

## **New Vatican Statement on Amsterdam Apparitions: Obedience, Theological Issues, and Distinctions**

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On July 11, 2024, the Vatican Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith published a new statement on the Amsterdam apparitions of the Lady of All Nations, stating that the reported apparitions have been judged as “*constat de non supernaturalitate*,” that is, not possessing a supernatural character, and that this position was orally confirmed by Pope St. Paul VI in an audience. Apart from ambiguities on the Vatican’s own website, which previously reported the 1974 status in several languages as “*non constat de supernaturalitate*,”<sup>1</sup> that is, “the supernatural character has not been established,” this new statement makes clear that the present position of the DDF is the more negative *constat de non* status.

In light of this new Vatican statement, we believe the following five points are important for its proper understanding and implementation.

### *1. Obedience is the proper response to Vatican disciplinary norms.*

Obedience is the response of the saints and faithful Catholics to proper Church authority, even when it is not on a doctrinal level, but only a disciplinary level. Obedience in this specific case further requires an obedient following of all juridical norms specified by the DDF and as concretely designated by the local bishop, Bishop Johannes Henricks in his December 30, 2020 statement released after consultation with the Vatican doctrinal office<sup>2</sup> at the time. This would

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<sup>1</sup> On the Vatican website, there are only vernacular texts of the 1974 CDF (DDF) judgment. The Italian, French, and German texts are all the equivalent of “*non constat de supernaturalitate*.” See this article by R. Fastiggi:

<https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/note-on-the-english-translation-of-the-1974-cdf-statement-on-our-lady-of-all-nations>.

<sup>2</sup> The Vatican doctrinal office since 2022 is known as the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF). From 1965 to 2022 it was known as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and before that, the Holy Office. To avoid confusion DDF will be used as the equivalent of CDF.

include, for example, not promulgating the reported message as if approved, or inaccurately portraying the Vatican position as anything but negative at this time.

Obedience, though, does not always imply an agreement with the DDF judgment, nor does it necessarily require rejecting a personal belief in the supernatural authenticity of the reported Amsterdam apparitions. The July 8, 2024 positive statement by the DDF concerning the Rosa Mystica apparitions, which previously had received at least five separate negative judgments from the local bishops of Brescia in the last 40 years, including several times after consultation with the DDF, have now all been completely reversed by the recent DDF statement. Certainly, the Rosa Mystica visionary, Pierina Gilli, maintained her personal faith in the supernatural character of her now essentially approved apparitions during these challenging periods of Church prohibition, condemnation, and even interdict.

Obedience to a Vatican disciplinary norm, therefore, requires obedience to the prescribed acts, but does not require an internal rejection of personal belief in the authenticity of the apparitions. Therefore, a faithful Catholic can be both obedient to the new DDF norms and still personally believe in the supernatural character of the reported Amsterdam apparitions.<sup>3</sup>

*2. Vatican disciplinary norms, even those approved by a pope are not definitive, and have been completely reversed in time.*

Recent Church examples clearly illustrate that even papally approved Vatican disciplinary norms are not, by their very nature, definitive and can in time be completely reversed.

For example, from 1924 to 1931, various statements of the Holy Office (now DDF) denied the supernaturality of Padre Pio's mystical

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<sup>3</sup> Faithful Catholics, though, must make every effort to understand the reasons for the judgment of the Holy See on particular apparitions. They must also avoid making any public statements that reject that judgment.

phenomena. In June, 1931, Padre Pio was ordered by the Holy Office with the approval of Pope Pius XI to desist from all activities except the celebration of the Mass, along with other prohibitions. In time, Padre Pio went from Church condemnation to Church canonization in a comprehensive overturning of his previous negative disciplinary status.

The Divine Mercy apparitions and messages likewise went through some 20 years of prohibition with the approval of its negative prohibition by Pope St. John XXIII in 1959. Due principally to the ongoing personal faith in the authenticity of the apparitions by Bishop Karol Wojtyla (Pope St. John Paul II) during this time of Church prohibition, the Church now universally celebrates the Feast of Divine Mercy and the Novena revealed in the apparitions of Jesus to St. Faustina throughout the universal Church.

The most recent example of the reversal of negative Vatican disciplinary norms is, once again, the case of the 1947-1966 Rosa Mystica apparitions, whereby the visionary Pierina Gilli received numerous negative disciplinary norms, several approved by the DDF and also experienced local ecclesiastical interdicts. All these negative norms have now being overturned with the DDF July 5, 2024 positive assessment and the bishop of Brescia's highest possible declaration of *Nihil Obstat*.

3. *The Lady of All Nations prayer, image, and prayer days remain approved the local bishop in consultation with the DDF.*

The December 30, 2020 statement on the Amsterdam apparitions by Bishop Johannes Hendricks of Haarlem-Amsterdam in consultation with the then Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith clearly states that the Prayer of the Lady of All Nations, its image, and prayer days in honor of the Lady of All Nations remain approved, as long as they are not seen as an indication of the supernatural character of the apparitions. The July 11, 2024 DDF statement is released in continuity with the norms specified in the Dec. 30, 2024 statement by

the local bishop. The Prayer of the Lady of all Nations, therefore, may continue to be prayed and spread.

4. *No explicit reasons were given by the DDF as to why the reported Amsterdam apparitions were judged to be not supernatural. There are some indications, though, that one possible reason might be opposition to the request for a fifth Marian dogma, which appears in the reported messages.*

Based on various Vatican statements on the reported Amsterdam apparitions, it appears one underlying reason for opposition to the apparitions may well be a newfound opposition to the papal and conciliar teachings on Marian coredemption and her mediation of graces, as well as the repeated request in the message for a fifth Marian dogma of these selfsame Marian title and roles.

One indication of this potential incongruity with papal and conciliar Marian doctrine was exhibited in the theological commentary contained in the recent DDF *Rosa Mystica* statement, whereby the document stated that “only the Lord can act in the hearts of people by giving sanctifying grace” and “in this action that only God can do profoundly, without neglecting our freedom, there is no other possible mediation, not even of the Holy Virgin Mary.” The content of this DDF statement runs in direct contradiction to three centuries of numerous papal teachings, starting with Pope Benedict XIV<sup>4</sup> in the eighteenth century to Pope St. John Paul II, who calls Our Lady the Mediatrix of all graces on eight different occasions,<sup>5</sup> to Pope Francis who positively referred to the Mediatrix of all graces title on

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<sup>4</sup> In his apostolic constitution, *Gloriosae Dominae* (September 27, 1748), Benedict XIV says that “Mary is that heavenly stream which brings to the hearts of wretched mortals all God’s gifts and graces” (*Papal Teachings Our Lady*, selected and arranged by the Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, translated by the Daughters of St. Paul (Boston, MA: Daughters of St. Paul, 1961), 26.

<sup>5</sup> See “Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces in the Papal Magisterium of John Paul II” by Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins: <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/mary-mediatrix-of-all-graces-in-the-papal-magisterium-of-pope-john-paul-ii>.

May 13, 2023,<sup>6</sup> to this unambiguous statement by Pope Benedict XVI that “There is no fruit of grace in the history of salvation that does not have as its necessary instrument the mediation of Our Lady.”<sup>7</sup>

If indeed the major opposition to the reported Amsterdam apparitions is centered in a rejection of these authentic papal and conciliar teachings on Mary’s unique coredemptive role with Jesus, for which role St. John Paul II uses the title, “Co-redemprix” on six occasions,<sup>8</sup> and her consequent role in the active mediation of the graces of redemption, then a deeper Mariological discussion must ensue about a proper defense of true Marian doctrine as found in the papal magisterium and in the conciliar teachings of Vatican II, where, for example, Our Lady’s coredemption is taught in *Lumen Gentium*,

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<sup>6</sup> See the May 13, 2023 Message of Pope Francis to Archbishop Gian Franco Saba, Archbishop of Sassari, Sardina (Italy), on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Festa del Voto. In this message, Pope Francis refers to one of the most ancient Marian titles as precisely, the “Mediatrix of All Graces”:  
<http://www.arcidiocesisassari.it/2023/05/28/festa-del-voto-il-messaggio-del-santo-padre/>.

<sup>7</sup> Benedict XVI, In his May 11 2007 homily at Campo de Marte, São Paulo, for the canonization of Frei Antônio de Sant’Ana Galvão (May 11, 2007):  
[https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2007/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20070511\\_canonization-brazil.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070511_canonization-brazil.html).

<sup>8</sup> See John Paul II General Audience, 10 December 1980 (*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II [Inseg]* 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-redemprix” in the English edition of *L’Osservatore Romano* March 11, 1985, p. 7. The Italian translation, though, is closer to the Spanish, viz., *il ruolo corredentore di Maria*.

nn. 56, 57, 58, and in 61, which speaks of the “singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the work of the Savior in giving back supernatural life to souls.” Moreover, her role and title as “Mediatrix” is taught and explained in *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 60, 61, and 62, which says that, “taken up to heaven [Mary] did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation (*in aeternae salutis donis nobis*).” Surely, the highest doctrinal commission in the Church must not only accept papal and conciliar teaching on Our Lady, but must also defend it as a precious part of the Church’s Marian tradition and truth.

We bring this forward in the proper spirit of the DDF’s own 1990 document, *Donum Veritatis*, “On the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian” which refers to the theologian’s duty to bring forth to magisterial authority the need for clarification or correction for the good of the Church:

...The theologian has the duty to make known to the Magisterial authorities the problems raised by the teaching in itself, in the arguments proposed to justify it, or even in the manner in which it is presented. He should do this in an evangelical spirit and with a profound desire to resolve the difficulties. His objections could then contribute to real progress and provide a stimulus to the Magisterium to propose the teaching of the Church in greater depth and with a clearer presentation of the arguments (*Donum Veritatis*, n. 30).

5. *This DDF statement on the Amsterdam Apparitions in no way hinders the continued progress of the international movement for a fifth Marian dogma.*

The international Catholic movement for the solemn papal definition of our Lady’s Spiritual Motherhood, inclusive of her three maternal roles as Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate, has never been based on any private revelation, but was founded by the renowned Belgian prelate, Cardinal Désiré Mercier in 1915, some 30 years before the Amsterdam apparitions reportedly began. Cardinal Mercier based this movement on the truth of these Marian titles and

roles as found in Scripture, Tradition, and as articulated by the Papal Magisterium. Mercier believed that the solemn proclamation of our Lady's role as Spiritual Mother and Mediatrix of all graces (based theologically on her foundational role as Co-redemptrix) would bring great graces to the Church during the terrible days of World War I.

As we today, once again, face what Pope Francis refers to as a potential "World War III by piecemeal,"<sup>9</sup> we believe there remains the need to solemnly recognize Our Lady's maternal roles, which will in turn activate the full exercise of her maternal mediation and intercession for humanity in its grave need for true peace.

The theological and pastoral efforts towards a fifth Marian dogma will certainly continue in full obedience to the Church's Magisterium, as part of a proper "Hermeneutics of Continuity" in conformity with the rich Mariological tradition of the past, the Mariological teachings of the Second Vatican Council, and the inspired Mariological teachings of St. John Paul II.

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, this article of January 4, 2024: <https://www.agensir.it/chiesa/2024/01/08/pope-francis-the-present-third-world-war-fought-piecemeal-is-turning-into-a-global-conflict/>.