

Mary Co-redemptrix in the Spanish Tradition and Its Definability¹

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There is an Italian song by Andrea Bocelli named *Vivo per Lei*, “I live for Her,” that is, for Music. The song says beautiful things about music, as if music was a Lady. At one moment he confesses: *If I had another life, I would also live it for her*. I very much like to hear this song while looking at Mary, our Holy Mother, instead of Music. At this point of the song, I always think that if I had not one, but a million more lives, I would like to live them all for Her, for our Lady. I would want to spend my time talking about Her, loving Her, studying Her, entering more and more deeply into her Heart.

My essay has two different parts. The first one is about Spain and Co-redemption. The second one is a biblical reflection on the convenience of proclaiming Co-redemption as a Marian dogma.

I. Our Lady and Spain

Spain is often called “Land of Mary” due to the great love she has received from the Spanish people.² Also, regarding Marian co-redemption, there are several fruits in this country.³ I will treat three aspects: 1) Theology: Three scholars talking about Co-redemption; 2) Christian life: Three examples of vows and consecrations for dogmatic proclamations; 3) A recent initiative: the Marian Diocesan Forum (in Getafe, Madrid).

¹ This work has been carried out with the financial support of the Spanish Center for Ecclesiastical Studies attached to the *Spanish National Church of Santiago and Montserrat*, in Rome, within the framework of the research projects of the 2017-2018 academic year.

² For example, there were many journals about Our Lady published in Spain in the 1920s: *Anales de Nuestra Señora del Sagrado Corazón* (Barcelona), *Lourdes* (Barcelona), *Revista Mariana* (Manresa), *Toia Pulchra* (Vich, 1909), *El Mensajero de María* (Totana, 1913), *Estel María* (Valls, 1917), *La Virgen de Don Bosco* (Málaga 1917), *Magisterio Avemariano* (Granada, 1919), *La Inmaculada Milagrosa* (Sevilla, 1919), *Revista Mariana* (Córdoba, 1923), *Inmaculata* (Valencia 1924), *Páginas Marianas* (Vitoria, 1924), etc.

³ There were several congresses about Our Lady’s mediation: *Congreso Mariano de Zaragoza* (1908), *Congreso Mariano Monfortiano de Barcelona* (1918), *Asamblea Mariana de Covadonga* (1926), and *Congreso Hispano Americano de Sevilla* (1929). Cf. N. Pérez, *Historia Mariana de España II* (Toledo 1995).

The theological Spanish tradition on Co-redemption

There is a strong theological tradition in Spain on Mariological mediation and Co-redemption and there are numerous studies about it.⁴ The Spanish Jesuits accepted Cardinal Mercier's proposal from Belgium to promote a dogmatic proclamation of *Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces*. In fact, in 1916, the journal *Sal Terrae* began this movement with several publications that were continued in the journal *Razón y Fe* by Jesuit Fr. Pablo Villada, who published all his articles in 1917 in a book entitled "For the dogmatic definition of Our Lady's universal mediation," the first one on this topic in Spain.⁵

In 1940, right after the end of Spain's civil war (1936-1939), the Spanish Mariological Society was founded, the third one of its kind in the world (after Belgium in 1931 and France in 1934).⁶ Its main goal was to organize a symposium every year with studies and talks by the most important Spanish scholars on Mariology, and to publish their works in the journal of the Society "Estudios Marianos." The society has often treated themes related to Marian Co-redemption in its symposia. For instance:

1942: Mary's Cooperation to salvation: Marian Co-redemption

1947: Spiritual Motherhood

1957: Marian Co-redemption (again)

1965 and 1967: the Marian teaching in *Lumen Gentium* (Vatican Council II) with studies by Olegario Domínguez, Emilio Sauras and Ángel Luis Iglesias on the Marian mediation in the council's debate

2003: Mary's collaboration and redemption

2017: Marian Mediation

⁴ Some of the most popular Spanish scholars on Marian mediation in the '20s are the Fathers Santiago Alameda, Nazario Pérez, José Bau, Venancio Carro, Anibal González and Juan González Arintero. Cf. F. M. Requena, "María Mediadora en la espiritualidad de los años veinte en España: el testimonio de *La Vida Sobrenatural*": *Scripta de Maria* (2004), 341-363; J. Lekan, *Maternidad espiritual de María. Aportación de los mariólogos españoles en el último siglo (1940-1985). Extracto de la Tesis Doctoral presentada en la Facultad de Teología de la Universidad de Navarra* (EDSTh 27.4; Pamplona 1995).

⁵ P. Villada, *Por la definición dogmática de la mediación universal de la Santísima Virgen* (Gabriel López del Horno, Madrid 1917).

⁶ Cf. Díez Merino, L., "Los orígenes de la Sociedad Mariológica Española," *Scripta de Maria* (2011), 131-166.

So, there have been several scholars in the twentieth century studying these questions in Spain. But now, I will mention only three important researchers from different times of the century.⁷

1) José María Bover (1877-1954)⁸

This eminent Jesuit is well known in Spain, mainly for teaching the Bible from 1911 to 1950 and for two biblical publications: a Theology of Saint Paul, the first important one in Spanish literature and a very relevant translation of the Bible to Spanish, being co-author with F. Cantera. Studies on Mary came later due to a provident calling. At first, he thought there was no theological basis for Marian co-redemption and universal mediation. In fact, he went in 1918 to a Marian Congress where he was scandalized by the exaggerations he heard there about Marian Mediation. But something happened in the Church... Due to so many petitions asking for the dogmatic proclamation of the Universal Mediation of Mary, at the beginning of the 1920's, the Holy See formed three commissions of expert theologians in order to study the question in Italy, Belgium and Spain. Fr. Bover was chosen to coordinate the Spanish commission on mediation. When he began to study it in depth, he changed his mind. There were another two scholars in his team, Ángel Amor Ruibal and Isidro Gomá. All of them, as well as the whole team from Belgium, gave a positive answer to the Holy Father about the dogmatic proclamation.⁹

From 1922 to 1928, he wrote much on this topic from different perspectives, defending the universal mediation of Our Lady: studies on the Fathers of the Church, on the Scripture, on Liturgy, a Catechism on Marian Universal Mediation, becoming a famous defender of the titles Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix.

He developed his Mariology from his studies on the letters of Saint Paul, mainly from two important ideas: Christ as the second Adam and the total body of Christ, the Head (Jesus), and the body (the Church):

If there is a second Adam, there must be a second Eve, Our Lady. Therefore, she is also the mother of all the redeemed humankind, just as Eve is the mother of every human being.

⁷ Cf. R. Sol, "La mediación de María en autores de la Sociedad Mariológica Española": *Estudios Marianos* 84 (2018), 245-279.

⁸ Cf. T. Ayuso, "El Padre José María Bover, S.I.," *Estudios Bíblicos* 13 (1954), 333-368; F. P. Solá, "R.P. José María Bover Oliver, S.I.," *Estudios Marianos* 15 (1955), 339-347; T. Ayuso, "In memoriam. El P. José María Bover, S.I.," *Revista Española de Teología* 15 (1955), 107-126; Sol, "La mediación de María," 246-256.

⁹ Cf. G. M. Besutti, "La Mediazione di Maria secondo gli studi di due Commissioni istituite da Pio XI," *Marianum* 47 (1983), 37-174.

If Mary is the mother of Christ (the Head), she must also be the mother of His body (Christians).

His main work was published in 1940, a great study on *Mary Universal Mediatrix and Marian Soteriology* (=Role of Mary in salvation), more than 400 pages long. It is impossible to relate it all in this essay, but his conclusion is as follows: "I began my Mariological studies with very strong preventions against the main truths on Marian Soteriology. But Saint Paul and the reading of the patristic writings as well as the pontifical documents later dispelled with shame my preventions, changing them into the most solid conviction about the truth, increasingly brighter and brighter, of Mary's Co-redemption and universal Mediation."¹⁰

Fr. José Bover died some years before the Vatican Council II in 1954.

2) Narciso García Garcés (1904-1989)¹¹

Fr. Narciso, a claretian religious, defended his doctorate in theology with a thesis entitled "Mater Coredemptrix," at the Angelicum University, in Rome. All of his life was dedicated to teaching Mariology. He was the main promotor and founder of the Spanish Mariological Society in 1940 and its first president, remaining in this role almost for 40 years. In this year, he published his doctorate study on Co-redemption in Latin with extensive data about the different authors, their opinions, their positive and negative reasons on the topic, etc.¹² At that moment the debate was great among theologians. His work had two sections:

1. Spiritual Motherhood of Mary in Scripture and Tradition. The main points are the same as those postulated by Fr. Bover: Mary as the Second Eve and her Motherhood of the body of Christ, the Church, because she is the mother of the Head, Christ himself.

¹⁰ J. M. Bover, *María, Mediadora universal o Soteriología mariana* (CSIC, Madrid 1946), 7. Cf. Id., "Mujer, he ahí a tu hijo. Maternidad espiritual de María para con todos los fieles, según San Juan XIX, 26-27," *Estudios eclesiósticos* 1 (1922), 5-18; Id., *La Mediación universal de la Virgen en Santo Tomás de Aquino* (El Mensajero del Corazón de Jesús, Bilbao 1924); Id., *Deiparae Virginis Consensus. Corredemptionis ac Mediationis Fundamentum* (CSIC, Madrid 1942); Id., *La Mediación universal de María* (El Mensajero del Corazón de Jesús, Bilbao 1947); Id., *Meditaciones sobre la Mediación Universal de María* (La Editorial, Zaragoza 1947).

¹¹ Cf. J. M. de Jaime Loren, J. de Jaime Gómez, "Narciso García Garcés (Ojos Negros 1904-1989)": *Xiloca* 33 (2005), 89-118; Á. L. Iglesias, T. Iturriaga, "In memoriam R.P. Narciso García Garcés (1904-1989)": *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 39 (1989), 345-366; E. Barea, "Narciso García Garcés. Fundador de Ephemerides Mariologicae": *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 51 (2001), 49-56; Sol, "La mediación de María," 256-268.

¹² Cf. N. García Garcés, *Mater Coredemptrix, seu de possibili illatione a spirituali Maternitate B.M. Virg. ad formalem eius Corredemptionem* (Marietti, Turín – Roma 1940).

2. The movement from spiritual motherhood to Co-redemption. There is research on liturgy, popes and fathers of the Church; answers to the classical difficulties on co-redemption and the theological relationship between spiritual motherhood and Co-redemption.

That same year he published a handbook on Mariology, *Titles and Greatness of Mary*, explaining all the mysteries and prerogatives of Our Lady.¹³ His theological principle was Mary as the Mother of the Total Christus (Head and Body), dividing his work into three points:

1. How she was prepared for this motherhood from the beginning.
2. How she, indeed, acts as Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church.
3. How her glorification is: the glory of the Mother.

For us, the interesting point is the development of Mary as Mother of the Church. There, Fr. Narciso ventures to go deep into reflection on mediation and co-redemption. The mediatrix title implies three functions, one of them being that of Co-redemptrix: Mary really cooperates for our salvation. There are a lot of conclusions on this topic, and he distinguishes among those he considers certain and others esteemed dubious. He legitimates the title of Co-redemptrix in different ways: mainly as a second Eve and as partner of Christ. There is a real merit in Mary, analogically, in her salvific collaboration.

The second function of mediation is being Advocate for all humanity and the third one is being dispensatory of all graces. These two functions are also developed in detail.

After completing these works, Fr. Narciso worked hard for 30 years as president of the Spanish Mariological Society and director of its journal, as well as being a great divulgator of Marian co-redemption, attending International Marian Congresses all over the world. In 1951, he founded another Marian journal, *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, and some years later he was called to participate in Vatican Council II as a Spanish bishops' consultant. When the document on Mary and the Church,

¹³ Cf. Id., *Títulos y grandezas de María o explicación teológico-popular de los misterios y prerogativas de la celestial Señora* (Coculsa, Madrid 1940, 1952, 1959). For other works, cf. Id., *Catecismo de la devoción al Corazón de María* (Coculsa, Madrid 1943); Id., "Cooperación de María a nuestra redención a modo de sacrificio": *Estudios Marianos* 2 (1943), 195-247; Id., "La devoción al Corazón de María en la poesía religiosa latina de la Edad Media": *Estudios Marianos* 4 (1945), 173-284; Id., "Raíz y fruto de la maternidad espiritual de María": *Estudios Marianos* 7 (1948), 299-340; Id., *Cordis Mariae Filius* (Gráficas Claret, Barcelona 1949).

Lumen Gentium, was approved in November 1964, he got discouraged, but he was soon able to read the text in a very positive manner. A new Mariological perspective and innovative orientations were born within the Council and chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium*. Fr. Narciso was the Spanish theologian that more often published articles and studies on this topic, always highlighting the Marian mediation aspects.¹⁴

3) Enrique Llamas (1926-2017)¹⁵

Fr. Enrique, a Carmelite priest specialist on XVI and XVII century Spanish Mariology was the president of the Spanish Marian Society after Fr. Narciso for almost 20 years. His main Mariological work was published in 1964, and its content is clear in its title: *Christ and Mary, unique principle of Salvation*.¹⁶

Unfortunately, this study appeared a few weeks before the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* and he obviously couldn't have cited this essential document, since his book became an "old" text right after its birth. We find in it several ideas on mediation from his professor and thesis director, Fr. Cuervo, who published an interesting work three years later entitled *Divine Motherhood and Marian co-redemption*.¹⁷ Returning to Fr. Llamas's publication, he indicates that the main question on Mariology is to determine accurately Mary's role and position in God's plan of salvation, that is, Marian Co-redemption: "It is our days [said in 1964] Mariological problem and the key for a right and adequate solution of so many other truths."¹⁸ He studies the formulation "Christ and Mary, unique principle of salvation" from all possible points of view: its history, meaning, significance, comparison with other formulations and theological arguments for its utilization. He defends that Our Lady truly paid for human beings the price of their redemption and that she offered

¹⁴ Cf. Id., "La Santísima Virgen en el Concilio," *Estudios Marianos* 26 (1965), 275-310; Id., "La Santísima Virgen nuestra Madre, y nuestra Madre la Santa Iglesia Católica," *Estudios Marianos* 26 (1965), 311-342; Id., "La Sociedad Mariológica Española, de sus orígenes a su actividad en el Concilio," *Estudios Marianos* 27 (1966), 25-83; Id., "Introducción preliminar y nn. 52 a 59," in *Concilio Vaticano II. Comentarios I. Constitución sobre la Iglesia* (BAC, Madrid 1966), 924-981; Id., *La Virgen de nuestra fe* (Coculsa, Madrid 1967); Id., "Explicación última del puesto y misión de la Virgen": *Estudios Marianos* 31 (1968), 69-104; Id., "Los mariólogos españoles y el cap. VIII de la *Lumen Gentium*": *Scripta de Maria* 3 (1980), 525-591.

¹⁵ Cf. All the articles of the journal *Estudios Marianos* 79 (2013), due to his 86th birthday, were dedicated to him; and also L. Díez Merino, "Perfil académico del Prof. Enrique Llamas Martínez OCD," *Estudios Marianos* 80 (2014), 13-44; P. Largo, "En memoria del P. Enrique Llamas," *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 67 (2017), 367-372; R. Llamas, "El P. Enrique, mi hermano," *Miriam* 66 (2017), 232-233; Sol, "La mediación de María," 269-278.

¹⁶ E. Llamas (= Enrique del Sagrado Corazón), *Cristo y María. Único principio de salvación* (Herder, Barcelona 1964).

¹⁷ Cf. M Cuervo, *Maternidad divina y corredención mariana* (Ope, Pamplona 1967).

¹⁸ Llamas, *Cristo y María*, 15.

to God the same sacrifice her divine Son offered.¹⁹ The conclusion of his study is clear: she can be called Co-redemptrix rightfully and truthfully and it can be defined as a dogma. Of course, there are not two principles of salvation but one, because Mary's cooperation is subordinated to her Son's salvation.

As I mentioned before, after this work came *Lumen Gentium*. Then Fr. Llamas began to write articles on this topic from different perspectives, also explaining the Council's text.²⁰ Avoiding extreme positions, he supports the opinion that the cooperation of Mary and the redemption is the basis of Council's Mariology. Therefore, it should also be in the heart of our modern mariologies, integrating the dynamic and active role of Mary in the redemption, which can be called in a correct sense co-redemption. She collaborates with her Son—in the council's perspective of the history of salvation—all throughout his life, with salvific actions in different moments.

He also commented on the great text of Saint John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, underlining again the perspective of Mary's mediation.²¹ Some years later, in 1998, he published another article showing the salvific connection between her divine motherhood and her collaboration in the redemption of humanity.²² With her "let it be done," she collaborates actively and efficiently in the objective redemption (the act of redemption itself).

We can conclude the presentation of these three Spanish theologians saying that all of them agree in this last sentence: Mary collaborated in the Redemption itself, in our salvation in the Paschal Mystery of our Lord's death and resurrection. All of them accept and use Co-redemptrix as a right title for Our Lady.

We could mention other Spanish scholars with the same position, for example Fr. Joaquín Arellano Ferrer (1931-2017), who published a book entitled *The Immaculate's Maternal Mediation, Ecumenical Hope for the Church: Towards the Fifth Marian Dogma*,

¹⁹ Ibid., 170.

²⁰ Cf., Id., "La corredención mariana a través de una controversia teológica del siglo XVII: La figura de la Madre Ágreda," *Estudios Marianos* (1958), 210-241; Id., *La Madre Ágreda y la mariología del Vaticano II* (Arca de la Alianza, Madrid 2007), 135-180; "La cooperación de María a la redención en el siglo XVII y en la madre Ágreda"; Id., "Puesto de María en la economía de la Redención," *Estudios Marianos* 30 (1968), 33-67; Id., "La cooperación de María a la salvación. Nuevas perspectivas después del Vaticano II," *Scripta de Maria* (1979), 423-447; Id., "María predestinada para la redención de los hombres," in *A Teología do Santuario Mariano II* (Braga 1965), 37-50; Id., "El puesto de María en la economía de la salvación," in *María en la Iglesia de hoy* (Coculsa, Madrid 1973), 7-19; Id., "La Soledad redentora. María, en su soledad, colabora a nuestra redención," *Miriam* 27 (1978), 186-189.

²¹ Cf. Id., "La Mediación materna de María en la Encíclica *Redemptoris Mater*," *Estudios Marianos* 61 (1995), 149-180.

²² Cf. Id., "Maternidad divina y colaboración de María a la Redención," *Estudios Marianos* 64 (1998), 387-413.

*Theological Arguments.*²³ Nevertheless, the three that we have seen are probably the most important ones.

The vows and consecrations in Spain for dogmatic proclamations

In order to create an adequate context for the Spanish vows, let us begin with the Immaculate's Dogma and some examples. In 1466, the little town of Villalpando and its entire diocese, Zamora, made a solemn vow to defend the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. It was the first vow for its defense. Valencia's University in 1530, Granada and Alcalá's in 1617 and Barcelona, Salamanca and Valladolid's in 1618, proclaimed her patronage: all professors were obliged to make a vow and to take an oath of teaching and defending this doctrine before joining these universities. In 1779, King Charles III extended this oath to all the universities in his kingdom (Spain and Latin America).²⁴

It would be nice to find these vows and oaths for Mary Co-redemptrix in our universities today, although it seems difficult. Nevertheless, in the twentieth century, we can find in Spain other vows for co-redemption as interesting as these. I will present three examples: a nun, a saint and a city.

1) The nun

María Ángela Sanz Tena was a girl of seventeen when she entered the Cloister of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Cantalapiedra (Salamanca), of the Poor Sisters of Saint Claire. A year later, on March 25, 1949, she took the name of "Mary, Grace of our Universal Mediatrix," and offered all her hidden life in this Monastery for the proclamation of this dogma. I met her several times before she died in 2017 (June 23). All her sisters remember nowadays how proud she was of her name and how she was absolutely confident on the dogmatic proclamation of this truth, sooner or later.

2) The saint

Saint Pedro Poveda (1874-1936), diocesan priest, Founder of the Teresian Association and Martyr in the religious persecution during the civil war in Spain (1936-1939) was canonized by Saint John Paul II in Madrid in 2003. On February 2, 1926, he wrote this vow:

Having done my oaths to defend with my life the mysteries of
the Assumption in body and soul and the universal Mediation

²³ J. Ferrer Arellano, *La Mediación Materna de la Inmaculada. Esperanza Ecueménica de la Iglesia. Hacia el quinto dogma mariano. Razones Teológicas* (Arca de la Alianza, Madrid 2006).

²⁴ Cf. L. Carbajo, I. De Villalpando, "La devoción a la Inmaculada Concepción en España. La Villa y Tierra de Villalpando," *Cristiandad* 881 (2004), 13-16.

[of Mary], I beg Our Lady the grace of becoming a martyr for
[the proclamation of] these two dogmas.

Since that date, once a year, every March 25, the Teresians – the daughters of San Pedro Poveda – with their pupils, go to the chapel in order to renew the vow. One by one, in a row in front of the priest, they receive the oaths, and with their hand on the Gospels, kneel on ground, and repeat with emotion: “I swear to defend with my life the mysteries of Assumption of Our Lady in body and soul into Heaven and of her role as Mediatrix in the bestowing of all the graces.” Frequently, the priest in front of them was a bishop or even a Cardinal.²⁵

Ten years after his first oath, Our Lady accepted the vow of San Pedro Poveda and he died as a martyr at the beginning of the religious persecution (July 28, 1936). Fourteen years after his martyrdom, in 1950, the dogma was proclaimed. Another is still waiting. Perhaps Our Lady needs someone else offering himself as a martyr for its proclamation.

3) A city

Seville is a Spanish city known for its devotion to Our Lady and the great amount of *cofradías* and brotherhoods under her advocacy. Most of them make vows and oaths defending the universal mediation of Mary as we read in their regulations, in the brotherhoods created before the Council Vatican II, as well as in those created after it. All of them have been approved by the local bishop. This vow was introduced for the first time in 1924 (14-XII-1924), promoted by Pedro Ayala, S.I., in the Congregation of The Immaculate and Saint Luis Gonzaga. Soon after, many other congregations, even the cathedral chapter and the town hall of Seville, joined these vows and the petition to the Holy Father asking for the dogmatic proclamation. Every year (August 15), the cathedral chapter renews its faith on the universal mediation of Mary and the vow to extend and defend this truth.

It is impossible to replicate here the names of all the religious groups that made these vows and oaths. It is enough to say that, in Seville alone, there are 170,000 lay people according to the scholar who made the study in 1996.²⁶ The formulation of the vow is different in each congregation, but only in small details. For example, in the *cofradía* of Our Lady of Patrocinium, the priest asks: “Do you swear to defend, as if it was a dogma of Faith, even until the pouring of your own blood if

²⁵ Josefa Segovia, "Assumpta est Maria," *Spes Nostra* (1941), 69-73.

²⁶ Cf. J. A. Riestra, "La devoción mariana en las cofradías españolas en la actualidad: las hermandades de Gloria de la ciudad de Sevilla," in PAMI, *De cultu mariano saeculo XX. Maria, Mater Domini, in misterio salutis quod ab Orientis et Occidentis Ecclesiis in Spiritu Sancto hodie celebratur. Acta congressus mariologici-mariani internationalis in sanctuario mariano Czestochoviensi anno 1996 celebrati. IV* (PAMI, Città del Vaticano 1999), 409-454.

needed, the belief that Our Lady is Patrocinator and Universal Mediatrix of all the graces?” And everybody answers emphatically, “Yes, I do.” It strikes in this brief formulation and in almost all the others the decision to pour out their own blood.

In another vow we read, “we will confess it [Marian mediation] and defend it with all our strength until the last blow of our life and the pouring out if it was necessary all the blood of our veins. Therefore, we solemnly promise it, we make a vow to it and we swear it” It is remarkable also to mention that in many of these vows and oaths we find the terms “co-redemption” and “co-redemptrix” united to the spiritual motherhood and the universal mediation of Our Lady.

We have eight million people asking the Holy Father to proclaim the fifth Marian Dogma. What about eight million people swearing vows and oaths of blood for its proclamation? I am sure that we would achieve not only the Dogma, but also an amazing Kingdom of Martyrs.

The Marian Diocesan Forum (in Getafe, Madrid)

Due to the centenary of Fatima, in my diocese of Getafe (Madrid), we began to think about the possibility of asking the proclamation of Our Lady as Spiritual Mother of all peoples, as Co-Redemptrix. We were three people, another priest doctor in theology, a lay mother and I. As not everybody in the priesthood agreed, either on the concept or on the opportunity and viability of the proclamation of this dogma, we decided to create a forum as a means to dialogue and study together all these questions, led by our auxiliary bishop, José Rico Paves, doctor in Theology and Patristics. We looked for a lot of bibliographies, articles, and books on Mariology and Mediation, Co-Redemption, etc. The bishop formed a Committee presided by the auxiliary one, a sister of *Mater Dei* (Argentina), another priest doctor in theology and rector of the seminary, and the three of us. We built a web site, www.foromariano.es, where we have uploaded all the material we have found, and we continue to update it every day. There is a section on “co-redemption,” where I explain briefly what we understand about Our Lady’s Co-redemption, what its truth is, and a reflection on the benefits of proclaiming it as a dogma. Here we can also find the bibliography folders with all the information I have already mentioned and much more. About 200 articles in different languages, mainly in Spanish, and a lot of very interesting books.

Currently there are about 385 people registered [updated: May 2019], most of them from Spain, but also from America, Australia, and many other countries. In the registration process, we ask them some questions. One of them is: “Would you like to make a vow for defending the dogmatic proclamation with the pouring of your blood if needed?” Sixty-two percent of the answers was “yes.”

II. Should the Dogma of Mary Co-redemptrix be proclaimed? A Biblical Reflection

The second part of my essay is a fruit of the Marian Forum: a biblical reflection on the dogmatic proclamation of Mary Co-redemptrix. Saint Teresa of Calcutta affirmed that when the Pope proclaims this dogma, great blessings would come on the Church. Taking the assumption that this is so, what we ask ourselves is: would proclaiming this Marian dogma produce that effect prophesied by St. Teresa of Calcutta? Is it proper for God to act like this? Does it agree with the divine pedagogy? What do we find in the Bible and in the history of salvation?

In order to shed light upon this discussion, we are going to consider the example of Abraham, our father in the faith. It was with him that God began salvation history approximately four millennia ago. Perhaps the first words that God directed to him can help to enlighten us:

The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's home, and go to a land that I am going to show you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing. *I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse those who curse you. And through you I will bless all the nations*" (Gen 12:1-3).

It is interesting to see how from the very beginning, God blesses one man and not many. But above all, it is remarkable that He makes the blessing that He wants to give to all mankind depend upon whether or not they themselves bless that one that He has chosen and blessed. In other words: in His plan, He wants to bless all humanity through one man, under the condition that mankind joins together in blessing God's chosen one. If they bless him, they will receive the same blessing that Abram received. If, on the contrary, they curse him, their same curse will come upon them for having called "cursed" the one that God has declared "blessed." The conclusion is obvious: it is beneficial for mankind to bless Abram in order to achieve his own salvation/blessing. God bids them to take this step, recognizing his choice, even though it could seem unjust or arbitrary. Let us consider what the exegete, P. Beauchamp says:

The chosen one is the only one par excellence, the blessed, but blessed for the sake of all the rest. Upon this individual, this one who has been set apart, depends the future of all the families throughout the world, that is, the future of all mankind. "I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse those who curse you"

(Gen 12:3). Question: Is man, therefore, bound to recognize Abraham's authority, honor him and, in the end embrace his beliefs? Answer: they must only bless him. Given that the only option is either to bless or to curse, it is necessary to conclude that cursing him is a real possibility. Men will undergo the temptation to curse him, and not only to curse him but to curse God through him. After all, why did He bless only one man, why not me, or, —in a still more subtle critique (more correct)— why not everyone? This is the scandal caused by Israel's being chosen [and in the end, by Mary's being chosen] the scandal of all divine election. Answer: all are blessed, absolutely everyone, if they just bless one man; that is the condition. Question: no condition has been placed upon the promise made to Abraham; is that just? Answer: this is where the envy that impedes the blessing surfaces; he who is envious, envies God and the life that comes from Him. The life that comes forth from God and gives of itself has no other cause beyond itself. Divine love has no cause: God loves all the families of the earth and he desires that they come to this knowledge through Abraham. [...] In reality, God says to one individual, to Abraham: “I love you so much that I make myself responsible for you and I want all mankind to know this. And upon coming to know this, I want them to bless you!”²⁷

Indeed, in the very origin of salvation history, the need is expressed for all mankind to bless one man, so that the salvation that God has desired for all may reach its fullness. The same occurs with the mystery of the election of Mary Most-Holy, whose role in salvation history is prefigured by Abraham. It is necessary that everyone blesses her, as universally as possible, so that the blessing may reach all humanity in the fullness of salvation.

That is why she herself says in the Magnificat: “All generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me” (Lk 1:48-49). Mary's words do not come forth from pride, or from the desire to be exalted. It's entirely the opposite... they come from having perceived in full depth, the saving vitality of God's election: all generations, upon praising and blessing Mary, the most-faithful daughter of Abraham and his purest fruit, may redound upon themselves not only the blessing of our father in the faith, but also the very blessing of the Mother of God. Mary knows this and rejoices in the salvation that all who bless her will achieve, despite the fact that it is not always easy for man to bless someone other

²⁷ P. Beauchamp, *Cincuenta retratos bíblicos* (BAC Popular 200; BAC, Madrid 2014), 4-5.

than himself. This has already happened to Cain. Instead of rejoicing fraternally at Abel's being blessed and joining in this blessing, and so gaining for himself the same benefits, he became jealous; he desired to be the chosen one, the blessed, and thereby lost all blessing (cf. Gen 4:1-16).

Let's be honest: God asks something that is impossible; the story of Cain who killed Abel because God preferred his offering above his own was already proof enough. [...] The radiant call made to Abraham is disposed to multiple dangers. God has asked the nations to bless him (cf. Gen 12:1-3). Must we worry about Abram, foreseeing a shadow upon the future of the nations, before whom God places the difficult test of asking them to bless his chosen one? Being blessed is not a misfortune; having to bless should not be so either, but how many conflicts does it indeed announce!²⁸

The pedagogy of being chosen is present throughout all of salvation history: God chooses Jacob over Esau, Joseph over his brothers, Israel before all other peoples, the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron above all the rest, David above Saul and so on. We are not dealing with a minor characteristic of the story of the plan of salvation.

On the other hand, as Beauchamp says, neither having to bless Abraham, nor any of God's chosen-ones should be considered a misfortune. And we must indeed conclude that neither should having to bless Mary be considered a misfortune. Especially if, after having reflected upon the call made to Abraham, we realize that it is in this way that God has desired to extend his blessing to all of humanity.

Blessing Mary, therefore, with a fifth dogma that recognizes and proclaims the great things that God has done in her, would be an action fully in accord with the divine pedagogy employed in his plan of salvation. The downpour of graces announced by St. Teresa of Calcutta for when this dogma is proclaimed can thus be understood in the light of Genesis 12.

The Church certainly has no more solemn, profound and radical way to bless Mary in the entire world, than by proclaiming a dogma. The proclamation made by the Pope in the name of the entire Church of the truth of Mary as essential collaborator in the salvific work of her Son, a proclamation that would declare this as a truth of the faith, a truth that obliges all Catholics, would bring God's blessing upon the entire Church. This would be adapting oneself to the divine pedagogy that He Himself has both taught us and demanded of us. To proclaim this dogma

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

is to make all Catholics bless Mary as Spiritual Mother, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate, and thus open their hearts to God's blessing, God who desires in this way to extend to all men the same blessing that He bestowed upon Mary.

If the one who calls Abraham blessed is blessed, it is conceivable that, if the Church dogmatically proclaims Mary the spiritual Mother of humanity, it will receive more fully the grace of her motherhood, and the Church itself will be enabled more gracefully to be a spiritual mother of Christians and men.

If the Church proclaims Mary Co-redemptrix, according to the divine logic, Christians will live the redemption of Christ more deeply, and they will become co-redeemers in Mary, collaborating with God more effectively in the redemption and salvation of the world.

If the Church proclaims Mary Mediatrix, it will open itself even more to Our Lady's mediation, and be a better mediator of God's grace for the world.

If the Church proclaims Mary Advocate, it will receive an even more powerful intercession from Our Lady, and it will be able to intercede for the world more perfectly still.

Hence, the present suitability of proclaiming the said dogma has been presented. We could almost say that the need of proclaiming this dogma is so that all the grace that God has destined upon mankind may be bestowed. It would indeed be unfortunate, and truly a great responsibility if we were to deprive the Church of such a blessing simply by not blessing Mary with this proclamation.