Conception, radical metaphysical basis of Mary's mediation as Mother of God-Coredemptrix and as Mother of the Church. And while he was in a sense risking his theological reputation for the sake of the Mother of God, he also was courageously witnessing the truth of the petrine primacy against the first serious challenges since the resolution of the investiture crisis two centuries earlier. Signs of the times! Opposition to the Immaculate Conception, at first theological, soon took a more subtle form, in the emergence of nominalism, both at the level of metaphysics (doubts about the possibility of creaturely cooperation in the work of redemption) and at the level of politics (doubts about the common law of Christian civilization and about the primacy of the Pope versus conciliarism during the great western schism).

This sketch, even if brief, is enough to enable us to put both the tragic success of the Protestant reformation and the relatively incomplete successes and losses of the so-called Catholic counter-reformation in Marian perspective. Without the slightest doubt Church reform was in order, because the crisis to which Our Lord referred in His conversation with St. Francis in 1206, had recurred. But the Protestant version of reform was a false version, precisely because organized around the systematic rejection of Marian mediation, and therefore of any other form of cooperation, either by the Church (hierarchical-sacramental) or by believers (good works) in the subjective redemption. Wherever protestant reformers, especially Calvinistic, succeeded in persuading a nation to abandon Marian-Catholic spirituality based on the mystery of her unique cooperation or mediation in the work of redemption, there they succeeded in detaching permanently a local Church from Rome. Where the defenders of Catholic tradition organized their efforts, in theory and in practice, around the

mystery of the Immaculate Mediatress, there they succeeded in keeping whole nations loyal or in bringing them back to the unity of faith. Not only, but in the new missions opened in Mexico and the rest of the Americas, the intervention of the Immaculate at Guadalupe in 1531 guaranteed a success far out-weighting the losses in northern Europe. The further victory at Lepanto, fruit of the intervention of Mary Immaculate in response to who knows how many Rosaries, guaranteed the external structures of Christian civilization in the west to the recent present.

If only briefly, I wish to call attention here to the providential role of Bl. John Duns Scotus in readying the theological basis of Catholic response to the challenge of the enemy, viz., the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, in conjunction with his contribution to Eucharistic theology and to the place of petrine primacy in ecclesiology. Calvinists in particular recognized the significance of this contribution in their violent efforts either to exterminate his memory in England or vilify his scholarly reputation beyond redemption, as in the caricature of his name still heard wherever English is spoken, a “dunce” and a “dunce’s cap”, only to be matched by the parody on the words of consecration of the host: “hocus-pocus”, and the epithet of derision for traitorous Catholics, viz., “papist”, or “papalotrist”. There are indeed questions other than the Marian involved in the split of western Christianity during the 16th century, but the controlling issue, particularly in relation to ecclesiology and to the theology of grace and justification, is the Marian. Resolve that and the reformation will be over.

No serious student will contest the facts recounted here. It is otherwise with the “reconstruction” of the facts along the lines of a history of the Church articulated on a Marian axis. Yet there is one curious fact about what appears to date to be in fact the lasting success of the Protestant reform and the lasting influence it continues to exert within the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox churches. That success in great part is due to the rapid and unanticipated defection of England from Rome in 1534 to become in adopting the most virulently anti-Marian, iconoclastic and most systematic (speculatively and institutionally) version of Protestantism, the Calvinist, the prime historical agent of a world-wide impact of the Reform. Cardinal Newman rightly perceived the anti-Marian character of that impact as the radical solvent of faith in the divinity of Mary’s Son, in His redemptive sacrifice, and hence the prime instrument for what that great Cardinal in his Biglietto Address on being notified of his elevation to the

Cardinalate (1879) called the greatest success of Satan ever: the secularisation of western Christendom. That “success”, consisting in the formal repudiation of the dogmatic principle as the basis of western culture was obtained, not so much by direct promotion of a repudiation of the dogmatic principle as by a subtle manipulation of a pragmatic mind-set prioritising the socially relevant as the essence of sanctity. The distance from this to a humanly speaking irreversible, radical secularisation and the legitimacy of a dogma-free virtue, that is to say, ethics without the faith of Mary Immaculate in the Incarnation and Redemption, and without her mediation, is a very short and easy step. After all dogma, the rosary are so useless, and philanthropy so relevant. This tragedy, the good Cardinal remarked, will only be reversed by a miracle, one he could not describe exactly, but one he was sure would be coming. We may add one which will be Marian in mode.

On the eve of the reformation no other country of the Catholic west was in such good condition, spiritually and culturally, as Mary’s Dowry (cf. E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, New Haven 1992). How was so radical a change accomplished as it were “over-night”? The answer is: the master-liar, the enemy of the Woman who owned England, cleverly manipulated, and those manipulated let themselves be manipulated because they did not consult their true “Advocate and Queen”. At the crucial moment, 1534, the moment the English Bishops (except for St. John Fisher, like St. Thomas a Becket nearly four centuries earlier, who suffered martyrdom for his refusal to participate in the tragic event fatally compromising the future of the Church and Catholicism in England) signed an “agreed statement” for the sake of peace, three examples of an attempt to live the faith in a non-Marian or minimally Marian way: in Cardinal Wolsey, King Henry VIII and Archbishop Cramner, coalesced to permit, both in the religious and in the civil spheres, the complete reversal of that original entrustment of England to Mary.

At the risk of oversimplification (factual documentation can easily be found in any good history of the English reformation) such a non-Marian life of faith manifested itself under four attempts at integrating God and mammon: a greedy faith (in the Cardinal Chancellor Wolsey); a lusty faith (in King Henry VIII, who for the sake of a woman separated England from the Pope and rationalized divorce); a heretical faith (in Archbishop Cramner, secretly a Lutheran who believed in a future without the Mediatress of all graces); and finally a political faith (in the bench of

Bishops who trusted more in diplomacy than the Rosary). In one way or another each one of these very talented actors in the play justified his role by an appeal to practicality, the need of the moment. And in the midst of all this “utilitarianism” can be clearly discerned “the little hiss that only comes from hell.” And so piety in England no longer enjoyed the Virgin as “defender or advocate of the faith”, but only a politician, symbol of a philosophy of life without Mary. Do we not also discern a certain parallel with the pragmatism rampant in all sectors of the Church today?

This is how England was successfully transformed from being Mary’s dowry to being a major instrument for the Prince of this world in its secularisation, particularly with the founding and promotion of modern freemasonry in 1717, whose potential for confrontation with the Woman was realized actively in a new, more intense key in 1917. The great 19th century English Cardinal and scholar, Newman, in his aforementioned Biglietto Address tells us that during his lifetime he witnessed just this: the final consummation of this process of secularisation begun with the capitulation of the bishops to the politicians. Newman tells us that in externals at least, at his birth in 1801, England was still a Christian nation (even if not a Marian one), observing a great many of the pre-reformation conventions of a Christian society. At the time of his reception of the red hat in Rome (1879) all this had disappeared. Such are the consequences of attempting to be Christian without being fully Marian. To be Christ-like, one must first be Mary-like (Pope Paul VI, at Bonaria-Cagliari, 1970).

The Woman has made this clear, here in Fatima, how the confrontation would end with or without her, and what both she and her Son expected of the Church and of all believers: not a faith conditioned by academic fashion, by greed, by lust, by political security, by personal preference, but a faith matching the Fiat of the Virgin: at Nazareth, on Calvary, in the Church. Such a faith is a faith lived in the spirit of prayer and penance-reparation, that is, in a coredemptive spirit. Satan’s success rested neither on superior power, nor on clever conspiracy, but on convincing key players at the right moment so to govern as to make in theory and then in practice the rejection of such a coredemptive spirit, rooted in the rejection of the mystery of the Immaculate Coredemptrix, the operative factor for advancement in the cultural, social-political and even religious dimensions of human existence.

The immediate consequences of this diabolical success, the radical repudiation of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception in the western land most responsible for the cultivation of this mystery in the rest of western Europe, especially France, were not long in appearing in England: stripping of the altars and icons, or violent repudiation of the Mass and Real Presence by transubstantiation and profound hatred of the Vicar of Christ as the harlot and beast of the Apocalypse, the three mysteries most defended by Scotus. Newman in his *Apologia pro vita sua* tells us that without subscription to these three points, no one can be a complete Protestant, and if one retains from youth a profound devotion to the Immaculate, as he did, he must end within the Catholic Church. Let no one be so foolish as to imagine history cannot repeat itself, if Mary is not acknowledged for what she truly is in God's sight: the Immaculate Coredemptrix. She is the only one who can salvage the situation, and make all the other useful programs fruitful. And it should not require many degrees in theology to realize that if the Church does not want her to help her way, she may not help.

Superficially, apart from the foregoing, the 17th and 18th centuries might seem to represent a kind of stand-off in the battle between the Woman and the Serpent for the heart of the western world. Reality in these centuries, however, is quite different. Beneath the surface on both sides preparations were being made for another confrontation, at first restrained, then violent in the French revolution and aftermath continuing to our days.

Here are some of the pointers to this jockeying for position. The loss of England, Mary's dowry, to the Church: from being one of the most Marian of lands England became not only one of the most anti-Marian, but perhaps the most effective agent rendering the Calvinist organized Protestantism a permanent feature of large segments of the west, often considered in the past as the immediate preparation of radical socialism. On the other hand the revival of the Church in Spain and France, in particular the Marian mysticism and theology throughout Spain and the Spanish speaking world (Latin America and the Philippines) and in the French school of spirituality culminating in the Marian apostolate of St. Louis Grignon de Montfort, in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries served the cause of the Immaculate qua Immaculate in the same way as England in the 12th and 13th and 14th centuries served that very same cause.

Paradoxically, however, the Roman inquisition during the first half of the 17th century imprisoned Franciscans for preaching the Immaculate Conception. Later in that century the anti-Marianism of Adam von Widenfeld, an older German Catholic contemporary of St. Louis, taken up by L. A. Muratori, effectively rebutted by St. Alphonsus and his *Glories of Mary*, and not to be taken up again publicly within the Church until after Vatican II, revealed a subtle, but no less active presence of these currents of Marian minimalism within the Church after Trent. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the success of St. Alphonsus among the masses of Catholics throughout the world and reflected in the 20th century movement of Cardinal Mercier to promote a solemn definition of the universal mediation of Mary Immaculate (including the coredemption), within Church governing circles there remained a hidden presence of Marian minimalism. Witness the recently revealed proscription of the term “Coredempstress” by the Holy Office in 1747, analogous to the 17th century proscription of the Immaculate Conception. That continued presence contributed not a little to the impotence of the Church in preventing or recouping losses consequent on the Protestant reform, and more significantly effectively countering new secular ideologies taking the place and exercising the influence of Christian metaphysics in the minds and hearts of the faithful, indeed of large numbers of the Catholic clergy. All this severely weakened the Church on the eve of the French Revolution and favoured the complete secularisation of European (and North American) culture. Newman is an excellent witness to all this. In the wake of the relative success of the neo-scholastic revival after the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception memory of this situation has faded almost to the point of oblivion. This is a reminder that the Immaculate is not merely one of many objects of theological reflection, she is after Her Son the teacher of our theology, without whose active involvement enthusiastically seconded by her students Catholic theology literally dies.

The explosion that was the French Revolution, preceded by the growth of freemasonry (founded 1717 in England) in France and rise of the “enlightenment”, and its codification by Napoleon as the new common law of the entire world, meant not merely the fall of an ancient political regime, grown decrepit, but the installation of a culture and civilization based, not on the mysteries of faith as celebrated through the faith of Mary in the Church, but on a thorough-going secular regime in all the dimensions of human life. Catholicism was reduced to the level of a purely private, individual option. Heroic efforts to restore the Church were made after the

end of the Napoleonic era. Only after our Lady's direct intervention at Rue de Bac and then at LaSalette was the courage found to do the only thing that could reverse the fortunes of the Church after 1815: solemnly define the Immaculate Conception, a move followed by the apparitions at Lourdes and elsewhere, and then despite the loss of the Papal States, was followed by a marvellous renewal of the Church in all aspects of its existence until the recent crisis began. Some have called this the Marian era par excellence.

The serpent, however, did not disappear entirely. In the rise of modernism, then the opposition to the Marian titles of Mediatrix of all grace and Coredemptrix, especially the latter, the "little hiss" could still be heard. This brings us to the importance of the theme discussed in so many conferences during this symposium: the mystery of the Coredemption. On the eve of Vatican II and since, willy-nilly, it was and has remained the issue of theology. It remains only to suggest why of all the aspects of Marian mediation, this one should during this particular crisis become the central one.

In all this the principle shaping the course of history, from Adam to the final blast of Gabriel's trumpet, laid down by the Seraphic Doctor, viz., the conflict between Christ and the anti-Christ, between the Church and the anti-Church or synagogue (in the patristic, allegorical sense of brood of the viper – St. John Baptist: Mt 3: 14) is shown to have, as the Seraphic Doctor teaches throughout his writings, a Marian or anti-Marian mode. Newman saw this most clearly [cf. "The Glories of Mary for the Sake of Her Son", in *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, London 1899, pp. 342-359, here 348]. The Arian-Nestorian denial of the divinity of the Son of Man, viz., the Son of Mary and so of Adam, "consubstantial" with us in time, as in eternity "consubstantial" with the Father (cf. Leo the Great, Letter 31), could only be resolved by confessing the Theotokos, which is exactly what happened at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Failure to do this could only lead to a victory of the Prince of this world. The same thing is true at the time of the Reformation and in its immediate aftermath: denial of the title Immaculate Mediatrix ensured defeat of the Church.

Conversely, its enthusiastic and practical affirmation led to the victory and prosperity of the Church. Let us not be ashamed to say: victory. For in this struggle success is very much a sharing in the victory of Christ over Satan on Calvary. That participation is via the mediation of Mary, or it is NOT! What we must further observe here is this: at Trent the

Immaculate Conception was not denied and its possibility expressly allowed. But it was not affirmed solemnly. Only when this was done three centuries later did some of the finest fruits of the Catholic reformation mature. In a word Trent's conciliar teaching without its ultimate completion in a solemn definition, was not sufficient to realize the full blessings of genuine reform so accurately sketched by this Council.

The same thing happened at Vatican II: Marian mediation, including the coredemption, logical doctrinal corollary of the Immaculate Conception, was not only not denied, but positively allowed, indeed set forth in a kind of paraphrase. Thus, in one of the introductory paragraphs of chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*, n. 53, Mary is described as *intuitu meritorum Filii sui sublimiori modo redempta*. The reference here to the Immaculate Conception is perfectly obvious. There immediately follows a reference to the joint predestination of Christ and Mary Immaculate: *arcta et indissolubili vinculo unita*, in view of her being *Genitrix Dei Filii*, *ideoque praedilecta filia Patris necnon sacrarium Spiritus Sancti*, by which grace she is set incomparably above all other creatures, heavenly as well as earthly. And then there follows a veiled, but clear reference to the coredemption: notwithstanding her exalted, incomparable state, she is nonetheless conjoined to the race of Adam, in the words of Augustine cited by the Council, *plane mater membrorum (Christi)...quia cooperata est caritate ut fideles in Ecclesia nasceretur, quia illius Capitis membra sunt*. Therefore, because she cooperated in the "objective" redemption on Calvary, Mary is rightly regarded as *supereminens prorsusque singulare membrum Ecclesiae*, viz., Maternal Mediatrix of all graces. That this is not a merely personal interpretation is clear from the repeated reference to the joint predestination of Jesus and Mary in n. 61: *Beata Virgo ab aeterno una cum Verbi divini incarnatione tamquam Mater Dei praedestinata*, followed by a brief, but concrete description of her active part in the consummation of the sacrifice of the Cross, or the "objective redemption": *Filioque suo in cruce morienti compatiens, operi Salvatoris singulari prorsus modo cooperata est...* Nonetheless, there is a hesitation on what I maintain has been for nearly a century the theological issue of our time: the doctrine of coredemption, in view of which on the eve of Vatican II theologians were divided into maximalists (those in favor, a majority) and minimalists (those who insisted the doctrine was inopportune). Vatican II left the question open, like Trent with the Immaculate Conception, teaching the mystery of coredemption, but not dotting the "i's" and crossing the "t's". Is this why the crisis continues, and why the hoped for fruits of the Council have not

been realized, above all the resolution of the ecumenical question (division among the baptized) and the problem of a genuine, and radical renewal of theology (confusion, even in the Roman schools)?

The Coredemptive Nature of the Marian Issue in the Church: the Ratio Facti

This brief historical review has sought to make clear why the Marian issue in the Church today, speculatively and practically (truth and opportuneness of the question), is that of the coredemption. Paraphrasing Newman in his famous discourse on the glories of Mary for the sake of her Son (christo-typology of the highest kind), we may say: failure to confess the coredemption concludes rapidly in violent denial and repudiation of the Redeemer and redemption, of the Mass and of the Church, of heaven in favour of hell and the gulag. In this anti-marianism the failure to glorify God and give thanks (cf. Rom 1: 18-32) in an expressly Marian mode (cf. the Magnificat, Lk 1: 46-55), because these are in principle regarded as anti-secular and so anti-human, transforms the world almost over-night into an anti-chamber of hell, a kind of universal gulag.

Let me state immediately why I believe this to be so. The prime principle of modern secularism is not its pretended religious neutrality. Rather, its “neutrality” consists in the formal, deliberate, a priori repudiation (in principle, therefore, and not merely in fact) of the absolute primacy of Jesus, the Word Incarnate, and Mary Immaculate – uno eodemque decreto (Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, *Lumen Gentium*, ch. 8, nn. 53, 61) in respect to all creation, and the same in respect to that same mystery as basis for the redemption of a fallen world, without which redemption no other created or human value can be other than vanity (*Ecclesiastes: vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas*: what *Proverbs* 8 and *Ecclesiasticus* 24 affirm positively concerning the joint wisdom of Jesus and Mary, *Ecclesiastes* affirms negatively).. Satan’s prime agent (but not sole agent) for the effective incorporation of this mind-set everywhere is freemasonry: not in the sense everyone or even a majority or even a large minority are to be inducted into the lodge, but in the sense that once this is legitimated in all nations, then the atmosphere of those lands becomes that of hell, because it is no longer a Marian atmosphere (Hopkins). Once this occurs, the Church and all believers are on the defensive and in perpetual retreat toward permanent defeat. That is the ratio of the present crisis. This powerful mind-set is what is known as secularism. This secularism,

the temporary triumph of the Prince of this world, can only be consolidated to the degree the maternal mediation of the Virgin Mother in the Church is rendered ineffectual and all memory of it utterly erased from the consciousness of the Church. That means in terms of the contemporary situation to persuade Catholics at every level to forget, or at least downplay the mystery of the Immaculate Coredemptrix, what this means here and now: theoretically in terms of a solemn definition, practically in terms of total consecration to the Immaculate Heart.

There is obviously only one remedy. Either solemnly confess the Theotokos is Coredemptrix for the same reason she is virginal Mother of God, because the Immaculate, or get ready for total enslavement to sin. Secularism: the systematic repudiation of the dogma of the Redemption needed above all because of the disaster of original sin, like the systematic denial of the divinity of the Word Incarnate, can only be overcome by publicly and solemnly affirming the Theotokos to be Coredemptrix, both titles based on her being the Immaculate Conception, the Woman preserved from all taint of original sin and so able to take effective action to overcome it and its effects. Mary is the first believer, because perfect believer, perfect because Virgin of Virgins or Immaculate, one who offers not only her Child, but herself with Him for the life of the world. Only with such virginal faith centred on the Eucharist can all other problems of the Church be resolved; without it ecumenical dialogue and theological renewal will produce only more division and worse intellectual chaos. The first priority of the Church must be Mary Immaculate-Coredemptrix, and that alone. All other priorities must turn about her.

Total enslavement to sin as a consequence of refusing to affirm the Immaculate Coredemptrix (Immaculate to be Coredemptrix – Bl. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*) is what makes it impossible to resolve the twin problems of division and intellectual chaos in the Church. Or somewhat differently, but essentially the same thought: without Marian orthopraxis, viz., *sine Maria nihil de Jesu*, or *De Maria numquam satis*, or again with St. Bonaventure: *Mariae nemo nimis potest esse devotus* (III Sent., d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1, ad 4: no one can be too devout in relation to Mary). Recently it has been affirmed, even in semi-official organs of the Vatican, that the ecumenical question has absolute priority over all others in the Church today. It has been affirmed for some 8 years in what is claimed to be an official “position-paper” of the Vatican, that the coredemption cannot be considered as a possible subject of dogmatic definition, until it is shown (if

possible) to be in accord with the directions taken by the new “post-conciliar” theology (whatever these are). And within the last year a high official of the Vatican has gone so far as to declare in a public interview that the title Coredemptrix is un-redeemably equivocal, that even the humble effort to show its theological relevance, let alone promote its dogmatic definition, is counter-productive and a disservice downright harmful to the Church, an obstacle to ecumenism and a retreat into a theological superficiality.

Now I shall be equally frank. The currently oft heard arguments: the title coredemptrix obscures that of Redeemer, and explanations to justify this exercises in word manipulation, should logically induces their proponents to say the same of the divine maternity: Mother of God obscures Son of God, exactly as Nestorius and company argued a millennium and half ago. Theological logic demands just the opposite conclusion: Mother-Coredemptrix does not obscure the unique role of the Redeemer in the work of redemption, but reveals it for the same reason Theotokos reveals, not obscures, the divine filiation of her Son. This logic is rooted in the fact that Christology and soteriology are inseparably linked, and alike, simultaneously, are signed by the same Marian coefficient, the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, at the moment of the Incarnation revealed in the virginal Maternity, at the consummation of the work of Redemption in the mystery of the Coredemption. An affirmation of the exclusive *solus* at either point necessarily requires it at the other. Denial of the coredemption inevitably leads to denial of the divine Maternity, and denial of either, as Newman so clearly saw, stands behind total indifference to the Incarnate Redeemer and His great work, at its commencement, and in its consummation, in Himself and in His body, the Church. Such was the fruit of the initial Protestant excluding of the mediation of Mary from soteriology after three centuries (1517-1847). Or in the title of *Lumen Gentium*, ch. 8, the presence of the Virgin Mary in the mystery of Christ and of the Church, and so in theology, postulates just this logic and just this fruit of its rejection.

Division among Christians and among Christian communities, and theological chaos, then, are the consequence of formal repudiation of the spiritual maternity and maternal mediation of Mary in the Incarnation and at the consummation of the Redemption on Calvary, therefore at the heart of the Church in the sacramental order culminating in the Eucharist and among all potential members of the Church. This sin (if not formal, then at

least material – the consequences are the same a parte rei) is the root cause of the division and of the chaos. Only by its pardon with consequent healing can anything practical be done about the other two. Division and theological chaos are bad, are indeed key issues. Unfortunately, Mary has come to be regarded by large numbers of believers and non-believers as a part of these problems in the sense that she constitutes a block to the first and an embarrassment to the second. So to regard her is to buy into the major premise guaranteeing the triumph of the serpent's warped Weltanschauung. Mary is not a "part of the problem", best and most quickly resolved by minimizing the Coredemption. She is the solution. She is the Mother of Unity and the Mistress of Theology: for ecumenism not the obstacle and for theology not merely one of many and lesser parts. The priority of the Marian issue is absolute, that of the other two relative to the Marian. These will be solved overnight, as it were, if everyone would absolutely and publicly confess the Immaculate Mediatrix: Mother of God and Coredemptrix, glorious Queen of heaven and earth (and I mean not honorary, but real: Omnipotentia supplex, to which the last great miracle of Fatima is witness).

No doubt a good many current practitioners of the theological trade and ecumenists would strongly disagree with this position and perspective. Nonetheless, "agreed statements" resting on consensus building rather than truth, however much they promise a realization of the long-desired oikumene just beyond the horizon, never reach that horizon. The illusion is fostered by describing religious pluralism and dogmatic indifferentism as diversity within unity, especially in reference to the maternal mediation of Mary Immaculate and a right to "de-dogmatize" the Immaculate Conception and Assumption, and by describing secular progress and a bene esse consisting in this-worldly prosperity as "eschatological fulfilment" or salvation.

But none of this will change a very simple fact (et contra factum non datur argumentum): the crisis, including above all its ecumenical and theological dimensions, will not only continue, but will worsen, until the Church confesses publicly the absolute priority of the cause of Mary Coredemptrix. This is, to adapt a famous Lutheran axiom, the articulus stantis aut cadentis Ecclesiae. Only thus can the root of secularism be exorcised and the new evangelization of the west, and the renewed civilization of love be genuinely, successfully initiated. In the meantime it is quite possible that the centre of gravity of Christianity will shift to those

parts of the world where the Catholic Church is enthusiastically promoting the Immaculate Coredemptrix: like India, the Philippines, Mexico, etc, just as a millennium ago the centre of gravity passed from the Near East-North Africa to western Europe.

There is indeed a sense in which Marian maximalism is an abuse, where it denotes an inept concept of what is most perfect in this work of God. Here the term denotes, to employ the terminology of Scotus, not a genuine, objectively valid quality capable of various grades of perfection or intensity of realization, a quantum transcendently, but a material quantum: predicamental, or mathematically. It is the latter, not the former which leads to such absurdities as confusion of the incomparably and normatively supreme realization of redemption in Mary Immaculate as the most perfect created person with the idea of a goddess. In this regard St. Bonaventure tells us Mary, who is full of Truth [her Son, the way, the truth and the life], has no need of our falsehoods: ...non oportet novos honores configere ad honorem Virginis, quae non indiget nostro mendacio, quae tantum plena est veritate (III Sent., d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2, ad 3). The problem here (in a discussion of the Immaculate Conception, which Bonaventure admitted might be true, but personally did not hold, partly because some theological defenders of the privilege erroneously defined it – cf. the classic 1960 study of J.-F. Bonnefoy, *Jean Duns Scot et l’Immaculée Conception*) is not Mary’s incomparable excellence as the Immaculate, but either 1) our inability to grasp it and consequently mis-formulate it, or 2) our tendency either to misconstrue her as a goddess equal to her Son or to treat her merely as another woman equal to us, or perhaps not even as good as us. To say that she is subordinate to her Son, even if He was subject to her as His Mother, does not mean that her position in the Church as “Super-eminent Member (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 53) is conditioned by equality with us, so making her incapable of being Immaculate Coredemptrix.

Therefore, it is not at all true that we can ever conceive mentally, or much less effectively realize the maximal praise due the Mother of God from the Church on objective grounds, because she is the incomparable Immaculate, whom God alone can fully grasp (cf. Bl. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*). Hence, we can never match the praise her own Son bestows on His Mother. That praise reflects the mystery of the virginal Maternity summarized by the Seraphic Doctor thus: non decebat Virginem habere Filium nisi Deum, nec Deum habere Matrem nisi Virginem (*Collationes in septem Donis Spiritus Sancti*, c. 6, n. 4: it was not fitting that the Virgin

should have a Son unless God, nor God have a Mother unless the Virgin). This explains why Bonaventure also says (in the same distinction where he criticizes an abusive maximalizing: *Mariae nemo nimis potest esse devotus* (III Sent., d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 4, ad 4), why Scotus insists (III Sent., d. 3, q. 1, n. 10) that the surpassing excellence of the mystery of Mary requires absolutely ascribing to her whatever is objectively more excellent (the quasi-infinite of St. Thomas in describing the maximal perfection of the divine Maternity). St. Francis tells us why he surrounded with indescribable praises the Mother of God who made the Lord of majesty our brother (cf. St. Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior*, 3, 1; 7, 1; 9, 3; II Celano 198). Here is St. Francis himself speaking: *non est tibi similis nata in mundo in mulieribus* (Antiphon, *Officium Passionis*: there is none like you born in the world among women). The happy mean between abusive maximizing and minimizing of Mary might better be stated thus: minimizing is always wrong, false maximizing is always wrong, but maximizing after the fashion of St. Francis and Bl. John Duns Scotus is to be commended.

The Church with every believer must outdo herself in praising Mary with Christ. Not to do so is to begin to fall into ruin. What the presentations here have made clear is that the mystery of the coredemption belongs to that order of objective perfections constituting the incomparable (St. Francis), quasi-infinite (St. Thomas) beauty of Mary Immaculate. Not to confess this at a time when the Church appears paralysed by the momentary triumph of secularism to my way of thinking is the height of foolishness. And the profoundly learned overviews of the doctrinal issue presented by highly qualified prelates and theologians in this symposium make it clear beyond any doubt, that acknowledging the Immaculate Virgin as the Mother Coredemptrix and Mediatrix of all graces is not an exercise in pious fantasy, but is based on revealed fact: this is an integral part of that maximal perfection-purity willed by the Father for the Mother of his Son and of the Church redeemed in His blood, freed precisely via the preservative redemption of that Mother.

The Sense of the Primary Questions concerning Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate

The learned speakers at this symposium have given us an excellent overview of the doctrine of coredemption across the centuries, from the foundation of the Church, and of the role this doctrine has played in speculative and practical Mariology and theology. Even if this mystery is not a solemnly defined dogma, its truth as a component of the deposit of

faith, to be assented to with firm faith by every believer, is beyond question: if not an article of faith *modo definitivo*, it surely is that of a truth definitive *tenenda* (Cf. recent revision of Canon 1364 of the Code of Canon Law), and so in the true sense is *proxima fidei*, or definable. It is, therefore, a startling oddity that for nearly half a century, despite solemn counsels from the highest ecclesiastical authority about never garnishing truths of faith for the sake of ecumenical dialogue (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 67), Marian truths, this one in particular, have been down-played or silenced.

Of a mystery so central both to the birth of the Saviour and to the consummation of His mission on Calvary and to its continuance in the Church as is the maternal mediation of the Virgin Mother there can hardly be a long-term reason justifying silence. We must say here what Sts. Peter and John replied to the rulers of the Jews who ordered them to be silent about “that man, the son of Mary”: “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, decide for yourselves. For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4: 19-20). What we have heard both of the birth and of the death and resurrection cannot be proclaimed apart from Mary. The ultimate sign, on earth and in the heavens of our Saviour and salvation is the Virgin Mother (cf. Is. 7: 14).

But it is even more than strange to encounter theologians, even in high places in the Church, 1) who cast doubt not only on the fitting character of a solemn definition of this mystery, but on the validity both of the title and of the doctrine that title has connoted for over half a millennium, or 2) who insinuate, if not expressly affirm, that the content either a) was not easily recognizable under earlier titles, viz., from apostolic times, such as the Eve-Mary typology, or b) that the distinction “objective-subjective redemption” was unknown before Scheeben’s use of it in the 19th century. Indeed, it was already in use (c. 1640) by the 17th century Neapolitan Scotist, Fr. Angelo Vulpes (golden age of Spanish and post-tridentine Mariology). His usage is but an adaptation of an earlier one found in the 13th century (1257) *Breviloquium* (p. IV, c. 10) of St. Bonaventure (and so already very traditional, for Bonaventure is the quintessence of the theologian faithfully echoing the traditions of the Fathers): *redemptio quoad sufficientiam* and *redemptio quoad efficientiam*.

The fact is: even the most rigid Marian minimalists no longer dare to assert in so many words that the coredemption is false. The most they attempt is to question the validity of the title for this doctrine and the

precision of its formulation in terms of objective-subjective redemption, or a unique participation of the Virgin Mother, because Immaculate, both in the acquisition of redemptive merit and founding of the economy of salvation through the sacrifice of the Cross, and in the distribution of those merits in and through the Church, such that the second is a consequence of the first, and on the second depends directly the correct and fruitful functioning of all other forms of mediation in the Church: sacramental-institutional as well as charismatic, those in the Church in pilgrimage and those in the communion of saints. In a word the mystery of Mary Mediatrix makes possible the functioning of the Church as virgin-mother who integrally preserves her faith (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, c. 8, n. 64) and identifies her Fiat with that of the Immaculate (cf. Eph 5: 27), above all in the celebration of Holy Mass: *Communicantes et memoriam venerantes, in primis, beatae Virginis et Genetricis Domini nostri Jesu Christi* (and only thus all the others, beginning with St. Joseph, key to the epiclesis or invocation of the Holy Spirit); and therefore key to the eucharistic fruit of her womb: *hostiam puram, sanctam, immaculatam, panem sanctam vitae aeternae, et calicem salutis perpetuae* (profound ancient Christian Latin mutilated in most current English translations; the subsequent references to Abel, Abraham and Melchisedech are to types of Jesus as victim, to Mary as Coredemptrix offering herself with her Isaac, first believer making possible our active participation in His sacrifice, and to Jesus as High Priest-Redeemer offering himself as Victim).

The most commonly heard “speculative” objection to the coredemption (and even occasionally today) was this: one cannot be both redeemed and redeeming at the same time. The answer has long since been given in the definition of the Immaculate Conception: one redeemed liberatively in no way can be active in the acquisition of salvific grace; one redeemed preservatively, like the Immaculate, cannot merit her own grace of salvation, but she can actively cooperate in the deliverance of all others, both as Theotokos and as Coredemptrix. More common today is the objection that the title Coredemptrix is equivocal, that it confuses two distinct personal roles, that of the Redeemer with that of His co-operators, and so such titles as Lamb, Saviour, Redeemer, Mediator should be reserved only to Him to avoid confusion. The point seems very plausible, until we pause to reflect on the logical consequences of its major premise: we should not refer to parents as procreators, but only as breeders, and still less to a mere creature baptized as a sharer in the divine nature, much less one creature as Mother of God. What is true is that personhood as such, above

all divine personhood, cannot be participated. What makes me, me, is incommunicable. But my personal role, even though it distinctively reflects me, can be shared by another without in any way necessarily downgrading the sufficiency of mission. So even more in the case of titles for Christ's various roles: Master, Priest, King and Lord. Indeed, from ancient times Mary is called the Ewe-Lamb (Melito of Sardis, cited in the liturgy of the Sacred Triduum), Salvatrix, Mediatrix, Redemptrix, Queen, and indeed Lady. Co-redemptrix in such a tradition can hardly be faulted as "equivocal" beyond repair. Use of such titles to indicate joint participation in a single work, as in the case of Jesus and Mary, predestined *in eodemque decreto*, is perfectly legitimate, so long as use of the same root title clarifies precisely the distinction within the unity decreed by the Father. This is exactly what titles such as Mother, Mediatrix, Coredemptrix, Advocate do.

We may calmly affirm: there is no question about the truth or exactitude of the Coredemption at the present time. The only question concerns the appropriateness of its solemn definition and of the readying of those matters, ordinarily constituting the proximate preparation for the implementation of a decision of the entire Church to go forward with what is the will of her Saviour: in the language of Fatima, the triumph of the Immaculate Heart in the Church and in the world.

Is it opportune? Any mystery of faith, by that very fact, is a fit subject for definition, whenever opportune. Our conferences have shown from every key point of view that what is called the coredemption in the proper sense is true, is the precise definition of what Vatican II confesses to be the unique (*viz.*, incomparable, not duplicable) participation of the one Mother of God in the redemptive work of Her first-Born. In this sense dogmatic definition of this mystery *definitivo modo* is remotely opportune.

But when we consider the history, especially of western Christianity, and the hopes of more recently christianised lands, or those rapidly becoming Christian, then that definition is not merely remotely, but proximately opportune. Only the exact moment and the mode of definition has yet to be determined. At the very least it would seem to me that our Lord desires this definition to be as solemn as possible.

My practical suggestion in conclusion of this conference concerns not these questions (ultimately the responsibility not of theologians, but of

the Holy Father and Bishops, to whom such decisions have been entrusted by the Lord), but something prior: the need to move the discussion of Marian coredemption from the realm of mere speculation to that of the practical order, where its discussion is part of a decision taken to prepare the Church for a formal, solemn definition: to honour the Mother of the Church and to move from paralysis to effective action to resolve the crisis of faith in the Church and in the world, and so set the scene for the resolution of the ecumenical and cultural problems of our times.

From Discussion of Crisis to Resolution, or from Paralysis to Action (Dynamic Marian Advocacy)

On the basis of what I believe, on the basis of what I have heard during this Symposium in so holy and so Marian a place, and in the light of history, I would offer this suggestion for consideration as a conclusion to this Symposium. The first bears on doctrinal aspects of our Lady's "unique cooperation in the work of salvation" and it is this: That the entire Church commit itself to preparing for a definition, as her number one priority absolutely. Only thus will Christ's command to Francis "to rebuild His Church" (still valid), repeated to Sr. Lucy in slightly different form, viz., that all must work for the triumph of Immaculate Heart in the Church, that this triumph is the condition for all the blessings promised, be fulfilled. This in fact corresponds exactly to St. Paul, Eph. 5, 27: Christ gave His life for Church that she might be *sine macula et sine ruga*, that is, a reflection and extension of His Virgin Mother, the Immaculate Conception.

I would also suggest that in any discussion of this suggestion attention be given to the disciplinary or practical aspects of ecclesial life resting on the mystery defined. The point is this: that the mystery of Marian coredemption be seen as the basis for living total consecration of the Church and of every soul to the Immaculate Heart, where consecration to the Immaculate Heart means sharing in and basing one's life on the compassion of the Sorrowful Mother at the foot of the Cross and by the side of the Altar. I want to stress the word living. The late Holy Father John Paul II has consecrated the Church and all peoples to the Immaculate according to her desires. He has done his part in this, but it remains for the rest of the Church to implement this consecration in daily life: not only of individuals, but of the entire Christian community. Implementation of this consecration in daily life on the basis of the coredemptive mystery is the only adequate grounds for preparing the Church to be what Christ wants it

to be on His second, glorious, triumphant coming to judge the living and the dead, to royally reclaim His own (cf. Hopkins, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, last stanza). A solemn definition of the Coredemption is the final guarantee that this is not a pious practice occasioned by a private revelation, but something rooted in and postulated by public revelation itself. It would, moreover, be a solemn, public expression, in the most exact of terms what the Spirit and the Bride and all who hear in faith have even since Pentecost cried out: “Come; Lord Jesus” And as the cry goes forth, even more solemnly, ever more publicly, so will the indefectible and infallible reply be heard: “I come and I come quickly” (cf. Apoc. 22: 16-21).

I would further suggest that the most effective way to begin this preparation would be the establishment (after the example of Bl. Pius IX, and after consultation with the bishops of the world) of a pontifical commission to prepare the way for a solemn definition.

Like all such definitions its purpose will be at once doxological and didactic or doctrinal. But in the present circumstances of the Church it will have positive and fruitful bearing on the ecumenical, theological and evangelical or missionary issues. Such a solemn proclamation of the mystery of Mary Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate cannot but spark a genuine renewal of the house, of the place, of the tabernacle, of the vestment, of the handmaid which St. Francis saw so clearly the Church must be for her Saviour and Founder and Bridegroom, in order that she might be the virgin-mother of the rest of His brethren. Only thus can the Church move from a state of critical paralysis to authentic growth, from a condition of advancing crisis to standing strong amidst the storms (cf. Mt 7: 24-27), of showing above all to the Saviour that we believe in the triumph of the Immaculate Heart, in her presence or absence in our midst as the *articulus stantis et cadentis Ecclesiae*. Implementation of this proposal would do for Vatican II what the dogmatic definition of Bl. Pius IX in 1854 did for Trent, with immense blessings for the Church throughout the world, this in “hoping against hope” (cf. Rom 4: 13-23; Gal 3: 7-4:7; Heb 11: 8-13; Jn 8: 31-59) , like Abraham, our father in faith and type of the Virgin Coredemptrix, both on Calvary and in the celebration of the Eucharist (cf. Canon I or Roman Canon of Mass).

Let us conclude some reflections inspired by a poem of Fr. G. M. Hopkins, written only a few decades after the discovery and publication (1842) of the lost manuscript of St. Louis de Montfort’s *True Devotion* and

after the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. Though a poem it is a powerful, theologically accurate and spiritually moving affirmation of the mystery of the Immaculate Mediatrix in the Church.

[“Again, look overhead how air is azured; O how! Nay do but stand where you can lift your hand skywards: rich it laps round your four fingergaps. Yet such a sapphire-shot, charged, steeped sky will not stain light. Yea, mark you this: it does no prejudice. The glass-blue days are those when every colour glows, each shape and shadow shows. Blue be it: this blue heaven the seven or seven times seven hued sunbeam will transmit perfect, not alter it. Or if there does some soft, on things aloof, aloft, bloom breathe, that one breath more earth is the fairer for. Whereas did air not make this bath of blue and slake his fire, the sun would shake, a blear and blinding ball with blackness bound, and all the thick stars round him roll flashing like flecks of coal, quartz-fret, or sparks of salt, in grimy vasty vault. So God was god of old: a mother came to mould those limbs like ours which are what must make our daystar much dearer to mankind; whose glory bare would blind or less would win man’s mind. Through her we may see him made sweeter, not made dim. And her hand leaves his light sifted to suit our sight.”]

Without compromise, yet so gently, the latter half of this poem, composed not many years after the definition of the Immaculate Conception, illustrates the link between that mystery and the maternal mediation of Mary. It makes perfectly clear what so many refuse to acknowledge, with consequences still more tragic than those we have remarked. Appropriately, Mary, spouse of Him who proceeds by spiration: literally the “breathing” of Father and Son, is called our atmosphere, which makes the difference between warmth and carbonisation, between sight and blindness, between conviction and despair. With hindsight it is not difficult to discern in these verses a fairly detailed explanation of the final miracle of the sun at Fatima on 13 Oct., 1917, a year so crucial for our present situation. Nor after pondering with Hopkins the historic and present fact of Marian mediation rooted in the great mystery of the Immaculate Conception is it difficult to hope for those ineffable blessings and that rocklike security in this vale of tears which a solemn definition of this mediation would bring.

Permit me, then, to adapt the final verses from the 1st person singular to the 1st person plural, so as to describe exactly what as soon as

possible we wish, with Jesus, to be the final and everlasting atmosphere of the Church and of the world:

“Be thou, then, O thou dear Mother, our atmosphere, our happier world in which to wend and meet no sin; above us, round us lie fronting our froward eye with sweet and scarless sky; stir in our ears, speak there of God’s love, O live air, of patience, penance, prayer; world-mothering air, air wild, wound with thee, in thee is led, fold home, fast fold thy child.”

Mary, help us! Maria Hilf! Maria, Auxilium Christianorum, quia Immaculata Conceptio.

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

MSGR. ARTHUR BURTON CALKINS

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 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)¹, 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"² and in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation³. 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"⁴, 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 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 *recapitulation* in Christ. In this radical

¹Cf. *Theotokos* 370-373; Manelli 20-37.

²Cf. *Theotokos* 373-375; Manelli 364-383.

³Cf. *Theotokos* 375-377; Manelli 394-414.

⁴Cf. *Theotokos* 139-141.

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.⁵

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 Pius XII, Paul VI, the Second Vatican Council and most notably in that of John Paul II. The Lutheran 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 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

⁵René Laurentin, *A Short Treatise of the Virgin Mary* trans. by Charles Neumann, S.M. (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press, 1991) 54, 57. Emphasis (except for “recapitulation” and “recirculatio”) my own.

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.*⁶

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”.⁷

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*⁸, Pius XII’s Apostolic Constitution of 1950, *Munificentissimus Deus*⁹, and his Encyclicals *Mystici Corporis* of 1943¹⁰ and *Ad Caeli 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

⁶Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996) 43-44. Emphasis in second part of passage my own.

⁷Cf. 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.

⁸Cf. 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.

⁹*AAS* 42 (1950) 768; Tondini 626 [OL #519].

¹⁰*AAS* 35 (1943) 247-248 [OL #383].

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, *Auspiciatus 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.¹¹

¹¹AAS 46 (1954) 634-635 [OL #705]. *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 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, acutissime 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.*

We may note that with the clarity which characterized all of his dogmatic statements the great Pontiff insists on Mary's active, but subordinate role in the work of our salvation and in doing so invokes the authority of Saint Irenaeus, the "father of Catholic dogmatic theology"¹².

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 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 Here is one of his last such references which occurs in his Letter to the Men and Women Religious of the Montfort Families for the 160th Anniversary of the Publication of *True Devotion to Mary*:

¹²Luigi Gambero, S.M., *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* trans. by Thomas Buffer (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999) 51.

¹³Flannery 416. *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: «Heva 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».*

¹⁴AAS 60 (1968) 438-439.

¹⁵Cf. 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; *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.

St Louis Marie contemplates all the mysteries, starting from the *Incarnation* which was brought about at the moment of the Annunciation. Thus, in the *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, Mary appears as “the true terrestrial paradise of the New Adam”, the “virginal and immaculate earth” of which he was formed (n. 261). She is also the *New Eve*, associated with the *New Adam* in the obedience that atones for the original disobedience of the man and the woman (cf. *ibid.*, n. 53; St Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 21, 10-22, 4). Through this obedience, the Son of God enters the world. The Cross itself is already mysteriously present at the instant of the Incarnation, at the very moment of Jesus’ conception in Mary’s womb. Indeed, the *ecce venio* in the Letter to the Hebrews (cf. 10: 5-9) is the primordial act of the Son’s obedience to the Father, an acceptance of his redeeming sacrifice already at the time “when Christ came into the world”.¹⁶

In this case there is a graceful reference which links Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort to Saint Irenaeus of Lyons while at the same time linking the reparation accomplished by the “New Adam” for the world’s salvation to that of the “New Eve”.

Let us allow Father Lino Cignelli, O.F.M., an expert who has studied the Mary-Eve parallel in Irenaeus and the early Greek Fathers at length, to offer us this penetrating analysis which may also serve as a summary of what we have found thus far in the papal magisterium:

¹⁶OR 14 gennaio 2004, p. 4 [ORE 1829:3]. [*San Luigi Maria contempla tutti i misteri a partire dall'Incarnazione che si è compiuta al momento dell'Annunciazione. Così, nel Trattato della vera devozione, Maria appare come “il vero paradiso terrestre del Nuovo Adamo”, la “terra vergine e immacolata” da cui Egli è stato plasmato (n. 261). Ella è anche la Nuova Eva, associata al Nuovo Adamo nell'obbedienza che ripara la disobbedienza originale dell'uomo e della donna (cfr ibid., 53; Sant'Ireneo, Adversus Haereses, III, 21, 10-22, 4). Per mezzo di quest'obbedienza, il Figlio di Dio entra nel mondo. La stessa Croce è già misteriosamente presente nell'istante dell'Incarnazione, al momento del concepimento di Gesù nel seno di Maria. Infatti, l'ecce venio della Lettera agli Ebrei (cfr 10,5-9) è il primordiale atto d'obbedienza del Figlio al Padre, già accettazione del suo Sacrificio redentore “quando entra nel mondo”.*]

From the human side, both the sexes contribute actively in determining the lot of the human race, but not however to the same extent. Ruin and salvation rest with the two Adams. With regard to Christ the New Adam, he can redeem because he is the God-man. As God, he guarantees the victory over the devil and communicates life, incorruptibility and immortality, which are essentially divine goods; as man, he is the primary ministerial cause of salvation and the antithesis of Adam, cause of universal ruin.

The two virgins, Eve and Mary, beyond depending on Satan and God respectively, are ordained in their actions to the two Adams, with whom they share ministerial causality. They thus carry out an intermediate and subordinate task. Subordination, however, does not mean being simple accessories. Irenaeus clearly points back to the feminine causality of the ruin and the salvation of the human race. Eve is the “cause of death” and Mary the “cause of salvation” for all mankind.¹⁷

Father Cignelli further comments that Mary’s “contribution, made in free and meritorious obedience, constitutes with that of Christ the man a single total principle of salvation. At the side of the New Adam, she is thus a ministerial and formal co-cause of the restoration of the human race.”¹⁸ Although we have not been able to review all of the texts here, this conclusion is fully justified by its use in the papal magisterium.¹⁹

II. The *Protoevangelium*

Intimately related to the concept of Mary as the “New Eve” are the words spoken by the Lord after the fall of our first parents. God metes out punishment first to the serpent (Gen. 3:14-15), then to the woman (Gen. 3:16) and finally to the man (Gen. 3:17-19). What is particularly striking, however, is that the sentence passed upon the serpent already heralds the reversal of the fall. The Lord says: “I will put enmity between you and the

¹⁷Cignelli 36-37 [my trans.].

¹⁸Cignelli 235-236 [my trans.].

¹⁹Cf. *MMC*1:179-187; *MMC*2:51-64.

woman, and between your seed and her seed; she shall crush your head, while you lie in wait for her heel” (Gen. 3:15).²⁰ This text has become famous as the *protoevangelium* (“first gospel”) and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains why:

The Christian tradition sees in this passage an announcement of the “New Adam” who because he “became obedient unto death, even death on a cross”, makes amends superabundantly for the disobedience of Adam. Furthermore many Fathers and Doctors of the Church have seen the woman announced in the “Protoevangelium” as Mary, the Mother of Christ, the “New Eve”.²¹

Arguments as to whether the text of the *protoevangelium* should be translated “he [the seed of the woman] shall crush your head” (*ipse conteret caput tuum* as in the *Neo-Vulgata*) or “she [the woman] shall crush your head” (*ipsa conteret caput tuum* as in the *Vulgata* of St. Jerome) continue to argue the matter.²² The *Neo-Vulgata* has chosen in favor of the masculine pronoun. I believe, however, that Father Stefano M. Manelli’s treatment of the matter in his *Biblical Mariology* provides an excellent overview of this issue²³ and draws conclusions fully in harmony with the consistent use made of this text in the papal magisterium:

As Pope Pius IX summarizes it, both according to tradition (the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers) and

²⁰ I have followed here the Douay-Rheims version which is a translation of St. Jerome’s Vulgate. For a discussion on whether the pronoun in the second part of the verse should be translated as he or she (favored in the Catholic tradition for well over a millennium) cf. Thomas Mary Sennott, *The Woman of Genesis* (Cambridge, MA: The Ravengate Press, 1984) 37-60. For a discussion of whether the verb should be translated as “bruise” or “crush”, cf. Sennott 61-80. For an overall treatment of the text, cf. Manelli. 20-37.

²¹CCC #411.

²²Cf. H.-L. Barth, *Ipsa conteret. Maria die Schlangenzertreterin. Philologische und theologische Überlegungen zum Protoevangelium (Gen 3, 15)* (Kirchliche Umschau 2000). This work was reviewed by Brunero Gherardini in *Divinitas* XLV:2 (2002) 224-225. Cf. also Thomas Mary Sennott, *The Woman of Genesis* (Cambridge, MA: The Ravengate Press, 1984) 37-60; *Ibid.*, “Mary Coredemptrix,” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, II (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2002) 49-63.

²³Manelli 20-37.

according to the express declarations of the papal Magisterium, the *Protoevangelium* “clearly and plainly” foretold the Redeemer, indicated the Virgin Mary as the Mother of the Redeemer, and described the common enmity of Mother and Son against the devil and their complete triumph over the poisonous serpent. One can, therefore, without hesitation affirm that the content of the *Protoevangelium* is “Marian” as well as messianic. Not only this, but the mariological dimension in reference to the “woman” must be also understood literally to be exclusive to that “woman”, to Mary, that is, to the Mother of the Redeemer, and not to Eve.²⁴

Pope John Paul II, even giving full weight to the *Neo-Vulgata* rendition, puts it this way:

Since the biblical concept establishes a profound solidarity between the parent and the offspring, the depiction of the Immaculata crushing the serpent, not by her own power but through the grace of her Son, is consistent with the original meaning of the passage.

The same biblical text also proclaims the enmity between the woman and her offspring on the one hand the serpent and his offspring on the other. This is a hostility expressly established by God, which has a unique importance, if we consider the problem of the Virgin’s personal holiness. In order to be the irreconcilable enemy of the serpent and his offspring, Mary had to be free from all power of sin, and to be so from the first moment of her existence.²⁵

²⁴Manelli 23-24; cf. also the excellent study by Settimio M. Manelli, F.I., “Genesis 3:15 and the Immaculate Coredemptrix” 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) 263-322.

²⁵*Inseg XIX/1* (1996) 1389-1390 [MCat 93-94]. . [Poiché la concezione biblica pone una profonda solidarietà tra il genitore e la sua discendenza, è coerente con il senso originale del passo la rappresentazione dell’Immacolata che schiaccia il serpente, non per virtù propria ma della grazia del Figlio. Nel medesimo testo biblico viene inoltre proclamata l’inimicizia tra la donna e la sua stirpe da una parte e il serpente e la sua

It should also be noted that already in drafting the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* it was confirmed that, for Catholics, it is always necessary to read the biblical texts in the light of the patristic interpretation.²⁶ This latter point has been further corroborated and validated in the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*.²⁷

Let us now proceed to the elaboration of this theme in *Ineffabilis Deus* of Bl. Pius IX. The Fathers and writers of the Church ... in quoting the words by which at the beginning of the world God announced His merciful remedies prepared for the regeneration of mankind – words by which He crushed the audacity of the deceitful Serpent and wondrously raised up the hope of our race, saying, “I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed” – taught that by this divine prophecy the merciful Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, was clearly foretold; that His most blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was prophetically indicated; and at the same time the very enmity of both against the Evil One was significantly expressed. Hence, just as Christ, the Mediator between God and man, assumed human nature, blotted the handwriting of the decree that stood against us, and fastened it triumphantly to the cross, so the most holy Virgin, united with Him by a most intimate and indissoluble bond, was, with Him and through Him, eternally at enmity with the evil serpent, and most completely triumphed over him, and thus crushed his head with her immaculate foot.²⁸

discendenza dell'altra. Si tratta di un'ostilità espressamente stabilita da Dio, che assume un rilievo singolare se consideriamo il problema della santità personale della Vergine, Per essere l'incolciliabile nemica del serpente e della sua stirpe, Maria doveva essere esente da ogni dominio del peccato. E questo fin dal primo momento della sua esistenza.

²⁶Cf. Stefano M. Cecchin, O.F.M., *L'Immacolata Concezione. Breve storia del dogma* (Vatican City: Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis “Studi Mariologici,” No. 5, 2003) 191.

²⁷Cf. *Dei Verbum*, especially #8, 10, 23.

²⁸Tondini 46 [OL #46]. *Quapropter enarrantes verba, quibus Deus preparata renovandis mortalibus suae pietatis remedia inter ipsa mundi primordia praeunant, et deceptoris serpentis retudit audaciam, et nostri generis spem mirifice erexit, inquit: “Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius” docuere, divine hoc oraculo clare aperteque prae monstrandum fuisse misericordem humani generis Redemptorem, scilicet Unigenitum Dei Filium Christum Iesum, ac designatam beatissimam eius Matrem Virginem Mariam, ac simul ipsissimas utriusque contra diabolum inimicitias insigniter expressas. Quocirca sicut Christus Dei hominumque mediator, humana assumpta natura, delens quod adversus nos erat*

Here we may note that the Pontiff gives an admirable summary of the Church's understanding of the *protoevangelium* and in so doing illuminates the teaching about Mary as the woman who was united with the Redeemer "by a most intimate and indissoluble bond, was, with Him and through Him, eternally at enmity with the evil serpent, and most completely triumphed over him, and thus crushed his head with her immaculate foot". We should not be ignorant, however, of what Father Settimio Manelli points out in his recent study i.e., that in recent decades there has been a blatant change of course in the interpretation of this text so that many modern exegetes are no longer willing to admit a Marian interpretation.²⁹ By the same token the painstaking work of Father Tiburtius Gallus shows a consistent Marian interpretation of this text over the course of the centuries *in medio Ecclesiae*³⁰ and the numerous commentaries on the *protoevangelium* by the late Pope John Paul II continue to sustain the Marian interpretation on the part of the magisterium. Let us conclude this part of our discussion with an excerpt from his Marian catechesis of 24 January 1996:

The Protogospel's words also reveal the unique destiny of the woman who, although yielding to the serpent's temptation before the man did, in virtue of the divine plan later becomes God's first ally. Eve was the serpent's accomplice in enticing man to sin. Overturning this situation, God declares that he will make the woman the serpent's enemy.

Exegetes now agree in recognizing that the text of Genesis, according to the original Hebrew, does not

chirographum decreti, illud cruci triumphator affixit; sic Sanctissima Virgo, artissimo et indissolubili vinculo cum Eo coniuncta, una cum Illo et per Illum, sempiternas contra venenosum serpentem inimicitias exercens, ac de ipso plenissime triumphans, illius caput immaculato pede contrivit.

²⁹Settimio M. Manelli, F.I., "Genesis 3:15 and the Immaculate Coredemptrix" in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, V:263.

³⁰Cf. Tiburtius Gallus, S.J., *Interpretatio Mariologica Protoevangelii*, Vol. I: *Tempore post-patristico ad Concilium Tridentinum* (Romae: Libreria Orbis Catholicus, 1949); Vol. II: *Aetas Aurea Exegesis Catholica a Concilio Tridentino usque ad Annum 1660* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1953); Vol. III: *Ab Anno 1661 usque ad Definitionem Dogmaticam Immaculae Conceptionis (1854)* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1954).

attribute action against the serpent directly to the woman, but to her offspring. Nevertheless, the text gives great prominence to the role she will play in the struggle against the tempter: in fact the one who defeats the serpent will be her offspring.

Who is this woman? The biblical text does not mention her personal name but allows us to glimpse a new woman, desired by God to atone for Eve's fall; in fact, she is called to restore woman's role and dignity, and to contribute to changing humanity's destiny, cooperating through her maternal mission in God's victory over Satan.

In the light of the New Testament and the Church's tradition, we know that the new woman announced by the Protogospel is Mary, and in "her seed" we recognize her Son, Jesus, who triumphed over Satan's power in the paschal mystery.

We also observe that in Mary the enmity God put between the serpent and the woman is fulfilled in two ways. God's perfect ally and the devil's enemy, she was completely removed from Satan's domination in the Immaculate Conception, when she was fashioned in grace by the Holy Spirit and preserved from every stain of sin. In addition, associated with her Son's saving work, Mary was fully involved in the fight against the spirit of evil.

Thus the titles "Immaculate Conception" and "Cooperator of the Redeemer", attributed by the Church's faith to Mary, in order to proclaim her spiritual beauty and her intimate participation in the wonderful work of Redemption, show the lasting antagonism between the serpent and the New Eve.³¹

³¹*Inseg XIX/1 (1996) 116-117 [ORE 1426:11; MCat 62-63]. . Le parole del Protovangelo rivelano, inoltre, il singolare destino della donna che, pur avendo preceduto l'uomo nel cedere alla tentazione del serpente, diventa poi, in virtù del piano divino, la prima alleata di Dio. Eva era stata l'alleata del serpente per trascinare l'uomo nel peccato. Dio annuncia che, capovolgendo questa situazione, Egli farà della donna la nemica del serpente.*

There are a number of points to be emphasized in this important catechesis. First, the Pope refers to the new Woman, the antithesis of Eve, as “God’s first ally” [*la prima alleata di Dio*] and “the serpent’s enemy” [*la nemica del serpente*], and subsequently “God’s perfect ally and the devil’s enemy” [*Alleata perfetta di Dio e nemica del diavolo*]. Secondly, he points out that “the text gives great prominence to the role she will play in the struggle against the tempter” and that this new Woman is called “to contribute to changing humanity’s destiny, cooperating through her maternal mission in God’s victory over Satan”. Thirdly, without hesitation he identifies the new Woman as Mary “in the light of the New Testament and the Church’s tradition”. This is an assertion of capital importance in the light of the resistance to a Marian interpretation even in certain contemporary Catholic exegetical circles. Fourthly, he points out that the enmity between the serpent and Mary is fulfilled in two ways: (1) she was removed from Satan’s dominion through her Immaculate Conception, which thus enabled her (2) to be “fully involved in the fight against the spirit of evil”. Fifthly, because of “her intimate participation in the wonderful work of Redemption,” Mary

Gli esegeti sono ormai concordi nel riconoscere che il testo della Genesi, secondo l'originale ebraico, attribuisce l'azione contro il serpente non direttamente alla donna, ma alla stirpe di lei. Il testo dà comunque un grande risalto al ruolo che elle svolgerà nella lotta contro il tentatore: il vincitore del serpente sarà, infatti, sua progenie.

Chi è questa donna? Il testo biblico non riferisce il suo nome personale, ma lascia intravedere una donna nuova, voluta da Dio per riparare la caduta di Eva; ella è chiamata, infatti, a restaurare il ruolo e la dignità della donna e a contribuire al cambiamento del destino dell'umanità, collaborando mediante la sua missione materna alla vittoria divina su satana.

Alla luce del Nuovo Testamento e della tradizione della Chiesa, sappiamo che la donna nuova annunciata del Protovangelo è Maria, e riconosciamo nella «sua stirpe» (Gn 3,15), il figlio, Gesù, trionfatore nel mistero della Pasqua sul potere di satana.

Osserviamo altresì che l'inimicizia, posta da Dio fra il serpente e la donna, si realizza in Maria in duplice modo. Alleata perfetta di Dio e nemica del diavolo, ella fu sottratta completamente al dominio di satana nell'immacolato concepimento, quando fu plasmata nella grazia dallo Spirito Santo e preservata da ogni macchia di peccato. Inoltre, associata all'opera salvifica del Figlio, Maria è stata pienamente coinvolta nella lotta contro lo spirito del male.

Così, i titoli di Immacolata Concezione e di Cooperatrice del Redentore, attribuiti dalla fede della Chiesa a Maria per proclamare la sua bellezza spirituale e la sua intima partecipazione all'opera mirabile della redenzione, manifestano l'opposizione irriducibile fra il serpente e la nuova Eva.

is described as “Cooperator of the Redeemer” [*Cooperatrice del Redentore*] and thus there is a state of “lasting antagonism between the serpent and the New Eve”. Hence this catechesis serves as an excellent summary of the great lines of Catholic exegesis, the Catholic tradition and the papal magisterium on the *protoevangelium*.

III. Development of Doctrine

In his catechesis of 25 October 1995 Pope John Paul II traces 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 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.)³²

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

IV. 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.

³²*Inseg* XVIII/2 (1995) 934-935 [ORE 1414:11; *MCat* 25-26. 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. Haer Adv. 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, 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.)

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 Justice her own Son, and in her Heart died with Him, stabbed by the sword of sorrow.³³

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 Sodalicis* 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

³³Tondini 204-206 [OL #151]. *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 exitit laboriosæ pro humano genere expiationis: ex quo etiam in acerbissimis Filii angoribus et cruciamentis, maxime animo condoluisse dubitandum non est. Ceterum præsente ipsa et spectante, divinum illud sacrificium erat conficiendum, cui victimam de se generosa aluerat; quod in eisdem mysteriis postremum flebilisque obversatur: stabat iuxta Crucem Iesu Maria Mater eius, quæ tacta in nos caritate immensa ut susciperet filios, Filium ipsa suum ultro obtulit iustitiæ divinæ, cum eo commoriens corde, doloris gladio transfixa.*

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 on her, offered her Son to placate divine justice; so we may well say that she with Christ redeemed mankind.³⁴

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,"³⁵ Benedict XV held that God had also predestined Mary's union with her Son in his sacrifice to the extent of making the sacrifice with him to the extent that 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, that he wished the active participation of a human creature joined with the sacrifice of the God-man.

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

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

³⁴AAS 10 (1918) 181-182 [OL #267]. [*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 oppetenti et Cruci suffixo adfuit, non sine divino consilio adfuisse. Scilicet ita cum Filio patiente et moriente passa est et paene commortua, sic materna in Filium jura pro hominum salute abdicavit placandaeque Dei justitiae, quantum ad se pertinebat, Filium immolavit, ut dici merito queat, Ipsam cum Christo humanum genus redemisse.*]

³⁵Tondini 32 [OL #34].

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.³⁶

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 Mother.³⁷

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 Denzinger-Hünemann's *Enchiridion Symbolorum*.³⁸ Pius professes that "our salvation flows from the love of Jesus Christ and His sufferings" [*ex Iesu Christi caritate eiusque cruciatibus*] which are "intimately

³⁶AAS 35 (1943) 247-248 [OL #383]. [*Ipsa fuit, quæ vel propriæ, vel hereditariæ labis expers, artissime 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.*]

³⁷AAS 48 (1956) 352 [OL #778]. [*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 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 projecta.*]

³⁸D-H #3926.

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,³⁹ but before moving on to the eve of the Council, it is necessary to speak of the use of the term “Coredemprix” 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 Pius XI in addresses and a prayer.⁴⁰ 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.

V. 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 apex⁴¹ which had been building on a popular level since the apparition of Our Lady to Saint Catherine Labouré in 1830⁴² and on the magisterial level since the time of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December 1854.⁴³ This Marian orientation had accelerated notably during the nineteen-year reign of the Servant of God Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) with the Consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on 31

³⁹For further references, cf. *MMC1*:188-218 and *MMC2*:64-79.

⁴⁰Cf. *MMC1*:147-153; *MMC2*:29-35.

⁴¹Cf. Michael O’Carroll, C.S.Sp., “Still Mediatrix of All Graces?”, *Miles Immaculata* 24 (1988) 121-122; *Theotokos* 351-352.

⁴²This 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.

⁴³Cf. *Theotokos* 179-180. Interestingly, Father O’Carroll acknowledges an impetus for the definition in the apparition of 1830, cf. *Theotokos* 182.

October 1942,⁴⁴ the dogmatic definition of the Assumption of Our Lady on 1 November 1950,⁴⁵ the establishment of the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1944⁴⁶ and of the Queenship of Mary in the Marian Year of 1954.⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹ Father Besutti, on the other hand, holds that over 500 bishops were asking for such a definition.⁵⁰ A fundamental reason why no such definition emanated from the Council was the expressed will of Blessed Pope John XXIII that the Council was to be primarily pastoral in its orientation, specifically excluding any new dogmatic definitions.⁵¹

⁴⁴Cf. *Totus Tuus* 98-101.

⁴⁵Cf. *Theotokos* 555-56.

⁴⁶Cf. *Totus Tuus* 100.

⁴⁷Cf. *Totus Tuus* 104-105.

⁴⁸Cf. *Theotokos* 308.

⁴⁹Cf. 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.

⁵⁰G. Besutti, O.S.M., *Lo schema mariano al Concilio Vaticano II* (Rome: Edizione Marianum-Desclée, 1966) 17.

⁵¹Cf. *Calvario* 14.

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 the original *schema* of the Marian document prepared in advance for the Council,⁵² 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]...⁵³

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 a prime factor in its avoidance⁵⁴ along with a distaste for the general language of mediation on the part of more progressive theologians.⁵⁵ We remain free to debate about the wisdom and effectiveness of such a strategy.⁵⁶

VI. 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.⁵⁷ Here I will limit myself

⁵²*Lo Schema* 28-29; cf. Toniolo 36.

⁵³*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. *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] ...*

⁵⁴Cf. Thomas Mary Sennott, O.S.B., “Mary Mediatrix of All Graces, Vatican II and Ecumenism,” *Miles Immaculata* 24 (1988) 151-167; *Theotokos* 242-245.

⁵⁵Cf. 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.

⁵⁶Cf. my article “Towards Another Marian Dogma?” A Response to Father Angelo Amato,” *Marianum* LIX (1997) 1163-165.

⁵⁷Cf. MMC1:154-161 and MMC2:35-41.

to the positive presentation on Our Lady's active work 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 Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of redemption, by the grace of Almighty God.⁵⁸

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, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which was born of her.⁵⁹

Not only, then, does the Council teach that was Mary 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

⁵⁸Flannery 416 (I have altered the word order of the translation). . *salvificam voluntatem Dei, pleno corde et nullo retardata peccato, complectens, semetipsam ut Domini ancillam personae et operi Filii sui totaliter devovit, sub Ipso et cum Ipso, omnipotentis Dei gratia, mysterio redemptionis inserviens*

⁵⁹Flannery 417. . *Ita etiam B. Virgo in peregrinatione fidei processit, suamque unionem cum Filio fideliter sustinuit usque ad crucem, ubi non sine divino consilio stetit (cf. Io. 19, 25), vehementer cum Unigenito suo condoluit et sacrificio Eius se materno animo sociavit, victimae de se genitae immolationi amanter consentiens.*

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 obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls.⁶⁰

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 the 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.

VII. The Postconciliar Situation

While it may well be argued, as Pope John Paul II has done, 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," [il complesso della elaborazione conciliare su Maria rimane vigorosa ed equilibrata e gli stessi temi, non pienamente definiti, hanno ottenuto significativi spazi nella trattazione complessiva]⁶¹ 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 effects.⁶²

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.⁶³

⁶⁰Flannery 418. *Filioque suo in cruce morienti compatiens, operi Salvatoris singulari prorsus modo cooperata est, oboedientia, fide, spe et flagrante caritate, ad vitam animarum supernaturalem restaurandam.*

⁶¹*Inseg* XVIII/2 (1995) 1369 [MCat 51].

⁶²Cf. *Theotokos* 351-356.

⁶³Avery 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 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”.⁶⁴ Father Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm. consistently presents the ecclesiotypical Mariology as the great triumph of the council even as he discloses 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.⁶⁵

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

⁶⁴ 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.

⁶⁵ 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) 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.

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 has, 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.⁶⁶ The practitioners of this methodology are almost always notably devoid of that awe before the mystery of Mary which comes instinctively to “little ones”.

VIII. The Contribution of John Paul II

I have been studying the Marian magisterium of the late Pope John Paul II for the past twenty years and believe that it may well prove to be 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 conciliar texts up to their maximum potentiality, unlike so many “minimalists” in 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 combined. 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

⁶⁶Cf. Carroll, “Revolution in Mariology” 455.

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.⁶⁷

What is true in general about his Marian magisterium in 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 it⁶⁸ and some shorter ones⁶⁹ as well as treating it in the course of other studies of the papal magisterium on Marian coredemption⁷⁰ without in any way having

⁶⁷ Hoc veer religious voluntaries et intellects obsequies singular ration præstandum est Romani Pontificis authentico magisterio etiam cum non ex cathedra loquitur; ita nempe ut magisterium eius supremum reverenter agnoscatur, et sentiis ab eo prolatis sincere adhæreatur, iuxta mentem et voluntatem manifestatam ipsius, quæ se prodit præcipue sive indole documentorum, sive ex frequenti propositione eiusdem doctrinæ, sive ex dicendi ratione.

⁶⁸“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 Immaculata* XXXII (Luglio/Dicembre 1996) 474-508 and “Pope John Paul II's Ordinary Magisterium on Marian Coredemption: Consistent Teaching and More Recent Perspectives” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross – II: Acts of the Second International Symposium on Marian Coredemption* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2002) 1-36; also published in *Divinitas* XLV «Nova Series» (2002) 153-185.

⁶⁹“The Heart of Mary as Coredemptrix 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.

⁷⁰“Il Mistero di Maria Corredentrice nel Magistero Pontificio” in Autori Vari, *Maria Corredentrice: Storia e Teologia I* (Frigento [AV]: Casa Mariana Editrice «Bibliotheca Corredemptionis B. V. Mariae» Studi e Ricerche 1, 1998) 141-220 and “The Mystery of Mary the Coredemptrix in the Papal Magisterium,” in Mark I.

taken all of it into consideration. To my knowledge, Monsignor Brunero Gherardini⁷¹ and I are the only students of Mariology to have done so. 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."⁷²

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:

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

Miravalle, S.T.D. (ed.), *Mary Co-redemptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today* (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing Company, 2002) 25-92.

⁷¹Cf. Brunero Gherardini, *La Corredentrice nel mistero di Cristo e della Chiesa* (Rome: Edizioni Vivere In, 1998) 135-139.

⁷²*Inseg VII/1* (1984) 307 [St. Paul Editions 37]. *Christi passio bonum redemptionis mundi effecit, quod quidem in se ipso inexhaustum est et infinitum neque ei quidquam ab ullo homine addi potest.*

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.⁷³

⁷³*Inseg* VII/1 (1984) 308-309 [St. Paul Editions 40-41]. Est imprimis solacii causa – res sane Evangelio et historia comprobata – quod iuxta Christum, loco primario et probe significato, sancta eius Mater semper adest ad dandum egregium testimonium, quod tota vita sua de hoc singulari Evangelio doloris perhibet. Permultae et vehementes passiones confluerunt in talem nexum et colligationem, ut non solum fidem eius inconcussam comprobarent, verum etiam ad redemptionem omnium conferrent. Re quidem vera, inde ab arcano colloquio cum angelo habito, ea in materna sua missione prospicit "munus, cui destinatur", ipsam Filii missionem modo unico et non iterabili participandi ...

Dolores Beatae Mariae Virginis in Calvariae loco ad fastigium pervenerunt, cuius altitudo mente humana vix fingi quidem potest, sed certe arcana fuit et supernaturali ratione fecunda pro universali redemptione. Ascensus ille in Calvariae locum, illud "stare" iuxta Crucem una cum discipulo prae ceteris dilecto, communicatio prorsus peculiaris fuerunt mortis redemptricis Filii, atque etiam verbis, quae ex eius ore audivit, ei quasi sollemniter est mandatum ut hoc Evangelium omnino singulare communitatis credentium nuntiaret.

Beatissima Virgo Maria, quippe quae praesens adesset, particeps effecta passionis compatiendo, singularem in modum ad Evangelium doloris contulit, cuius non paucas quasi paginas una cum Filio conscripsit, et in antecessum verba Sancti Pauli vivendo implevit, in initio huius Epistulae allata. Illa enim prorsus

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”.

Let us see how skillfully the Holy Father states this in his truly extraordinary Angelus address on Corpus Christi, 5 June 1983:

“Ave, verum Corpus natum de Maria Virgine”!

Hail, true Body born of the Virgin Mary! ...

That divine Body and Blood, which after the consecration is present on the altar, is offered to the Father, and becomes Communion of love for everyone, by consolidating us in the unity of the Spirit in order to found the Church, preserves its maternal origin from Mary. She prepared that Body and Blood before offering them to the Word as a gift from the whole human family that he might be clothed in them in becoming our Redeemer, High Priest and Victim.

particularem causam habet ut dicat se “adimplere in carne sua – quemadmodum iam in corde fecit – ea quae desunt passionum Christi”.

Luce affulgente incomparabilis exempli Christi, quae in vita eius Matris repercussa singulariter refulget, Evangelium doloris, testimonio et scriptis Apostolorum, fit fons inexhaustus generationibus semper novis, quae sibi succedunt in historia Ecclesiae.

At the root of the Eucharist, therefore, there is the virginal and maternal life of Mary, her overflowing experience of God, her journey of faith and love, which through the work of the Holy Spirit made her flesh a temple and her heart an altar: because she conceived not according to nature, but through faith, with a free and conscious act: an act of obedience. And if the Body that we eat and the Blood that we drink is the inestimable gift of the Risen Lord, to us travellers, it still has in itself, as fragrant Bread, the taste and aroma of the Virgin Mother.

“Vere passum, immolatum in Cruce pro homine”. That Body truly suffered and was immolated on the Cross for man.

Born of the Virgin to be a pure, holy and immaculate oblation, Christ offered on the Cross the one perfect Sacrifice which every Mass, in an unbloody manner, renews and makes present. In that one Sacrifice, Mary, the first redeemed, the Mother of the Church, had an active part. She stood near the Crucified, suffering deeply with her Firstborn; with a motherly heart she associated herself with his Sacrifice; with love she consented to his immolation (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 58; *Marialis Cultus*, 20): she offered him and she offered herself to the Father. Every Eucharist is a memorial of that Sacrifice and that Passover that restored life to the world; every Mass puts us in intimate communion with her, the Mother, whose sacrifice “becomes present” just as the Sacrifice of her Son “becomes present” at the words of consecration of the bread and wine pronounced by the priest (cf. Discourse at the Celebration of the Word, 2 June 1983, n. 2 [ORE 788:1]).⁷⁴

⁷⁴Inseg VI/1 (1983) 1446-1447 [ORE 788:2]. “*Ave, verum Corpus natum de Maria Virgine*” (*Ave, vero Corpo nato da Maria Vergine*)...

Quel Corpo e quel Sangue divino, che dopo la Consacrazione è presente sull'Altare, e viene offerto al Padre e diventa comunione d'amore per tutti, rinsaldandoci nell'unità dello Spirito per fondare la Chiesa, conserva la sua originaria matrice da Maria. Lì ha preparati lei quella Carne e quel Sangue, prima di offrirli al Verbo come dono di tutta la famiglia umana, perché egli se ne rivestisse diventando nostro Redentore, sommo Sacerdote e Vittima.

Alla radice dell'Eucaristia c'è dunque la vita verginale e materna di Maria, la sua traboccante esperienza di Dio, il suo cammino di fede e di amore, che fece, per opera dello Spirito Santo, della sua

I will only make a brief comment on this beautiful passage which strongly underscores the reality of the coredemption. The Eucharist, according to the Holy Father, bears “the taste and aroma of the Virgin Mother” not only because Jesus was born of Mary, but also because in the Mass her sacrifice, her offering of Jesus and herself to the Father, becomes present along with his.

The final text which I wish to highlight is from a homily given at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Dawn in Guayaquil, Ecuador on 31 January 1985:

Mary goes before us and accompanies us. The silent journey that begins with her Immaculate Conception and passes through the “yes” of Nazareth, which makes her the Mother of God, finds on Calvary a particularly important moment. There also, accepting and assisting at the sacrifice of her son, Mary is the dawn of Redemption; and there her Son entrusts her to us as our Mother: “The Mother looked with eyes of pity on the wounds of her Son, from whom she knew the redemption of the world had to come” (St. Ambrose, *De Institutione Virginis*, 49). Crucified spiritually with her crucified son (cf. Gal. 2:20), she contemplated with heroic love the death of her God, she “lovingly consented to the immolation of this Victim

carne un tempio, del suo cuore un altare: poiché concepì non secondo natura, ma mediante la fede, con atto libero e cosciente: un atto di obbedienza. E se il Corpo che noi mangiamo e il Sangue che beviamo è il dono inestimabile del Signore risorto a noi viatori, esso porta ancora in sé, come Pane fragrante, il sapore e il profumo della Vergine Madre.

“Vere passum, immolatum in Cruce pro homine”. Quel Corpo ha veramente patito, ed è stato immolato sulla Croce per l'uomo.

*Nato dalla Vergine per essere oblazione pura, santa e immacolata, Cristo compì sull'altare della Croce il sacrificio unico e perfetto, che ogni Messa, in modo incruento, rinnova e rende attuale. A quell'unico sacrificio ebbe parte attiva Maria, la prima redenta, la Madre della Chiesa. Stette accanto al Crocifisso, soffrendo profondamente col suo Unigenito; si associò con animo materno al suo sacrificio; acconsentì con amore alla sua immolazione (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 58; Paolo VI, *Marialis Cultus*, 20): lo offrì e si offrì al Padre. Ogni Eucaristia è memoriale di quel Sacrificio e della Pasqua che ridonò vita al mondo; ogni Messa ci pone in comunione intima con lei, la Madre, il cui sacrificio “ritorna presente” come “ritorna presente” il sacrificio del Figlio alle parole della Consacrazione del pane e del vino pronunciate dal sacerdote (cf. Giovanni Paolo II, *Allocutio in Audientia Generali habita*, 2, 1 giugno 1983)*

which she herself had brought forth” (*Lumen Gentium*, 58). She fulfills the will of the Father on our behalf and accepts all of us as her children, in virtue of the testament of Christ: “Woman, there is your son” (Jn. 19:26). ...

At Calvary she united herself with the sacrifice of her Son that led to the foundation of the Church; her maternal heart shared to the very depths the will of Christ “to gather into one all the dispersed children of God” (Jn. 11:52). Having suffered for the Church, Mary deserved to become the Mother of all the disciples of her Son, the Mother of their unity. ...

The Gospels do not tell us of an appearance of the risen Christ to Mary. Nevertheless, as she was in a special way close to the Cross of her Son, she also had to have a privileged experience of his Resurrection. In fact, *Mary's role as coredemptrix* did not cease with the glorification of her Son.⁷⁵

⁷⁵Inseg VIII/1 (1985) 318-321 [ORE 876:7]. [*María nos precede y acompaña. El silencioso itinerario que inicia con su Concepción Inmaculada y pasa por el sí de Nazaret que la hace Madre de Dios, encuentra en el Calvario un momento particularmente señalado. También allí, aceptando y asistiendo al sacrificio de su Hijo, es María aurora de la Redención; y allí nos la entregará su Hijo como Madre. «La Madre miraba con ojos de piedad las llagas del Hijo, de quien sabía que había de venir la redención del mundo». Crucificada espiritualmente con el Hijo crucificado, contemplaba con caridad heroica la muerte de su Dios, «consintiendo amorosamente en la immolación de la Víctima que Ella misma había engendrado». Cumple la voluntad del Padre en favor nuestro y nos acoge a todos como a hijos, en virtud del testamento de Cristo: «Mujer, he ahí a tu hijo». ...*

Efectivamente, en el Calvario Ella se unió al sacrificio de Hijo que tendía a la formación de la Iglesia; su corazón materno compartió hasta el fondo la voluntad de Cristo de «reunir en uno todos los hijos de Dios que estaban dispersos». Habiendo sufrido por la Iglesia, María mereció convertirse en la Madre de todos los discípulos de su Hijo, la Madre de su unidad. ...

Los evangelios no nos hablan de una aparición de Jesús resucitado a María. De todos modos, como Ella estuvo de manera especialmente cercana a la cruz del Hijo, hubo de tener también una experiencia privilegiada de su resurrección. Efectivamente, el papel corredentor de María no cesó con la glorificación del Hijo

While I refer those interested to my commentary on this text elsewhere⁷⁶ I wish to point out here that the Holy Father used the adjectival form of Coredemptrix in Spanish [*corredentor*], just as he used the Italian term Coredemptrix in speaking of Mary on five other occasions.⁷⁷ In effect, he used the word twice as much as his last predecessor to do so, Pius XI.⁷⁸

IX. The Present Situation

Where does all of the above discussion leave us? According to Monsignor Brunero Gherardini:

The conditions by which a doctrine is and must be considered Church doctrine are totally and amply verifiable in Marian Coredemption: its foundation is indirect and implicit, yet solid, in the Scriptures; extensive in the Fathers and Theologians; unequivocal in the Magisterium. It follows, therefore, that the Coredemption belongs to the Church's doctrinal patrimony.

The nature of this present relation, in virtue of a theological conclusion drawn from premises in the Old and New Testaments, is expressed by the note *proxima fidei*.⁷⁹

We can safely say that the teaching on Mary's collaboration in the work of redemption is part of the ordinary magisterium and our late Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, especially by the frequency with which he returned to this theme, brought it to a new peak of explicitness and prominence in the Church.

And yet, strangely enough, most of those who hold prominent positions in academic Mariology and other high places have chosen to

⁷⁶Cf. *JPMC*2:32-34.

⁷⁷*Inseg* V/3 (1982); *Inseg* VII/2 (1984) 1151 [ORE 860:1]; *Inseg* VIII/1 (1985) 889-890 [ORE 880:12]; *Inseg* XIII/1 (1990) 743; *Inseg* XIV/2 (1991) 756 [ORE 1211:4]. Cf. my presentation of these texts in *MMC*2:41-46.

⁷⁸Cf. *MMC*1:151-152; *MMC*2:32-34.

⁷⁹Brunero Gherardini, "The Coredemption of Mary: Doctrine of the Church," in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, II (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2002) 48.

ignore the clear papal teaching and all of the positive scholarship that has been produced in this regard during the past 12 years. The first of four volumes of collected studies edited by Dr. Mark Miravalle and published in 1995⁸⁰ received only a condescending review in *Marianum*⁸¹, while the other three volumes along with the six volumes of the *Bibliotheca Corredemptionis B. V. Mariæ* published by the Casa Mariana Editrice of Frigento from 1998 to 2003, the four volumes of *Mary at the Foot of the Cross* published by the Academy of the Immaculate of New Bedford, MA from 2001 to 2004 and Monsignor Gherardini's *La Coredentrice* have all been met with stony, deafening silence by the mariological establishment. The most positive statement to come from one of their representatives thus far was an admission in a footnote by the late Father Ignazio M. Calabuig, O.S.M. on behalf of his colleagues that my study of the use of the term Coredemptrix published in *Maria Corredentrice: Storia e Teologia I* was done with praiseworthy precision and clearly indicates that the title Coredemptrix is not proscribed and is susceptible of a correct reading, even though they insist that the word only occurs in documents of a non-magisterial character.⁸²

But that is not all. An *ad hoc* committee was convened at the Mariological Congress held in Częstochowa, Poland in August 1996 to deal with petitions which the Holy See had been receiving for a dogmatic definition of Mary's role in the work of our redemption as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate. None of us who had done any studies in support of such a definition were consulted and of the 23 theologians who rendered the negative decision against considering a definition, one was Anglican, one was Lutheran and three were Orthodox. The rationale proffered was the following:

The titles, as proposed, are ambiguous, as they can be understood in very different ways. Furthermore, the theological direction taken by the Second Vatican Council,

⁸⁰ Mark I. Miravalle, S.T.D., (ed.), *Mary Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate, Theological Foundations: Towards a Papal Definition?* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing Company, 1995).

⁸¹Angelo Amato, S.D.B., «Verso un altro dogma mariano?», *Marianum* 58 (1996) 229-232.

⁸²Ignazio Calabuig, O.S.M. e il Comitato di redazione della rivista *Marianum*, "Riflessione sulla richiesta della definizione dogmatica di «Maria corredentrice, mediatrix, avvocat»7," *Marianum* LXI, nn. 155-156 (1999) 157, n. 50.

which did not wish to define any of these titles, should not be abandoned.⁸³

What is particularly dumbfounding about this statement is that in the prologue to the Marian chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, #54 explicitly states that:

This sacred synod ... does not, however, intend to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified. Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and also closest to us.⁸⁴

As if the “Vatican II triumphalism” of the signers of the Częstochowa statement didn’t suffice, the same edition of *L’Osservatore Romano* which carried their declaration also carried an unsigned article stating that:

With respect to the title of *Coredemptrix*, the Declaration of Częstochowa notes that “from the time of Pope Pius XII, the term *Coredemptrix* has not been used by the papal Magisterium in its significant documents” and there is evidence that he himself intentionally avoided using it. An important qualification, because here and there, in papal writings which are marginal and therefore devoid of doctrinal weight, one can find such a title, be it very rarely.⁸⁵

⁸³OR 4 giugno 1997, p. 10 [ORE 1494:12]. *I titoli, come vengono proposti, risultano ambigui, giacché possono comprendersi in modi molto diversi. E’ parso inoltre non doversi abbandonare la linea teologica seguita dal Concilio Vaticano II, il quale non ha voluto definire nessuno di essi.*

⁸⁴Flannery 414. *Sacrosancta Synodus ...quin tamen in animo habeat completam de Maria proponere doctrinam, atque quæstiones labore theologorum nondum ad plenam lucem perductas dirimere. Servantur itaque in suo iure sententia, quæ in scholis catholicis libere proponuntur de Illa, quæ in Sancta Ecclesia locum occupat post Christum altissimum nobisque maxime propinquum.*

⁸⁵OR 4 giugno 1997, p. 10 [ORE 1497:10]. *A proposito del titolo di Corredentrice, la Dichiarazione di Częstochowa annota: «il termine “Corredentrice” non viene adoperato del*

It seems that the primary reason why Pius XII did not use the title, even though he clearly taught the doctrine as we have seen, was because of the discussion of theologians which had only reached a definite theological consensus at the Mariological Congress of Lourdes in 1958 a few months before his death.⁸⁶ What I wish to underscore here, however, is how “Vatican II triumphalism” tramples even upon the papal magisterium whenever it suits the purposes of its practitioners. The fact that Pope John Paul II used the term “Coredemptrix” five times and “coredemptive” once in speaking about Our Lady is simply dismissed as “marginal and therefore devoid of doctrinal weight” with no reference to *Lumen Gentium* #25. I would simply add that the Częstochowa Declaration itself is hardly above criticism for the way it attempts to deal with facts and may be far more appropriately described as “marginal and therefore devoid of doctrinal weight”.

X. Conclusion

Why is there such stiff resistance to recognizing the development of doctrine which has taken place, especially in the course of the last pontificate and in celebrating and proclaiming the role that the “New Eve” had in the working out of our redemption and the role which she continues to carry out in dispensing the graces of the redemption and interceding on our behalf? There are many partial answers, but ultimately, I believe the opposition can only be explained in terms of the eternal enmity between the serpent and the “Woman” of the *protoevangelium*.

It has been noted that there are already four dogmas about Mary. They are that she is (1) the Mother of God (*Theotokos*)⁸⁷; (2) ever-virgin⁸⁸; that she was (3) immaculately conceived⁸⁹ and (4) assumed body and soul

magistero dei Sommi Pontefici, in documenti di rilievo dai tempi di Pio XII. A questo riguardo vi sono testimonianze sul fatto che egli ne abbia evitato intenzionalmente l'uso». Precisazione importante, perché que e là, in documenti pontifici secondari, e quindi senza peso dottrinale, si può trovare, sia pure molto raramente, tale titolo.

⁸⁶Cf. *Calvario* 7-8.

⁸⁷Defined by the Council of Ephesus in 431. Cf. *D-H* #252.

⁸⁸ By the time of the Council of Ephesus belief in Mary's virginity before, during and after birth was in possession and was explicitly defined at the Lateran Council of 649 convoked by Pope Saint Martin I. Cf. *D-H* #503.

⁸⁹Defined by Blessed Pope Pius XI on 8 December 1854. Cf. *D-H* #2303.

into heaven⁹⁰. All of these truths of the faith pertain to the person of Mary, but thus far the Church has not yet proposed to the faithful in the most solemn manner the truth about Mary's role in their lives.

But why should this be done when so many other matters in the Church appear to be much more important and much more urgent? There is, indeed, indisputable evidence that there is now at least a large part of two generations of Catholics who do not know their faith or take it very seriously. This didn't happen by accident. There are many who, with good intentions or not, seized the moment toward the end of the Second Vatican Council to commandeered Catholic catechesis and education and have contributed mightily to the chaos which has ensued. They have not been simply unseated by the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nor will any simply legislative act be capable of doing this.

The moral turpitude and permissiveness of the world in which we live daily becomes more apparent and more appalling – and it seeps into the Church. Contraception, abortion, the breakup of families, blatant pornography in the media, the attempted justification of homosexual unions, militant feminism, the confusion of the roles of man and woman, the promotion of a society without values – all of these plague the sons and daughters of the Catholic Church. Popes Paul VI and John Paul II have not hesitated to stand up to these myriad errors with courage, providing clear guidelines and admonishing the faithful to be converted and follow the way of the Gospel. Thirty-seven years after *Humanae Vitae* the prophetic wisdom of Paul VI is far more apparent than it was in 1968, but has the tide changed?

In many places careless, insensitive and imprudent innovations have been introduced into the Church's worship. A new form of iconoclasm has caused the wanton destruction of many Catholic sanctuaries. Further, there is a notable tendency at work on various levels to shift the orientation of the liturgy from being God-centered to being more man-centered. The language of the "holy sacrifice of the Mass" is slowly disappearing from our vocabulary. Even more, there is an attempt on the part of some highly placed strategists to de-construct the present Roman liturgy and render it less recognizable. All of this has led to massive

⁹⁰Defined by the Servant of God Pope Pius XII on 1 November 1950. Cf. D-H #3903.

disorientation on the part of priests, religious and laity, resulting in many defections and apostasy. Can we reasonably expect that more directives on the right application of the Church's liturgical norms will dramatically alter the present situation?

Now, of course, I do not wish to minimize the many hopeful signs on the horizon or the often heroic work being done on many levels to re-establish Catholic practice in faith, morals and worship where this is needed. But I am convinced that a papal definition of Mary as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate for the People of God could have incalculable positive effects, both direct and indirect, in all of these areas that will come in no other way. This is because:

Mary, present in the Church as the Mother of the Redeemer, takes part, as a mother, in that "monumental struggle against the powers of darkness" which continues throughout human history.⁹¹

She is not only the "Woman" of the *protoevangelium* (Gen. 3.15), but also the triumphant "Woman" of the Apocalypse (Rev. 12). The more that the Church recognizes her role in our salvation, proclaims it and celebrates it, the more Satan will be vanquished and the more Jesus will reign. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council already gave voice to this intuition when they stated in *Lumen Gentium* #65 that:

Having entered deeply into the history of salvation, Mary, in a way unites in her person and re-echoes the most important doctrines of the faith: and when she is the subject of preaching and worship she prompts the faithful to come to her Son, and to his sacrifice and to the love of the Father. Seeking after the glory of Christ, the Church becomes more like her lofty type, and continually progresses in faith, hope and charity, seeking and doing the will of God in all things.⁹²

⁹¹*Redemptoris Mater* #47 [Inseg X/1 (1987) 738; St. Paul Editions 67. *Maria enim, præsens in Ecclesia ut Mater Redemptoris, materno animo participat illam «arduum colluctationem contra potestates tenebrarum ... quæ universam hominum historiam pervadit».*

⁹²Flannery 420-421.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAS *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* (1909 –).

Calvario Alessandro M. Apollonio, *Il “calvario teologico” della Coredenzione mariana* (Castelpetroso, IS: Casa Mariana Editrice, 1999).

CCC *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994).

Cignelli Lino Cignelli, O.F.M., *Maria Nuova Eva nella Patristica greca* (Assisi: Studio Teologico “Porziuncola” Collectio Assisiensis #3, 1966).

D-H Heinrich Denzinger, S.I., *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum: Edizione Bilingue (XXXVII)* a cura di Peter Hünermann (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 2000).

Flannery Austin Flannery, O.P., ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1975).

Inseg *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, I (1978 – 2005) (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979 –).

JPMC1 Arthur Burton Calkins, “Pope John Paul II’s Teaching on Marian Coredeemption” in Mark I. Miravalle, S.T.D., (ed.), *Mary Coredeptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate, Theological Foundations II: Papal, Pneumatological, Ecumenical* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing Company, 1997) 113-147.

JPMC2 Arthur Burton Calkins, “Pope John Paul II’s Ordinary Magisterium on Marian Coredeemption: Consistent Teaching and More Recent Perspectives” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, II (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2002) 1-36.

Manelli Stefano M. Manelli, F.I., *All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed: Biblical Mariology* trans. Peter Damian Fehlner, F.I. (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, revised and enlarged second edition, 2005).

MCat Pope John Paul II, *Theotókos – Woman, Mother, Disciple: A Catechesis on Mary, Mother of God* with a Foreword by Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm, S.T.D. (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2000).

MMC1 Arthur Burton Calkins, “Il Mistero di Maria Corredentrice nel Magistero Pontificio” in Autori Vari, *Maria Corredentrice: Storia e Teologia I* (Frigento [AV]: Casa Mariana Editrice «Bibliotheca Corredemptionis B. V. Mariæ» Studi e Ricerche 1, 1998) 141-220.

MMC2 Arthur Burton Calkins, “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) 25-92.

OL *Our Lady: Papal Teachings*, trans. Daughters of St. Paul (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1961).

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Queen Conceived Without Subjection? A Defence of the View that the Law of Original Sin did not Apply to the Mother of Christ

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1. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the question of Mary's subjection to the law of original sin

The purpose of the essay is to examine a peripheral question of Mariology, which is not settled by official Catholic teaching, but is considered to be a matter of dispute among theologians: If God had not miraculously intervened to ensure that Mary was conceived in a state of grace, would she have fallen into a state of original sin? Or, to put it another way, was Mary subject to the law of original sin, even if it is the case that God intervened to prevent her from falling into a state of original sin?

To this end I begin with a brief summary of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception – the official Catholic teaching that Mary was conceived in a state of grace and so free from original sin and its effects. This is followed by an outline of the issue in question and the two main positions taken on the matter: the so-called debt position (that Mary was subject to the law of original sin) and the no-debt position (that she was not subject to such a law). I defend no-debt view from the so-called redemption objection: that if Mary was exempt from the law of original sin, she would be an exception to the universal application of Christ's redemptive death on the cross. I show that the advocate of the no-debt position has at least two feasible options for addressing this objection. The first approach involves showing that the relevant sources of authority can be interpreted in such a way that these do not require that Mary's Immaculate Conception be an effect of the redemption. According to the second approach the sanctified state of Mary at her conception can still be an effect of the redemption despite her being exempt from the law of original sin.

The Blessed Virgin was conceived without original sin. This was declared as revealed dogma by Pope Blessed Pius IX in his encyclical *Ineffabilis Deus*:

We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and

privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.¹

The dogma is the culmination of an unbroken tradition that has held Mary as all holy and full of grace – reaching back before the composition of the Gospels.² Of course, it has not always been the case that everyone has understood this *gratia plena* to entail that Mary was conceived in a state of sanctified grace, and indeed some have explicitly rejected the doctrine. But wherever objections have been made, these have been considered by Catholics to be cogently answered – most famously by the late thirteenth century scholastic theologian Bl. John Duns Scotus.³

Both revelation and experience testify that the rest of humanity is not as fortunate as the Mother of Christ, for we contract original sin upon our conception i.e. we lack sanctifying grace at the first moment of our existence. Or, to put it another way, we are conceived in a state of debt to God – we lack something that is owed to God and this creates a debt that requires payment. That we do contract original sin upon our conception and are in a state of debt is no accident, for we are subject to a law that makes this, in some sense, inevitable.⁴ This is the law of original sin, and it ensures, *ceteris paribus*, that the first sin of Adam is, in some sense, passed on to any given descendant at the moment of their conception. There is a law of inheritance built into human nature that ensures that Adam's lack of sanctifying grace is passed onto all his descendants apart from Mary and her divine Son.

Although Catholics hold it as infallibly certain that Mary did not inherit original sin and so owes no such debt to God, the Church does not have a position on whether she was subject to this same law of original sin

¹ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus* (December 8, 1854).

² Luke 1:28 relates the words of the angel at the Annunciation. Presumably he received the account from Mary herself.

³ See his *On the Fittingness of the Immaculate Conception Distinction 3; Question 1*.

⁴ Inevitable but not natural. Human nature is so constructed that a hereditary law holds with regards to its members. If Adam had not sinned in the Garden of Eden, then this law would have ensured his descendants a sanctified conception. As is readily apparent, Adam did sin, and the result is regrettable.

that we are – the law that ensures our conception is tarnished with the sin of Adam. Of course, if she was so subject, then it must be the case that God intervened in a miraculous way to suspend this law in the case of her conception.

The question of whether the Mother of God was subject to the law of original sin has been debated by Catholic theologians for some time, especially from the Counter Reformation onward, although since the Second Vatican Council, as with many topics in Mariology, interest in the issue has waned. It is fair to say that the majority position is that Mary was subject to the law of original sin and that God miraculously intervened at her conception to suspend the law. This is appropriately known as the debt position because she was subject to a law of debt, with the debt being fully paid from the first moment of her existence. But a minority of theologians have taken the view that Mary was not subject to this law at all.⁵ This is known, naturally enough, as the no-debt position. According to this view, Mary is not subject to the law that ensures an inheritance of debt generated by Adam (albeit with the debt being paid at the first moment of her existence). Given that she is not subject to the law of original sin, there was no need for God to miraculously intervene at the moment of her conception to ensure she is preserved from original sin. Each of these positions can be considered as alternative explanations for the Immaculate Conception.

That the majority of theologians have rejected the no-debt view is not surprising given the main objection levelled against it. Pohle/Preuss puts the matter thusly:

Theologians generally hold that, though she was *de facto* exempt from original sin, Mary incurred the *debitum contrahendi*, because else her Immaculate Conception would not be an effect of the atonement.⁶

The objection, of course, has its foundation in scripture: “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world ... in whom all have sinned.” (Rom 5:12 Vulgate). In some sense, all humans are implicated in the sin of

⁵ And some have considerable clout such as Saint and Doctor of the Church, Alphonsus de Liguori – see his *The Glories of Mary*, Part 2, Disc. 1.

⁶ Pohle-Preuss 1922, 40.

Adam. And so, in some sense, all of us require the saving effects of Christ's atoning death on the Cross. The Blessed Virgin is thought to be no exception to this: she is implicated in the sin of Adam – original sin – and so she too requires redemption from her Divine Son. The only difference between Mary and the rest of us, is that her redemption came at the very first instant of her existence, whilst ours happens, if at all, at a later time in our lives.

2. The redemption argument against the no-debt position

The argument against an exemption from the law of original sin, and which is hinted at in the above quotes, can be fleshed out in the following form.⁷

- (1) If Mary is exempt from the law of original sin, then Mary's state of grace is the original grace lost by Adam.
- (2) If Mary's state of grace is the original grace lost by Adam, then the source of Mary's grace is not the redemptive death of Christ.
- (3) But the source of Mary's grace is the redemptive death of Christ.
- (4) Therefore, Mary's grace is not the original grace lost by Adam.
- (5) Therefore, Mary is not exempt from the law of original sin.

Premise (1) is just another way of spelling out the no-debt position. Adam was created in a state of grace which, if he had not sinned, would have passed onto his descendants – such is the solidarity intrinsic to human nature. As it so happens, he did sin and so lost this grace for both for himself, his spouse Eve, and their descendants. To say that Mary was exempt from the law of original sin is just to say that the loss of grace caused by the sin of Adam did not apply to her, and so she ends up inheriting this state whilst the rest of us do not. Proposition (4) follows from (2) and (3), and (5) follows from (1) and (4).

The key premises are clearly (2) and (3), and in what follows I examine both, and show that neither is obviously true, and that the arguments in their favor are less than compelling. Before doing so it would be opportune to say a few things about premise (1). Above I presented (1) almost as if it were true by definition. But strictly speaking this is not so – it is possible for

⁷ Disclaimer: I have not seen the alleged problems with the no-debt view spelt out in the English literature in this manner. Usually the argument is not made as explicit as this and many of the premises are merely suggested. The best discussion in English I have come across is Carr and Williams 2019.

an advocate of the no-debt position to deny (1). After all, what if Mary simply had her own special source of grace independent of Adam? On such a view, Mary may be a special creation of her own, such that she is not a descendent of Adam in a sense that would allow her to be subject to any law of inheritance. Perhaps one way of achieving this would be to have Mary virginally conceived rather than as a descendent of Adam in the normal sense of the word.⁸

I do not intend to examine the denial of premise (1) any further. This is because doing so will not in itself address the major issue that faces the no-debt position: the question of whether the no-debt position amounts to the denial of the universal applicability of the redemption of Christ. Even if Mary had her own special source of sanctifying grace independent of Adam, we can still ask the question: was this source the redemptive act of Christ or not? This is the issue that is dealt with in the critiques I offer of premises (2) and (3), beginning with the latter. Fortunately, much of the theological speculation I articulate below can be applied in defence of a version of the no-debt position that rejects premise (1).

3. A critique of premise (3)

Why do advocates of the debt position insist that the source of Mary's sanctifying grace specifically be the redemptive act of Christ as opposed to some other source? After all, whatever grace Mary does receive at her conception, it obviously came from God. It's not as if the advocate of the no-debt position would take the heretical view that Mary has a state of grace that is entirely of her own doing or that it has some non-divine source. Rather, all the no-debt advocate would be calming is that God supplied this grace *sans* the instrument of Christ's redemptive act. Why then accept then that premise (3) is true?

⁸ The doctrine of the virginal conception of Mary is usually combined with the doctrine that original sin is transmitted through the procreative act. Mary avoids original sin precisely by not being the product of the act of human procreation. The belief can be found in the Apocrypha New Testament and private revelation. Some versions of the Protoevangelium of James espouse a virginal conception (Rush 2018: 251). The view is also found in the private revelations of Anne Catherine Emmerich and Maria Valtorta. I further discuss the doctrine of the virginal conception of the Virgin in my discussion of premise 3 below.

The reason most usually cited in support of premise (3) is that it is entailed by Divine Revelation. Pohle-Preuss cites the opinion that the rejection of (3) is inconsistent with Infallible Papal teaching:

The view of some older Scotist theologians, that she had not even so much as a *debitum remotum incurrendi peccatum originale*, cannot be reconciled with the solemn formula by which Pope Pius IX defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.⁹

The ‘solemn formula’ referred to here is the dogmatic definition of the bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, which is commonly interpreted as claiming that the redemptive act of Christ is the cause of the grace that Mary receives at the first instant of her existence.

One could also argue that (3) is supported by biblical teaching as well. As stated by St Paul: “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world ... in whom all have sinned” (Rom 5:12 Vulgate). Paul appears to be teaching that *all* of us, including Mary, are implicated in the sin of Adam in some sense. The advocate of the debt position would have us interpret the passage in this manner: *Mary has sinned in Adam in the sense that she too is subject to the law of original sin and would have been conceived without sanctifying grace if not for a special miracle*. Understood in this sense, the passage is difficult to read in a manner consistent with the no-debt position.

Response to the claim that (3) is entailed by biblical revelation

How might the advocate of the no-debt position respond to what appears to be a decisive argument? Let’s take the passage from Romans to begin with. The obvious response is to deny that this passage has unlimited scope. When the passage claims that *all* have sinned in Adam, it is not literally quantifying over every single human that has or will ever exist. Rather, the passage is using hyperbole to emphasize how thoroughly widespread and entrenched is sin in the human race as a result of the devastating choice of Adam. On this reading the passage is *not* to be read as applying universally to all humans, precisely because there is a single exception, namely the Mother of Christ, who does not require redemption.

⁹ Pohle-Preuss 1922, 40.

How plausible this alternative reading is will depend on whether St Paul makes use of this literary device in similar contexts elsewhere in his Epistles. Fortunately there appears to be a number of such examples, including Col 1:6, Col 1:23, and 1Thess 2:15 – all of which appear to be an exaggeration in scope. According to the first of these: “Which is come to you, as indeed in the whole world ...” What is it that has come to the Catholics of Colossae that is also in the whole world? Answer: the hope in heaven and the truth of the Gospel. But if we take the phrase ‘in the whole world’ as literally unrestricted, the claim is obviously false. There are a number of other feasible interpretations, based on well understood literary devices, which would render Paul’s claim to be true, which do not require an unrestricted reading of the phrase. Perhaps Paul is using hyperbole in order to emphasise how successfully the word of God has spread throughout the Roman Empire. Or perhaps the phrase translated as ‘whole world’ was commonly understood at the time to mean something like ‘the world with which we are familiar or the world as we know it’.

Response to the claim that (3) is entailed by dogmatic definition

What though is to be done with the dogmatic definition contained in *Ineffabilis Deus*? The relevant passage is this:

... the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin ...

The key to the response of the advocate of the no-debt view is to be found in the meaning of the phrase ‘in view of,’ which is the translation of the original Latin word *intuitu*.¹⁰ One could read the phrase “in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race” to mean the redemptive death of Christ plays a role in the *efficient cause* of the grace bestowed in the soul of Mary. The idea here is that God transfers the grace produced by Christ’s redemptive death onto Mary’s soul, at the moment of her conception.

¹⁰ The English version of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* translates *intuitu* as ‘by virtue of’ (Part 1, paragraph 491). This might be thought to be more congenial to the debt position. However, the English phrase ‘by virtue of’ would normally be a translation of the Latin word *virtute* and not *intuitu*.

But this strikes me as a rather forced reading. The term “in view of” reads far more naturally, not as denoting a role as the efficient cause, but rather a final cause. On this reading, the passage is asserting that the ultimate *purpose* of the Immaculate Conception is to achieve the redemption of the human race through the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross. It is as if it is saying that God sanctifies the soul of the Blessed Virgin with an eye to achieving the redemption: the idea being that the sinlessness of Christ (a necessary condition for performing the redemptive act) is achieved by ensuring His mother is sinless.

If there is an efficient cause referred to in this passage it is by the phrase “by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God.” It is noteworthy that there is no reference in this specific phrase to a redemptive act. Rather, it reads most naturally as an act of creation rather than that of redemption: God *creates* Mary in a state of grace. Understood this way, the passage is clearly consistent with the no-debt position.

So I think that the advocate of the no-debt position could feasibly reject premise (3) and take the view that divine revelation can be plausibly interpreted in a way that is consistent with this. Moreover, there is no need to advocate the heretical position that Mary receives her grace from a non-divine source. All the advocate of the debt position would be saying is that in the case of Mary, God does the sanctifying, but without using the instrument of Christ’s redemptive death on the cross. But surely this is no more problematic than the commonly held view that Adam was so sanctified at his creation. And this comparison with the creation of Adam gives us a basis for understanding how Mary avoids the law of original sin. Like Adam, she is a special creation that avoids the hereditary laws of human nature that allow the fall from grace to apply to all of Adam’s descendants. How does she avoid this? She does so by not being a descendent in the relevant sense – by being virginally conceived.¹¹

¹¹ This assumes that original sin is transmitted through the procreative act - a view that has considerable support from some of the heavyweights of theology. It was, for example, advocated by Augustine and Aquinas – but denied by Scotus. The claim that Mary was virginally conceived is less popular among theologians, and those who have advocated the view have not always agreed on its basis. Whatever the justification for the doctrine, it certainly coheres well with a specific reading of the New Eve motif: given that Eve was virginally created in a state of grace, it follows that Mary too was so created. After all, Mary (along with Christ) is supposed to be the beginning of a new humanity, just as Eve (along with Adam)

4. A critique of premise (2)

But in the event that the above reinterpretation of biblical teaching and the dogmatic definition is not feasible, the advocate of the no-debt position has a further response to make to the argument from redemption, namely a rejection of premise (2). The advocate of the no-debt position is entitled to ask for a justification of premise (2), and it takes little reflection to see that premise (2) is assuming the truth of premise (2a):

(2a) the source of Adam's original grace is not the redemptive death of Christ.

As intuitive or obvious as (2a) sounds, I do not believe the advocate of the no-debt position is compelled to accept it. To begin with it appears incongruous with the debt position itself. The advocate of the debt position is committed to the view that the redemptive death of Christ is the source of the sanctified grace that Mary received at her conception. But if the death for Christ can be the source of grace Mary receives at her conception, why not Adam at his creation? Moreover, the debt advocate cannot raise an issue about the timing of the redemptive death of Christ in this regard. The problem can't be that the death of Christ occurs after the creation of Adam in a state of grace and therefore can't be source of this grace. After all, it is held by the debt advocate that the cause of Mary's grace at her conception is the later historical event of the death of Christ on the cross. The debt advocate is cognisant that God, being beyond time, and able to see all of history in one intuitive vision, is able to make use of any good work at any point in time as an instrument for His effects. The sacrifice of the cross is no different in this regard.

Is the function of Christ's redemptive death on the cross purely propitiatory?

It seems to me that the advocate of the debt position might defend (2a) by the claim that the effects of the death of Christ on the cross were purely propitiatory and so redemptive – that is to say, that the effects serve to replace a grace already lost and they are not the source of grace at the

was the beginning of the old humanity. Of course there are alternative ways of understanding the motif that do not requiring a commitment to the virginal conception of Mary. Never mind – I am merely trying to establish the feasibility of this approach.

origin of the human species. What is the response of the no-debt advocate? That the death of Christ has this function is no doubt true and is explicitly taught in scripture. But it does not follow from this that the death of Christ cannot have effects other than replacing the lost grace caused by the sin of Adam.

Catholic theologians understand that the redemptive and atoning effects of the death of Christ stem from the fact that it is a *sacrifice* to God the Father. A sacrifice consists essentially of the offering of an object (also referred to as the victim) to God by setting it aside (i.e. consecrating it) and ensuring the destruction of that object, or at least rendering it unusable, so that no one else can claim it. The destruction of the consecrated object can be offered as satisfaction to assuage the justice of God in the face of sin – the object offered is accepted by God in order to make up for the sin. This act of propitiation is the basis for the redemptive aspects of the Crucifixion of Christ. Christ is offered up to the Father as a satisfaction for sin.

But sacrifice clearly has effects that go beyond propitiation. Under both natural and revealed religion, an additional purpose to sacrifice has been recognised, and this has often been seen as the ideal and primary purpose of sacrifice: to offer praise and adoration to God. To adore God is to form an attitude in which we acknowledge our utter and total dependence on God. Sacrifice is eminently suitable for the purpose of publically expressing this attitude: an object (the victim) is set aside for God (i.e. consecrated to God), and either completely destroyed, or rendered useless, so that no one else can benefit from it. The idea being expressed is that everything is ultimately owned by God and not us. Note that this purpose of sacrifice is independent of its propitiatory function. Adoration is owed to God by a person even if they have no sin for which they must make satisfaction. Even in a sinless world, it is obligatory to offer adoration to God and express that adoration through sacrifice.¹²

¹² That the sacrifice of the cross serves as more than just as an act of propitiation and is, in addition, adoration, is supported by more than just the nature of sacrifice under natural religion. The Roman Catechism teaches that the sacrifice of the Mass is, in addition to a sacrifice of propitiation, a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Given that the Mass is a commemoration of the sacrifice performed on the cross, it is reasonable to infer that the sacrifice of the cross is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving as well (McHugh and Callan, p. 238).

Now for mere humans, offering adoration to God is obligatory and so does not generate merit – we have no choice in the matter as we already owe such adoration to God. But if someone were to offer a sacrifice of adoration to God *who did not already owe this as a matter of obligation*, then such an act would constitute a good work and generate merit. And if the victim were especially valuable, then such an act would generate considerable merit. And if such a victim were of infinite value, then such an act would have no limit to the merit it would generate. Indeed Christ is just such a person, as he does not owe God adoration as he is divine himself. And if he were to offer himself as the victim, then such a sacrifice would generate limitless merit – again due to his divine nature.

But how exactly does this sacrifice of adoration and praise generate the original grace of humanity? What exactly is the mechanism by which it is applied for this purpose? Given the infinite merit generated by this sacrifice on the cross, it is entirely appropriate for God the Father to bestow a reward on Christ for such an act. And it seems feasible to think that God the Father, from the infinite love He has toward his Son, would bestow such a reward. The reward? Whatever Christ wants – after all that is the most generous gift that can be offered. What would Christ request? I speculate that he requested that humanity be created in a state of original grace.¹³

A further problem and solution

The debt advocate might now raise a further difficulty, namely that the no-debt advocate would appear to be committed to (2b):

(2b) if Adam had not fallen, then the sacrifice of the cross would have taken place.

This would seem to follow from the claims that (i) the source of Adam's original grace is the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and (ii) it is possible that Adam had not fallen. But surely it is absurd to think that the sacrifice of the cross would have taken place even if Adam had not sinned.

¹³ Note that this idea is consistent with the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception cited above, which uses the phrase "... in view of the merits of Christ, the redeemer of the Human race." It is worth noting that the word 'merit' and not 'satisfaction' is used – perhaps suggesting that the grace received at her conception is not caused by an act of propitiation but some sort of good work that requires a reward.

Indeed it would appear to be outright contradictory, for the death of Christ on the cross surely presupposes a fallen humanity – not just because it was an event replete with suffering, betrayal, torture, murder and so forth (all of which are the result of a fallen world), but because the death of Christ had as one of its functions the redemption of a fallen world (2b) clearly entails *if Adam had not fallen, then Adam would have fallen*. This condition is clearly inherently contradictory and so fails to make sense. Given that it is entailed by (2b), (2b) also fails to make sense. Given the assumption that the no-debt advocate is committed, to (2b), the no-debt position should be rejected.

The response of the no-debt advocate: It is simply not the case that (2b) follows from the claim that the source of Adam's original grace is the cross. This is because in worlds in which Adam remains steadfast to God's will, there is a different method by which God applies original grace to Adam. It is only in worlds in which Adam falls that God makes use of the method of the cross in applying original grace to Adam.

God can ensure that this is the case, because God knows how Adam would choose if he were created in a state of grace.¹⁴ Using this knowledge, God can then make a decision as to *how* He will apply that grace to Adam. If it were the case that Adam would fall when in a state of grace, then God would decide to apply this grace using the method of the cross. If it were the case that Adam would persist when in a state of grace, then He would decide to apply that grace via some other method. Of course it is true that if Adam were created in a state of grace, then he would fall. God knew this to be the case and so decided to apply that grace via the method of the cross.

Counter-reply and final response

Now this response is open to a possible objection from the opponent of the no-debt position, which can be presented as follows. In order for the above analysis to be sound, God must decide his method of applying original grace subsequent and in response to the choice that Adam makes to

¹⁴ This of course assumes the truth of the doctrine of middle knowledge: that there is a fact of the matter of what Adam would choose in a given set of circumstances logically prior to the divine will; and that God knows this fact. Although controversial, there is available a sufficiently robust defence of the doctrine to give the benefit of the doubt to my assumption. For two rather thorough defences see Flint 1998, and Molina and Freddoso 1988.

either fall or persevere. If it were the case that God established the method of applying grace prior to knowing Adam's choice, then there would be no way for God to *ensure* that the method appropriately matches the choice that Adam has made. The only way for God to ensure the appropriate correlation would be for him to be prepared to override the free choice of Adam – which is problematic for well-known reasons. But short of that, getting the correct match between choice and application of grace would be a matter of luck for God. It is conceivable, for example, that God might institute the cross as the means of applying original grace and yet Adam not fall. Such a world might be broadly metaphysically possible, but it would be theologically absurd. It would seem to require the simultaneous presence of sinlessness and natural bliss alongside sin and suffering: a violent death in the form of the crucifixion, alongside a humanity affirmed in original grace.

But it would appear that God cannot designate the method for applying grace in response to the choice of Adam. This is because God knows how Adam would choose if in a state of grace, and such a state of grace cannot exist without being applied in some way or another. There is no state of grace that is independent of God causing it via some method. But that means the question of the source of that grace must already be determined prior to Adam making a choice. It follows that God cannot decide on the source of grace based on Adam's choice. Rather He must already establish the source prior to this choice – along with the absurd consequences described above.

The obvious response to this objection is to point out that it misunderstands the sense in which a state of grace is dependent on its source. It is true that there is no state of grace that is independent of the fact that God brought it about in some way. But that dependence is causal and not conceptual. Grace is fungible, which is to say that grace is grace regardless of how it is applied. The method of applying the grace does not change its character in any way. Grace applied through the cross is the same as grace applied through some other method. Grace is like water. It does not matter much if I am wet because it has rained or because my brother has tossed a bucket of water upon me – it is still water with which I am drenched. Of course, the water must have come from somewhere: it is not as if my being wet is a brute fact without a more fundamental explanation. But the fact that I am wet is conceptually distinct from how the water soaked me. It follows that it is quite meaningful to speak of Adam being in a state of grace independently of the method of how that grace was applied.

And it follows that God can know how Adam would respond to being in a state of grace independently of deciding on the method of applying such grace.

A theological speculation

Of course this analysis raises the question as to the method God would choose if Adam had decided to persevere in grace. This is highly speculative, but I wonder if a sacrifice that is purely of adoration and praise, and with no propitiatory aspects at all, would have been the source of grace.

The characteristics of the historical sacrifice of the cross presuppose a fallen world full of sin and suffering, as is testified by the hideous pain and betrayal experienced by Christ in His death on the cross. But there is nothing about the essence of a sacrifice that requires it to have such characteristics. It is feasible to think that a sacrificial act for an unfallen world would have been very different indeed. It is likely that it would have been an unbloody act, as the shedding of blood seems to be peculiar to the propitiatory purpose of a sacrifice. Likewise it seems that it would not require the death of Christ in the way this occurred in history – merely a public act in which Christ undergoes a complete dedication to and expression of ownership by the Father. A sacrifice does not necessarily require destruction of the victim in order to express the creator’s complete ownership over it. What I have in mind can be illustrated in the Gospel of Matthew (3:13-17 and 17:1-5) in the account of the Baptism and Transfiguration of Christ. Here we have a public, unbloody act in which the Father responds with “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ...”¹⁵

¹⁵ This account of sacrifice in a non-fallen world presupposes that the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity would have occurred even if Adam did not sin. A minority of theologians, among them Scotus, have held the view that the Incarnation of the Word was not primarily a response to the fall of humanity. Rather, it is logically prior to the fall in the divine plan and so would have occurred even if Adam had not sinned. Sans the fall, the Incarnation would have served primarily to unite creation to God in a perfect act of worship of the Father. Of course, such an Incarnation would not have involved passible flesh. Rather, the Incarnate Word would have had a glorified body – possibly like that observed during his transfiguration.

But if a sacrifice does require a destruction of some sort, this need not involve shedding the blood of the victim and his suffering. Destruction of that sort is merely the most expressive way of doing this in a fallen world. A good example of such a non-bloody sacrifice can be found in the Catholic theology of the Eucharist. In the Sacrifice of the Mass, Christ offers himself (Incarnate in a resurrected and glorified body) to the Father in the form of the transubstantiated bread and wine. The consumption, and therefore destruction, of the transubstantiated elements by the officiating Priest brings to completion the sacrificial act in an unbloody manner that involves no suffering for the victim.¹⁶

5. Conclusion

So there we have it: two feasible strategies that the advocate of the no-debt position could take in responding to the argument from redemption. On the first, based on a rejection of premise (3), Mary receives her sanctified state from God, but not via the instrument of Christ's redemptive death on the cross. According to the second approach, based on a rejection of premise (2), Mary did not require redemption in the technical sense, as there was no possibility of her incurring original sin. However, she was still a beneficiary of the fruits of Christ's redemptive death on the cross in the same way that all humans were originally such beneficiaries. Most importantly, both of these options have the advantage of consistency with the wording of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, provided this is interpreted in a suitable manner.

¹⁶ For a defence of this theology see Bellarmine 2020 especially pp. 150-8. One may wonder how the Mass constitutes a sacrifice. Specifically, what constitutes the destruction of the victim in this context? There is no settled agreement by Catholic theologians on this matter, but Bellarmine argues that in consuming the transubstantiated bread and wine, the Priest destroys the victim. In being consumed and digested, the real presence of Christ in the elements ceases. Thus the transubstantiated state of the elements is destroyed. This is, of course, a controversial view. An alternative, and well received, view is that the destruction of the victim is mystical rather than literal and occurs with the double consecration: whatever else is made present at the consecration of the host, it is the presence of the body of Christ that the words of consecration cause and nothing else. Likewise for the consecration of the wine: the words of consecration only bring about the presence of the blood of Christ. Hence there is a mystical separating of the body and blood and so a mystical slaying of the victim. Of course, the remainder of Christ is made presence through each via concomitance.

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Mariology and Ecumenism

JEAN GALOT, S.J. (1919-2008)¹

Mariology presents us with an ecumenical difficulty. Up to this point Mariology cannot be said to have constituted one of the principal themes of ecumenical dialogue, but it is inevitable that, in the course of engaging the doctrinal positions that surface prominently in ecumenism, Mariology should come under consideration.

We cannot here dedicate ourselves to this engagement. We will instead limit ourselves to briefly citing convergences and divergences, with the aim of bringing into relief the reasons behind each, as well as possible avenues of mutual approach.

It has frequently been noted that Catholic theologians tend to view ecumenism as being primarily a matter of fraternal relations with Protestants, as well as an effort to comprehend various objections of reformed theology. Yet in reality relations with the orthodox are no less important. We are much nearer to the orthodox in matters of Mariology, and the ecumenical issue confronts us very differently in the two cases. We will here examine these two ecumenical situations in succession.

Mariology in the Orthodox Churches

1. Worship and doctrine

The orthodox churches are manifestly and profoundly marked by the Virgin's presence.²

It is important firstly to underscore that Mary's place in the work of salvation is realized very vibrantly in worship, as the orthodox churches have retained the tradition of the Byzantine church. "The *cultus* of the Theotokos, beginning with the proclamation of the dogmas at Ephesus and Chalcedon, underwent in Byzantium a prodigious advance, which placed Mary on the highest plane in the Church's piety... the veneration of the

¹ Translated by John Mark Miravalle from the Italian, *Maria: La Donna nell'Opera della Salvezza*, in consultation with the French, *Dieu et la Femme*.

² Cf. H. M. Köster, *Die Eigenart der orthodoxen Mariologie, Maria in Sacra Scriptura [MSS]*, 6, 37-56; D. Stiernon, *Théologie mariale dans l'Orthodoxie russe, Maria* 7, 239-238; B. Schultze, *La Mariologie sophianique russe, Maria* 6, 213-239.

Theotokos has maintained the same fullness in the piety of the contemporary Orthodox Church.”³

The orthodox theologian who makes this claim adds, “Nonetheless, orthodox theology, like the rest of byzantine theology, has not yet made precise the exact meaning of this cult of the Mother of the Savior, and has not generally defined the place and significance of Mariology within the broader whole of the truth taught by the Church.”⁴ An attempt at doctrinal elaboration has not, therefore accompanied the intense Marian piety that is one of the essential characteristics of orthodox piety.⁵

One might say that, due to this piety, there is a profound agreement between Catholics and orthodox regarding the value of Mary’s presence in Christian life. This agreement carries over into matters of faith in certain fundamental truths about Mary. Although Marian theology is not developed in a systematic way in the orthodox world, it is centered on certain essential affirmations wherein their unity of faith with the doctrine professed by the Catholic Church is vividly apparent.

What are those truths which the orthodox regard as pertaining to the Christian faith? “That which is required, as dogmatic doctrine, for all Orthodox believers,” says the Orthodox theologian, A. Stawrowsky, “are the following definitions of the Church on the Most Holy Virgin Mary:

1 – She is the Mother of God, not only the Mother of Christ – *Theotokos*, according to the definition of the third ecumenical council at Ephesus in 431.

2 – She is the Ever-Virgin – *Aeiparthenos*: Virgin before and after the birth of her only Son, born of her and of the Holy Spirit, according to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan formula and according to the definitions of the fifth and sixth ecumenical councils.

³ A. Kniazeff, *La place de Marie dans la piété orthodoxe, Etudes Mariales [EtM]* 19 (1962) 123.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Kniazeff presents his own study on the place of Mary within Orthodox piety as “one of the first efforts of Orthodox theology” to remedy this lacuna. He “attempts to determine the chief lines of what might be to the eyes of an Orthodox theologian as much as justification for the veneration of the Virgin, as an explication of the different aspects of her cult in the Church” (*art. Cit.*, 124).

3 – She is the intermediary on behalf of humanity before her Son, according to the definition of the fourth ecumenical council.

Besides these three doctrinal points, it must be observed that according to the unanimous opinion expressed by the majority of the Church's Holy Fathers, the faithful must believe that the Virgin Mary was, from her birth to her dormition, free from every voluntary sin, whether mortal or even venial.”⁶

We have reproduced this list of dogmatic points on account of its clarity and precision: it indicates what an orthodox Christian may not refuse to believe, and what held by faith in common with catholic belief. Nevertheless, as M. J. Le Guillou has noted, from the ecumenical point of view it is important to “discover Orthodox Marian theology from within, since despite its unsystematic appearance it possesses an intuitive sense of mystery, and vigorously unites the living unity between the mysteries of the Incarnation, Mary's maternity, virginity and sanctity, the divinization of Christians, and the renewal of all things at the end of time.”⁷

2. *Essential Doctrinal Teachings*

In doctrine as in worship, Mary is held to be the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God. It is the divine maternity that has, so to speak, fascinated the gaze of the Christian easterners. It is indissolubly linked to the contemplation of the mystery of the Incarnation. Such is St. Gregory Nazianzus' early emphasis when he says, “if anyone does not accept Holy Mary as *Theotokos*, he is separated from divinity.”⁸

By attributing a particular importance to the feast of the annunciation, the liturgy has progressed from the doctrine to an appreciation of the importance of Mary's consent to the mystery. While considering first of all the greatness of the divine work which is effected in Mary, eastern theology has not neglected to underscore Mary's active part in the realization of this design. “The Incarnation of the Word,” says Nicholas Cabasilas, “was not only the Father's work, of His Power and His Spirit... but also the work of

⁶ Stawrowsky, *La Sainte Vierge Marie. La doctrine de l'Immaculée Conception*, *Marianum [Mar]* 1973, 37-38.

⁷ M. J. Le Guillou, *Les caractères de la théologie mariale orthodoxe*, *EtM* 19 (1962) 92.

⁸ *Epist.* 101, PG 37, 177 C. Cf. Le Guillou, *Les caractères*, 120.

the Virgin's faith and will. Since without these this design could not have been realized, it was impossible that the project could have been effected without the involvement of the will and faith of the all-holy woman."⁹

United to her Son, Mary participated in his sacrifice. Mary's suffering at the foot of the cross is feelingly recalled by the Byzantine liturgy. "It was necessary that she should be associated with her Son in all that pertained to our destiny. Just as she gave him her flesh and her blood, receiving in return the communication of his graces, so was it necessary for her to participate in all his sufferings, in all his afflictions. He, on the cross, received a strike from the lance in his side, while she was pierced by a sword in her heart, as Simeon had foretold."¹⁰

This association in his sacrifice was followed by an association in Christ's glorious triumph. We have shown how the faith in the Assumption developed first in the East. The Virgin, who in heaven shares in the glory of the risen Christ, stands before all Christians as "the image of every beauty," in the phrase of Gregory Palamas.¹¹

With respect to the theme of spiritual maternity, it has been "much less reflected on by orthodox theology," as Kniazeff notes. But "it is felt strongly at the level of liturgy and piety. In fact, the title of 'Mother' is much more frequent in prayers and hymns than that of 'Queen.'" ¹² Marian devotion testifies to the faith of orthodox Christians "in all the Virgin's power of intercession." Moreover, "if Orthodox theologians have not concerned themselves much with Mary's spiritual maternity, they are nevertheless wholly agreed in seeing her maternity as being proclaimed in John 19:25-27."¹³

We must stress too the way in which eastern theologians have been willing to see in Mary a new destiny for humanity. The Holy Virgin is called *Theotokos* "Not only with respect to the nature of the Word, but also with

⁹ N. Cabasilas, *In Dormitionem*, 12, PO 19, 508.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ *Homil.* 37, PG 151, 468 A.

¹² *Marie dans la piété orthodoxe*, 134.

¹³ *Ibid.* On Orthodox commentaries on the Johannine text, cf. B. Schultze, *Sriechische und russische orthodoxe Theologen über Maria im Johannesevangelium*, MSS 5, 363-404. It appears in this study that the spiritual maternity is professed by A. Makrakès, S. Bulgakov, A. Kniazeff, G. Florovsky.

respect to the deification of humanity,” says St. John Damascene.¹⁴ Orthodox Marian devotion implies a strong relationship between Mariology and the doctrine of the transfiguration of the world through the action of the Holy Spirit. It employs this mode of biblical typology in applying it to Mary, and thus shows that “in Mary, who is a witness of the Incarnation and Redemption, the Kingdom of God must first be accomplished, since it is in its essence a new order of things, that is a transfiguration – through the Holy Spirit – of the old order of things.”¹⁵

3. The Immaculate Conception and the Assumption

The agreement between the orthodox and catholic churches ends, unfortunately, once we reach the two dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.

While taking solace in the absence of any dogmatic definition on these doctrinal points in the orthodox church, Stawrowsky nevertheless refers to a situation of nearly unanimous opposition: “One notes on the part of the orthodox such strong opposition to these dogmas, that at this point we cannot see any contemporary orthodox theologians who might be considered followers of Catholic Marian doctrine, nor even those would qualify as sympathizers. This despite the evident fact that devotion for the Virgin has been and remains today extremely fervent in the orthodox east, perhaps even more fervent than in the Catholic west.”¹⁶

The opposition to the Immaculate Conception takes various forms and includes a range of arguments: at times it can become radical, as in T. Spassky, who holds that this doctrine runs counter to the dogma of Chalcedon, basing his position on the conciliar definition’s silence on the matter.¹⁷ At times opponents limit themselves to characterizing the Immaculate Conception in terms of private opinion, and denying that it binds as a matter of revealed doctrine.¹⁸

¹⁴ *De fide orthodoxa*, 3, 12, PG 94, 1032 B.

¹⁵ Kniazeff, *Marie dans la piété orthodoxe*, 138.

¹⁶ *La Sainte Vierge*, 40.

¹⁷ Cf. D. Stiernon, *L’Immaculée Conception dans la théologie russ-contemporaine*, *Ephemerides Mariologicae [EMar]* 6 (1956) 284.

¹⁸ Such is the case with J. Kolemin; cf. Stiernon, *ibid.*, 290-291.

We may however cite the opinion of the Russian theologian V. Iljin, who does not hesitate to take a favorable position to the dogma: "Just as the church is infallible and impeccable both in her beginnings and in history, which is to say that she cannot have sin in her origin nor in her historical life, so too the Virgin, Mother of God, who bears the same name as the church cannot have, *a fortiori*, either original nor actual sin. From the beginning, she is the Vessel of the Incarnation."¹⁹

Without getting too deeply into the maze of controversies, or examining the statements of opposition to the dogma,²⁰ we may simply point out that the current negation by the orthodox stands in contrast to the doctrine of the great Byzantine doctors who affirmed Mary's immaculate sanctity from the beginning of her existence; consequently, the contemporary negation constitutes a rupture with eastern tradition. It seems that among the deep motives for this negation, one must suggest a certain protestant influence, and a hostile reaction to the pope's power and to every pontifical definition.²¹

Let us cite Stawrowsky's opinion, since he, as an orthodox theologian, has made a noteworthy effort to understand the Catholic doctrine, "To our way of thinking, the rejection of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary on the part of contemporary orthodox theologians – not on the part of the orthodox church, which has not yet pronounced in an authentic manner on this issue – is merely a misunderstanding, an erroneous interpretation of the Catholic dogma's infelicitous formulation, even though the dogma itself is quite right and true in its essence..., but badly defective in its formulation. Finally, there has also crept in a polemical desire to triumph dialectically over the enemy which the orthodox have shamefully and for centuries seen as the Catholic Church."²²

¹⁹ As cited by Stiernon, *ibid.*, 271.

²⁰ Ten principle statements are collected by Stawrowsky, *La Sainte Vierge*, 43-44.

²¹ With respect to the Russian orthodox church, A. Wegner shows that for over a century (1650-1750) the doctrine of the immaculate conception was professed at Kiev, but was then abandoned following the nomination of Patriarch Theophan Prokopovitch, a theologian who adopted the majority of protestantism's principal theses (*L'Eglise orthodoxe russe et l'Immaculée Conception, Virgo Immaculata [Vim]* 4, 196-215).

²² *La Sainte Vierge*, 111.

Certainly, Catholic theology cannot regard the dogma's formulation as defective. However, it is true that Mary's sanctity is expressed therein only in its negative aspect: the preservation from the original stain. Catholic theologians need to take the eastern doctrine into account – since the latter has reflected instead the positive aspect of Mary's holiness – and show the harmony of both points of view. In acknowledging Mary to be she who is full of grace, they attribute to her an essentially positive perfection. It is this perfection that, by being complete, implies the preservation from original sin from the first moment.

A return on the part of the orthodox to their own tradition, namely, a reflection on the totality of that holiness that Mary must have possessed, could open the pathway to a rapprochement.

One may also hope for progress towards union in the case of the Assumption. The pontifical definition has aroused opposition among orthodox towards the dogma, but the opposition is focused primarily against the authority by which the dogma was defined.

To again reference Stawrowsky: "The Orthodox Church, in the feast of the Holy Virgin's Dormition, celebrated since antiquity, has always taught that the Virgin did not remain under the power of death, nor did she undergo corruption, but was raised up by the power of her Son and was brought body and soul into heaven, where she reigns with her Son over the entire universe. This doctrine, which in the east was not elevated to the level of a dogma of faith, is considered established doctrine by the Orthodox Church. As we see it, therefore, there is no reason to oppose the fact that the Catholic Church has found it proper to proclaim this doctrine as a dogma of faith."²³

This doctrinal rapprochement is all the more desirable insofar as it would correspond to the fundamental convictions that animate Marian devotion within the orthodox church. From the Catholic perspective, this devotion on the part of the easterners remains an important witness to the place which Mary must occupy in Christian life and thought.

²³ *La Sainte Vierge*, 112.

Mariology and the Protestant Churches

1. *A fundamental opposition.*

What is the ecumenical situation of Mariology with respect to Protestantism?²⁴

In the Protestant churches one often encounters an attitude that is quite critical towards Marian veneration and doctrine. Certain protestant theologians have expressed their radical opposition to Mariology. Speaking of the significance of Mariology, Roger Mehl holds it to be a “field entirely extraneous to the thought of the Reformation,” but “extremely revelatory of the structures of Catholic theology, in particular of its manner of conceiving the action of divine grace.”²⁵ He expresses various critical reflections on the perpetual virginity, an affirmation which he sees as deriving from the positing of a link between sexuality and sin; he thinks that the proclamation of Mary as Mother of God has had disastrous effects on the development of Mariology; he condemns the attribution of universal mediatrix of all graces, the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the

²⁴ Among the studies on this theme, cf. G. Philips, *L'opposition protestante à la mariologie*, *Mar* 11 (1949) 469-488; J. Hamer, *Mariologie et théologie protestante*, *Divus Thomas* (Freiburg) 30 (1952) 347-368; *Marie et le protestantisme à partir du dialogue oecuménique*, *Maria* 5 983-1006; Th. Sartory, *Die Hintergründe der Katholisch-protestantischen Kontroverse über Maria, Theologie und Glaube [TG]* 49 (1959) 279-298; B. Leeming, *Protestants and Our Lady*, *Irish Theological Quarterly [IrTQ]* 27 (1960) 91-110; K.F. Dougherty, *Our Lady and the Protestants*, in J.B. Carol *Mariology*, 3, Milwaukee 1961, 422-439; A. Brandeburg, *De mariologia ac de cultu venerationeque Mariae apud christianos disiunctos protestanticos hoc tempore vigentibus*, in *De Mariologia et Oecumenismo*, Rome 1962, 479-516; E. Lamirande, *La "Theotokos" et les travaux du mouvement oecuménique "Foi et Constitution"*, *EMar* 13 (1963) 77-105; *Prises de position au sujet de Marie chez des non-catholiques canadiens*, *ibid.*, 287-294; J. Galot, *Marie et certains protestants contemporains* *Nouvelle Revue Théologique [NRT]* 85 (1963) 478-495; G.A.F. Knight, *The Protestant World and Mariology*, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 19 (1966) 55-73; F.W. Künneth, *Maria im Glaubenszeugnis der Kirche Evangelisch-Lutherischer Reformation*, *MSS* 6, 5-14; M.D. Koster, *Reformierte und Katholische Grundansichten über den Marienkult*, *MSS* 6, 15-36; W. Cole, *Scripture and the Current Understanding of Mary among American Protestants*, *MSS* 6, 95-161; A.M. Allchin, *Maria in der anglikanischen Theologie und Frömmigkeit*, *Una Sancta* 24 (1969) 272-285; P. Emonet, *Un problème du dialogue oecuménique avec les Protestants: la Mariologie*, *Esprit et Vie* 81 (1971) 225-236; D. Flanagan, *Mary in the Ecumenical Discussion*, *IrTQ* 40 (1973) 227-249; R. Mackenzie, *Mary as an Ecumenical Discussion*, *EMar* 27 (1977) 27-36; E. Doyle, *The Blessed Virgin Mary and Dialogue with Evangelicals*, *Clergy Review* 64 (1979) 347-357.

²⁵ *Du catholicisme romain. Approche et interpretation*, Neuchâtel-Paris 1957, 78.

Assumption, and he fears the definition of Mary's coredemptive role, which he sees as an attempt to revitalize the theme of the fertility goddess, a theme typical of a multitude of pagan religions.²⁶ He reacts against this kind of "lateral Christianity," "which is potentially sustained by all popular superstitions."²⁷ "Certainly," he admits, "Mary has a place in the economy of salvation, but for all its singularity it is a position which remains analogous to that of all witnesses, namely, to be an instrument in the Lord's hands, to say the 'yes' of faith to God's initiatives, to be a witness to God's great works."²⁸ He also adds that by withdrawing Mary from the story of sin and affirming her immaculate conception, Mariology renders nugatory, for her, the cross of Jesus Christ and so imperils the mystery of the Incarnation, in addition to excising Mary from the common condition of humankind.

He ends with the following categorical judgment: "Therefore we cannot do otherwise than respond to the whole of Mariology with an absolute 'no.' We are persuaded that it constitutes a lethal apparatus against the evangelical faith. Within it converge all the heresies of Catholicism: the autonomous power granted to the tradition, the doctrinal magisterial authority arbitrarily granted to the supreme pontiff and to the bishops, the equivocations of the doctrine of merit, the exploding of the unique grace of the Father which is then is fractured into particular graces giving man the possibility of acquiring merit, and the negation of Christ's unique mediation. The Reformers thought that 'sola fide' and 'sola gratia' were the only foundations upon which the peace of consciences could be built. Today it is necessary to add that a universal rejection of the whole of Mariology is the only means by which confidence in Jesus Christ can be secured on behalf of conscience."²⁹

It is immediately evident how unqualified is this attitude of rejection, how it does not limit itself to a protestation against certain excesses: it comes from a reaction against essential elements of catholic doctrine. One sees within it a hostility towards everything in the work of salvation that entails a true collaboration of man with God, a cooperation of the church and of Christians with Christ, namely: the contribution to the exploration and formulation of revelation, which becomes manifest in the role of

²⁶ Ibid., 79-86.

²⁷ Ibid., 87.

²⁸ Ibid., 88.

²⁹ Ibid., 91.

tradition and the doctrinal magisterium; collaboration in sanctification, which finds its expression in the doctrine of merit; Mary's cooperation in the work of redemption and participation in Christ's mediation. This opposition involves, therefore, the foundational principle of the covenant between God and humanity, insofar as it manifests an effective contribution on man's part to the work of salvation. Mariology is rejected because it attributes an active role to Mary, an extremely important one, in this work.

This doctrinal hostility is accompanied by an absence of Marian devotion: the absence of Marian devotion is the indication of a quite different mentality than which finds expression in the Catholic Church. One sees the profound difference of attitude in the terms employed by Pastor Pierre Murray: "The uninterrupted development of Marian doctrine and devotion seems to us to signal, more strongly than ever, the impossibility for us in conscience, not only of reunion, but even of a contemporary profound mutual approach with the roman church on doctrinal and spiritual grounds. Of course, I realize that Catholicism wants to distance itself, both dogmatically and in its devotions, from every idolatry to a creature, including that unique creature who is the Mother of God; I know that their doctors explain themselves by saying that in divine-human cooperation everything always comes from grace, and that the human intermediaries in no way detract from the divine sovereignty whenever it grants them the grace of being secondary causes. Nonetheless, despite all these explanations and all these theological expositions, we cannot avoid the conclusion that at the level of popular piety, these sophisticated doctrines do not prevent our wretched humanity from suddenly changing the religion of grace (which allows us to merit) into a religion of merits, nor do they prevent the devotion of hyperdulia rendered to Mary from degenerating into the most idolatrous of superstitions... is it not inevitable then that we ask ourselves whether in the system itself, and not merely in its concrete manifestation, there lies a principle of falsity and error?"³⁰

Maury adds that the biblical Gospel teaches us "that we must live *only* for God's glory." "And it is for this reason that, confronted with the Catholicism of Mary, we say: *non possumus*."³¹

³⁰ *La Vierge Marie dans le catholicisme contemporain*, in *Le protestantisme et la Vierge Marie*, Paris 1950, 65-66.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

2. *Avenues of mutual approach*

While acknowledging a prevalent opposition to Mariology, we must not that there are signs, beginning more than twenty years ago, of a change of attitude on the part of certain protestants. The anti-Marian attitude is yielding, in certain able theologians, to a more well-rounded attitude, one more interested in coming to know in what the true Catholic position consists,³² and one more open in its investigations and analyses of Mary's role in the divine plan of salvation.

a – The return to the teaching of the reformers

Among the reasons for this greater openness, an outstanding one is the rediscovery of the teaching of the first reformers. In opposing themselves to the Marian devotion and theology of Catholics, Protestants were often convinced that they were following in the steps of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. But these figures were a far cry from having adopted a purely negative attitude towards Mary. One Protestant, W. Tappolet, has published an anthology of texts entitled *The Praise of the Reformers for Mary*.³³ The author tells his readers that in the course of the research and compilation of these texts, he discovered that he had been mistaken in thinking that the beginnings of the reformation had rejected Marian

³² R. Mehl, for example, seems to have a rather imperfect and superficial knowledge of Catholic Mariology. Indeed, he traces the proclamation of *Theotokos* to Chalcedon and explains it with other affirmations of that council, even though the title was defined at Ephesus. Nor does he seem to account for the fact that, according to the doctrine of the immaculate conception, Mary owes all her sanctity to the merits of the Redeemer, since, as he sees it, this doctrine makes Christ's cross irrelevant to Mary (*Du catholicisme*, 87-89).

³³ *Das Marienlob der Reformatoren*, Tübingen, 1962. The anthology was put together with the collaboration of a catholic theologian, A. Ebner, who had already underscored the positive elements of Luther's marian doctrine: *Martin Luthers Marienbild*, in *Orientierung*, 20 (1956), 77-79, 85-87. We must also point out the prior work by R. Schimmelpfennig, *Die Geschichte der Marienverehrung im deutschen Protestantismus*, Paderborn, 1952. Begun under the impulse of Fr. Heiler and according to the ecumenical objective of *Una Sancta*, this investigation shows the Marian devotion maintained by the reformers and in German Protestantism up until our own time. One may further consult K. Algermissen, *Mariologie und Marienverehrung der Reformatoren*, TG 49 (1959) 1-24; H. Hennig, *Die Lehre von der Mutter Gottes in den ev.-luth. Bekenntnisschriften und bei den lutherischen Vätern*, in *Una Sancta*, 16 (1961) 55-80; E. Stakemeier, *De Beata Maria Virgine eiusque cultu iuxta reformatores*, in *De Mariologia et Oecumenismo*, 423-477.

doctrine and devotion. In particular, Luther's Marian devotion, while not without its limits, is an incontestable fact, and one which merits attention: "it is beyond all reasonable doubt that Luther *loved* and *venerated* (honored or praised) Mary personally, and *imitated* the evangelical virtues he saw displayed in her life. Likewise, no one can doubt that he wished all Christians to follow him along these lines."³⁴

The numerous attacks launched by Protestants against Mary's perpetual virginity appear to be a clear deviation from the first positions of the Reformation: the reformers unanimously affirmed her virginity.³⁵ Along with her virginity, Luther and Zwingli affirm Mary's purity and sanctity in such clear terms that is worthwhile to contrast them with the modern Protestant opinion which relegates Mary to the order of sinners. "I firmly believe, according to the words of the holy Evangelist," Zwingli declares, "that this pure Virgin for us gave birth to the Son of God and that she remained, both during the birth and afterwards, a pure and intact Virgin for all eternity."³⁶ In so saying, Zwingli defends himself explicitly from those who would accuse him of having thought Mary to be a sinner like other human beings. He had already cited the passage in which St. John Chrysostom attributes to Mary the weakness of self-love, but Zwingli made clear that he found this opinion unsatisfactory: "I have never said anything," he avers, "attributing dishonor or sinfulness to the pure Virgin Mary."

In citing Zwingli's very definite position, Max Thurian notes, "Let us take note in passing how much this Marian doctrine of the most humanist, most 'Protestant' amongst the Reformers, can overthrow the established opinions on the subject of the 'Reformed Tradition'."³⁷

It is not without a certain surprise that one encounters various opinions, held by diverse reformers, which seem favorable to the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. The pontifical definitions of these two prerogatives have stirred up vehement protestations among separated Christians. In an age when the Immaculate Conception had not

³⁴ This is the conclusion of W.J. Cole, at the end of the lengthy study *Was Luther a Devotee of Mary? Marian Studies [MSt]* 21 (1970) 94-202. Nonetheless, after this affirmation (p. 201), the author adds that Luther ultimately rejected every mode of invocation to Mary (202).

³⁵ Tappolet, *Marienlob*, 41-54, 170-173, 240-249, 319-321.

³⁶ Tappolet, *Marienlob*, 235.

³⁷ *Mary, Mother of All Christians*, trans. Neville B. Cryer Herder, New York, 1963, 77.

yet become a dogma, and met with opposition in certain Catholic theologians, one is still startled to find Luther acknowledging Mary's exceptional privilege, justifying it with the principle that "The Virgin Mary lies between Christ and other men."³⁸ As far as the Assumption goes, Luther did not deny it; he believed that Mary was taken up into heaven, but he said nothing concerning her bodily destiny.³⁹ One finds an explicit affirmation of the bodily Assumption in Bullinger's discourses, who was Zwingli's successor in Zurich.⁴⁰

The Reformers not only preserved such important elements of Marian doctrine; they also to a certain extent continued and promoted Marian devotion. Without admitting Mary's mediation or intercession, they desired devotion which consisted in praise and, above all, imitation. Mary is chiefly presented as a model of faith; the greatest praise that could be rendered to Mary is to follow her example in following Christ and God with the greatest possible fidelity.⁴¹

This is not to suggest that there is no concrete sign of devotion in the form of images. To those who wished to destroy all images, Luther responded that for his part he desired to preserve the crucifix and the image of Mary.⁴² From sufficiently reliable testimony, we know that in the great Reformer's room a picture representing the Virgin with the Christ-child hung from the wall.⁴³

The indisputable attestations to the Marian devotion of the reformers are of such a nature as to prompt reflection in contemporary Protestants.⁴⁴

³⁸ *Werke* (ed. Weimar), 17, 2, p. 228 (Homily of 1527 for the Feast of Mary's Conception.).

³⁹ *Werke*, 52, p. 681. Cf. Tappolet, *Marienlob*, 56ff.

⁴⁰ *De origine erroris libri duo*, c. 16, Neustadt 1600, 79. Cf. Tappolet, *Marienlob*, 327.

⁴¹ Cf. Tappolet, *Marienlob*, 58-65, 104-126, 190-202, 256-260, 328-331.

⁴² *Werke*, 18, 70. Cf. Tappolet, *Marienlob*, 146.

⁴³ *Werke, Tischreden* 5, 623, n. 6365; 2, 207, n. 1755. Cf. Ebner, *art. cit.*, 87, in which the author observes that if the first text might leave some doubt, the second is perfectly clear.

⁴⁴ At the conclusion of a presentation on the Mariology of the reformers, pastor J. Bosc writes, "The theology of the reformers plainly reveals an attention to Mary, to her role and significance, that is definitely positive, and which contrasts with the reticence or even silence with which later protestantism avoids the virgin in anti-Catholic reactionism..." He maintains that the "positive directions of this

In their doctrinal affirmations on the Ever-Virgin Mother of God, and in the hints they provide regarding the praise and devotion she deserves, one finds pervasive indicators of a profound personal conviction. Even Calvin, who has the reputation of being more coolly reticent than the rest on this matter, does not neglect to describe the way we should live as being “disciples of the Virgin Mary,” and “holding fast to her teaching.”⁴⁵

b – *Analysis of the Scriptural data*

The divergence between Protestants and Catholics with regard to Marian doctrine results in large part from a moral general divergence concerning the communication of revealed truth. Protestantism claims to find this truth uniquely in scripture, *sola Scriptura*, while Catholic theology affirms the presence of this truth in the Church’s living faith, the present faith which comes from a tradition that must be taken into account, and which is based on Scripture as the privileged witness of the original tradition. In the field of Mariology the doctrinal development of the tradition has been considerable, and as a result the distance between Protestantism and Catholicism is correspondingly considerable.

How might this distance be reduced? It is not irrelevant to point out that a better awareness of the teaching of the reformers could open the path to a certain respect for the tradition, since the reformers themselves remained faithful to the tradition of the first centuries, at least in its essentials.⁴⁶ If in certain cases they interpreted the dogma of the divine maternity proclaimed at Ephesus as well as that of the virginity in their own way, according to the basic orientation of their own doctrine, they were still careful to preserve the heritage of the patristic tradition. In point of fact, they did not, in their opinions about Mary, base themselves only on Scripture, and their respect for the primitive tradition was such as might possibly promote the broadening of protestant views.

Mariology could and should be more realistically assessed in ecclesial life” (*La mariologie des Réformateurs*, *EtM* 20 (1963) 26).

⁴⁵ *Opera*, 46, Brunswick 1891, 122.

⁴⁶ “Whatever may be the position theologically that one may take to-day on the subject of Mariology,” writes M. Thurian, “one is not able to call to one’s aid ‘reformed tradition’ unless one does it with the greatest care... the Marian doctrine of the Reformers is consonant with the great tradition of the Church in all the essentials and with that of the Fathers of the first centuries in particular.” (*Mary*, 77).

But this broadening might also arise from a more profound analysis of the scriptural data. The evangelists have only reported a few of the episodes of Mary's life. But these episodes furnish us with a vaster doctrinal richness than might appear at first sight, if only it is closely examined and placed within the context the Old Testament preparation. Once this attitude, which is foundational for the reception of the scriptural data, is in place, then the exploration of those biblical passages having to do with Mary proves very fruitful.

One might cite, for instance, J. G. Machen, who has made a concise analysis of the gospel testimony concerning the virginal motherhood. He is well aware of the animating principle at work in his research, which is to say that he admits the infallible authority of Scripture. If one rejects the virginal birth of Jesus, which is so clearly attested to in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, then, he declares, "let us cease talking about the 'authority of the Bible' or the 'infallibility of Scripture' or the like."⁴⁷ This principled stance propels one further to a more rigorous examination of the evangelical accounts, to their form, their content, and their credibility. With this examination the author shows how the scriptural testimony can be explained only if there was in fact a virgin birth. He also shows the congruence of this fact with the whole of the gospel message, with the supernatural that is made manifest in Jesus, and with the personality of the Son of God.

In order to clarify the gospel texts, A. G. Hebert appeals to the Old Testament.⁴⁸ Following in the footsteps of the Swedish theologian, Sahlin, he expounds the way in which a sound exegesis of Luke's Gospel demands that one see in Mary, who receives the angel's message and then sings the Magnificat, the completion of what was said about the Daughter of Zion. The identification of Mary with the Daughter of Zion indicates the extent to which Marian devotion falls directly within the biblical tradition. This devotion is often accused of making Mary a goddess through the influence of the pagan cults; but as Hebert observes, those who make this objection are often unaware that it is the biblical account which presents Mary according to the outlines of the Daughter of Zion.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ J.G. Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, New York, 1932, 386.

⁴⁸ *The Virgin Mary as the Daughter of Zion*, *Theology* 53 (1950) 403-410.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 410.

And the biblical portrait of Mary is more complete than this, as Max Thurian lays out in his work, *Mary, Mother of the Lord, Figure of the Church*. This work lays out the essential trajectory for a Mariology founded on scripture. Earlier, the author had expressed an unfavorable opinion towards the Immaculate Conception,⁵⁰ and was particularly animated in his reaction against the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption.⁵¹ Here, without disavowing those positions adopted earlier, he prescinds from them deliberately in order to accept, with maximal liberty and maximal serenity, the Bible's message regarding Mary. The extent of his open-mindedness may be seen especially in his concern to receive the contribution from the work of Catholic exegetes, insofar as they seem to be responding to the text's real significance. There is in all this an ecumenical mindset, but it is one which accords with the desire to discover, as completely as possible, the revealed truth of scripture. The emphasis is placed on those positive elements which flow from the study of scripture, without worrying about which dogmatic expansion they might imply, or towards which they might incline. This mentality is at the opposite end of the spectrum from any polemic against Catholic Marian devotion.

We should add that exegetical study worthy of the name normally demands some doctrinal reflection. This reflection is elaborated in a two-fold direction: that of the mystery of the Incarnation and that of the relations between Mary and the church.

If we begin from the perspective of the mystery of the Incarnation, the gospel, for all practical purposes, poses the question about Mary's role in the economy of salvation. Therefore, it is due to the requirements of the Incarnation that Karl Barth reacted against the strong tendency among a certain number of protestants to deny the virgin motherhood.⁵² While an anti-Marian polemic derives from positing a one-sided competition between Jesus and Mary, a consideration of the mystery of the Incarnation forces one to adopt the alternative perspective of seeing a solidarity between Jesus and Mary and an integration of the Virgin within the mystery of the Word made flesh.

⁵⁰ "Mariology," in *Ways of Worship*, London 1951, 301-311.

⁵¹ *Le dogme de l'Assomption*, *Verbum Caro* 5 (1951) 2-41.

⁵² *Dogmatique*, vol. I, *La doctrine de la Parole de Dieu. Prolegomenènes à la Dogmatique*, II, 1 (tr. F. Ryser, Geneva 1954), 172ff.

We have already mentioned that another principle, that of the relationship between Mary and the church, results from the scriptural data and have contributed to the clarification of the meaning of Marian doctrine and devotion.

3. *Doctrinal opinions favorable to Mariology*

a – *The divine maternity*

Many Protestants have abandoned belief in Mary's divine maternity. We may cite a revelatory statistic regarding this belief in the United States. In response to the question, "Do you believe that Mary is the Mother of God?" presented to Protestant ministers of various denominations, only twenty-two out of one hundred respondents answered in the affirmative.⁵³ The reason for this denial is sometimes ascribed to Nestorianism, which refuses to admit that Jesus Christ is God.⁵⁴

One should therefore have the greater appreciation for Karl Barth's reaction in showing the legitimacy of the title "Mother of God" as attributed to Mary over the course of a long tradition by Lutheran and reformed orthodoxy. "It matters – and this is a kind of indication that people know how to rightly interpret the Incarnation—that the Christian or the evangelical theologian unreservedly recognize that the title Mother of God as applied to Mary is perfectly justified within Christology, despite those abuses present in roman catholic Mariology."⁵⁵

By 'abuses' Barth means everything in Catholic doctrine that attributes to Mary "even a merely relative independence or eminence which could serve as a basis for Marian dogma."⁵⁶ He rejects such dogma insofar as it implies a recognition of Mary's cooperation at the level of salvation.

⁵³ K.F. Dougherty, *Contemporary American Protestant Attitudes Towards the Divine Maternity*, in *MSt* 6 (1955) 143. The results of the survey with regard to the Lutheran participants (five out of twenty-one of whom responded in the affirmative) were contested by the publication of the Lutheran Church, *The American Lutheran*, 38 (1955) 6, which claimed that all Lutherans believe that Mary is the Mother of God. Indeed, all of them should believe it as a matter of Lutheran orthodoxy, as the survey demonstrated (cf. S.J. Bonano, *Mary and United States Protestantism*, in *EMar* 6 (1956) 401ff).

⁵⁴ Cf. For example R. Niebuhr's position in *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, New York 1947, 70 (cf. Bonano, *Mary*, 374).

⁵⁵ *Dogmatique*, 127.

⁵⁶ *Dogmatique*, 128.

“The creature who is graced in virtue of its own consent: such is the real theme of Mariology.” It is not therefore simply Mary as an individual who is involved, but the more general principle of the creature’s collaboration in salvation. According to Catholic theology, Mary is actively engaged in the divine plan as she gives her consent to the Incarnation in the name of humanity; this consent opens her fully to grace and renders her capable of positively assuming her task as Mother of God. She prefigures the church, which must also cooperate with Christ. Barth laments this fundamental principle: when he criticizes Marian dogma, he wants to reject “the idea according to which the human creature collaborates (*ministerialiter*) in its own salvation, on the basis of prevenient grace.”⁵⁷ He maintains that such cooperation betrays Christ’s sovereignty; certainly, Christ acts with and through his Church, “but nonetheless still in such a way that at every stage He is and remains Lord... and so no reciprocity, no exchange, no transmission of power may be countenanced, even with the most careful qualifiers.”⁵⁸

On the one hand, Barth must be given credit for defending the title of “Mother of God,” as linked to the mystery of the Incarnation. On the other hand, his dogmatic vision of grace and the church makes him deny Mary any true and active collaboration in salvation, and so tends to empty the divine maternity of any content. Nor is “Mother of God” the only thing at risk of being devalued; the mystery of the Incarnation itself is at stake, since this mystery makes sense only within the context of human nature’s cooperation with God. Elsewhere, Barth himself became aware of deficiency in his presentation of the mystery of the Incarnation, and attempted to modify it by placing more attention on the importance and the role of Jesus’ human nature, stating in particular that “as true man” Jesus Christ is “God’s faithful partner.”⁵⁹

The principle of a real human collaboration entailed by the Incarnation could be applied to Mary as an integral part of that mystery, but the reformed theologian did not reach this point; his doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of grace appears to cut him off from following that path.

⁵⁷ *Dogmatique*, 133.

⁵⁸ *Dogmatique*, *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *L’humanité de Dieu*, Geneva 1956, 21.

The German protestant Hans Asmussen has responded to the fundamental objection as laid down by Barth, saying “In our Church one may speak freely of the sole efficacy of grace, and one is right to do so.” Nonetheless, it must not be forgotten that “grace works only in those human beings who cooperate. And Mary is the clear sign within human history that only grace is at work, but indeed precisely in those members of humanity who cooperate.”⁶⁰

The whole of the mystery of human history, from Adam to Christ, implies a community of God with men, a community in which men open themselves to grace and do that which God does, in such manner that what grace does within them and what they themselves do cannot be separated. This mystery of cooperation appears clearly in the Incarnation. The child in the crèche at Bethlehem is the work of God, of the Holy Spirit who was at work in Mary’s womb; but, Asmussen adds forcefully, this baby is also Mary’s work, and bears the traces of likeness to his Mother. But behind Mary stands the entirety of humanity which provided this likeness; there culminates in Mary the cooperation of all those generations of humanity from Adam to the Incarnation.⁶¹

This is the sense in which Asmussen declares, “One has no Christ without Mary.”⁶² What is essential about the Savior is that he is ours; if he were not truly ours, he could do nothing for us. And he unites himself to humanity through Mary.

Mary’s contribution is therefore an essential element of the Incarnation; it represents the contribution of all humanity to that mystery. Asmussen maintains that if Protestants are willing to grant so little to Mary’s role, it is because they think of her too exclusively as an individual and not as the link between Jesus Christ and humanity. If one has to do with Christ, one has to do with us, and it must be a real man that offered the redemptive sacrifice so that we offered it in him. If it was simply God who carried out the sacrifice, it would not have benefitted mankind.

⁶⁰ *Maria die Mutter Gottes*, Stuttgart 1951 (2nd ed.), 15. A third edition was published in 1960. A good presentation of Asmussen’s Mariology was made by C.S.

Napiórkowski: *Le Christ avec Marie ou le Christ sans la Vierge? Le Pasteur Asmussen et la Sainte Vierge*, *Mar* 38 (1976) 97-114. Asmussen was born in 1898 and died in 1968, and was an observer at Vatican II.

⁶¹ *Maria*, 16.

⁶² *Maria*, 13.

Humanity can see itself in Christ thanks to Mary; thanks to her, it is the “Son of Man” who has saved us.⁶³

Thus Mary’s consent at the Annunciation must be regarded as a decision that enlists the whole human race. “Only if humanity enters into Mary’s decision can this decision be their salvation.”⁶⁴ The decision taken by the Virgin in the name of humanity manifests the positive, principal role she enacts in the Incarnation.

In his book on Mary, Thurian likewise underscores these requirements of the Incarnation. When speaking of Calvin’s reticence with respect to the title “Mother of God,”⁶⁵ he attributes it to a certain Nestorianism. He notes that many Protestants are disposed to this current of thought; they prefer to speak of a manifestation of God in Jesus, rather than affirm that Christ is God. Thurian himself is of the opinion that there ought to be a rehabilitation of Nestorius.⁶⁶ But in point of fact he distances himself quite clearly from Nestorian views insofar as he detects, for the most part, all that is implied by the Incarnation, and he states himself to be firmly in favor of the title “Mother of God”: “If God has truly taken flesh in the Virgin Mary, and if the two natures of Christ are really united in one person, Mary cannot be only the mother of the humanity of Christ as if that could be separated from his divinity. She is the mother of one single

⁶³ *Maria*, 14.

⁶⁴ *Maria*, 18.

⁶⁵ Calvin admitted the Council of Ephesus’ definition, but habitually abstained from making use of the title “Mother of God,” and tended to disregard the particular importance of Jesus’ humanity, and, in consequence, of the divine maternity (Cf. B. Dupuy, *La mariologie de Calvin*, in *Istina* 5 (1958) 486-490). J. Bosc cites a text from the *Institutes* in which Calvin calls Mary “Mother of Our Lord,” but also cites a passage from a letter to the community in London where he says, “To be fraternally candid with you, I must not hide that it is terrible that this title be ordinarily attributed to the virgin in homilies, and, for my part, I know not how such language can be either good, or decent, or fitting. . . . To say Mother of God about the Virgin Mary can accomplish nothing except to solidify the ignorant in their superstitions.” Bosc does not consider this to be a case of nestorianism, since Calvin explicitly rejects Nestorius’ heresy, but thinks instead that the title “Mother of God” is avoided due to pastoral concerns. (*La mariologie*, 19-20).

⁶⁶ *Le dogme de l’Assomption*, 33.

person, the Mother of God made man, of the Only Christ, true God and true man.”⁶⁷

Furthermore, if the Incarnation requires that Christ be God and Mary be the mother of God, this also demands that he be truly man; the reality of his humanity means that Mary is “a truly human mother and not only an instrument to permit God’s appearing on earth.”⁶⁸ Here Thurian is distancing himself from Barth: Mary is not simply an instrument for God’s sovereign agency: her motherhood carries with it “a relationship of mother to son in the full sense, physical, psychological and spiritual.”⁶⁹

Therefore, Mary made her personal contribution to the birth and development of Jesus. This contribution is revealed in her role as educator: “if Christ truly became man like ourselves He was a child and thus had to be brought up and educated like us.”⁷⁰ Mary carried out her mission as educator in faith. Jesus’ submission to his parents attests to this surprising aspect of the mystery, and guarantees “the Incarnation of the Son of God, the reality of his humanity.”⁷¹

Asmussen insists on Mary’s physical cooperation in the formation of the child, and on her decision at the Annunciation in the name of the human race; Thurian places his emphasis on her moral cooperation in Jesus’ development, in “the human conditions in the domestic, social and religious sense of the life of Christ,” which is an essential element in the Incarnation.⁷² With a Protestant meditation on the mystery of Mary, one can also highlight the personal responsibility Mary assumed with her consent, which is an “essential element,” in the plan of salvation.⁷³ These are the various aspects of a collaboration which is not added to, but rather integrated within, the mystery of the Incarnation.

⁶⁷ *Mary*, 78-79. Thurian cites the reformed pastor Charles Drelincourt (1595-1669) who in his treatise *De l’honneur qui doit être rendu à la Sainte et bienheureuse vierge Marie*, accepts, much more positively than Calvin, the title Mother of God.

⁶⁸ *Mary*, 79.

⁶⁹ *Mary*, 79.

⁷⁰ *Mary*, 81.

⁷¹ *Mary*, 83.

⁷² *Mary, Mother of the Lord*, 80.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 81.

This is the reason why, in reference to the sparse attention given Mary in Protestantism, pastor A. Brémond confesses “Our protestant Christianity is at times too disincarnated.”⁷⁴

b – *Virginity*

Barth’s stance on Mary’s virginity, like his stance on Mary’s maternity, is such as to attract attention. While the prevailing tendency within Protestantism is to deny the virgin birth of Jesus, Barth has revived the affirmation of the Credo: *natus ex Maria Virgine*, a formula which he maintains “absolutely unequivocally.”⁷⁵

This fact entails a miracle, a sign immediately effected by God that illuminates our sense of the Incarnation. While highlighting the importance of this sign, the reformed theologian nevertheless will not grant Mary’s virginity, any more than her maternity, a status that rises above the purely negative in terms of human collaboration. In this virginity he sees a sign of the exclusion of the sexual, sinful life from the origins of Jesus Christ’s human existence.⁷⁶ And, even more profoundly, he sees this sign to be a judgment on man and on the incapacity of human nature to raise itself to the level of “fellowship with God.”⁷⁷ Mary’s virginity indicates that the event is brought about by God, and that the creature must merely submit to Him and receive Him. The virginity implies a negation “of the possibilities and of the aptitude of man to know and attain to God. However,” adds Barth, “If man is able to be endowed with God – as is evident in Mary – that means, strictly and exclusively, that he receives God, that he is entrusted with Him.”⁷⁸ Mary’s virginity therefore signifies the passivity of the creature, who allows God to act within her.

Thurian too highlights the sovereignty of the divine decision expressed in Mary’s virginity. He considers this virginity to be a consecration, a setting apart in which the predestination of Mary’s virginity is implied. In explaining this virginal consecration, he states, “Mary is alone with God in order to receive Him, that the fullness of the Lord may dwell in her and nothing other might be able to fill her. It is essential that this

⁷⁴ C. Booth, *Marie la mère de Notre Seigneur*, in *Dialogue sur la Vierge*, Lyons 1950, 65.

⁷⁵ *Dogmatique*, 172.

⁷⁶ *Dogmatique*, 178.

⁷⁷ *Dogmatique*, 174.

⁷⁸ *Dogmatique*, 176.

fullness should be received without any other human help, and in the poverty of the Virgin of Israel...”

As a sign of consecration, this virginity is consequently and at the same time a “sign of solitary powerlessness, which gives glory to the fullness and the power of God.”⁷⁹

Nevertheless, in contrast to Barth, Thurian does not relegate to Mary’s virginity a merely negative role; while it expresses humanity’s incapacity, this virginity is not totally passive. It is a “sign of poverty,” but of a poverty which is actively consented to, a poverty brought about by humility, one of attentiveness to God, total fidelity, service to the Creator.⁸⁰ It therefore presupposes a positive attitude, one deliberately willed and deliberately sustained. This is an attitude of openness to contemplation and love, since the virginity is “a state in which the creature may lovingly contemplate his Creator.” “Because Mary in view of the Messiah’s birth, does not know any other love than that of God, and her unique communion with Him, she is entirely turned toward Him and waiting readily for His response.”⁸¹ She has had a contemplative life, of which we discover definite indications in the Gospel.

One should also add that this virginal attitude entails an *aspect of novelty*, in which a new human liberty, transformed by grace and the new order of things, is affirmed. Thurian observes that “The fact of free renunciation of marriage points out that from the coming of Christ the creative order is not necessarily unavoidable; the law of creation can be broken by the new order of the kingdom.”⁸² Mary’s virginity is the fullness of love, the sign of the resurrection and of the future world. It is thus that the Virgin Mary introduces into the world, “the novelty of the Kingdom of God which makes its appearance with Christ.”⁸³

The three aspects of Mary’s virginity which Thurian elucidates, he then goes on to apply to celibate monasticism: “a sign of consecrated obedience, contemplative poverty, and eschatological newness.”⁸⁴ One might well

⁷⁹ *Mary*, 31.

⁸⁰ *Mary*, 31ff.

⁸¹ *Mary*, 33.

⁸² *Mary*, 33-34.

⁸³ *Mary*, 35.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

imagine that the author, through his own experience of monastic life, would be better able to grasp the meaning of Mary's virginity, just as at one time the institution of consecrated virginity was an illumination for the Church with respect to the reality and the value of the Virgin of virgins' first virginal consecration, which is the model for all others.⁸⁵ The monk's commitment to chastity is by its nature such as to enable the profound recognition of that first commitment by the Virgin.

Based on the fact that he understands virginal consecration from the inside, Thurian is led to acknowledge Mary's perpetual virginity. The New Testament texts do not of themselves suffice for making an absolute affirmation of virginity after Jesus' birth, but the doctrine of the perpetual virginity results from three characteristics of virginity itself: a sign of consecration to the Lord, of contemplative poverty, and of the eschatological newness of the Kingdom. This consecration is total only to the extent that it is definitive; her poverty is what enables Mary to have received everything by receiving Christ; she cannot be any more completely filled, and must contemplate only that which she possesses; the newness of the Kingdom has as its sign a perpetual celibacy (Matthew 19:12). Thus the belief in Mary, ever-virgin, which is found in the Church's tradition and in the thinking of the Reformers, assumes a solid coherence.

In her virginity Mary is a sign of the church. Asmussen presented Jesus' virginal birth as the initiation of the new birth of the Christian;⁸⁶ Thurian does more to highlight the nature of the personal commitment of virginity, with its ecclesial implications. "Mary is in her virginity the sign of the creature who is set apart and dedicated by the Lord, is filled with all the fullness of God, and has nothing more to await than the final completion when the Kingdom of God should be revealed, of which she already, in a hidden and anticipatory way, sees the fulfilment. She is the sign of the Holy Church which only awaits and looks for the return of Jesus Christ."⁸⁷

c – Holiness

With respect to Mary's holiness it is interesting to compare the two successive stages in Thurian's thought. When reporting the teaching of reformed theology, Thurian explained why it rejected the idea of Mary's

⁸⁵ *Mary*, 36-37.

⁸⁶ *Maria die Mutter Gottes*, 17-21.

⁸⁷ *Mary*, 40.

perfect sanctity, and especially any privilege of an immaculate conception. He contrasted the Catholic notion of grace, according to which man is physically transformed by the Holy Spirit and physically placed in communion with Christ with the Protestant notion that defines grace instead as a habitation of the Holy Spirit in a nature which remains sinful, and which while serving as an instrument of God in His work of sanctification, remains attracted to rebellion. The Immaculate Conception, as understood by Catholicism, is Mary's predestination understood as a physical preparation for the divine maternity. Protestantism, on the contrary, does not understand this predestination in terms of sanctification, but as God's sovereign decision which leads a sinful, pardoned soul towards the goal chosen by Him. It is God's glory that is made manifest in beings who can lay claim to no dignity of their own: such is Mary, "the humble and sinful handmaiden who has found favor before God." Though a unique personality in history, she "remains a wretched sinner who needs her Son's forgiveness."⁸⁸

With this divergence arising from his doctrine on grace, Thurian notes that there is an opposition to any exaltation of Mary, which might seem to make of her a divine personage. Reformed theology accuses Catholicism of separating Mary from the church, from the society of sinful human beings like us: the virginity and the Immaculate Conception and the assumption widen the gap between the situation ascribed to Mary and the conditions of life within the Church.⁸⁹

But in his work on Mary Thurian reconsiders the problem from a new angle: Scripture. He analyzes the title given to Mary by the angel – "full of grace" – and discerns therein a predestination to the messianic maternity which prepared Mary for her mission and which affected her life by the infusion of sanctity.⁹⁰ With this move he overcomes the antagonism assumed by Protestantism between a predestination which is the sovereign act of God and an interior, "physical" preparation of human nature; in effect scripture indicates that the divine predestination is made concrete in an intimate sanctification.

⁸⁸ *Mariology*, 310-312, cf. 301, with regard to the purification: "She is a sinner like others."

⁸⁹ *Mariology*, 312-313.

⁹⁰ *Mary*, 22.

With respect to the accusation that there is a separation posited between Mary and the rest of humanity, Thurian shows it to be ill-founded. The accusation should pertain to her virginity as well; but the evangelists, who affirm the miracle of the virgin birth, do not compromise the mystery of the Incarnation in the process – nor can they be accused of docetism. And, like her virginity, Mary's holiness does not contradict the humanity of Christ: "on the contrary, sanctity is the authentic quality of true humanity. Christ would not have been more human if He had been a sinner; nor therefore would He have been more human had He been born of a woman who was a sinner. The Son of God became true man because He was born of a true woman..."⁹¹

Thurian identifies the danger of insisting on Mary's sinful state: holiness risks appearing as "a kind of contradiction of true humanity," and faith in Christ, the man who knew no sin, is quickly compromised.⁹² One sees once more the solidarity between Mother and Son: to reject Mary's perfect holiness as inhuman is to wed oneself to unbelief in the humanity of the Word made flesh.

Moreover, one might well fear that the negation of Mary's sanctity would entail an offense against Christian sanctity. The monk of Taizé has realized that, in the area of holiness as in that of virginity, there is a link between the Virgin and the deportment of Christians today: "It might be asked if the denial of Mary's sanctity, of which the only source is in Christ, is not accompanied by a naturalistic view of the Christian life which would exclude asceticism, contemplation and sanctification since these are seen as achieving greater sanctity in God only by escaping the ordinary conditions of human nature. The anti-ascetic or anti-monastic reaction found in a certain type of Protestantism is not altogether removed from the anti-Marian reaction."⁹³

Consequently, the doctrine of Mary's holiness is best seen in relation to the doctrine of the Church's holiness. "The Church," states Thurian, "will no more be 'human' because we may speak of it as sinful." Certainly the church recognizes sin within her, since it is a society made up of human beings. But it is necessary to see Christ's Body, the community instituted by

⁹¹ *Mary*, 24.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

the Lord and animated by the Spirit, within her, and for this reason the church is holy. "The Church is not truly the Church except in so far as she is holy in her vocation and ministry as Mother of the Faithful, ordained for the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments, for 'the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ' (Ephesians 4:12)." ⁹⁴

Holiness is therefore not something that estranges Mary from the Church. Thurian places no restrictions on Mary's sanctity; nonetheless, he does not affirm the Immaculate Conception, and he restricts himself to criticizing "those who wish to speak of Mary as if she were sinful or on the other [hand] separated from our condition as human creatures." ⁹⁵ But meditation on the scriptural words "full of grace" has enabled him both to avoid those common objections which Protestantism poses to the privilege of the immaculate conception, as well as to look with new eyes at the issue of the Mother of God's sanctity.

d – *Spiritual maternity and mediation*

Protestant critics often become agitated when presented with the spiritual maternity and mediation attributed to Mary by Catholic theology. Indeed, inasmuch as this involves her current role in the economy of salvation and the communication of grace, according to Protestantism it seems that Mary is usurping a place that belongs exclusively to Christ, the one mediator.

Still, even in this field, certain contemporary Protestants have taken on a less negative attitude. Thus, in the meditation he published on "the Virgin, Image of the Church," where he comments on the Calvary scene, Pastor Jean de Saussure does not hesitate to say that Christ gave Mary as mother to each of his beloved disciples. He concludes with these lines, which in their conciseness comprehend the whole theology of spiritual maternity: "Lord, we give you thanks for having given us so exalted a Mother! After all, in Your mercy you have been pleased to make us Your brethren, so is Your Mother not to be our Mother? And more profoundly still, since she was Your Mother, how could she not be ours as well, for we are members of Your Body, we who are united in the same spirit with You." ⁹⁶ These final

⁹⁴ *Mary*, 24-25.

⁹⁵ *Mary*, 25.

⁹⁶ *Dialogue sur la Vierge*, 104.

words reprise the deep connection which obtains between Mary's maternal function and the intimate reality of Christian grace, from belonging to the church to union with Christ. The spiritual motherhood reveals itself to be the prolongation of the divine maternity, since Christ, who lives within the Christian and bestows his Spirit, is the Son of Mary.

Max Thurian too, in a detailed analysis of the words of the dying Christ to his mother and his beloved disciple, wants to demonstrate that there is in Mary a personification of the church's motherhood: Mary is the image of the Church-Mother. Then he considers Mary's motherhood within the Church: Mary is "the spiritual mother *par excellence* of the beloved and faithful disciple, of the brother of Jesus, which every Christian is called to be."⁹⁷

This spiritual motherhood raises the issue of mediation. Protestantism has generally abandoned the idea of Mary's mediation, as it more generally and more universally abandons every teaching on the mediation of the saints along with any corresponding forms of devotion.

Already in the report prepared for the congress on "Faith and Constitution," Thurian declared himself opposed to this exclusion of devotion to the saints. He stated that this devotion "does not in any way detract from the love which is due only to Christ, from the adoration and obedience which belong only to him, and nothing from his sacrifice and his intercession; it is he who is loved in his saints, who is adored in veneration to them, who is obeyed when we follow their example."⁹⁸ The true Christocentrism of Christian worship is therefore maintained: "The remembrance of the saints in the Church is to love an imitate Christ, and it is further the action of grace through those gifts made manifest in them, through his power of resurrection and regeneration."⁹⁹ Such is his response to Protestantism's most common criticism, namely, that devotion to Mary is an offense to the worship that belongs to Christ. In reality, love and imitation of Mary means love and imitation of Christ.

In addition, Thurian underscores the extent to which devotion to the saints is demanded by love for the church. A piety that devalues the

⁹⁷ *Mary*, 170.

⁹⁸ *Marie dans la Bible et dans l'Eglise*, in *Dialogue sur la Vierge*, 118.

⁹⁹ *Marie dans la Bible et dans l'Eglise*, 119.

communion of the saints, he points out, yields to individualism or to sectarianism. According to the Lord's precept, "one cannot love God only in oneself. It is necessary to love Him in His brethren, in the Church, in His saints." And this love for the brethren must be extended to the whole of Catholicity throughout space and time, and therefore to all the saints of the tradition. And, hence, also to Mary.¹⁰⁰

Thurian reaffirms this truth in his work. The mention of the saints in the liturgy causes us to "realize that we are not alone in adoration and intercession for men." "The Communion of Saints unites all Christians in one and the same prayer, in one and the same life, in Christ; it unites the Church to-day with that of all ages, the Church militant on earth with the Church triumphant in Heaven."¹⁰¹ This communion of saints builds up the Church's faith, hope and charity.

And Mary has a role to play in this communion: "And Mary, the Mother of the Lord and type of the Church, has her place in this immense community of the Saints, a place of pre-eminence as the first Christian woman, filled with grace. She is all the more for the Church a symbol of her sorrowful motherhood which gives birth to the faithful by the risen life. She is an example of faith, obedience, constancy and saintliness: the Church militant, considering the Church triumphant, sees there Mary, a symbol of her certain victory."¹⁰²

Thus is Mary's place in the liturgy justified. Thurian supports the celebration of the three liturgical feasts which Luther never stopped observing: the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Purification, all of which have a biblical foundation. Thurian desires too the preservation of the feast of August 15, not explicitly in honor of the bodily assumption, which Protestants contest, but at least as the feast of Mary's entrance into God's rest. The ultimate meaning of this liturgical veneration is "asking for grace to follow the example of the Virgin Mary."¹⁰³ Christ is deprived of none of his rights, for Mary's presence in the Church is for the sake of "being loved and so leading to the love of Christ, and of being imitated and so leading to the imitation of Christ..."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ *Marie dans la Bible et dans l'Eglise*, 117-119.

¹⁰¹ *Mary*, 184.

¹⁰² *Mary*, 185.

¹⁰³ *Mary*, 188.

¹⁰⁴ *Marie dans la Bible*, 119.

Asmussen also insists on the need to create a devotional space for Mary, since a failure to acknowledge the divine blessing of which Christ's Mother is the beneficiary would risk making Christ himself an idea outside of time, and would therefore risk failing to render proper glory to Mary's Son.¹⁰⁵

The German Lutheran theologian poses the issue of mediation in these terms: is Mary to be placed on the side of God or of men? "We are convinced," he says, articulating the Protestant opinion, "that she is to be found solely on the side of men."¹⁰⁶ But is this position so certain? Does it not presuppose an overly absolute separation between God and men, a separation that contradicts the very mediation of Christ? The character of this mediation "is not just that Christ participates in the human, but that we too participate in what belongs to him."¹⁰⁷ We are brought into Jesus' life as he enters into ours. We become partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4). We die and we live with Christ and we are therefore able to cooperate with God. From this point of view we find ourselves on the side of God as we confront the world: "in the gift of Jesus Christ Christians are placed next to God."¹⁰⁸

This truth becomes more apparent when we consider the task, imposed on every Christian, of being the servant of the Gospel. It is a priesthood through which the Christian sees himself as being entrusted with the administration of the grace that he himself has been given. Now, through this priesthood and through this power, man finds himself on the side of God when confronting humanity. It is in this way that Christ must show himself to the world through the apostle.

One cannot therefore act as though there is a radical separation between God and men. "From the point of view of the world, God and his saints form a unity."¹⁰⁹ Christians must incorporate themselves into this unity and so place themselves on the side of God.

From this it follows that if it is true that Mary is with all of us, one must also grant that she is to be found, along with all the saints, alongside

¹⁰⁵ *Maria die Mutter Gottes*, 61.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

God in the engagement with the world. It does not therefore suffice to think solely of Mary's consecration to God, nor simply to see her as an object for reflection or a subject of speech; it is also necessary to discern her role of service to humanity in salvation history, to acknowledge her as someone with something important to say about us and about the world, who expresses this truth before the throne of God.¹¹⁰

This does not entail assigning Mary a position as secondary mediatrix along with Christ. The Protestants do not support the notion that it is necessary that there should be a mediation between Christ and us. But, on the other hand, Asmussen adds, they have oversimplified the issue of the one mediator. One must in practice admit the mediation of Christians, since we grant their priestly function, and since without mediation any priesthood would be bogus.¹¹¹

In which case one must acknowledge this Christian mediation in Mary's case as well. Nevertheless, Mary is not a mediatrix along with Christ; she is mediatrix *in* Christ, as is the case of Christians.¹¹² A mediation *in* Christ would not offend against his honor. While being unique, this mediation does not preclude others from entering into it and becoming colleagues; it is the sign that Christ's mediation is bearing fruit. Mary is not only the earthly mother of the Lord, she has become his disciple, in his Kingdom, and in following him she takes part in his mediation.¹¹³

Thus does Asmussen underscore, more clearly than Thurian, the active aspect of Mary's mediation. For the monk of Taizé, Mary is revered above all as the example we are called to follow. For Asmussen, Mary plays a role of intercession. The Lutheran theologian does not go so far as to say that we should invoke Mary,¹¹⁴ but he does attribute to her an intervening role from God for the benefit of humanity. This intervention does not diminish Christ's unique mediation, since it is a participation within that mediation.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 48.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 50.

¹¹² Asmussen criticizes the Catholic doctrine of Mary's mediation alongside of Christ, especially in the article *Dem Unbefleckten Herzen Mariä geweiht?*, *Gloria Dei* 9 (1954): 202-210, written on the occasion of the consecration of Germany to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Cf. Napiórkowski, *Le Christ*, 109-110.

¹¹³ *Maria die Mutter Gottes*, 51.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 61.

4. *Anglican Positions*

In the Thirty-Nine Articles that constitute the essential profession of the Anglican Church, nothing is said in favor of Marian devotion. Article Twenty-two describes invocation of the saints and angels as “vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God,” and the main thrust is hostile to any prayer directed to the Virgin. The anti-Catholic reaction is conveyed in an opposition to Marian devotion.

Nonetheless, this negative attitude is not shared by all, and one may observe within the Anglican tradition various witnesses to a Marian doctrine that affirms the divine maternity, the perpetual virginity, a unique position within the economy of redemption, and at times the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.¹¹⁵ We must note that with respect to the divine maternity, the fidelity to this affirmation is based on the recognition, within the Anglican Church, of the authority of the first four ecumenical councils.

In certain Anglican circles one finds, recently, a renewal of Marian devotion, and in certain theologians one ascertains a noteworthy ecumenical energy in the sense of a more profound study of Marian doctrine.¹¹⁶ It is thus that E.L. Mascall, professor of historical theology at the University of London, has not only confirmed the importance pertaining to the title *Theotokos*, but has emphasized the value of the consent given by Mary to the divine project. He moreover accepts favorably the title of co-redemptrix, highlighting that it implies a subordination to Christ the Redeemer. “Mary,” he says, “was redeemed in a special way in the body of the Church and is associated in a special way with the Mediator and so is become the mother of all his members.”¹¹⁷ He invokes St. John’s text in order to affirm Mary’s universal motherhood: “Mary is the mother of Jesus and of those who are incorporated into him, the mother of the Church which is his Mystical Body...”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ S. Cwiertniak, *La Vierge Marie dans la tradition anglicane*, Paris 1958; A. M. Allchin, *Our Lady in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Devotion and Theology*, in *The Blessed Virgin Mary* (ed. E. L. Mascall – H.S. Box), London 1963, 53-76.

¹¹⁶ Cf. G.M. Papini, *Teologia ecumenico-mariana in Occidente*, *Mar* 35 (1973) 150-176; J. De Satgé, *Toward an Evangelical Re-appraisal*, in *The Blessed Virgin*, 103-114.

¹¹⁷ *Theotokos: The Place of Mary in the Work of Salvation*, in *The Blessed Virgin*, 19.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

Also worthy of mention are two brief studies by H.S. Box on the Immaculate Conception and on the Assumption. These two privileges are not admitted to be dogmas of faith, but rather secondary religious truths, possessing a high degree of plausibility, which merit a place in Christian devotion.¹¹⁹

Nor are expressions of Marian devotion absent from contemporary Anglicanism: there are signs of popular devotion to Our Lady.¹²⁰ The Anglican religious communities, some of which bear the name of the Virgin Mary, venerate Jesus' mother with various pious practices.¹²¹

5. *Obstacles and Points of Mutual Approach*

Despite the opinions of certain protestant or Anglican theologians which are more favorable to Mariology, one should not underestimate the obstacles in the reformed churches that, up till now, have blocked the path of the development of Marian doctrine and devotion.¹²²

Among the most crucial doctrinal reasons which are invoked in the Protestant setting against Catholic Mariology are the uniqueness of Christ's mediation and the doctrine of the sovereignty of God's action. The basic response on the part of Catholic theology is that Christ's mediation, in its omnipotence and its governance over all humanity, is most fully expressed when it gives rise to mediations within creatures, mediations which are entirely derived from his and receive their efficacy from his. God's sovereignty in grace does not consist in reducing the human being to passive acceptance, but to promoting an active collaboration that enlists all the resources of the human personality in the work of salvation. In the role attributed to Mary there is, in particular, a promotion of the feminine personality: during a time in which such emphasis is placed on women's liberation, Mariology is responding to a profound aspiration of this movement, showing how God was the first to liberate woman and entrust

¹¹⁹ *The Immaculate Conception*, in *The Blessed Virgin*, 76-88; *The Assumption*, *ibid.*, 89-100.

¹²⁰ Cf. J. C. Stephenson, *Popular Devotion to Our Lady and Christian Unity*, in *The Blessed Virgin*, 115-120.

¹²¹ Cf. K. F. Dougherty, *Our Lady and Christian Unity*, ME 10, 209-236.

¹²² Cf. S. C. Napiórkowski, *Le mariologue peut-il être oecuméniste? Du rôle de la mariologie contemporaine dans le dialogue oecuménique des protestants et des catholiques*, EMar 22 (1972) 15-76.

her with a mission of primary importance within the economy of redemption.

The absence of Marian devotion in the Protestant religion indicates an absence of woman: a certain number of Protestants have taken cognizance of this privation. On the other hand, this absence has not encouraged any attachment to Christ, declarations of principle notwithstanding: it must be granted that the faith in Christ the Son of God made man has been maintained better among the Orthodox, who have an intense Marian devotion, than among the Protestants. Mary's doctrinal solidarity with Christ, which is made manifest in the proclamation of the *Theotokos* at Ephesus, continues to be confirmed in the history of Christian theology.

Opposition to Mariology among Protestants is tied to a deep hostility towards the infallible magisterium as understood by Catholics, and also seemingly to the rejection of the importance of the tradition in the development of what is implicitly contained by scripture.¹²³ We are dealing here with a difference in conceiving revealed truth, truth which, for Protestants, is enclosed with scripture and which, for Catholics, is expressed from scripture in the living tradition of the Church. Mariology testifies, especially through the affirmation of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, to the great role which this tradition plays. It must be grasped that the ecumenical issue of Mariology demands the solution of a much vaster problematic which results from opposed conceptions about revelation and its transmission.¹²⁴

All the same, the greater proximity which has been achieved on the part of certain theologians remains a reason for hope. Mary, who was the first to commit herself in Christian hope, leads the Church on the path of this hope, and more particularly on the path of ecumenical hope.¹²⁵

¹²³ Cf. J. Vodopivec, *La Vierge Marie: obstacle et Espoir de la reunion des chrétiens. Les incidences ecclésiologiques de la mariologie dans la perspective oecuménique*, *Maria et Ecclesia [ME]* 10, 143-180.

¹²⁴ Cf. A. Farrer, *Mary, Scripture and Tradition*, in *The Blessed Virgin*, 27-52.

¹²⁵ Cf. C. Boyer, *Marie, espérance pour l'unité chrétienne*, *ME* 10, 181-193; A. Morris, *Our Lady and Reunion of Christendom*, in *The Blessed Virgin*, 121-131.

The Treatment of Mary in the Codex Veronensis

I. Introduction

The Codex Veronensis, denoted by siglum ‘*b*’, is arguably the most ‘typical’ witness of the *Vetus Latina* Gospel text of the European type,¹ and is held by some scholars to represent a text of the type which formed the primary basis for the Gospels in Jerome’s Vulgate.² The manuscript, inscribed in uncial script in silver and occasionally gold ink on purple vellum, dates from the 4th or 5th Century. It comprises the four Gospels in the Western order, with generally fewer *lacunae* than other Latin Gospel codices of comparable antiquity.³ It is currently held at the Biblioteca Capitolare at Verona. Three editions of the work have been published; the first by Blanchini (1749),⁴ which was reproduced by Migne (1845),⁵ one by Belshiem (1904),⁶ and one Buchanan (1911).⁷ This last edition faithfully replicates the column and verse divisions of the manuscript.

¹ P. BURTON, *The Old Latin Gospels—A Study of Their Texts and Language*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 62.

² H. KOESTER, *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 34.

³ The primary *lacunae* in the Codex Veronensis are portions of Mt 1:15 and 23; Jn 7 and 8; Lk 19-21; and Mk 13-16. While not inconsiderable, these are significantly less than the *lacunae* in either the Codices Vercellensis or Palatinus.

⁴ J. BLANCHINUS (ed.), *Evangeliarium quadruplex latinae versionis antiquae seu veteris italicae* (Rome: Antonio de Rubeis, 1749).

⁵ BLANCHINUS (ed.), “*Evangeliarium quadruplex latinae versionis antiquae seu veteris italicae*”, *PL* 35:9-948.

⁶ J. BELSHEIM (ed.), *Codex Veronensis Quattuor Evangelia* (Prague: Royal Society of Sciences of Bohemia, 1904). Although the Belsheim edition is certainly the most conveniently readable, it does have the disadvantage of inserted punctuation, and even the inclusion of a very considerable number of textual ‘corrections’. (Cf. BELSHEIM [ed.], *Codex Veronensis*, 140-142)

⁷ A.S. BUCHANAN, *The four Gospels from the codex Veronensis (b): Being the first complete edition of the Evangeliarium purpureum in the Cathedral Library at Verona* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911). It is to be noted that Buchanan’s subsequent authorship of manifestly falsified texts of supposed ‘primitive Latin

In this essay, it will be demonstrated that numerous textual variants in the Codex Veronensis reflect a particular focus on Mary, and an emphasis on the virginal conception of Christ, as well as a deliberate highlighting of the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary. These textual variants are readily identified through a comparison of the text of *b* with both the Heironymian Vulgate, and/or other *V/L* versions. In themselves, most of the textual variants are apparently minor,⁸ such as the use of a proper name rather than a pronoun, a difference in tense or case, or the insertion or omission of a word or phrase— yet cumulatively they suggest convincingly a tendency on the part of the compiler of the text to highlight the person of Mary, and to emphasize the related themes of the virginal conception of Christ and the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary. Although the significance of the variant reading appearing in *b* for Jn 1:13 in relation to the doctrine of the virginal conception has already been widely discussed, it seems the question of the Marian nuances of the Codex, in a more comprehensive sense, has not been explored in the secondary literature.

Gospels', supporting his own theological views, necessarily raises doubts about the observations he offers in the preface of his edition. (Cf. A.S. BUCHANAN, *Evangelium Secundum Joannem, sine Judiazantium Emendationibus* [New York: E.S. Buchanan, 1919]).

⁸ The exceptions to this are two variant readings which present more obvious differences in conceptual sense; namely Jn 1:13 ('*natus est*' vs. '*nati sunt*'), and Lk 1:34 (in which *b* omits altogether the Mary's question '*Quomodo fiet istud quoniam virum non cognosco?*'). Each of these variants has attracted wide discussion. Cf. J.D. CROSSAN, "Mary and the Church in Jn 1,13," *The Bible Today* 20 (1965), 1318-1324. I. de la Potterie, "Il parto verginale del Verbo incarnato: Non ex sanguinibus, sed ex Deo natus est (Jn 1:13)," *Marianum* 45 (1983), 127-176. J.W. PRYOR, "Of the Virgin Birth or the Birth of Christianity: The Text of John 1:13 Once More," *Novum Testamentum* Vol. 27, Fasc. 4 (Oct., 1985), 296-318. R.M. PRICE, *The Incredible Shrinking Son of Man: How Reliable Is the Gospel Tradition?* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2003), 70.

For the purposes of this brief article, the analysis will be restricted here to variants in the text of the Gospel of Matthew.⁹ Firstly, a number of relevant textual variants will be identified, and their significance analysed. Secondly, the devotional and theological context in which the manuscript emerged will be considered, with particular reference to the writings of Zeno of Verona. Finally, some conclusions will be offered, and some strategies for testing the argued hypothesis more systematically and comprehensively will be proposed.

II. Relevant Textual Variants in the Gospel of Matthew

II.1. *Matthew 1,16*

The reading of Mt 1:16 offered by the Codex Veronensis differs markedly from that of the Vulgate, as shown below:

Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i> ¹⁰	Vulgate (Codex Amiatinus, A ¹¹)
(...) <i>Jacob autem genuit Joseph cui desponsata erat Virgo Maria. Virgo autem Maria genuit Jesum (.....)</i>	(...) <i>Jacob autem genuit Joseph virum Mariae de qua natus est Jesus, qui vocatur Christus.</i>

In the *b* reading, the name of *Maria* appears twice, in comparison to its single appearance in A (where it is replaced by a relative pronoun ‘*qua*’ in the latter part of the verse). In both cases in *b* (unlike A), the title ‘*Virgo*’ is attached to the proper name, suggesting

⁹ This limitation of field excludes the aforementioned well known textual variants. (Jn 1:13 and Lk 1:34) Textual variants in the remaining Gospels in Codex Veronensis which seem to emphasize Mary or the virginal conception are listed, with only minor comment, in Appendix I.

¹⁰ The texts of the Codex Veronensis used in this paper are taken from a consensus of the published editions of Blanchini, Belsheim, and Buchanan. Editorial punctuation has been omitted.

¹¹ The Vulgate text given through this paper is that of the Codex Amiatinus (accepted as the most reliable witness), according to Tischendorf’s edition. (C. TISCHENDORF [ed.], *Novum Testamentum Amiatinum* [Leipzig, F.A. Lirockhausius, 1859.]

that for the compiler of the Codex, the expression ‘*Virgo Maria*’ was understood as a standard expression.

Indeed, the insertion of ‘*autem*’ between ‘*Virgo*’ between ‘*Maria*’ in the second part of the verse demonstrates even more clearly the highly familiar way in which the devotional title and name were linked for the compiler of the text and his readers. It is, of course, a common idiom in Latin for names and titles which are in familiarly recognized conjunction to be separated by an ‘*autem*’ (e.g. ‘*Julius autem Caesar*’, ‘*Jesus autem Christus*’, ‘*Sanctus autem Spiritus*’, etc.). This same idiom seems to be employed here (‘*Virgo autem Maria*’).

There is an important and conspicuous syntactic difference between the Codex Veronensis and the Vulgate reading of Mt 1:16—in the former, ‘*Virgo Maria*’, for both of its appearances, functions as a grammatical subject (nominative); whereas in A, it (or its pronoun) appears each time in grammatically subsidiary roles (as a genitive and ablative).

Syntactically also, the relationship of Christ and Mary is highlighted more strongly in Mt 1:16 in the text of *b* than in A. In A, Jesus is the subject of the verb (albeit in a passive form—‘*natus est*’), and the pronoun designating Mary is an ablative, not of agency, but of location (‘*de qua*’). In *b*, however, it is Mary who ‘begets’ (*genuit*) Christ, in the relationship of a subject to a direct object. Interesting this verb ‘*genuit*’ is reserved in the remainder of the Matthean genealogy (in both A and *b*) to signify the relationship between a male parent and his progeny.¹²

It also seems that the marital relationship between Mary and Joseph is presented in a more reserved modality in *b* than A. Indeed, for *b*, Mary merely ‘*had been promised*’ (‘*desponsata erat*’) to Joseph, whereas in A, Joseph is/was ‘the husband of Mary’ (‘*virum Mariae*’). Arguably, this mode of expression in *b* highlights the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary more strongly than A.

¹² Cf. Mt 1:2-16 (Vulgate and VL versions)

II.2. Matthew 1,19

In Mt 1,19, Joseph's plan to divorce Mary privately is described. The Codex Veronensis differs, both from the Vulgate and other *Vetus Latina* texts,¹³ in employing the adverb '*tacite*', rather than the '*occulte*'. Thus the *b* text reads: (...) '*voluit tacite illam dimittere*.' However, A gives: '(...) *voluit occulte dimittere eam*.'

The text's preference for '*tacite*' here effectively avoids the suggestion of deception or dissimulation which is often associated with the word '*occulte*'. Indeed, a little later, the *b* text does employ '*occulte*'—to describe Herod's deceptive consultations with the Magi.¹⁴ Perhaps the compiler of the text was eager to distance the plan of Joseph to divorce Mary privately from any such tone of underhanded concealment. While Herod's enquiries are made '*occulte*', Joseph's plans (for the compiler of *b*), innocent of any intention of dissimulation, are merely considered 'silently'. Interestingly, the *b* text comfortably allows the adverb '*tacite*' to be understood as describing either the manner in which Joseph's 'willed' ('*voluit*') the course of action, or the manner of divorce he was considering.

Does the position of the pronoun before the verb ('*illam dimittere*' rather than '*dimittere eam*'), together with the choice of the slightly more emphatic and sonorous '*illam*', rather than '*eam*', give Mary extra prominence and centrality in the sentence? Quite possibly.¹⁵

II.3. Matthew 1,25

¹³ Cf. Codices Vercellensis, Corbeienis and Brixianus.

¹⁴ Mt 2:7 (*b*).

¹⁵ The line in question, in both the A and the *b* versions, forms a *logaoedic* tetrapody, thus:

A: *volúit occúlte dimittére éam*.

b: *volúit tácite íllam dimittére*.

In such a quadruple rhythmic grouping, the third beat tends normally to be more accented than the fourth. Thus, '*illam*' in the *b* text will tend, according to this principle, to be more strongly accented, than '*eam*' is in the A text.

Matthew 1,25, as presented in the Vulgate (and most *Vetus Latina* texts¹⁶), has generated much discussion, since the time of Hilary¹⁷ and Jerome,¹⁸ concerning how it is best to be understood, especially in connection with the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary. Its reading differs in several key words in the *b* text, as shown below:

Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i>	Vulgate (Codex Amiatinus, A)
<i>Et non cognovit eam donec peperit filium et vocavit nomen ejus Jesum.</i>	<i>Et non cognoscebat eam donec peperit filium suum primogenitum et vocavit nomen ejus Jesum.</i>

There are certain obvious, but by no means insuperable, difficulties in reconciling the A text with the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary. Does the term ‘*donec*’ imply that *after* the birth of Christ Joseph did ‘know’ Mary? Both Hilary and Jerome point out that ‘to know’ here is not necessarily to be understood in the sense of implying physical relations.¹⁹ Moreover, Jerome argues that ‘*donec*’, while it refers to the time *before* an event, does not necessarily imply any change after the event.²⁰

A further difficulty may arise in the use of the term ‘*primogenitum*’ in the A text. Does this imply that Jesus was a first-born, rather than an *only* son of Mary?²¹

¹⁶ Cf. Codices Vercellensis, Corbeienis, Brixianus, etc.

¹⁷ HILARY OF POITERS, *Commentarius in Evangelium Matthaei*, 1:3.

¹⁸ JEROME, *De Perpetua Virginitate B. Mariae*, 23:197-199.

¹⁹ HILARY, *In Evangelium Matthaei*, 1:3. JEROME, *De Perpetua Virginitate*, 7.

²⁰ JEROME, *De Perpetua Virginitate*, 7.

²¹ Cf. JEROME, *De Perpetua Virginitate*, 9-10. According to orthodox commentators, ‘*primogenitum*’ should not be understood to exclude ‘*unicum*’ or ‘*unigenitum*’. Cf. EPIPHANIUS, *Panariorum*, Liber III, 2:78. BENEDICT XIV, *De Festis D.N. Jesu Christi et de B. Mariae Virginis Libri Duo*, I:XVII:22 (Parma: Typographia Fratrum Borsi, 1768), 226.

The Codex Veronensis reading of the text seems largely to solve, or to obviate, these ambiguities. Firstly, the use of the perfect tense (*cognovit*) in *b*, rather than the imperfect used in the Vulgate and some other Latin versions (*cognoscebat*), reduces the implication of any subsequent change (since the imperfect tense has some sense of describing a transitory or temporary condition). Rather than saying: ‘And he had not *been* knowing her *donec* (...),’ the text becomes, ‘And he had not known her *donec* (...).’

Furthermore, the potentially problematic word ‘*primogenitum*’ is dropped altogether in *b*, eliminating any possibility that ‘*primogenitum*’ will be interpreted as indicating the Jesus was not an only, but merely a first-born, son.

Curiously, Jerome himself cites a combination of both the Veronensis and the Vulgate readings of this verse in his *De Perpetua Virginitate B. Mariae*.²²

II.4. Matthew 11:11

The text of Matthew 11:11 does not refer directly to Mary, but to John the Baptist, and his greatness:

(...) *non surrexit inter natos mulierum major Joanne Baptista* (...)

This line, however, necessarily has a connection to the position of Mary. If John is ‘the greatest of those born of women,’ (Mt 11:11) as Christ here states, does this imply that his status is somehow ‘higher’ than that of the Virgin Mary? This question of how this line is to be interpreted to avoid such a problematic conclusion (inconsistent with Christian devotional practice) has given rise to various solutions amongst orthodox exegetes.²³

²² JEROME, *De Perpetua Virginitate*, 3 & 7.

²³ Alfonso de Madrigal solves the problem by noting that the Vulgate text gives ‘*inter natos mulierum*’, and therefore refers compares John only to men, but not to women. (ALFONSO DE MADRIGAL, *Commentaria in tertiam partem Matthaei* [Venice: Typographia Balleoniana, 1728], 459.) A perhaps more fanciful solution is offered by Dorn, who notes the word ‘*surrexit*’ in the Vulgate text,

The text of the Codex Veronensis, however, presents a different wording, matching the verse more closely to Lk 7:28,²⁴ which explicitly contains a solution to this difficulty:

(...) *non surrexit inter natos mulierum propheta major Johanne Baptista*

The field of comparison thus limited merely to other prophets, thereby excluding Mary (as well as Christ), and so neatly solving what might otherwise remain problematic.

II.5 Matthew 12,47-49

The last portion of Matthew 12 deals with the incident in which Jesus' mother and brothers are 'seeking him'; in response to which Christ asks the question 'Who are my mothers and my brothers?' (Mt 12:47-50) A number of key words vary in the *b* text from the Vulgate and other *Vetus Latina* version, which subtly change the tone of the action of Jesus' mother and brothers, as well as Christ's own response. Specifically, the Codex Veronensis reduces any way in which the passage can be read to reflect uncomfortably upon Mary, or Jesus' response to the situation.

In the text of A, in Mt 12:47, someone informs Jesus that: '*Mater tua et fratres tui foris stant quaerentes te.*' But the *b* text introduces a somewhat more fully expressed sense: '*Mater tua et fratres tui foris stant quaerentes loqui tecum.*'²⁵ The Vulgate text is slightly ambiguous as to what was conveyed to Christ regarding the intentions of his mother and brothers— do they wish to speak to him, or to take him home,

('non surrexit major') arguing that Mary did not 'surrexit', since, being immune to the effects of original sin, she did not need to rise up (F.X. DORN, *Diurnale Concionarium In Festa: Complectens Conceptus Praedicabiles Pro singulis B. V. Mariae Festivitatibus* [Burkhart: Augusta Vindelicorum Burkhart, 1762], 63.)

²⁴ The Lukan redaction undoubtedly reflects a more developed Mariology.

²⁵ This same variant appears also for Mk 3:32. Interestingly, most *Vetus Latina* texts offer a version of this line similar to the Codex Veronensis (cf. Codices Vercellensis, Brixianus, Corbeinsis, etc.), and the Vulgate text ('quaerentes te') seems to be curiously isolated amongst Latin versions at this point.

or are they ‘seeking him’ in the sense of simply determining his whereabouts?²⁶ The Codex Veronensis text, however, specifies that their intention, as conveyed to Christ, was purely to converse, thus reducing the sense a confrontational encounter between Jesus and his family members.

Indeed, congruent with observation is the reading offered by the Codex Veronensis for Mk 3:21. The Vulgate (not without a certain ambiguity as to the *relati* of ‘*sui*’) has at this point:

Et cum audissent sui, exiurent tenere eum dicebant enim quoniam in furorem versus est.

In contrast, *b* (in common with the sense of several other *Vetus Latin* texts²⁷), gives:

Quod ut audierunt de illo Scribae et caeteri, exierunt ut tenerent illum dicebant enim quoniam exsential eos.

This variant can be linked back to the *b* text of Mt 12:46-47, effectively eliminating any suggestion in the text that Mary and Jesus’ other close family members were concerned about his sanity.

In Mt 12:48, the Codex Veronensis offers an interesting and unique reading for the rhetorical question with which Jesus responds, which in the Vulgate is simply:

Quae est mater mea, et qui sunt fratres mei?

Here, *b* introduces the word ‘*mibi*’:

Quae est mihi mater mea et fratres mei?

At first glance, the ‘*mibi*’ appears to be tautological, replicating the meaning of ‘*mea*’ and ‘*mei*’. However, the effect of the combination of both ‘*mibi*’ and ‘*mea/mei*’ seems to emphasize the non-literal nature of the question, as if Jesus is saying ‘Who is, to me,

²⁶ Both the A and *b* texts had, in fact, indicated a little earlier (Mt 12:46) that the intention of Jesus’ mother and brothers was ‘*loqui ei*’. However, Mt 12:47 speaks not about their actual intentions, but what was communicated to Jesus about their intentions.

²⁷ cf. Codices Vercellensis, Palatinus, Brixianus, Corbeiensis, etc.

like my mother and my brothers?’ Indeed, this explicitly metaphorical sense is reinforced in *b* text by the use of a single, singular verb (*‘est’*), rather than introducing (in a more grammatically ‘correct’ way), the plural verb (*‘sunt’*) and masculine pronoun (*‘qui’*) for *‘fratres mei’*. The overall effect is to ‘soften’ the otherwise difficult effect of Christ’s rhetorical question. Of course, the question in either form is necessarily metaphoric— but in *b* its self-consciously non-literal nature is more prominently articulated.

Christ’s response to his own question, in Mt 12:49, *‘Ecce mater mea et fratres mei’*, is accompanied by gesture of extending his hand towards (?) his disciples. But the quality of this gesture is differently nuanced in various Latin versions, according to the choice of preposition. In this case, *b* and A match. However, other *Vetus Latina* witnesses differ, as shown:

Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i> Codex Amiatinus, A (Vulgate)	Codex Vercellensis, <i>a</i> Codex Corbeiensis I, <i>ff</i> ^f	Codex Brixianus, <i>f</i>
<i>Extendens manum in discipulos suos (...)</i>	<i>Extendens manum ad discipulos suos (...)</i>	<i>Extendens manum super discipulos suos (...)</i>

The *a* and *ff*^f texts (and, in a different way, the *f* text²⁸) both emphasize the directional dynamic of Jesus’ gesture, making it evidently a demonstrative act, akin to pointing. However, the *b* and A text, while not totally excluding that sense, is less emphatic as to the directional or demonstrative quality, as reflected in the very literal translation of Wycliffe:

And he helde forth his boond in to hise disciplis.

²⁸ It is to be noted that the *f* text may, in fact, be interpreted as “extending his hand over his disciples, he said, ‘Behold.....’,” i.e. that Jesus was pointing (over the heads of his disciples) to his mother and brothers when saying, “Behold, my mother and brothers.”

Thus the Codex Veronensis text (like that of the Vulgate) is less clear about whether Jesus actually *indicates* his disciples (to the apparent exclusion of Mary and his ‘brothers’), when saying ‘*Ecce mater mea et fratres mei*’; or whether he is simply making some other kind of gesture accompanying his discourse, in the midst of an audience of his disciples.

The total effect of these three textual variants in the Codex Veronensis for Mt 12,47-49 is to reduce the sense of a clash between Jesus and his mother and brothers. These subtle nuances in wording quite possibly reflect a desire to expunge any sense of disharmony between Mary and her Son.

III. The Theological Context in which the *b* Text Emerged, and its Relationship to the writings of Zeno of Verona

Consistent with the hypothesis that the text of the Codex Veronensis reflects a particular emphasis on Mary, and the related doctrines of the virginal conception of Christ and perpetual virginity of his mother, is the evidence that this was a particular feature of the Church at Verona in the fourth and fifth centuries. The most useful evidence of the theological and devotional *zeitgeist* of the Veronese Church at the time of the Codex’s origin is the corpus of sermons of Zeno—who served as Bishop of Verona in the 4th Century, and is closely associated with the early articulation in the Latin Church of the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

According to the Ballerinius’ commentary, Zeno, anticipating Jerome, was the first to formulate in precise terms the doctrine of virginity of Mary ‘*post connubium, post conceptum, post filium*.’²⁹ Guiliari similarly expresses the view that the orthodox Catholic position on the perpetual virginity of Mary finds its first and most apt expression

²⁹ P. BALLERINIUS, ‘Footnote 5’, in ZENO OF VERONA, *Sermones* (Verona: Typis Semanirii, 1739), 49.

in the writings of Zeno.³⁰ This undoubtedly was a particular theme for the Veronese Bishop, figuring in a quite number of his extant homilies.³¹

In one case, he even refers to the evidence a midwife, supposedly present at the birth of Christ, whose hand burned when she presumed to test the physical virginity of Mary after the birth.³² Interesting, Jerome himself dismisses that story as apocryphal.³³

A prominent feature of Zeno's Mariology is that Mary suffered no pain or discomfort, either in gestation or birth. This idea (which also figures in Jerome and Ambrose, and indeed Cyprian) is, however, articulated particularly emphatically by Zeno.³⁴ This theme of Mary's 'blessed calmness' seems to be reflected at several points in the *b* text. (See appendix— Lk 1:29; Lk 1:34; Lk 2:48b.)

If the status of Mary, and her perpetual virginity, was then a key topic for Zeno (and, presumably, the Church at Verona which he led), it seems reasonable that the Codex Veronensis, a treasured possession of the Cathedral at Verona since approximately his time, should reflect this emphasis. The findings of the analysis of textual variants in the Codex undertaken previously thus seem wholly consistent with the evident Marian emphasis of the Veronese Church of that time.

³⁰ GIAMBATTISTA CARLO GIULIARI, *S. Zenonis episcopi veronensis Sermones* (Rome: Typ. episc. F. Colombari, 1883), 69.

³¹ Cf. ZENO OF VERONA, *De Continentia*, 1:5. Zeno, *De eo, quod scriptum est "Cum tradiderit regnum Deo et Patri"*, 2:6. ZENO, *De Nativitate Domini* (i), 1:5. ZENO, *De Nativitate Domini* (ii), 1:5.

³² ZENO, *De Nativitate*. A more detailed variant of this story is present in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. "Pseudo-Matthei Evangelium," XIII:3-5, in C. TISCHENDORF (ed.), *Evangelia Apocrypha* (Leipzig: Avernarius & Mendelssohn, 1853), 75.

³³ JEROME, *De Perpetua Virginitate*, 8.

³⁴ Cf. ZENO, *De Nativitate Domini* (ii), 1:5.

IV. Conclusions

On the basis of the few examples considered, it seems that the variant wordings found in the text of the Codex Veronensis, *b*, do reflect a particular emphasis on Mary, and the doctrines of the virginal conception of Christ, and the perpetual virginity of Mary. This is in accordance with the special emphasis on those themes found in the writings of Zeno, whose episcopacy of Verona approximately coincides with the date of origin of the Codex.

Although the textual variants in Matthew have been the focus of the present paper, the Marian trend appears equally strongly and consistently in the texts of the other Gospels. These variants are tabulated with brief comment in Appendix I. While none of the variants, taken in individually and in isolation, are perhaps sufficient to prove this (except, arguably, the most widely discussed variant reading, in Jn 1:13), in combination they form a convincing case. Given the key importance of the Codex Veronensis as a witness of the *Vetus Latina* Gospel tradition, the identification and demonstration of this significant and consistent Marian theological/devotional nuance in the text may well be of real interest.

**APPENDIX I—
Additional Textual Variants in other Gospels Suggesting a
Marian Emphasis**

Verse	Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i>	Vulgate	Comment
Jn 1:12b-13	(...) <i>credentibus in nomine ejus qui non ex sanguine neque ex voluntate carnis nec ex voluntate viri sed ex deo natus est</i>	(...) <i>credentibus in nomine ejus qui non ex sanguine neque ex voluntate carnis nec ex voluntate viri sed ex deo nati sunt</i>	A widely discussed variant. The <i>b</i> reading obviously appears to refer to the virginal conception of Jesus, which otherwise is not explicitly mention in John.

Verse	Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i>	Vulgate	Comment
Jn 2,3-8	(...) <i>dicit mater Jesu ad eum (...) dixit ei Jesus (...) dicit mater ejus ministris (...) ait illis Jesus (...) ait illis Jesus (...)</i>	(...) <i>dicit mater Jesu ad eum (...) dicit ei Jesus (...) dicit mater ejus ministris (...) dicit eis Jesus (...) dicit eis Jesus (...)</i>	In the description of the utterances of Mary and Jesus in wedding at Cana pericope, the <i>b</i> text reserves the historical present for Mary, giving Christ the perfect tense. The Vulgate used historical present for both Jesus and Mary. Other versions (<i>e</i>) use only the perfect, while others mix perfect and historical present variously between both figures (<i>a</i> , <i>f</i>). The effect of the reservation of the historical present to Mary is a ‘foregrounding’ of her role in the narrative of the event.
Jn 6,42	Nonne <i>hic filius Joseph, cujus noscimus patrem?</i>	Nonne <i>hic est Jesús filius Joseph cujus nos novimus patrem et matrem?</i>	The <i>b</i> reading here seems to emphasise the separation of Mary from the Jews. The Jews assume (falsely) the paternity of Joseph, but are depicted as being not interested in his mother.

Verse	Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i>	Vulgate	Comment
Lk 1:27	<i>eodem autem tempore missus est Angelus Gabriel a Domino in civitatem Galilaeae cui nomen Nazareth ad Virgine Maria desponsatam viro cui nomen erat Joseph de domo David et nomen VIRGINIS MARIA</i>	<i>in mense autem sexto missus est angelus Gabrihel a Deo in civitatem Galilaeae cui nomen Nazareth ad virginem desponsatam viro cui nomen erat Joseph de domo David et nomen virginis Maria</i>	Note extra appearance of name ‘Maria’ in <i>b</i> , in both cases joined to the title ‘Virgo’, and in the second case using larger letters. Note also the ‘ungrammatical’ use of ablative for ‘ <i>ad Virgine Maria</i> ’ possibly to preserve the morphology of the name. The use of ‘ <i>eodem (...) tempore</i> ’, rather than ‘ <i>in mense sexto</i> ’ may well reflect the apocryphal tradition that Jesus’ gestation was of an extended length (referred to by Zeno), since the Baptist and Jesus were conceived ‘ <i>eodem tempore</i> ’. The introduction of this <i>motif</i> highlights Mary’s closeness to Christ, and the importance of His ‘supernatural’ birth/conception/gestation.

Verse	Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i>	Vulgate	Comment
Lk 1:28	<i>et ingressus angelus evangelizavit eam et dixit illi (...)</i>	<i>et ingressus angelus ad eam dixit (...)</i>	Note use of ‘ <i>evangelizare</i> ’, tying in with the ancient tradition that Mary was the first to receive the Gospel. Since ‘ <i>dixit</i> ’ is also given, it conveys the sense that the ‘evangelization’ was something additional to the angel’s announcement (i.e. ‘ <i>evangelizavit</i> ’ is not simply used instead of ‘ <i>dixit</i> ’).
Lk 1:28	<i>(...) benedicta tu inter mulieres</i>	<i>(....) benedicta tu inter mulieribus</i>	Note that the Vulgate’s ablative ‘ <i>mulieribus</i> ’ has a sense of comparison (‘Blessed are you, <i>compared</i> to women’). This is not present in <i>b</i> (‘Blessed are you, in the midst of women’). This seems to be a higher statement of praise, since it is not qualified by a comparative aspect.

Verse	Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i>	Vulgate	Comment
Lk 1:29	<i>ipsa autem ut vidit eum mota est in introitu ejus et erat cogitans quod sic benedixisset eam</i>	<i>quae cum audisset turbata est in sermone ejus et cogitabat qualis esset ista salutation</i>	Mary is not depicted as being ‘disturbed’ here, but merely ‘moved’ by the angel’s appearance (but not the speech). The <i>b</i> text may be read as: ‘She, since she had seen him, was moved by his entrance, and was meditating that he had thus blessed her.’ There is no suggestion (unlike in the Vulgate) that Mary did not comprehend the significance of the angel’s salutation. This paints a ‘calmer’ Mary, consistent with Zeno’s portrayal.
Lk 1:34	<i>(....) ecce ancilla domini</i>	<i>(...) quomodo fiat istud quoniam virum non cognosco</i>	Mary’s momentary questioning or doubt is removed; she obeys even before the angel’s explanation.

Verse	Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i>	Vulgate	Comment
Lk 2:41 & 2:43	<i>Maria et Joseph</i>	<i>parentes ejus</i>	Extra naming of Mary, and removing possibly problematic use of ‘ <i>parentes</i> ’ (connected with ‘ <i>parere</i> ’— not applicable to Joseph, and also troublesome to apply to Mary, because of the crudity of sense of ‘ <i>parere</i> ’)
Lk 2:48a	<i>(...) et dixit Maria</i>	<i>(...) et dixit mater ejus</i>	Extra naming of Mary.
Lk 2:48b	<i>(....) dolentes quaerebamus te.</i>	<i>pater tuus et ego dolentes quaerebamus te</i>	Dropping of reference to Joseph as ‘ <i>pater tuus</i> ’. Whereas the Vulgate reading makes it clear that Mary included amongst those (i.e. ‘ <i>pater tuus</i> ’) ‘ <i>dolentes</i> ’, the <i>b</i> (by not naming the subject of ‘ <i>quaerebus</i> ’) text leaves this open. ‘ <i>Tristes</i> ’, which is also found is several texts (<i>a, ff</i>) is omitted both from <i>b</i> and A. (Note link with Zeno’s theme of Mary not suffering).
Lk 3:22	<i>tu es filius meus, ego hodie genui te</i>	<i>tu es filius meus dilectus, in te complacui mihi</i>	The <i>b</i> text clearly presents a stronger emphasis on Divine paternity.

Verse	Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i>	Vulgate	Comment
Lk 3:23	<i>et ipse Jesus erat incipiens fere annorum, quod videbatur et dicebatur esse filius Joseph</i>	<i>et ipse Jesus erat incipiens quasi annorum trigenta, ut putabatur, filius Joseph</i>	The <i>b</i> text emphasises more strongly that Jesus was <i>not</i> the son of Joseph, by doubling up the verb (<i>videbatur et dicebatur esse filius Joseph</i>), and also presented it in a personal form, rather than the impersonal ‘ <i>putabatur</i> ’ of the Vulgate. The fact that his status as son of Joseph was merely putative is expressed in just two words in the Vulgate (‘ <i>ut putabatur</i> ’), compared to the very emphatic five words in <i>b</i> .

Verse	Codex Veronensis, <i>b</i>	Vulgate	Comment
Lk 11:27-28	<i>mulier de dixit illi beatus venter qui te portavit et ubera quae suxisisti At ille dixit ad eos beati qui audient verbum dei et custodiunt illud</i>	<i>mulier de turba dixit illi beatus venter qui te portavit et ubera quae suxisisti At ille dixit quinimmo beati qui audient verbum dei et custodiunt illud</i>	The omission of the ‘ <i>quinimmo</i> ’ from <i>b</i> has the effect of reducing/eliminating the rhetorical contrast between ‘the womb that bore you (...)’ and ‘those who do the will of hear the word of God (...)’.
Mk 3:21	<i>Quod ut audierunt de illo Scribae et caeteri, exierunt ut tenerent illum dicebant enim quoniam exsentiati eos.</i>	<i>Et cum audissent sui, exiirent tenere eum dicebant enim quoniam in furorem versus est.</i>	According the <i>b</i> version (found also in <i>a</i> , <i>e</i> , <i>f</i> and <i>ff</i> ^b) it is the ‘scribes and others’ who claim the Jesus is insane, not his ‘relatives’. This preserves Mary from this otherwise difficult incident.
Mk 3:23	<i>quaerentes loqui tecum</i>	<i>quaerentes te</i>	(As <i>per</i> Mt 12:47. <i>Vide supra.</i>)