

The Blessed Virgin Mary as Co-Redemptrix

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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 Doctrines 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=GZHW6&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/MK53fbfFU6Y>.

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 prophecies 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 Coredemptrix 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 Coredemptrix in Scripture and Tradition*, sec. 7'57"-7'59".

St Catherine of Siena, fourteenth century Doctor of the Church, also called the Virgin 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 “salvatrrix” 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 Fastiggi, *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 “coredeemptive 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” resorting 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 Coredeemption 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 Coredeptrix, 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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