

Introduction to *Ecce Mater Tua* Vol. 8

THE EDITORS

This issue of *Ecce Mater Tua* coincides with the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary, a feast that reminds us that the Blessed Virgin Mary, taken up to heaven, continues by her constant intercession “to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation” (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 62). In the *Commentario* section, Robert Fastiggi highlights the importance of Pope Francis’s May 13, 2023 Message to Archbishop Gian Franco Saba of Sassari, Italy in which the Holy Father refers to Mary as the “Advocate close to Jesus” and the Mediatrix of all graces.” In this way, Pope Francis affirms two of the three Marian titles found in various petitions for a fifth Marian dogma.

This commentary is followed by a remarkable homily and prayer to Mary given by Archbishop Victor Manuel Fernández of La Plata, Argentina on December 8, 2020 to mark the conclusion of the national Marian year. In this homily and prayer—which we have in English—Archbishop (and Cardinal-elect) Fernández manifests his great love for the Virgin Mary, who, as our Mother, knows the whole history of our lives. In his homily, Archbishop Fernández points to the heart of Mary as the most complete Gospel because she, more than the apostles, knows the story of our Lord’s life in the most intimate and profound way. As is well-known, Archbishop Fernández has been named by Pope Francis to be the new prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. We ask the Blessed Mother to guide and protect him in this very important position.

The homily and prayer of Archbishop Victor Manuel Fernández is followed by a wonderful defense of the Marian title, co-redemptrix, written by Mary Moore. Tracing the foundations in Scripture, Church history, and the Magisterium, Mary Moore explains how the title corresponds to the truth of the Virgin Mary’s active collaboration in the work of redemption. Father Paolo Siano of Italy has recently brought to light Leo XIII’s July 18, 1885 approval of praises (laudes) to Jesus and Mary with an indulgence of 100 days granted by the Congregation for Indulgences and Sacred Relics. In the Italian version

of the praises to Mary, she is referred to as “co-redemptrix of the world” (*corredentrica del mondo*). In the Latin version, she is referred to as the “*mundo redimendo coadiutrix*”). Leo XIII approved both the Italian and Latin versions of the prayer (*Acta Sanctae Sedis [ASS]* 18 [1885] p. 93). This shows that the Marian title, co-redemptrix, has received official papal approval since 1885.

Bernhard Streisselberger follows with an appeal to the bishops of the United States to reconsider their rejection of the supernatural character of the messages of Our Lady of America. He is especially concerned with the rejection of the title of “co-redeemer” for St. Joseph as an error. As Bernhard argues, various popes have affirmed that all of the faithful can be co-redeemers, and the recognition of St. Joseph as “co-redeemer” should not be described as “an error.”

The four articles in this volume explore some important aspects of Marian doctrine and devotion. Father Andrej Mária Čaja of Slovakia investigates “The Problem of Our Lady’s Knowledge from the Perspective of the Theology of St. John Henry Newman (1801–1890).” He shows how the great English saint and scholar had a balanced view of Mary’s knowledge grounded in Scripture and sound theology. He highlights, in a special way, Mary’s knowledge through divine illumination.

Peter Coelho-Kostolny provides a beautiful exposition of the contribution of Romanos the Melodist (c. 490–550) to Mary as the “Unwedded Bride,” a title which affirms Mary as the Virgin Mother of Jesus but does not deny her genuine marriage to Joseph. This article tells of the dream Romanos had of the Blessed Mother who handed him a scroll and told him to eat it. Just as Ezekiel was asked to eat a scroll to enable his gift of prophecy, so Romanos ate the scroll in his dream to enable him to be a gifted cantor and prophet of the holy Mother of God. As Coelho-Kostolny notes, many people believe Romanos is the author of the renowned Byzantine Akhathist Hymn.

Max Oswalt provides an important article on Mary’s relationship to God the Father, which is an oft-neglected theme in Mariology. He

shows that Mary can be understood as the daughter of the Father, the Spouse of the Father (with a shared Son), and the Masterpiece of the Father. He also presents Mary at Calvary, offering her Son, Jesus, to the Father, which is a truth affirmed by various popes.

The final article by Dr. Jason Bourgeois is an interesting exploration of the cultural and historical applications of the message of Fatima in the 1960s by the now-defunct publication, *The North American Voices of Fatima*. As Bourgeois notes, this publication highlighted the messages of Fatima as an antidote to some of the cultural upheavals of the 1960s: the spread of Marxist communism, the sexual revolution, and the growth of doctrinal dissent in some Catholic circles. Although the journal's support for the Vietnam War might be questioned, the application of Fatima to the problems of sexual immorality and doctrinal dissent were quite appropriate in the 1960s and continue to be today.