

## **Mother of Us All: Global Ramifications for a World in Crisis**

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Pope Francis has no difficulty in bringing up a topic which has become a staple of his papal teaching and preaching: *Satan*.<sup>107</sup>

Why does the Successor of Peter discuss the evil one so much?

Perhaps it is because Satan is gaining ground in global society, global culture, and global politics in ways that may well be unprecedented since the time Christ walked the earth.

Much of humanity senses this. Most Christians sense this. Perhaps Pope Francis wants Catholics aware of Satan's historic advancements in the world and, to some degree, even within the Church.

This is precisely why the Church and the world *desperately need a Mother*. "Desperate" is not hyperbolic when looking at the present global scene, from the ominous wars between Russia and Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, and Sudanese genocide; to growing global economic instabilities; to the rise of abortion, euthanasia, human trafficking, and all attacks on human life; to unprecedented natural disasters; to schismatic dangers within the Church; to attacks on the true nature of marriage and family, and well beyond.

Yes, the world desperately needs a Mother. But the world has a Mother. She is the Mother given us by the Crucified Lord (cf. J

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<sup>107</sup> Pope Francis' emphasis on Satan is already clear from the early years of his pontificate, cf. Andrea Tornielli, *Il Papa contra Satana*, <https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/it/2017/12/28/news/il-papa-in-lotta-contro-satana-1.34087676/>. (In English) *The Pope Against Satan* <https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/en/2017/12/28/news/the-pope-s-fight-against-satan-1.34087845/>.

19:26-27). She is the Woman clothed with the sun, who has been designated by God to wage the great spiritual battle against the dragon (cf. Rev. 12:1-20), who is the same biblical woman prophesied to crush the head of the serpent (cf. Gen. 3:15). She is the Immaculate Mother, given by God to lead today's spiritual battle against Satan for the salvation of souls and the future of humanity. This is why it is of historically paramount importance that the Church solemnly recognize Mary as our Spiritual Mother and her true ongoing role in salvation history *now*, in our present moment—to grant her our universal consent, through the voice of Peter, which will enable her to most fully intercede against the forces of Hell that are making vast diabolical strides today.

The Second Vatican Council identifies Christ's mother as "a mother to us in the order of grace."<sup>1</sup> Soon after the Council in his 1967 Apostolic Letter, *Signum Magnum*, Pope St. Paul VI identified Mary's Spiritual Motherhood, based upon her unique and intimate participation in Christ's redeeming sacrifice, as a *de fide* article of faith, and as such to be accepted by all Christians:

Indeed, just as no human mother can limit her task to the generation of a new man but must extend it to the function of nourishing and educating her offspring, thus the blessed Virgin Mary, after participating in the redeeming sacrifice of the Son, and in such an intimate way as to deserve to be proclaimed by Him the Mother not only of His disciple John but - may we be allowed to affirm it - of mankind which he in some way represents, now continues to fulfill from heaven her maternal function as the cooperator in the birth and development of divine life in the individual souls of redeemed men. This is a most consoling truth which, by the free consent of God the All-Wise, is an integrating part of the

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<sup>1</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 61.

mystery of human salvation; therefore it must be held as faith by all Christians.<sup>2</sup>

On January 10, 1979, months after he became the Roman pontiff, Pope St. John Paul II immediately began teaching the pre-eminence and universality of Our Lady's Spiritual Maternity:

Her spiritual motherhood (*quoad spiritum*) started at the same time as her physical motherhood (*quoad corpus*)...all men have her as Mother. They understand the words spoken from the Cross as addressed to each of them. [She is]The Mother of all men. *Spiritual motherhood knows no limits*. It extends in time and in space. It reaches so many human hearts. It reaches whole nations.<sup>3</sup>

One year after the assassination attempt on his life on May 13, 1981, Pope St. John Paul II made an initial consecration and entrustment of humanity to Our Lady at Fatima on May 13, 1982, invoking her, “O Mother of men and of peoples”<sup>4</sup> and entrusting to her, “O Mother, all men and all peoples.”<sup>5</sup> During his historic March 25, 1984 Consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart, St. John Paul II again invokes her, “O Mother of individuals and peoples.”<sup>6</sup>

The Totus Tuus pontiff officially teaches the centrality of Spiritual Maternity in his 1987 Marian encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, where he states:

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<sup>2</sup> Pope St. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Signum Magnum*, May 13, 1967, Part I.1.

<sup>3</sup> St. John Paul II, *General Audience*, January 10, 1979,

[https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19790110.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19790110.html). [emphasis mine].

<sup>4</sup> St. John Paul II, *Prayer of Entrustment and Consecration to the Virgin*, May 13, 1982, Fatima, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly English edition, May 24, 1982.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>6</sup> St. John Paul II, *Act of Consecration of the World to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, St. Peter's Square, Vatican City, March 25, 1984.

The Mother of Christ, who stands at the very center of this mystery—a mystery which embraces each individual and all humanity—is given as mother to every single individual and all humanity. The man at the foot of the cross is John, the disciple whom he [Jesus] loved. But it is not he alone. Following Tradition, the Council does not hesitate to call Mary “*the mother of Christ and mother of mankind*... Indeed she is clearly ‘the mother of the members of Christ...since she cooperated out of love so that there might be born in the Church the faithful...Mary’s Motherhood is a gift: a gift which Christ himself makes personally to every individual.’<sup>7</sup>

In his January 1, 2007 World Day of Peace homily, Pope Benedict XVI continues this perennial papal teaching by referring to Our Lady as the “Spiritual Mother of all humanity.”<sup>8</sup>

Pope Francis consistently re-affirms Mary’s Spiritual Maternity, in teaching and in title as well. For example, in a 2019 homily on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, he teaches, “She is the Mother of us all.”<sup>9</sup> In his 2020 World Day of Peace Address, he denotes Mary as the “Mother of all the peoples of the earth.”<sup>10</sup> In his 2021 Message to

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<sup>7</sup> St. John Paul II, *Encyclical, Redemptoris Mater*, March 25, 1987, nn. 23,45.

<sup>8</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Homily of January 1, 2007, Solemnity of the Mother of God and 40<sup>th</sup> World Day of Peace, [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2007/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20070101\\_world-day-peace.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070101_world-day-peace.html).

<sup>9</sup> Pope Francis, Homily for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12, 2019, St. Peter’s Basilica, Vatican City, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2019/documents/papa-francesco\\_20191212\\_omelia-guadalupe.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20191212_omelia-guadalupe.html).

<sup>10</sup> Pope Francis, *Message for the 53<sup>th</sup> World Day of Peace, January 1, 2020*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco\\_20191208\\_messaggio-53giornatamondiale-pace2020.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20191208_messaggio-53giornatamondiale-pace2020.html).

the International Pontifical Marian Academy, Pope Francis confirms “...She is Mother of All, regardless of ethnicity or nationality.”<sup>11</sup>

Let us now examine three dynamically relevant dimensions of Mary’s Spiritual motherhood for the Church and the world today. First, what is the essence of her universal Spiritual Motherhood and how does the expression, “Mother of us all” synthesize Our Lady’s overall relationship to humanity? Secondly, how does Mary’s role with and under Jesus in Redemption constitute the indispensable foundation of her Spiritual Maternity? Thirdly, how would the Church and world benefit from a solemn papal definition of Mary as the spiritual Mother of humanity in our present moment of ubiquitous global crises?

### *Universal Spiritual Motherhood*

Motherhood is classically defined as when a woman gives birth to an offspring with a nature identical to her own, through the process of conception, gestation, and birth. However, it is not the biological generation of a child alone that normally and existentially constitutes authentic motherhood, but also the formation of the child—not only naturing, but also nurturing the child through sacrificial love, formation, and protection.

Spiritual maternity requires the same maternal functions in the order of grace. Jesuit theologian, Bertrand de Margerie explains:

Spiritual motherhood means a supernatural activity, received and subordinate, in the work of eternal salvation of another human being, by which a created person received and transmits to another person the divine life...the human being who is elevated to the level of spiritual motherhood receives from God the Father the possibility of engendering

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<sup>11</sup> Pope Francis, *Message to the Participants of the 25<sup>th</sup> International Marian Congress of the Pontifical Marian Academy International (PAMI)* September 8, 2021, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2021/documents/20210822-messaggio-congressomariano.html>.

supernaturally those who are her brothers and sisters in the natural order.<sup>12</sup>

This is Mary's role in the supernatural order. It is a motherhood which firstly intervenes for the sake of our spiritual birth in Baptism by transmitting divine life to us, and then our ongoing spiritual nourishment and protection through her maternal intercession.

St. Augustine rightly testifies to this truth early in Church Tradition: "...she [Mary] is really mother of the members who we are, because she cooperated by charity so that there might be born in the Church believers, of whom He [Christ] is the head."<sup>13</sup>

The beginning of her Spiritual Maternity originates at the Annunciation. Her "let it be done" to give a human nature to Christ, Head of the Mystical Body, also conveys a "yes" to becoming a mother to the members mystically united to Christ the Head. Pope St. Pius X famously taught in his 1904 encyclical, *Ad diem illum*, that all Christians are mystically born from the "womb of Mary" and thus she becomes spiritual "Mother of us all:"

Is not Mary the Mother of Christ? She is therefore our Mother also....He acquired a body composed like that of other men, but as Savior of our race, He had a kind of spiritual and mystical body, which is the society of those who believe in Christ....Consequently, Mary, bearing in her own womb the Savior, may be said to have born all those whose life was contained in the life of the Savior. All of us, therefore...have come forth from the womb of Mary as a body united to its head. Hence, in a spiritual and mystical

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<sup>12</sup> Bertrand de Margerie, S.J., "Can the Church Define Dogmatically the Spiritual Motherhood of Mary? Objections and Answers", *Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate, Theological Foundations: Towards a Papal Definition?* M. Miravalle, editor, (Santa Barbara, Queenship Publishing, 1995), p. 193.

<sup>13</sup> St. Augustine, *De S. Virginitate* VI, PL 40, 399; Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 53.

sense, we are called children of Mary, and she is the Mother of us all.<sup>14</sup>

Mary's motherhood of humanity constitutes a real motherhood of the spirit, not simply symbolic nor metaphorical.

To perform this sublime task of directing humanity to spiritual birth and ongoing holiness, the Mother of all humanity had first to participate with her divine Son in the restoration of grace for the human race. Mary was the human New Eve with and under Jesus, the divine New Adam; she was the human Co-redemptrix with and under Jesus Christ, the divine Redeemer, in the historic mission of Redemption. This is the foundation of her true and authentic Spiritual Motherhood which required an unparalleled earthly life of maternal suffering and sacrifice.

The full institution of Mary's spiritual maternity takes place at Calvary. The words of the crucified Redeemer announce to the world that only at the end of paying the price for the world's sins, now and definitively, *humanity has a new mother*: "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!" (Jn. 19:26-27). These words *establish a new family order in God's kingdom*. We are no longer offspring only of Eve, a generational mother of the flesh who tragically gave her fiat to Satan's plan, through which grace is universally lost for her present and future children. Now, we have a *new and universal Mother of the spirit* who gives her fiat "let it be done" to the entirety of God the Father's plan, and thus cooperates like no other human being in restoring grace for her universal children.

Leo XIII rightly taught: "Now in John, according to the constant mind of the Church, Christ designated the whole human race, particularly those who were joined with him in faith."<sup>15</sup> As the entire

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<sup>14</sup> St. Pius X, Encyclical, *Ad diem illum*, 1904, n. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Adiutricem populi*, September 5, 1895, No. 6, ASS 28, 1895-1896.

human race is represented in John, so, too the entire human race is entrusted to Mary by Christ. Pope St. John Paul II confirms:

The Mother of Christ, who stands at the very enter of this mystery—a mystery which embraces each individual and all humanity—is given as mother to every single individual and all humanity. The man at the foot of the Cross is John, “the disciple who Jesus loved.” But it is not he alone. Following tradition, the Council does not hesitate to call Mary “the Mother of Christ and all mankind...”<sup>16</sup>

Mary’s Spiritual Motherhood is as universal as Christ’s Redemption. Benedict XVI confirms: “Mary is the spiritual mother of all humanity, because Jesus on the Cross shed his blood for all of us, and from the Cross he entrusted us all to her maternal care.”<sup>17</sup>

Titles such as, “Mother of us all”, “Mother of all humanity” or “Mother of all peoples” accurately convey both the theological truth concerning Mary’s supernatural role to be exercised in the lives of all peoples, but at the same time capture the universality and appreciation of motherhood itself, esteemed and applauded in essentially all societies. Motherhood, like mediation, is also metaphysically and analogously rich, but the motherhood model possesses an immediate common appeal that no abstract theological or philosophical term could likewise offer. “Mother of us all” is a

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<sup>16</sup> Pope St. John Paul II, Encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, 1987, n. 23. N.B. With the November 21, 1964 declaration of Mary as “Mother of the Church” by Pope St. Paul VI, and its 2018 liturgical implementation by Pope Francis as an obligatory memorial on the Monday after Pentecost, Our Lady’s motherhood in the order of grace is undeniably established for the Church. Yet this motherhood also extends universally beyond the Church’s visible confines to all nations, all peoples, all individuals.

<sup>17</sup> Benedict XVI, homily of January 1, 2007: [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2007/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20070101\\_world-day-peace.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070101_world-day-peace.html)



mariological expression understood and appreciated by both head and heart.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, Spiritual Motherhood can well facilitate as a metaphysical genus of Our Lady's three principal maternal functions, i.e., the *Mother Suffering (Co-redemptrix)*; the *Mother Nourishing (Mediatrice of all graces)* and the *Mother Interceding (Advocate)*, without stretching the category of maternity beyond its proper ontological limits. On the contrary, it contains and conveys what all good mothers do for their children in the natural order of maternal mediation: they suffer, they nourish, and they intercede. This is precisely what the Immaculate Mother does for humanity within her spiritual order of maternity.

*The Foundation of Spiritual Motherhood: Mary's Role in the Redemption*

It is obvious in the natural order that the exercise of motherhood necessarily involves suffering. Oftentimes, soon after pregnancy the pain of motherhood begins. This physical suffering is brought to its climactic stage with the labor of birth. Full motherhood does not cease at birth, but existentially continues in nurturing her child in a plethora of formative ways. A mother's emotional and psychological co-suffering with her child likewise continues in light of the connatural union of heart between mother and child.

Maternal suffering as the foundation for all other motherly functions is likewise true with Our Lady's Spiritual Motherhood.

Mary's Immaculate Conception is also essentially connected to her human coredemption with Christ. She is created "full of grace" by

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<sup>18</sup> While some may argue that there is a formal distinction between Maternal mediation and Spiritual Motherhood because the latter includes only "descending mediation," this would be to significantly underestimate the full metaphysical and analogical richness of Spiritual Maternity. Both in the natural and supernatural orders, motherhood is quintessentially mediational; naturally between father and child in generation and beyond; supernaturally in our Lady's prior mediatorial role with the Father and her constant mediation with and under Jesus, which is the very foundation of her relationship with us.

the heavenly Father precisely to be the perfect human companion with her Redeemer-Son. Mary *maintains* her “fullness of grace” through her heroic moment by moment ‘yes’ to God’s will *throughout her entire earthly life*. This free fidelity to her Immaculate Conception demanded perpetually heroic human effort, and was, in itself, a coredeemptive contribution for humanity. It also constituted Mary’s own personal victory over Satan and his seed of sin and temptation.

It is precisely this lifetime suffering with Jesus in his redemptive mission which leads to the climactic moment of Calvary, where, in the words of St. John Paul II, Mary is “spiritually crucified with her crucified Son”<sup>19</sup> as the Co-redemptrix.<sup>20</sup> It is no accident of time that only *after* the completion of the suffering of the divine Redeemer and the human Co-redemptrix at Calvary (cf. Jn. 19:26-27), that Jesus announces to the world that we now have a new, definitive, and perpetual Spiritual Mother. The necessary foundation of Mary’s maternity of the spirit will always be her unique, and lifetime co-suffering with Jesus in the mystery of Redemption.

The mariological teachings of Pope St. John Paul II also offer magisterial confirmation of Mary’s unique role with Jesus in the *acquisition* of the graces of Redemption.<sup>21</sup> Mary alone shared in the actual *obtaining* of the graces with Christ, whereas all other Christians are called to participate in the consequential release and distribution of the redemptive graces acquired at Calvary:

The collaboration of Christians in salvation takes place after the Calvary event, whose fruits they endeavor to spread by prayer and sacrifice. Mary, instead, cooperated in the event itself and in the role of mother; thus her cooperation embraces the whole of Christ’s saving work. She alone was

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<sup>19</sup> St. John Paul II, Homily at the Sanctuary of Guayaquil, Ecuador, Jan 31, 1985, English edition translation.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. Pope St. John Paul II, “Cooperator in the Redemption” Audience, April 7, 1997, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, April 16, 1997, 7; cf. also *Salvific Doloris*, 1984, 25; 1997 Papal Audience, October 25, 1995.

associated in this way with the redemptive sacrifice that merited the salvation of all mankind. In union with Christ and in submission to him, she collaborated in obtaining the graces of salvation for all humanity.<sup>22</sup>

As Jesus mystically conveyed to St. Bridget: “My Mother and I saved man as with one heart only; I by suffering in my Heart and my flesh, she by the sorrow and love of her Heart.”<sup>23</sup>

There is no mariological coherence in the concept of Mary’s Spiritual Motherhood separated from her foundational role with Jesus in Redemption. Mary is appropriately the Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate for all humanity, only because she was first the human Co-redemptrix with the divine Redeemer in uniquely participating in the historic acquisition of the graces of Redemption.

Why, then, is the concept of Mary as human Co-redemptrix so difficult for some to grasp?

One contributing factor is the contemporary neglect of the quintessential Christian concept of *participation*. Participation denotes when an inferior being shares in the being or qualities of a superior being, but without adding, subtracting or possessing equality with that superior being.<sup>24</sup> True participation, then, constitutes a partaking, a sharing in some real way, in the being of another greater being, without risk of equality, competition, or reduction.

The New Testament clearly establishes that all followers of Jesus Christ become, as St. Peter states, “partakers” in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), i.e., to participate in the very nature and being of God

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<sup>22</sup> Pope St. John Paul II, “Cooperator in the Redemption” Audience, April 9, 1997, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, April 16, 1997, 7.

<sup>23</sup> St. Bridget, *Revelationes*, IX, c. 3.

<sup>24</sup> For a classic discussion on the metaphysics of participation, see C. Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo San Tommaso d’Aquino* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Torino: SEI, 1963).

himself. St. Paul likewise exhorts Christians to become “co-workers with God” (1 Cor. 3:9), and thus to personally cooperate in the salvific mission of Jesus Christ. In fact, St. Paul does not shy away from identifying himself in a role of coredeemption with Jesus by testifying to his own cooperation to “save” his fellow Jews when speaking to the Romans: “Now I am speaking to you Gentiles...I magnify my ministry in order to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them (Rom. 11: 13-14).”<sup>25</sup>

St. Augustine was right: “God created us without us, but he did not will to save us without us.”<sup>26</sup> This points to the Christian imperative for humans to participate not only in their own salvation, but in the salvation of other human beings as well. Is this not the imperative of the New Evangelization?

Mary’s participation in the one mediation of Christ and his redemptive mission is incomparably beyond any other creature. Second century Mariology bears this out in the words of Church doctor St. Irenaeus, that the New Eve is the “cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race.”<sup>27</sup>

Any position which holds that Mary’s role as human Co-redemptrix is *equal* to that of Jesus Christ, the world’s only divine Redeemer, would constitute logical, let alone theological, absurdity. Humanity equal to divinity on any level is impossible. Any concept of a human woman competing with a divine Savior is irrational. A human woman

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<sup>25</sup> In fact, the Pauline doctrine of human participation in the saving mission of Christ, starting with the Apostle himself and extending by example to all Christians, is oftentimes undervalued. St. Paul repeatedly beckons the Christian to become “co-workers” (*synergoi*) in the salvific ministry of Jesus, a term he uses at least five times in five different epistles, including “co-workers in the Kingdom of God” (Col. 4:11); and “co-workers in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 16:3).<sup>25</sup> St. John joins St. Paul in this biblical teaching when he likewise refers to fellow Christians as “co-workers” in spreading the “Truth” of Jesus Christ (cf. 3 John 1:8).

<sup>26</sup> St. Augustine, *Sermo* 169, 11, 13: PL 38, 923.

<sup>27</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*. III, 22, 4: PG 7, 9S9 A; Harvey, 2, 123.

*participating* with a Divine Redeemer in the work of Redemption is biblical and historical. Clearly, God wanted a woman to participate in the greatest divine act of human history. Mary, amidst all the disciples of Christ of all times, uniquely did so.

The “Hermeneutics of Continuity,” as theologically promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI, should also apply to Mary’s role in the Redemption within contemporary theology. The rich Tradition of Marian coredeemption has been explicitly present in the Church since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, as well as substantially contained within the New Eve teaching of the first three Christian centuries. Mary’s unique cooperation with Jesus in the Redemption, taught by popes, saints, mystics, and theologians,<sup>28</sup> is simply not going away. Twentieth century Mariology championed the themes of Spiritual Maternity, Coredeemption, and Mediation, more than any other mariological topics.<sup>29</sup> Consistent papal teachings on these Mariological themes would also dominate the greater part of the twentieth century.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. J.B. Carol, *De corredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Rome, 1950; G. Roschini, *Maria Santissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, Vol. II, Isola Del Liri, Pisani, 144-155. For a survey of papal texts from Leo XIII to John Paul II, cf. A. Calkins, “The Mystery of Mary Co-redemptrix in the Papal Magisterium,” *Mary Co-redemptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today*, Queenship, 2002, 25-92; M. Perillo, F.I. and M. Somerton, F.I., “The Marian Coredeemption Through Two Millennia,” *Mary at the Foot of the Cross-II*, Ratcliffe College, England, 2002, Academy of the Immaculate, 79- 112.

<sup>29</sup> This is verifiable by a summary examination of the major Mariological journals in the major languages from the 1910’s to the 1960’s, as well as confirmation by recognized Protestant theologians, cf. G. Miegge, *La Vergine Maria, saggio del storia del dogma* (Torre Pellice: Editrice Claudina, 1950) p. 178, as cited by Carol, *Mariology*, Vol. 2, p. 377. Concerning Marian coredeemption alone, cf. Cf. J.B. Carol, “Marian Coredeemption,” Carol, ed., *Mariology*, Vol 2, 1957, p. 409. (17) For a survey of papal texts on Marian Coredeemption from Leo XIII to John Paul II, cf. A. Calkins, “The Mystery of Mary Co-redemptrix in the Papal Magisterium,” *Mary Coredeemptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today*, Queenship, 2002, 25-92; M. Perillo, F.I. and M. Somerton, F.I., “The Marian Coredeemption Through Two Millennia,” *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, Ratcliffe College, England, 2002, (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2002) 79- 112; Cf. J.B. Carol, *De corredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Rome, 1950; G. Roschini, *Maria Santissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, Vol. II, (Isola Del Liri, Pisani, 1969) 144-155.

<sup>30</sup> Papal teachings on these Marian themes are ubiquitous through 20<sup>th</sup> century papal encyclicals, apostolic letters, homilies, allocutions, etc. For papal and

*Authentic Marian development of doctrine only increases*—it does not decrease. The Holy Spirit, who commits no error, has inspired this Mariological doctrinal development since at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> century,<sup>31</sup> There is no substantial reason to believe that the Spirit will cease its continuation and ultimate completion of this doctrinal development.

*Solemn Definition of the “Mother of Us All”?*

In 1915, the renowned Belgian prelate, Cardinal Désiré Mercier, initiated a movement for the solemn papal definition of Our Lady’s Spiritual Motherhood amidst the ongoing devastation of World War I. Mercier believed that a solemn papal recognition of Mary’s Spiritual Maternity (founded, as he taught, on her roles as Co-

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magisterial references just for Co-redemptrix title, cf. ) Congregation of Rites, Decretum quo festum Septem Dolorum B. M. V., Dominicæ tertiæ Septembris affixum, ad ritum duplicem secundæ classis elevatur pro universa Ecclesia (may 13, 1918) Acta Sanctæ Sedis, 41 [1908] in which the Congregation itself uses the Co-redemptrix title in granting the feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary to be raised to the rank of double class; the Congregation of the Holy Office also uses the title, Co-redemptrix, in a decree of June 26, 1913, Acta Apostolicæ Sedis [AAS] 5[1913], 364; and in another decree of January 22, 1914, AAS 6, [1914], 108. (19) Pope Benedict XV, Inter Sodalicia, AAS 10, 182. “... ut dici merito queat, Ipsam cum Christo humanum genus redemisse.” (20) Cf. Pius XI, Allocution to Pilgrims from Vicenza, Italy, November 30, 1933, L’Osservatore Roma no, Dec. 1, 1933, 1; Pius XI, Allocution to Spanish Pilgrims, L’Osservatore Romano, March 25, 1934, 1; Pius XI, Radio Message for the Closing of the Holy Year at Lourdes, L’Osservatore Romano, April 29-30, 1935, 1. (21) Pius XI, *Allocution to Pilgrims from Vicenza*, Italy, November 30, 1933, L’Osservatore Romano, Dec. 1, 1933, 1; See John Paul II General Audience, 10 December 1980 (Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo [Inseg] II, III/2 [1980], p. 1646); General Audience 8 September 1982 (Inseg V/3 [1982], p. 404); Angelus Address 4 November, 1984 (Inseg VII/2 [1984], p. 1151); Discourse at World Youth Day 31 March 1985 (Inseg VIII/1 [1985], p. 889–890); Address to the Sick 24 March, 1990 (Inseg XIII/1 [1990], p. 743); Discourse of 6 October, 1991 (Inseg XIV/2 [1991], p. 756). Moreover, in a homily in Guayaquil, Ecuador on January 31, 1985, John Paul II spoke of the “co-redemptive role of Mary (el papel corredentor de María: Inseg VIII [1985], p. 319), which was translated as “Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix” in L’Osservatore Romano, English ed., March 11, 1985.

<sup>31</sup> Scholars maintain that the New Eve tradition is apostolic in its origins, being handed down, for example, from St. John the Apostle through St. Polycarp to St. Irenæus.

redemptrix and Mediatrix of all graces) would lead to a great historic release of grace and peace for the world. This gratuitous outpouring is based on the principle that the more we freely and officially honor Mary's motherly roles of supernatural intercession, the more she can providentially enact and empower these roles for humanity. By 1918, over 300 bishops joined by hundreds of thousands of priests, religious and faithful globally, had petitioned Pope Benedict XV for this fifth Marian dogma.

This Marian movement has continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, from 1993 to 2000, an additional 650 bishops and over 7 million Catholic faithful from 180 countries would join in this petition for a fifth Marian dogma.<sup>32</sup> Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many contemporaries believe the world to be in even greater need of a supernatural intervention from the Mother of all humanity for world peace.

But why a new dogma? Presently, the four Marian dogmas, i.e., her Motherhood of God, her Perpetual Virginity, her Immaculate Conception, and her Assumption, all focus on personal prerogatives and their effects which God has given to Mary in relation to Jesus. Yet, none of the existing Marian dogmas denote *Mary's relationship to humanity*. ***To define as dogma that Mary is the "Mother of us all" is to manifest in the highest and most solemn manner the Church's acknowledgement and appreciation of her role as humanity's Spiritual Mother—that her unique human role with Jesus in our salvation and subsequent maternal relation to the human race merits to be raised to the same dogmatic recognition and honor as her other God-given privileges and roles.***

What, then, would be the potential fruits from a new dogma of Spiritual Motherhood?

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<sup>32</sup> . *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrix* Archives of cardinal and bishop endorsement letters received, filed, copied and submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith since 1993, as well as petitions of the lay faithful likewise submitted to the CDF, 48765 Annapolis Rd, Hopedale, Ohio.

Here are at least seven monumental ecclesial and global fruits that would come from a fifth Marian dogma of Mary as *Mother of us all*:

1. releasing historic graces of peace and conversion for the Church and the world, by fully activating Mary's maternal intercession through our free consent as exercised by the successor of Peter;
2. the completion of Marian dogma, by solemnly proclaiming Mary's relationship to humanity;
3. testifying to the redemptive value of human suffering, as seen both in the model of Mary Co-redemptrix and the call of all Christians to be "co-redeemers in Christ;"<sup>33</sup>
4. highlighting the dignity of the human person and human freedom, by celebrating the human imperative to freely cooperate with God's grace;
5. proclaiming the true dignity of woman, by accentuating an authentic Christian feminism based on Our Lady;
6. exercising authentic Catholic ecumenism by proclaiming the whole truth about Mary in transparent ecumenical dialogue, and by affirming that no one better unites Christians than our universal Spiritual Mother;
7. responding to credible Marian private Revelation, where through numerous contemporary apparitions, Our Lady has

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Allocution to the Sick at the Hospital of the Brothers of St. John of God*, April 5, 1981, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1981/april/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19810405\\_fatebenefratelli.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1981/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19810405_fatebenefratelli.html), *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., April 13, 1981, 6; Address to the Sick following General Audience, January 13, 1982, 91 [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19820113.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19820113.html); *Inseg.* V/1, 1982, 91; *Address to the Bishops of Uruguay*, May 8, 1988, n.7: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1988/may/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19880508\\_vescovi-nunziatura.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1988/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19880508_vescovi-nunziatura.html), *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., May 30, 1988, 4.



communicated that God desires this fifth Marian dogma as the definitive key to the Triumph of her Immaculate Heart.<sup>34</sup>

Recently, in a May 13, 2023 papal message for a Marian celebration in Sardinia, Pope Francis referred to “Mediatrice of all graces” as an “ancient Marian title,” and identified Mary as the “Advocate close to Jesus.”<sup>35</sup> Could these references to two of the three titles so closely associated with the worldwide petition for a new Marian dogma indicate a new openness on the part of Pope Francis? Only time and prayer will tell. In the meantime, the present Roman pontiff continues to teach the doctrine of Mary’s Spiritual Maternity and her unique role in the Redemption as he did, for example, his January 1, 2020 homily for the World Day of Peace: “From her, a woman, salvation came forth, and thus, there is no salvation without a woman.”<sup>36</sup>

I believe the time has come to apply Pascal’s Wager to the fifth Marian Dogma. What is lost if every predicted global fruit—from Cardinal Mercier’s historic release of grace to Private Revelation’s description of a fifth Marian dogma as the necessary condition for the Triumph of Mary’s Heart and global peace— would not result from this proposed definition, but only a solemn proclamation of what we already believe of Our Mother as Catholics? Is not the

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Mark Miravalle, “*Apologia Pro Dogma Sua: Ecclesial, Anthropological, and Contemporary Global Fruits from a Potential New Marian Dogma*,” *Ecce Mater Tua*, Vol. 3, August 22, 2018,

<https://eccematertua.com/sites/eccc/files/miravalleemtv3second.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> Pope Francis, *Papal Address to Diocese of Sassari*, Sardinia, May 13, 2023, <http://www.arcidiocesisassari.it/2023/05/28/festa-del-voto-il-messaggio-del-santo-padre/> (accessed July 13, 2023).

<sup>36</sup> Pope Francis, *Homily of the Mass of the Solemnity of the Mother of God*, January 1, 2020, [\(https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco\\_20200101\\_omelia-madredidio-pace.html#:~:text=Holy%20Mass%20on%20the%20Solemnity,\(1st%20January%202020\)%20%7C%20Francis&text=%E2%80%9CBut%20when%20the%20time%20had,\(Lk%20%3B21\)](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200101_omelia-madredidio-pace.html#:~:text=Holy%20Mass%20on%20the%20Solemnity,(1st%20January%202020)%20%7C%20Francis&text=%E2%80%9CBut%20when%20the%20time%20had,(Lk%20%3B21)) (accessed July 16, 2023).

proclamation of Marian truth meritorious in the eyes and heart of her Son?

But what if Mercier and Mary are right? What if all the fruits from Mercier's temporal peace to Mary's Era of Peace is truly conditional on this Marian proclamation? Is it not time to make that wager for world peace? Or should we wait for another series of regional wars, or perhaps even the full and fatal formalization of a nuclear third world war?

*Conclusion*

The battle in the book of Revelation is the battle of the *present moment*. The world urgently needs the fully activated intercession of the Woman clothed with the Sun, *the Spiritual Mother of us all*, to lead the present battle against Satan and his anti-culture of hatred, division, and war. This Woman *will* lead us to victory, the Triumph of her Immaculate Heart, for she will intercede to bring *Jesus anew* into the world through a new Pentecost—a new descent of his Spirit which alone can bring true and lasting peace to our troubled world.

The Woman awaits only one thing: our consent—a universal human consent for her most powerful intercession manifested through a solemn papal declaration of her Spiritual Maternity. No other can speak on behalf of all humanity except the Vicar of Christ.

Let us enter into a serious discussion within the Church and its hierarchy, in a true spirit of synodality, regarding a potential papal definition of the *Mother of us all*—a dogma which recognizes Our Mother for who she really is, and what she can do for a human family that needs her powerful maternal intercession *now*.