

God's Masterpiece and Our Saving Mother Co-Redemptrix

ROBERT L. JUDGE, B.S.S.E., MA

Introduction

The doctrine of Mary as Co-Redemptrix has been somewhat controversial since Vatican II. This article seeks to show that Mary's Co-Redemptive role is well founded. Beginning with the philosophical underpinning of the existence of God, this article reviews Sacred Scripture and Tradition to demonstrate that the proper understanding of the "woman" leads to the doctrine of Mary the mother of God as the Co-Redemptrix.

Beginning with Genesis, Sacred Scripture gives the foundation in divine revelation for the doctrine of Mary's Co-redemptive role. Through the Tradition of the Church, the theme of Mary's singularly unique role in the redemption of man is examined. From the seed of divine revelation in Genesis and the subsequent books of the Old Testament, the Apostolic Fathers described and explored an antithetical parallelism between Adam and Eve and Christ the New Adam and Mary the New Eve. This paper examines the "woman's" essential role as the New Adam's battle partner for the salvation of souls. As this prophecy is fulfilled in the New Testament, the "woman," by the power of the only begotten Son, "crushes the head of the infernal serpent with her immaculate foot." The magisterium's development of this doctrine is taken into consideration as well, particularly during this current Age of Mary.

Private revelation of certain approved apparitions are reviewed and their significance in this title of Mary as Co-Redemptrix.

The argument for the promulgation of a dogmatic definition of Mary's role as Co-Redemptrix will be argued from this body of evidence.

This article seeks to describe, in a comprehensive yet succinct manner, the doctrine of Mary as Co-Redemptrix. This doctrine is rooted in Mary's divine and spiritual motherhood. Mary's role as Co-Redemptrix as it relates to her divine and spiritual motherhood, will be further elucidated through the Church's history as promulgated in theological rationale by several saints and doctors of the Church and lastly the papal magisterium. From this body of

evidence, the argument for the promulgation of a dogmatic definition will be presented.

A Brief History of Creation

There is God and then there are created things that are living and non-living. Everything that we see, experience and interact with, falls into one of these three categories. There are material inanimate objects that comprise the physical universe; those things that are not alive, but exist. Then there are the living creatures that have two broad categories; those we see and those we don't see. The angels and demons are pure spirits that do not have material bodies, and are beautiful in the case of angels and ugly in the case of demons. Living material creatures constitute everything from a single cell bacteria to human beings. All of the non-rational creatures are works of perfection from the Creator, and as a result each individual is a masterpiece that speaks to the glory of God. This beauty is displayed as each particular species of non-rational creature can only be, act and respond in accordance with its inherent nature as designed by God. This is true of all non-living systems of the earth, sea and sky as well. They all operate within the parameters as designed by the Almighty. Aquinas' fifth proof of the existence of God, the governance of all things,¹ speaks to these non-rational living creatures and non-living things being ordered to their end, even though they do not have intelligence themselves. However, as God grants to the non-living and non-rational living things perfection in their being as they are ordered to their end by God, man is rational and was created in freedom to choose the good, but instead chose the evil. It is man who is impure because of sin. It is our sinfulness that defiles us, that makes us something less than what we were originally created to be. Our rebellion and conflict within ourselves is then manifested in nature. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning with labor pains....."(Rm.8:22)

God's original creation, *baryth* (Hebrew) including *ba adam* (man and woman) is the pinnacle of that creation. Man was created with infused knowledge, preternatural justice and supernatural grace, giving man a share in the divine life of God. (Gen.2:25) At the end of each day of creation, God saw it and it was "good." Fast forwarding to get a glimpse at what this means, we should look at the exchange between Jesus and the rich young man, who comes up to Jesus and asks, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus first responds by saying, "Why do you call me good, only God is good?"

In Genesis, we see that on the last day of creation, “God looked at all that He had made and it was *very* good.”(Gen.1:31) It was perfect; for Jesus tells us, “Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.” In the beginning, everything was perfect just as the heavenly Father is perfect and so it was “very good.”

In another account of creation, God noted that “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a suitable *helper* (*ezer* Hb.) *fit* for him.” (Gen. 2:18) This *ezer*, or helper is bone of Adam’s bone and flesh of his flesh, whom he names “woman.”

Co-Redemptrix in Sacred Scripture:

The “woman” at her creation was to be the *ezer* for Adam. The Old Testament has twenty-one references to this “helper,” nineteen of which are in the context of a battle.² “With thy hands contend for him, and be a *help*, (*ezer*) against his adversaries.”(Deut. 33:7) In Psalm 33:29 we read, “...a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your *help*, and the sword of your triumph! Your enemies shall come fawning to you.” And, “Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our *help* and shield.” (Ps.33:20) This helper is engaged in a battle for those who call upon the Lord, as the Old Testament Scriptures reveal. In light of the saving actions of Jesus Christ, the “woman” who is the “helper” is the New Adam’s *ezer*, his battle partner, the head crusher.

In his envy and hatred of God, the serpent sought to undo what was “very good.” The evil one could not affect God, as he is immutable, so he attacked what was made in His image and likeness. He tempted the woman to follow in his rebellion and she in turn enticed the man who was with her. After condemning the serpent to crawl on his belly and eat dust, God promised redemption to save His creation and not allow it to be destroyed by one of His creatures. He tells the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; she shall crush your head and you shall bruise her heel.” (Gen. 3:15) The enmity between the “woman” and the serpent is the scriptural grounding for the “woman’s” preparation and role as Co-redemptrix. There has been some recent controversy in the text between *ipsa* (she), as St. Jerome translated the original Hebrew and Greek to Latin, and *ipsum* (the seed) which is a more modern translation existing in some copies. Cardinal Robert Bellarmine noted, “The fathers who have cited the old Italic version, taken from the Septuagint agree with the Vulgate, which is followed by almost all the Latins; and hence we may argue

with probability, that the Septuagint and the Hebrew formally acknowledged *ipsa.*”³

Until the “woman” is born in history, the Scriptures foreshadow her, (*ipsa*) as the head crusher. One archetype who stands out as foreshadowing “*the woman*” is Judith. “The Lord has struck him (Holofernes) down *by the hand of a woman*. As the Lord lives, who has protected me in the way I went, it was my face that tricked him to his destruction, and yet he committed no act of sin with me, to defile and shame me.” (Judith 13:15-16) Judith acknowledges and gives glory to God as the one who struck down the enemy of Israel. She recognizes that she is but an instrument of God’s power. She is Israel’s (God’s first born son) *ezer*, who engages in the battle and is not defiled in the process.

The enmity between the “woman” and the serpent prophesied in Gen. 3:15 is realized in time when Gabriel addresses Mary as the one “full of grace” *kecharitomene* (Gk) as written in the Gospel of Luke. (1:28) He affirms from the Divine Father that Mary is the “woman” of Genesis 3:15. It is Mary’s fiat to the angelic messenger that allows the Incarnation of the Logos to take place in time. It is in the womb of the “woman” where the eternally begotten Son, the Logos, takes on His perfect human nature from his immaculately conceived human mother.

“Like that of Jesus, Mary’s predestination and role in salvation after the Incarnation, is cosmic, absolute and universally crucial to the creative plan of the world’s being and history.”⁴ Her immaculate human nature becomes his human nature, her flesh becomes His flesh, her heart becomes His heart. And the human body given by the most perfect creature, is offered by the Logos to the Father for the redemption of man. The Logos obtains the very instrument of our salvation from the “woman” who is “full of grace.” The excruciating anguish that she will experience at the immolation of the Lamb of God on Calvary, who is flesh of her flesh and heart of her heart, is the sword that will pierce her immaculate heart.(Lk.2:35)

Our Spiritual Mother

It is at Calvary that the dying Son of God, the Son of Mary, reaffirms His mother as the “woman.” “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 his disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’” It is here that he

bequeaths his mother to His “beloved disciple” to “take into his own,” to be his mother and for her to be his son. (Jn. 19:26-27) According to Thayer’s Greek lexicon, a definition of “behold” is, “at the beginning of sentences: as the utterance of one who wishes that something should not be neglected by another.”⁵ The definition cites Jn. 19:26 as an example of this usage. Mary should not be neglected by the beloved disciple, nor he by her. Jesus is giving an imperative command to both. The command is simple, Mary is the beloved disciple’s mother and he is her son. We can read Jesus’ command to be the sons (and daughters) of His mother and she our mother alluded to in Lk.8:20-21. “And he was told, ‘Your mother and your brethren are standing outside desiring to see you.’ But he said to them, ‘My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it.’” Logically, we can conclude that if those who hear and do the will of God are his brethren, Mary must be their mother. For truly no one heard and did the will of the Father as she did. Her hearing and doing the will of the Father was so perfect and so fruitful that the Word of God, (λογος θεός) took on flesh in her immaculate womb. As Titus Bostrensis, a fourth century Father, writes, “When you hear of our Lord’s brethren you must include also the notions of *piety and grace*. For no one in regard of His divine nature is the brother of the Saviour, (for He is the Only-begotten,) but He has, *by the grace of piety, made us partakers in His flesh and His blood, and He who is by nature God has become our brother.*”⁶ Therefore, Jesus’ gift of His mother to the beloved disciple at the foot of the cross is His gift to everyone who is His beloved disciple. But there is more to this relationship between the mother of the Logos and the beloved disciple who takes Mary into his home to care for the now childless widow. Jesus doesn’t say, “John, take care of my mother,” but rather, “Behold your mother.” St. Ambrose writes, “He thought it a greater thing to show Him victorious over punishment, fulfilling the *offices of piety to His mother*, than giving the kingdom of heaven and eternal life to the thief. For if it was religious to give life to the thief, a much richer work of piety it is for a son to honor his mother with such affection.

Co-Redemptrix in Tradition:

The first of the Apostolic Fathers from whom we have writing about Mary’s role in the salvation of man is St. Justin Martyr, (+c.165). “In his *Dialogue with Tryphon*, (AD 155) Justin Martyr outlines the antithetical parallel between Eve and Mary, between the fruit that brought death and the fruit that was filled with blessing. ‘Eve the virgin conceived the word of the serpent and brought forth disobedience and death; Mary in faith and joy, that the Spirit

of the Lord would overshadow her and bring forth the Son of God when she said, be it done unto me according to your word.”⁸

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (+c. 202) develops the theme of Eve and Mary being parallel antithetical virgins:

And just as it was through a virgin who disobeyed that man was stricken and fell and died, so too it was through the Virgin, who obeyed the word of God, that man resuscitated by life received life for Adam had necessarily to be restored in Christ, that mortality be absorbed in immortality, and Eve in Mary, that a virgin, become the advocate of a virgin, should undo and destroy virginal disobedience by virginal obedience.⁹

St. Melito of Sardis (c.170) uses sacrificial language in referring to Christ and Mary participating in that sacrifice. Tertullian (c.240-250) reiterates the Eve-Mary antithetical parallelism where Eve was the cause of man’s fall and death and Mary the renewal of life or recapitulation.¹⁰ St. Ephraem teaches that we are reconciled to God through the Mother of God and that God chose the Blessed Virgin to be the instrument of our salvation. St. Epiphanius (+403) echoes St. Ephraem that our salvation comes through the Blessed Mother as she furnishes the cause of life.¹¹

Athanasius of Alexandria, the hero of Nicaea and the great defender of Christian truth against the Arian heresy writes in regard to the Incarnation, “...He took our body, and not only so, but He took it directly from a spotless, stainless virgin, without agency of a human father- a pure body, untainted by intercourse with man. He the Mighty One, the Artificer of all, Himself prepared this body in the virgin as a temple for Himself, and took it for his very own, as the instrument through which he was known and in which He dwelt.”¹² The development of the doctrine continues with St. Ambrose, “Let us not be astonished that the Lord who came to save the world, began his work in Mary, so that she, by whom the salvation of all was being readied, would be the first to receive from her own child fruits.”¹³

St. Augustine, the spiritual son of St. Ambrose, incorporates the fact that Jesus received his body, the instrument of our salvation, from Mary, the second Eve. By continuing the antithetical parallelism between Eve and Mary, Augustine, like the earlier fathers, show this symmetry in the arch of

salvation. Adam and Eve are the purchasers of death, and Christ and Mary are the New Adam and New Eve who buy back life. St. Augustine (+430) incorporates this foundational idea of Mary as the New Eve from the earlier Apostolic Fathers and identifies the fittingness of the feminine sex in the redemption of man. "...so that in both sexes, feminine and masculine, the devil, being conquered, might be tormented, as he had glorified in the downfall of both." The term "conquered" that Augustine uses here, would seem to indicate a victory in a conflict, battle or war. For Augustine, since both sexes were involved in the downfall of man, it was fitting that both are involved in gaining man's freedom.¹⁴

The development of Mary's participation in the salvation of mankind because of her unique role in bringing forth the Redeemer of the world continues with Chrysostom, Chrysologus, and Cyril of Jerusalem, among others, all proclaiming that Mary has a unique and singular participation in the salvation of man. This unique role is intimately tied to her divine motherhood as it is by this divine motherhood by which she gives Jesus, the Redeemer the instrument of our salvation. Near the end of the Apostolic Father's era, liturgies of several rites, incorporate Mary's role in salvation. The Armenian liturgy of that time period specifically incorporate the title of Mary salvatrix and liberatrix.¹⁵

Liturgical celebrations incorporating Marian devotion of her nativity dating back to the fifth century in Syria and perhaps Jerusalem developed and began spreading very quickly through the Middle East Churches. Pope Innocent IV in 1243 adds this liturgy to the Church's calendar and with it a corresponding octave.¹⁶ The seventh and eighth centuries witness a continued fleshing out of the theology of Mary as the New Eve that cooperates uniquely in the redemption of man. St. Modestus of Jerusalem and then later St. Andrew of Crete (+740) writes, "In you we have been redeemed from corruption."¹⁷

St. John Damascene reiterates St. Andrew confirming that it is by Mary that man is saved. Being saved by Mary must always be understood that it is through the Blessed Virgin that the divine person of Jesus Christ became Incarnate and by his Passion Death and Resurrection, we are redeemed. The papal Magisterium and the Second Vatican Council will properly explain how Mary's participation in the Redemption of mankind in a subordinate role allows the Fathers Modestus and Andrew of Crete to say, "In you we have been redeemed from corruption." Toward the end of the Medieval period,

St. John the Geometer introduces Mary's life as being wholly united with her Son in his suffering and work of salvation.¹⁸

During the tenth century, John the Geometer systematically developed Mary's associated role in Jesus' suffering during the tenth century. He ties together Mary's divine maternity and the love associated with maternity combined with the grace that Mary singularly possessed as the one "full of grace" and so shared not only in Jesus' suffering but in his whole work of redemption as only she could.

In a French psalter of the tenth Century the term "Redemptrix" is used which describes Mary's role as the fathers of earlier centuries understood it. Mary's role is unique, subordinate creaturely participation in the salvation work of Jesus the Redeemer.¹⁹

St. Bernard of Clairvaux in the twelfth century writes, "O hallowed Virgin, offer thy Son; and present anew to the Lord this fruit of thy womb. Offer for our reconciliation this Victim, holy and pleasing to God."²⁰ St. John Tauler, the fourteenth century mystic and Dominican theologian develops the thought of Mary's gift of offering her Son to include the offering of herself and her sorrows as a living victim.²¹ He writes, "...God accepted her oblation as a pleasing sacrifice, for the utility and salvation of the whole human race...so that through the merits of her sorrows, she might change God's anger into mercy."²²

In the thirteenth century, Pseudo-Albert refers to Mary as the "co-helper of the redemption which he roots in her compassion as "helpmate of Redemption at Golgotha."²³

The Fathers and doctors of the Church would expound on Bernard's development that takes Mary's role beyond the Incarnation itself, and contemplates the unique relationship that Mary had with Jesus which culminates at His definitive redemptive act on the cross; where Mary stands, in complete solidarity with her divine Son and the son who is the "beloved disciple." Because of her immaculate heart, which knew no sin, she suffered like no other mother at the cruel torturous death of her divine Son and Savior. The theology advanced in development of this doctrine is furthered, yet tethered to the Scriptural grounding in Genesis 2:18-23, by Alphonsus Salmeron, S.J. a preeminent theologian of the Council of Trent (+1585). Salmeron anchors the theology of Mary as Co-Redemptrix to Mary's solitary

unique role in the Incarnation of the Logos which unites her to Jesus and his divine mission of redemption of man. “The Mother stood near the Cross for this: that the restoration of mankind would correspond with the collapse of the world. As the fall of the world was accomplished by two, but especially man, so the salvation and redemption came about from two, but especially from Christ...”²⁴ As Eve and Adam are the full expression of humanity in the beginning, so too is Mary and Jesus the full expression of humanity as it was originally designed to be; the masculine and the feminine expression of that humanity with preternatural gifts and supernatural grace. So it is fitting that as God gives to Adam a helper, Jesus has a helper too. It must be stressed that Jesus’ redemptive act in no way required any assistance, help or supplemental action to complete the action of Redemption. He chose, in His omnipotent free will to involve the cooperation of a woman in the definitive act that saves mankind from the wreckage caused by our first parents at the suggestion of the devil.

Papal Teaching: From the Magisterium

Pius IX in *Ineffabilis Deus*, the Dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception, echoes the doctrinal kernel that was deposited by divine revelation, and developed by the fathers as has been presented.

From these considerations, we can conclude as follows:
Mary in the work of redemption was by God’s will joined with Jesus Christ, the cause of salvation, in much the same way as Eve was joined with Adam, the cause of death.”
[17]

And in assuredly a most quotable line evoking a celebration of victory and a cause for great joy for the human race at the Redeemer and His head crushing *ezer* writes,

“...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.”[14]

The theological foundation for Mary's role as Co-redemptrix is expressed in the above excerpt from *ID*. Mary's Co-redemptrix role as part of her spiritual motherhood of the mystical body of Christ is intimately tied to Mary being the mother of God the Son. Mary's Immaculate Conception, perpetual virginity and Assumption are all rooted in her divine motherhood. It is no coincidence that the first Marian Dogma was Mary the Mother of God, *theotokos*, at the council of Ephesus in 431. Mary, *theotokos*, is Christological, as it is a statement about Jesus being a Divine person. Because Mary was designated before time to be the mother of the savior, it was fitting that she would be "full of grace;" for in this she has enmity with the infernal serpent. She has no part with Satan and hence he has no power or dominion over her. She is the handmaid of the Lord and is focused on Him and His will, which she makes her own.

Leo XIII advances the support for the development of Mary's co-suffering with Jesus at Calvary for the redemption of the human race because of her unique and singular role in the Incarnation of the Savior in his encyclical on the Rosary, *Jucunda Semper*. Leo XIII confirms Mary's office of Mother, and that as she offered Jesus to the Father for the expiation of the sin of man, she offered herself and suffered a "mystical death by dying with him in her heart."²⁵

Up until this point in history, the term Co-redemptrix has not been used by any papal magisterium, although the doctrinal elements of Mary's suffering with Jesus and her unique role in association with and subordinated to Jesus in the salvation of man is clearly present as has been briefly illustrated here. It is under the pontificate of Pius X, the ground on the magisterial level is broken in the use of the term co-redemptrix. The Congregation of Sacred Rites under Pope St. Pius X, in response to a request by Father Giuseppe Lucchesi responds to Father Lucchesi, "the cultus of the Sorrowful Mother may increase and the piety of the faithful and their gratitude toward the merciful Co-Redemptrix of the human race may intensify."²⁶

Pius XII writes in *Mystici Corporis*: "Christ, says the Apostle, 'is the Head of the Body of the Church [13] and if the Church is a body, it must be an unbroken unity.'" This encyclical gives the rationale for declaring that Mary is our mother as she is the mother of the head of the Church, Jesus Christ, so she must also be the mother of the body united to the head. How Mary's spiritual motherhood is related to her specific role as Co-redemptrix is given

by Pius XII within the encyclical. Pius XII does not fail to tie Mary's spiritual motherhood to the Eve/Mary antithetical parallelism first posited by Irenaeus in the second century.

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. . . .her mother's love was 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. [MC 110]

In the recognition of Mary's role in salvation or the Co-redemptrix, Pius XII writes in *Ad Caeli Reginum*, "... in taking an active part in the work of salvation, was, by God's design, associated with Jesus Christ, the source of salvation itself, in a manner comparable to that in which Eve was associated with Adam, the source of death, so that it may be stated that the work of our salvation was accomplished by a kind of "recapitulation,"[49] in which a virgin was instrumental in the salvation of the human race.

Magisterial Approved Private Revelation

The Marian Age, while not discounting the development of the Apostolic Fathers, began in earnest in 1830 with the apparition of Our Lady of Grace and the instructions for the miraculous medal. In this approved apparition, Mary gives instruction to Sr. Catherine Labouré to have a medal struck. The image was initially part of the apparition on November 30, 1830. The miraculous medal depicts several Marian doctrines, beginning with the words around the face of the medal which encircle the Blessed Mother with her hands outstretched with rays of light emanating from precious stone rings on her fingers. These words, "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee" state what would be defined 24 years later as the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Mary's image, surrounded by the words, is on a globe and her foot is on the head of a green serpent with yellow spots. On the back of the medal, there is a cross bar across the top with an "M" under a cross. Under the "M" are the sacred heart of Jesus surrounded with a crown of thorns and the immaculate heart of Mary depicted pierced by a sword through it. Mary standing with her foot on the head of the serpent certainly identifies her with the "woman" of Genesis 3:15.²⁷ The design of the cross over the "M" on the back of the medal with the two hearts has been interpreted to signify Mary's subordinate role as Co-redemptrix (hence the M

under the cross) in that her heart was intimately united to Christ's and suffered with him in his Passion and death.

Five hundred years earlier, St. Bridget of Sweden (+1373) reported vision of Jesus and Mary and describes Mary the Mother of Sorrows revealing that, "My Son and I redeemed the world as with one heart."²⁸

Other approved apparitions include Lourdes, Fatima, Our Lady of All Nations, and Akita, Japan. At Lourdes, the "Lady" identified herself as "the Immaculate Conception" to St. Bernadette. It is Mary, the Immaculate Conception who is perfectly at enmity with Satan and thus the unwavering helper with Jesus in the redemption of man.

Vatican II

Leading up to Vatican II there was still much debate about Mary's co-redemptive role in our salvation. Of note, and in relation to the Eve/Mary parallelisms is Father Lino Cignelli's observation, "Insofar as Co-redemptrix, she is instead the complement of the man Christ and his "helper" in the work of universal salvation. She represents the feminine component of the dimension or human causality of the objective redemption."²⁹

Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*, the Constitution on the Church, is wholly devoted to the Blessed Mother in a thorough, although not exhaustive, treatment of her. The Dogmas of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin and holy Mother of God are noted, as are her duties as Advocate and Mediatrix. The title of Co-Redemptrix, the shoot of the seed of Divine Revelation as was first noted by the Fathers as demonstrated above, is conspicuously absent. *Lumen Gentium* notes that this title could cause a disruption to ecumenical efforts to those outside the Church; particularly Protestants. However, *Lumen Gentium* does expound the doctrine of Co-redemptrix. "She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the Temple, 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." LG [61] It was unfortunate that the Council Fathers omitted the title Co-redemptrix for sake of ecumenism with "our separated brethren" LG[67] although the description of Mary's participation in Christ's redemption is delineated.

Post Vatican II

Pope St. John Paul II's motto during his pontificate was *totus tuus*, totally yours, in his devotion to the Blessed Mother. He did not fail to recognize Mary's unique and cooperative role in the redemption of man. He coalesces the Scriptures, the Fathers, and the ongoing development of Mary's role in redemption as the Co-redemptrix.

In the light of the New Testament and the Church's tradition, we know that the woman announced by the *Protoevangelium* is Mary, and in "her seed" we recognize her son Jesus who triumphed over Satan's power in the Paschal Mystery. We 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... In addition, associated with her Son's saving work, Mary was *fully involved in the fight* against the spirit of evil.³⁰

St. Maximilian Kolbe notes that because all the truths of Christian Dogma are intertwined together, defining that Jesus is the divine person in which the hypostatic union of the human nature and divine natures exist, the Council of Ephesus dogmatically defined Mary's divine motherhood. St. Maximilian Kolbe discusses all the truths of the Incarnation, the Redemption of Jesus and the actions of the Holy Spirit through the Immaculata, taken together as allowing us to conclude that Mary, as the mother of Jesus our savior, was made the Co-Redemptrix of the human race; as the spouse of the Holy Spirit she shares in the distribution of all graces. Kolbe reiterates what the early Church Fathers discussed regarding "Eve bringing the ruin of man by her own free actions and Mary by her own free actions took part in the reparation of the human race."³¹

Conclusion

Mary is the "Woman" of Genesis 3:15 who crushed the head of the serpent and did so, not by her own power, but only by the power of God. "The Lord has struck him down by the hand of a woman." (Judith 13:15) Originally, prior to the fall, Eve was the helpmate fit for Adam. But where Eve consented to the word of the serpent and brought about sin and death, Mary conceived the Word and brought forth the redeemer of humanity. The Apostolic Fathers describe the antithetical parallelism between Eve and Mary; the first

shoot of the kernel of divine revelation. As the Church “pondered these things in her heart” the development of the “woman” at enmity with the serpent began to blossom. In the light of definitive revelation of Jesus Christ, God the Son, born of a woman in time, (Gal.4:4) the grounding of all Marian Dogmas is established in Mary as *theotokos*. Mary’s co-redemptive role in the salvation of man is further developed through time by St. Andrew of Crete, St. John Damascene, Pseudo-Albert, St. Bernard, and Arnold of Chartres. Beginning with Pius IX, and in *Ineffibilis Deus*, the Marian age is confirmed to have begun in earnest with the apparitions of Our Lady of Grace. Pope Pius XII pronounces Mary’s spiritual motherhood of us all united in Christ. Maximilian Kolbe’s insight into the unity of the “uncreated eternal conception” and the created Immaculate Conception, advances the doctrinal understanding of Mary’s unique relationship of the Holy Spirit by which the Incarnation took place and the graces of the redemption are obtained and dispensed. St. John Paul II’s expounding on the “woman fully involved in the fight” highlights Mary’s singularly unique role as the *exer* of the New Adam which reaffirms the Apostolic Fathers’ Eve/Mary antithetical parallelism. The blossom has now become the fruit of the doctrine of Mary as spiritual mother of the mystical body of Christ who fulfills her role as the Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces and the Advocate of humanity. She is God’s masterpiece of creation and graciously our mother.

Endnotes

1. Aquinas, Thomas. *The Treatise on the Divine Nature Summa Theologiae I, 1-13*. Translated by Brian J. Shanley. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Company, 2006.
2. H5828 - `ezer - Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (RSV). (n.d.). Retrieved November 05, 2020, from <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon/.cfm?Strong's=H5828>
3. Haycock, Geo. Leo. *Haycock Catholic Bible Commentary (Old Testament)*. New York, NY:EDW. Dunigan &c.Brother, (James B. Kirker), 1859.
4. Meilach, Michael D. *Mary Immaculate in the Divine Plan*. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc, 1981.
5. G2396 - Ide - Strong's Greek Lexicon (RSV).” Blue Letter Bible. Accessed November 1, 2020. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang>
6. Aquinas, T. and Newman, J.H., *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels*, Collected out of the Works of the Fathers: St. Luke. (Vol.3, p. 273). London: J.G.F. and J. Rivington, 1841.
7. Ibid. Vol. 4, Vol. 4, pp. 583–58
8. Guittion, Jean. *The Virgin Mary*. New York, Nw York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1952.
9. Irenaeus. J.P. Smith, S.J. Trans: *Proof of the apostolic preaching*; New York: Paulist Press. 1992
10. Miravalle, Mark. "With Jesus" The Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix. Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing, 2003. (pp.69)
11. Ibid. pp. 70
12. Athanasius. "The Divine Dilemma and Its Solution in the Incarnation." Essay. In *On the Incarnation*, translated by Penelope Lawson, Middletown, DE: Pantianos Classics, 2018. (pp. 21)
13. Miravalle, Mark. "With Jesus" The Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix 71.
14. Ibid. pp 71,72

15. Ibid. pp 72.
16. Salvador Gonzalez, Jose Maria. "The Mariology of St. Bonaventure as a Source of Inspiration in Italian Late Medieval Iconography." Universidad Complutense de Madrid, May 10, 2014.
17. Miravalle. "With Jesus" The Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix. 79.
18. Ibid., 80–81.
19. Ibid., . 82–83.
20. Miravalle, Mark. editor: *Mariology A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarists, and Consecrated Persons*. (Goleta, CA, Queenship Publishing, 2007) p. 365 footnote 40
21. Ibid. p.369
22. Ibid. p. 36
23. Miravalle, Mark. "*With Jesus*" *The Story of Mary Co-Redemptrix*: 84.
24. Miravalle, Mark. editor: *Mariology A Guide*, 371.
25. Ibid. 374–375.
26. Ibid. p. 376, footnote 84.
27. Ibid. pp. 841-846
28. Ibid. p. 369
29. Ibid. pp. 384—385.
30. Ibid. p.385, footnote 116
31. Manteau-Bonay, H. M. Chapter Seven: "The Immaculata's Universal Mediation." In *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit: Marian Teachings of St. Maximilian Kolbe*, (Libertyville, IL: Marytown Press, 2001) 88–91