

The Question of "*Omnium Gratiarum*": Karl Rahner and Twentieth Century Thomism on Marian Mediation

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Introduction

If one were to begin studies in Catholic Mariology, they would not come to see the value of the Franciscan tradition with much difficulty. Even a cursory reading of the historical development of Marian doctrine and devotion will take note of the significant contributions made by Franciscans particularly in the defined dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the taught doctrine of Marian mediation. Beginning with Francis of Assisi's love for Mary, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, and continuing to the scholastic head of the Franciscan Order, Bonaventure, Mary's place as mother and queen of the Franciscan Order was never diminished. It is with the scholastic genius of Blessed John Duns Scotus that the theological difficulties of Mary's preservative redemption were given a proper response. Following the Anselmian principle of fittingness, Duns Scotus brought forward to the mind of the Church Mary, who through the perfect act of redemption was conceived in a state of original justice in virtue of the merits of her Son, the most perfect Redeemer. The Franciscans, especially after the contribution of Blessed Scotus, became known as the champions of Mary's Immaculate Conception - and what has been called the "Golden Thread" of the Franciscan order continued down through the ages with contributions to the cause of the Immaculate and her maternal mediation from figures such as Saint Lawrence of Brindisi, Saint Francis Anthony Fasani, Father Karlo Balic, Blessed Gabriele Allegra, and (most especially) Saint Maximilian Kolbe. While rightfully giving the Franciscan tradition its place of honor in the development of the Church's Marian doctrine, one would be remiss to not examine the contributions made by another mendicant-scholastic tradition beginning with the Common Doctor - Saint Thomas Aquinas. To say that the Thomistic Mariological tradition has been eclipsed by the Franciscan-Scotistic tradition by the fault of a vehement opposition by Thomistic commentators to the immaculate conception of Mary is

a centuries-old trope that is mixed with historical fact and interpretive exaggeration. While scholarship on the subject of the Immaculate Conception in the thought of Saint Thomas has generally argued that the Angelic Doctor consistently rejected the doctrine, still others (especially in the twentieth century) have taken a nuanced approach arguing for Thomas' own development of thought on the subject; eventually coming to affirm the doctrine towards the end of his life.¹ Moreover, recent discoveries have been made on the subject of Dominicans and the development of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception that challenge the general opinion of an almost universal rejection of the doctrine prior to *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854.² That being said, it would be wrong for us to dismiss the Thomistic contribution to Catholic Mariology - particularly in the development of the theology of Marian co-redemption and mediation.

This paper is an attempt to shed light on this Thomistic school of Mariology - in particular with regards to Mary's distribution of all graces, and to mend the "fractured domain" of faithful Catholics against faithful Catholics a domain that has been described by one theologian as a "circular firing squad" of orthodox theologians.³ The following paper has a two-fold aim in 1) providing an adequate theological explanation of the Marian title Mediatrix of All Graces (*Mediatrix Omnium Gratarum*), and 2) doing so through the contribution of Thomistic theology - specifically from the early 20th

¹ Cf. Mandonnet, S. Th. Aq. opuscula omnia (Paris, 1927) pp. xix-xxii. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrangé, *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life* (Dublin: Golden Eagle Books, 1948), pp. 66-71.

² Cf. Alan Krieger, "Seventeenth Century Dominicans Supporting the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception", *RBSC ND* (January 17, 2022) <https://sites.nd.edu/rbsc/seventeenth-century-dominicans-supporting-the-doctrine-of-the-immaculate-conception/>.

³ Matthew Levering, in his endorsement of Matthew Miner's translation of *The Sense of Mystery* by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrangé writes, "If liberal theology is to be opposed in the twenty-first century Church, we will need both the neo-scholastics and the nouvelle théologie, whose insights can now be gleaned without condemning the one or the other. May the publication of this book signal an end to the circular firing squad of those who should be allies in the struggle against Catholic Troeltschian theology." (Reginald Garrigou Lagrangé. *The Sense of Mystery: Clarity and Obscurity in the Intellectual Life*. (Steubenville: Emmaus Academic, 2017)).

century to our present day. This will be done in three stages. First, we will examine the critiques of the *omnium gratiarum* from the writings of Karl Rahner and his “transcendental Thomism”. These critiques will largely revolve around ecumenical concerns, a Marian immanentism, and the question of Marian mediation in the graces of the sacraments. Second, we will expound on the Thomistic contributions to a theological understanding of Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces in the time leading up to the Second Vatican Council. Through the examples of Thomists of the French Dominican tradition, such as Édouard Hugon and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, we find a clear, reasonable, and sensible theological exposition of Catholic doctrine that provides an answer to the Rahnerian-concilium concerns. Finally, there will be a treatment on the subject of Marian mediation in the sacraments. For the treatment of Mary’s mediation of all graces in the sacramental economy we are most indebted to the late Spanish Thomist Joaquín Ferrer Arellano. Following the affirmation of Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces from Pope Benedict XVI⁴ and Pope Francis⁵, it is our hope that this paper will contribute to the new fervor and renewed interest in the subject of Mary’s maternal mediation and her distribution of all graces.

Rahner’s “Fundamental Principle” as an Interpretive Lens of “Mediatrix of All Graces”

While the topic of twentieth century Marian minimalism is broad, and its proponents numerous, our focus concerns the thought of Karl Rahner and (more specifically) his concerns with the theology of Mary, *Mediatrix Omnium Gratiarum*. It should be stated from the beginning that it would be wrong for those who might identify themselves as “Marian maximalists” or “Christotypical mariologists” to accuse those that are minimalist or ecclesiotypical in their mariology as theologically disinterested in Mary; and that this disinterest serves as basis for their downplaying of a Mariology and

⁴ Pope Benedict XVI, *Letter to H.E. Msgr. Zygmunt Zimowski, Special Envoy to the celebrations of the 21st World Day of the Sick*, February 11, 2013. Web.

⁵ Pope Francis, *Message on the Feast of the Vow to Bishop Gian Franco Saba*, May 13, 2023. Web.

Marian devotion that is considered “excessive”, “overly metaphysical”, or “superstitious”. The preponderance of texts on Mary in what has been considered the “Marian” age following the dogmatic definition of *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854, texts that emphasize these two (often grating) strands of Mariology, show that the minimalists are just as interested in Mary as the maximalists, if for different reasons. We can find a keen interest in the Virgin Mary in the self-identified “Marian minimalist” Karl Rahner. This interest in Mary for Rahner largely began with his reading of Heinrich Maria Köster’s 1947 book *The Handmaid of the Lord: Theological Essays and Observations*, and his assessment of the text as being both “one of the best 1940s-era Mariologies” and yet “sharing the propositionalism of Neo-Scholastic theologians”⁶. To rectify the issues that Rahner found in Köster’s text, and to provide a text on Mariology in light of the (at the time) looming prospect of a dogmatic state on Mary’s Assumption, Rahner began writing what is known as the *Assumptio-Arbeit* in the 1940s. Ultimately, this text would not be published until after his death due to multiple censorships from both Jesuit censors and the Holy Office. One will note the severity in the document issued by the Holy Office in 1952 criticizing Rahner’s “fundamental principle” [*Grundprinzip*] of Mariology:

What K. Rahner developed regarding the fundamental principle of Mariology, what one could express with the phrase: *Maria fuit perfectissimo modo passive et active salvata* [Mary was saved in the most perfect way, passively and actively], wholly displeases the censor.⁷

⁶ Cf. Peter Joseph Fritz, “Karl Rahner’s ‘Marian Minimalism’”, *Mary on the Eve of Vatican II*, ed. J. Cavadini, D. Peters (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017) pp. 156-178.

⁷ This Rahnerian “fundamental Marian principle” would be taken up again in Rahner’s *Theological Investigations* Vol. 1: “If we were to try and sum up what we have so far said about Mary in a concise formula, which expresses it all at one stroke by means of a concept whose theological validity requires no preliminary proof, then all we need say is: Mary is she who is most perfectly Redeemed.” See: K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 3:206 (St Louis: Herder & Herder, 1982).

What became an issue for the censors in Rahner's "fundamental principle" is a thesis that places emphasis on the public-ecclesial dimension of Mary that leaves out anything that might be considered of "private privilege". The emphasis that Rahner places on Mary as the most perfectly redeemed places her one among many - albeit singular and unique. The "fundamental principle" of Karl Rahner presents a Mariology for the modern world that springs from his theology of immanence and what Peter Joseph Fritz refers to as his "Chalcedonian Christological commitments" that puts a pause on any Mariology that - to the mind of Rahner - diminishes the two natures of Christ.

This "fundamental position" that Rahner establishes for himself informs his understanding of Marian mediation and - in particular - her distribution of the graces of Redemption. In his slim 1963 volume of Marian meditations entitled *Mary, Mother of the Lord*, Rahner devotes his penultimate chapter to the title of "Mediatrice of Graces". Here indeed we find the thread of Rahner's fundamental principle in his theology of Mary's mediation that emphasizes her public actions. Rather than referring to Mary's mediation role as an "office" or "privilege" of Mary, Rahner argues for Marian mediation as a function of the preeminent woman and model within the Church. While arguing that Mary as mediatrix is "not yet a definite doctrine", Rahner does affirm the doctrine through an emphasis on all members of the Mystical Body serving as mediators of grace and salvation:

God in Jesus Christ has so established grace within the human community's solidarity in history and eternal welfare and loss, that it reaches one member through another, even though in God's perspective, it is intended equally directly for each, in Jesus Christ, the head of the one human race.⁸

⁸ Karl Rahner, *Mary, Mother of the Lord: Theological Meditations* (St. Louis: Herder & Herder, 1962) p. 97.

Truly, Rahner's theological treatment of mediation through the lens of human solidarity takes up almost the entire chapter on Mary as the Mediatrix of Grace. Rahner, it must be stated, is not wholly dismissive of Mary's singular importance in salvation history as the Mediatrix of Grace. Rahner will argue that "none has had a profounder, more comprehensive function, or one more decisive for the whole divine plan, than the blessed Virgin, in the earthly history of redemption."⁹ One must be careful to note, however, Rahner's tone in treating Mary's singularity. The emphasis placed on Mary's "comprehensive function" and her mediatory role in the "earthly history of redemption", stresses Mary as mediatrix in bringing forth Jesus Christ as Savior into the world through her maternal fiat.¹⁰ It is in Mary as the feminine figure in the earthly history of redemption that she can be considered by Rahner as "Mediatrix of All Graces". He writes,

We can truly say of Mary, on account of what she did in the history of redemption, which has become eternal, that in the communion of saints she is the intercessor for all of us, the mediatrix of all graces.¹¹

The transcendence of Mary's mediation of the graces of redemption becomes associated, for Rahner, not with her private privileges of being the Immaculate Conception, her cooperating role in the Redemption, or in her queenship, but rather in connection to the saving work of Christ in the one historical event of his life, death, and resurrection. The "*omnium gratiarum*" for Rahner is grace personified - Jesus Christ - and the grace merited through the Paschal Mystery. Anything else concerning the distribution of actual graces, the singular grace of the present moment, and the graces of the sacraments does not fall under this Rahnerian theology of Marian mediation.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 100.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 101.

Rahner's de-emphasis of the Marian title of Mediatrix of All Graces is expounded on in greater detail in his multi-volume *Theological Investigations*. Arguing that the Church only teaches Mary's mediation of grace "theoretically"¹² Rahner will place such title and veneration until the stress that this role of mediation is given to Mary by Christ who alone is "the sole source and mediator of all grace." The titles given to Mary by chapter eight of the Second Vatican Council document *Lumen Gentium* - 'Advocate', 'Auxiliatrix', 'Adjutrix', and 'Mediatrix' - are considered by Rahner to be a "freer language of pious affection"¹³ and that Mary's function as Mediatrix "belongs to the plane of solidarity in salvation which is true of all the redeemed, not to the plane of Christ's sole mediatorship."¹⁴ Here it can be stated that Rahner's interpretation of Marian mediation runs counter to the physical-instrumental causality theory that considers Mary as the distributor of the graces of Redemption - using language such as channel, aqueduct, or neck of the Mystical Body. Against thinkers of this position such as Lepicier, Hugon, Roschini, and Garrigou-Lagrange, Rahner places all emphasis on Mary's intercessory role in view of her previous (historical) cooperation in the redemptive work of Christ.

Twentieth-Century Thomism and the Position of Marian Instrumental Causality

To provide a proper answer to Rahner's objections and his Marian minimalism with respect to Mary's role in the distribution of graces, it is worth examining the Thomistic theologies of the twentieth-century that could be classified as falling under the theory of "physical-instrumental causality". A preliminary observation of genuine importance in this matter is the question of Mary's position in the

¹² Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 9:171.

¹³ *Ibid*, 9:172.

¹⁴ *Ibid*. This leads Rahner to predict a future of the Church that moves away from what he refers to as a "quantitative augmentation of Marian dogma" - so that one forgets a future solemn definition of a Marian title like "Co-Redemptrix" or "*Mediatrix Omnium Gratiarum*".

order of grace and in what has traditionally been referred to as the “order of hypostatic union”. More broadly than the hypostatic union of Christ’s humanity and divinity in one person, the hypostatic order is all that is involved in this union - including Mary and her divine maternity as the Theotokos. As a human person who participates in the hypostatic order Mary is, as 17th century Dominican Louis Chardon writes in his magnum opus *The Cross of Jesus*, “a remarkable work...In a manner of speaking she exhausts the omnipotence of God.”¹⁵ The hypostatic union, Chardon continues, “is something far above the natural order, and by her maternity Mary entered into that divine order.”¹⁶ This does not mean that Mary is equal with Jesus in the hypostatic order. Rather, it places Mary under Jesus yet above the natural and common order of grace. Because of this placement of Mary within the hypostatic order, she is the human person fully divinized through her affinity to the divine. The Dominican Chardon is quite explicit in his affirmation of this writing that:

Mary constitutes an order all by herself somewhere between God by nature and God by participation...Jesus is God by nature of His divine Person; so far as they share in God’s nature, the saints and angels are gods by adoption. It follows then that Mary is God by affinity, since the bonds which make her His Mother touch the borders of divinity.¹⁷

Chardon will go even further in this theology of affinity in virtue of Mary’s placement within the hypostatic order when writing on Mary’s affinity with the Holy Spirit. Note in these words of Chardon two things: 1) their similarity to the Marian-pneumatology of Saint Maximilian Kolbe 300 years later¹⁸ and 2) their implications in our discussion of Mary as distributor of all graces:

¹⁵ Louis Chardon, *The Cross of Jesus* (Providence: Cluny, 2023), p. 123.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 124.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Cf. Saint Maximilian Kolbe, *The Writings of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe* (Florence: Nerbini International, 2022). n. 1318-1320.

May we not go further and say [Mary] contracts a sort of affinity with the person of the Holy Spirit, who is uncreated Love?...May we not say that the Holy Spirit communicated to her all His power and that while He gave Himself partially to other saints, He poured Himself forth in her to produce one of whom He was not the Father?¹⁹

This theology of affinity to the Holy Trinity from Chardon comes from a rich line of thought in the Thomistic tradition beginning as far back as Cajetan, who, in his commentary on St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*, wrote:

[Christ's] mother is said to be placed akin to [*affinis*] God. Now, not all those of such affinity deserve hyperdulia...but only the Blessed Virgin, who alone attained to the borders of the deity by her own natural operation when she conceived, bore, gave birth to, and gave to drink of her own milk.²⁰

From this theology of affinity comes - in essence - to what is referred to as Mary's physical-instrumental causality in the plan of redemption - and, more specifically, a Thomistic theology for Mary's mediation and distribution of grace through a reflection on her Divine Maternity. This Thomistic orientation to the "physical-instrumental" causality can (and should) be considered as being both in complementarity with the Scotistic presentation of meditation that stresses a moral-exemplary causality, and in contrast to the Rahnerian "fundamental principle" that begins Mariology not from the theology of Mary's divine maternity, but rather from the divine maternity in relation to her place as the preeminently redeemed among the redeemed Church.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 125.

²⁰ Cajetan, *Comm. II-II STh* q. 103, a. 4, n. 4

²¹ Rahner makes this clear in Volume 1 of his *Theological Investigations* where he writes, "As Mother of God, Mary is most perfectly redeemed, and vice versa. In

By starting from a theological preference of Mary's physical-instrumental causality based on her divine maternity, the Thomistic tradition - especially that of the 19th and 20th century Dominican strand of Thomism that has been called *neo-scholastic* (often pejoratively) - can have a solid foundation in its theology of Mary's mediation and her distribution of all graces. Two witnesses from this tradition that stand out are Édouard Hugon (1867-1929) and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964). Thanks to the extraordinary research of Manfred Hauke, we know that both of these French Dominicans, and founding members of the Angelicum, were involved in the Roman Theological Commission in 1924-1925 to study the question of a dogmatic definition of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces.²² In his seminal text of Mariology entitled *Mary, Full of Grace* Hugon writes on how Mary is (like Christ and only in relation to him) an exemplar, meritorious, satisfactory, and intercessory cause in the redemption. Placing emphasis on the fundamental relationship between Mary's active part in the redemption of the world, Hugon argues that, "The role of our Mother in the distribution of graces is the consequence of the role which she had in their acquisition."²³ The affirmation of Hugon of this link between what can be called ascending mediation (in acquiring the graces of redemption in the sacrificial offering of Jesus Christ to the Father) and descending mediation (the distribution of these graces of redemption in the building up and sanctification of the Mystical Body) is absent in Rahner's mariology that stresses Mary's singular grace of being "most perfectly redeemed" and, therefore an intercessory of special significance. Mary, as Hugon writes, "is, after Christ, the all-powerful one who pleads our cause, the one through whom every prayer must rise and every grace descend."²⁴

short, for the faith of the Church Mary is she who is most perfectly Redeemed, the example and exemplar of redemption simply speaking." (no. 207).

²² See Manfred Hauke, *Mary, Mediatrix of Grace: Mary's Universal Mediation of Grace in the Theological and Pastoral Works of Cardinal Mercier* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate 2004).

²³ E. Hugon, *Mary: Full of Grace* (Providence: Cluny, 2019) p. 132.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

In his argument for Mary as being the cause of merit and satisfaction, Hugon begins with a scholastic distinction of the “acts of the just” as having a “threefold worth: that they are meritorious, satisfactory, and intercessory”. With regards to the theology of merit, Hugon emphasizes the traditional distinction between condign merit (*de condigno*) and the merit of fittingness (*de congruo*). As merit *de condigno* is the merit not achieved by the human person but by the grace of God operating in us—so that the crowning of our merits is (in reality) the crowning of God’s own gifts—the application of this condign merit can only be done by God alone. As Hugon writes concerning this type of merit, “[As] the universal principle of salvation, he [Christ] becomes our justice by attributing to us his merits, just as he is our life by giving us his grace.”²⁵ Condign merit, while given to the role of Christ as this “universal principle of salvation”, does not eliminate a merit of fittingness (*de congruo*) that is based upon the right of friendship which Hugon calls “sovereign and efficacious”. Completely joined to and under her Son in the saving economy, “the Blessed Virgin merited by a claim of fittingness all that which Christ merited in strict justice.” (*B. Virgo de congruo meruit quod Christus de condigno*). This assertion is in harmony with St. Thomas’ statement concerning Mary’s fiat at the Annunciation, “In the Annunciation the Virgin’s consent was besought in lieu of that of the entire human race.”²⁶ Hugon’s affirmation of both Christ’s unique role as sole Mediator between God and humanity - the unique savior of the world - and Mary’s participation with and under her Son’s saving work in a singular way goes beyond a theology of merit to its implications in a theology of both satisfaction and intercession. This is evident in the corollary statement of Hugon that “already supposing the plenary satisfactions of Christ, Mary was able to offer for all our faults a fitting satisfaction.”²⁷ (*B. Virgo satisfecit de congruo ubi Christus de condigno*). Because Mary’s place of fittingness is united to the merit and satisfaction obtained by Christ through justice, Mary is therefore united to her Son in regards to intercession and (in

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 138.

²⁶ *STh* III, q. 30, a. 1.

²⁷ Hugon, *Mary: Full of Grace*, p. 143.

particular) the distribution of grace. Hugon comments on this connection of merit and satisfaction to intercession and distribution writing:

The power of intercession advances along with meritorious or expiatory worth, for it is due, just like them, to the state of grace and the dignity of the person. One's mediation in heaven depends upon the merits acquired here below. Since in Mary the power of merit and satisfaction attained to a secondary degree all that which Christ Jesus abstained as the principle cause and in strict justice, it is fitting that the secondary intercession of the Mother of Christians extend just as far as the principal intercession of the Savior, that is to say to all graces without exception...[Mary] must distribute all to us, albeit through a secondary mediation and in union with Jesus.²⁸

This theological position of Hugon leads to his affirmation of the title *Maria collum Ecclesiae* - Mary, as the mystical neck of the Church, is "all things dependent upon Christ...and is the efficacious organ that would link him to the other members of his body."²⁹

This affirmation of Mary as the "neck of the Church" is shared by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance who argues for justification of this title based on Saint Thomas' writings concerning the humanity of Christ being a "physical instrumental cause of grace."³⁰ While Saint Thomas does not write on this subject in relation to Mary's distribution of grace, Garrigou-Lagrance will argue that there is no contradiction in this line of thought, as "what [Aquinas] says about the Head may be affirmed of her who is the neck which unites the Head to the members and transmits the vital impulse to them."³¹

²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 162-163.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 166.

³⁰ Cf. *STh* III, q. 62, a. 1.

³¹ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance (RGL), *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life* (Dublin: Golden Eagle Books, 1948) p. 235.

These vital impulses are all graces that are distributed to us from the hands of Mary. Garrigou-Lagrange, in defending the title of Mary as “omnipotentia supplex” - the one all-powerful in the order of supplication through an assertion (that Garrigou-Lagrange finds support for in STh II-II, q. 83, a. 2) writes that “the intercession of the saints is proportioned to their degree of glory in heaven, or of union with God.”³² Therefore, Garrigou-Lagrange argues, “it follows that Mary whose glory surpasses that of all the saints, must have all power in intercession.”³³ This theology of the power of intercession is also applied to Mary’s power of distribution of all graces. Garrigou-Lagrange writes:

The Church turns to Mary to obtain graces of all kinds, both temporal and spiritual; among these last, from the grace of conversion up to that of final perseverance, to say nothing of those needed by virgins to preserve virginity, by apostles to exercise their apostolate, by martyrs to remain firm in their faith...Not only every kind of grace is distributed to us by Mary, but every grace in particular...[including] the grace of the present moment. This grace is the most individual of graces; it varies with each of us, and for each one of us at every moment...Mary knows our spiritual needs at every instant, and prays for us, and obtains for us all the graces that we receive.³⁴

Mary’s Distribution of Sacramental Graces

These twentieth-century Dominican Thomists, and many others, will go further in affirming that Mary’s distribution of all graces extends beyond the aforementioned individual graces to even sacramental graces. Father Garrigou-Lagrange writes in *The Three Ages of the Interior Life* , “All kinds of graces are distributed by her even, in a sense,

³² Ibid. p. 230

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ RGL, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life* Vol. 1 (Rockford: TAN, 1947), p. 127.

those of the sacraments; for she merited them for us in union with Christ on Calvary. In addition, she disposes us, by her prayer, to approach the sacraments and to receive them well.”³⁵ Writing a position paper to the Roman Commission on the question a dogmatic definition of Mary’s mediation and distribution of graces, Garrigou-Lagrange treats the question of Mary’s distribution of the graces of the sacraments using the language of *de congruo/decondigno* merit, writing:

The effect of the sacraments of the New Law is not to be excluded from [Mary’s] universal influence...for Mary has for *de congruo quae Christus de condigno*, and moreover she indirectly influences the effects of the sacraments...and bestows upon us the actual grace by which we are rightly disposed to a fruitful reception of sacramental grace.³⁶

This statement from Garrigou-Lagrange is of a similar vein to Hugon’s affirmation that “Each grace...even of sacrament grace...is due to the constant intercession of the Blessed Virgin...for it is the Mother of God who procedures for us the ministers of the sacrament and the dispositions to be admitted to the sacred ritual with profit.”³⁷

The theology of Mary’s mediation and distribution of the graces of the sacraments is developed further in the writings of Joaquín Ferrer Arellano, who develops with great clarity the Thomistic mariological

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ My translation. Source: Hauke, *Mary, Mediatress of Grace: Mary’s Universal Mediation of Grace in the Theological and Pastoral Works of Cardinal Mercier*.

Imo a praedictis universalis influxu non excludendus est effectus sacramentorum Novae Legis, ex opere operato productus; nam Virgo nobis meruit de congruo quae Christus de condigno, et insuper indirecte influit ad effectum sacramentorum prout nobis obtinet validam sacramentorum administrationem et nobis elargitus gratiam actualem qua recte disponamur ad gratiam sacramentalem fructuose recipendam.

³⁷ Hugon, *Mary: Full of Grace*, p. 148.

tradition. Moving beyond the category of instrumental causality that is so affirmed by writers like Hugon and Garrigou-Lagrange, Arellano proposes a notion of “transcendental participation of the Immaculate in the mediation of headship of Christ, i.e. as ‘Maternal Mediatrix in the Mediator’”³⁸ This “transcendental participation” posited by Arellano holds that Mary—because of her association with the sacrifice of her son on the Cross—has her participation extended down through the ages in the sacrifice of the Mass. For this reason, Arellano affirms, “[Mary’s] presence during Holy Mass is as real as her presence in the sacrifice of Calvary...The mediation of Mary, in effect, includes the very highest form of participation in the Mediation of Christ: sacerdotal, prophetic and kingly, a participation superior - not only in degree, but in kind, because pertaining to the order of the hypostatic union - to that of the ministerial priesthood.”³⁹ Mary’s presence in the Eucharist is a presence of mediation as it cannot be separated from Mary’s role at the foot of the cross in which she, as *Lumen Gentium* affirms, “joins herself with his sacrifice in her mother’s heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim.” Arellano, in his defense of Mary’s mediation of sacramental graces, reminds us of a sacramental theology that affirms the central place of the Eucharist. This primary place is written on by Saint Thomas who states that, “The common spiritual good of the whole Church is contained substantially in the sacrament itself of the Eucharist.”⁴⁰ Arellano is keen to give the reminder that this teaching of Saint Thomas was incorporated into the Catechism of Saint Pius V: “every salvific effect of the sacraments derives from the Eucharist (*Eucharistia fons, coetera sacramento rivuli* - The Eucharist is the source, the other sacraments streamlets). This would be considered “too extreme” for an ecclesiotypical theology of Mary that is, as we find in Karl Rahner, totally immanent placing Mary within the Church as a unique one among many. Arellano will counter this Marian immanentism by the affirmation that Mary belongs “to an order far superior to ours, namely the hypostatic order *relatively*, and beneath that of Jesus Christ, which is a hypostatic order

³⁸ MFC vol. 3

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ STh III q. 65 a. 3. R. 1

substantially.⁴¹ In virtue of Mary's *relative* relation to the hypostatic order she is the one who alone can bear the title Mater Eucharistiae.

Conclusion

While the Thomistic mariological tradition has diverging points of emphasis from a Franciscan-Scotistic school, there exists a real complementarity in which a mutual affirmation is stressed of Mary's divine maternity in a proper theological understanding of Marian mediation. Moreover, against the mariology of Karl Rahner - that stresses a Marian immanentism that places the uniqueness of Mary the redeemed woman as (at best) on par with her divine maternity or (at worst) above it - both the Thomistic and Franciscan-Scotistic schools of mariology recognize a uniqueness in the Mother of God that transcends the natural order of grace. With the affirmation of Mary's divine maternity in providing a basis for Marian mediation, Thomists like Hugon will write that supernatural maternity requires an action renewed without ceasing. This is following a long line of Thomistic understanding that can be drawn from the Angelic Doctor himself and his commentary on the Angelic Salutation:

The plenitude of grace in Mary was such that its effects overflow upon all men. It is a great thing in a Saint when he has grace to bring about the salvation of many, but it is exceedingly wonderful when grace is of such abundance as to be sufficient for the salvation of all men in the world, and this is true of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin.⁴²

⁴¹ MFC vol. 3

⁴² Aquinas, *Expositio Salutationis Angelicae*.