

MARIOLOGY

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Chapter 1

Mariology Introductory Reflections

Mariology is the theological study of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Within the Roman Catholic Church, Mary is venerated over all other saints. Anglicans share some of the beliefs of Roman Catholic Mariology, but not all. The Eastern Orthodox Church calls Mary the “God-bearer,” emphasizing Mary’s status as the mother of God Incarnate, gives her the title “Ever Virgin,” and emphasizes her sublime holiness, her share in redemption, and her role as a mediator of grace. Mary is seen as having a singular dignity above the saints. The Catholic Church teaches that she was conceived without original sin therefore receiving a higher level of veneration than all other saints. Roman Catholic Mariology thus studies not only her life but also the veneration of her in daily life, prayer, hyman, art, music and architecture in modern and ancient Christianity throughout the ages.

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Contents of Mariology

The following are the major areas of research in Mariology:

- The Biblical understanding of Mary in which the OT typologies referring to Mary and the NT presentation of Mary are scientifically analyzed.
- The four officially proclaimed dogmas of perpetual virginity, mother of God, immaculate conception and assumption form the basis of Mariology.
- However, a number of other Catholic doctrines about the Virgin Mary have been developed by reference to sacred scripture, theological reasoning and Church tradition, such as, Mary- Mother of all Christians, co-redemptrix, Queen of heaven, mediatrix.
- Mary's place in Ecumenism
- The development of Mariology is ongoing and since the beginnings it has continued to be shaped by theological analyses, writings of saints and papal statements, e.g. while two Marian dogmas are ancient, the other two were defined in the 19th and 20th centuries; and papal teachings on Mary's continued apparitions in recent times.
- Three documents are of special importance in any future study of Mariology. They are the following: (1) The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Chapter VIII, The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church, 1964; (2) The Apostolic Exhortation; of Pope Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, 1974. (3) The Encyclical of Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, 1997.
- The relationship between Mariology and other branches of theology is also an important point of discussion in Mariology.
- In parallel to the traditional views, since the late 19th century, a number of other perspectives have been presented as a challenge to Roman Catholic Mariology. These have ranged from feminist criticisms that consider the image of Mary a construct of the

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patriarchal mindset which limits equal opportunity for women, to other Christian views that see Mariology as unbiblical and a denial of the uniqueness of Christ as redeemer and mediator to modern psychological interpretations of Mary as the equivalent of mythical Goddesses ranging from Diana to Kwan Yin. Many different notions similar to these have been addressed in the 1988 John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Mullieris Dignitatem* ("on the Dignity and Vocation of Women",¹ for the occasion of the Marian Year. John Paul II also defines the feminine genius in this writing as well, referencing the life of the Mother of God.

The study of Mary and her place in the Catholic Church has been undertaken from a number of perspectives and within a number of contexts, and in his address to the 2012 Mariological congress, Pope Benedict XVI stated that this study must be "understood and deeply examined from different and complementary viewpoints."

Pope Benedict XVI has also emphasized that the study of Mary cannot be performed in isolation from other disciplines and that Mariology is inherently related to the study of Christ and of the Church, and expresses the inner coherence of these disciplines. Pope Benedict XVI has stated that Marian studies have three separate characteristics: first personalizing the Church so it is not seen just as a structure but as a person, secondly the incarnational aspect and the relation to God, and third Marian piety which involves the heart and the emotional component.

Mary's position in Church can be compared to the aspect of the Petrine Office in a dual sense. This perspective on the duality of the roles of Mary and Peter highlights the subjective holiness of the heart and the holiness of the structure of the Church. In this duality the Petrine office logically examines the Charisms for their theological soundness, while the Marian dual provides a balance in the spiritual and emotional sense via the service of love that the office can never encompass. Mariology and the doctrine of office are thus not "side chapels" in Roman Catholic teachings, but are central and integrating elements of it. As referenced in the encyclical on the Mystical Body

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of Christ, Pius XII, 1943, her fiat gave consent for a spiritual marriage between the Son of God and human nature, thus giving humanity the means to salvation. Mary's rights (wedding feast at Cana), and Mary's love (fiat) are essential to salvation.

Mariology has been related to Christology and in the Roman Catholic theological and papal writings has been viewed as interwoven with the mystery of Christ. Pope John Paul II discussed the "precise place of Mary" in the plan of salvation in the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* and stated: "Following the line of the Second Vatican Council, I wish to emphasize the special presence of the Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and his Church. For this is a fundamental dimension emerging from the Mariology of the Council." Roman Catholic theologians have also explored the interwoven natures of Mariology and Christology. Pope Benedict XVI characterized the relationship by stating that "Christology and Mariology are inseparably interwoven" from their very beginnings. In his view Mariology underscores the nexus of the mysteries of Christology and ecclesiology, and reflects they are intrinsically interwoven.

Early Christians and numerous saints focused on this connection and the inner link between Marian doctrines and a fuller understanding of Christological themes. Given the Catholic perspective that the Church lives in its relation to Christ, being the Body of Christ, it also has a relation to his mother, whose study is the subject of Roman Catholic Mariology. Pope Pius X in *Ad Diem Illum* stated: "there is no more direct road than by Mary for uniting all mankind in Christ." In Roman Catholic theology the study of Mary, while contributing to the study of Christ, is also a separate discipline in its own right, with an understanding of the figure of Mary contributing to a fuller understanding of who Christ is and what he did. The history of theology shows that an understanding of the mystery of the Virgin contributes to a more profound understanding of the mystery of Christ, of the Church and of the vocation of man.

Place of her Life, Death, and Burial

As to tradition, there is some testimony for Mary's temporary residence in or near Ephesus, but the evidence for her permanent home in Jerusalem is much stronger. Ephesus and Jerusalem are the disputed places. Mary's Ephesian residence rests on the following evidence:

- ❖ A passage in the synodal letter of the Council of Ephesus reads: "Wherefore also Nestorius, the instigator of the impious heresy, when he had come to the city of the Ephesians, where John the Theologian and the Virgin Mother of God St. Mary, estranging himself of his own accord from the gathering of the holy Fathers and Bishops..." Since St. John had lived in Ephesus and had been buried there, it has been inferred that the ellipsis of the synodal letter means either, "where John... and the Virgin... Mary lived", or, "where John... and the Virgin... Mary lived and are buried".
- ❖ Bar-Hebraeus or Abulpharagius, a Jacobite bishop of the thirteenth century, relates that St. John took the Blessed Virgin with him to Patmos, then founded the Church of Ephesus, and buried Mary no one knows where.
- ❖ Benedict XIV states that Mary followed St. John to Ephesus and died there. He intended also to remove from the Breviary those lessons which mention Mary's death in Jerusalem, but died before carrying out his intention.
- ❖ Mary's temporary residence and death in Ephesus are upheld by such writers as Tillemont, Calmet.
- ❖ In Panaghia Kapoli, on a hill about nine or ten miles distant from Ephesus, was discovered a house, or rather its remains, in which Mary is supposed to have lived. The house was found, as it had been sought, according to the indications given by Catherine Emmerich in her life of the Blessed Virgin.

Arguments against Ephesus: On closer inspection these arguments for Mary's residence or burial in Ephesus are not unanswerable.

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- ❖ The ellipsis in the synodal letter of the Council of Ephesus may be filled out in such a way as not to imply the assumption that Our Blessed Lady either lived or died in Ephesus. As there was in the city a double church dedicated to the Virgin Mary and to St. John, the incomplete clause of the synodal letter may be completed so as to read, “where John the Theologian and the Virgin... Mary have a sanctuary”. This explanation of the ambiguous phrase is one of the two suggested in the margin in Labbe’s *Collect. Concil.* (l.c.)
- ❖ The words of Bar-Hebraeus contain two inaccurate statements; for St. John did not found the Church of Ephesus, nor did he take Mary with him to Patmos. St. Paul founded the Ephesian Church, and Mary was dead before John’s exile in Patmos. It would not be surprising, therefore, if the writer were wrong in what he says about Mary’s burial. Besides, Bar-Hebraeus belongs to the thirteenth century; the earlier writers had been most anxious about the sacred places in Ephesus; they mention the tomb of St. John and of a daughter of Philip [119], but they say nothing about Mary’s burying place.
- ❖ As to Benedict XIV, this great pontiff is not so emphatic about Mary’s death and burial in Ephesus, when he speaks about her Assumption in heaven.
- ❖ Neither Benedict XIV nor the other authorities who uphold the Ephesian claims, advance any argument that has not been found inconclusive by other scientific students of this question.
- ❖ The house found in Panaghia-Kapouli is of any weight only in so far as it is connected with the visions of Catherine Emmerich. Its distance from the city of Ephesus creates a presumption against its being the home of the Apostle St. John. The historical value of Catherine’s visions is not universally admitted. Mgr. Timoni, Archbishop of Smyrna, writes concerning Panaghia-Kapouli: “Every one is entire free to keep his personal opinion”. Finally the agreement of the condition of the ruined house in Panaghia-Kapouli with Catherine’s description does not

necessarily prove the truth of her statement as to the history of the building.

Arguments against Jerusalem

Two considerations militate against a permanent residence of Our Lady in Jerusalem: first, it has already been pointed out that St. John did not permanently remain in the Holy City; secondly, the Jewish Christians are said to have left Jerusalem during the periods of Jewish persecution (cf. Acts 8:1; 12:1). But as St. John cannot be supposed to have taken Our Lady with him on his apostolic expeditions, we may suppose that he left her in the care of his friends or relatives during the periods of his absence. And there is little doubt that many of the Christians returned to Jerusalem, after the storms of persecution had abated.

Arguments for Jerusalem: Independently of these considerations, we may appeal to the following reasons in favour of Mary's death and burial in Jerusalem:

- ❖ In 451 Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem, testified to the presence of Mary's tomb in Jerusalem. It is strange that neither St. Jerome, nor the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, nor again pseudo-Silvia give any evidence of such a sacred place. But when the Emperor Marcion and the Empress Pulcheria asked Juvenal to send the sacred remains of the Virgin Mary from their tomb in Gethsemani to Constantinople, where they intended to dedicate a new church to Our Lady, the bishop cited an ancient tradition saying that the sacred body had been assumed into heaven, and sent to Constantinople only the coffin and the winding sheet. This narrative rests on the authority of a certain Euthymius whose report was inserted into a homily of St. John Damascene now read in the second Nocturn of the fourth day within the octave of the Assumption. Scheeben is of opinion that Euthymius's words are a later interpolation: they do not fit into the context; they contain an appeal to pseudo-Dionysius which are not otherwise cited before the sixth century; and they are suspicious in their connection with the name of Bishop Juvenal, who was charged

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with forging documents by Pope St. Leo. In his letter the pontiff reminds the bishop of the holy places which he has under his very eyes, but does not mention the tomb of Mary. Allowing that this silence is purely incidental, the main question remains, how much historic truth underlies the Euthymian account of the words of Juvenal?

- ❖ Here must be mentioned too the apocryphal "Historia dormitionis et assumptionis B.M.V.", which claims St. John for its author. Tischendorf believes that the substantial parts of the work go back to the fourth, perhaps even to the second, century. Variations of the original text appeared in Arabic and Syriac, and in other languages; among these must be noted a work called "De transitu Mariae Virg.", which appeared under the name of St. Melito of Sardes. Pope Gelasius enumerates this work among the forbidden books. The extraordinary incidents which these works connect with the death of Mary do not concern us here; but they place her last moments and her burial in or near Jerusalem.
- ❖ Another witness for the existence of a tradition placing the tomb of Mary in Gethsemani is the basilica erected above the sacred spot, about the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century. The present church was built by the Latins in the same place in which the old edifice had stood.
- ❖ In the early part of the seventh century, Modestus, Bishop of Jerusalem, located the passing of Our Lady on Mount Sion, in the house which contained the Cenacle and the upper room of Pentecost. At that time, a single church covered the localities consecrated by these various mysteries. One must wonder at the late evidence for a tradition which became so general since the seventh century.
- ❖ Another tradition is preserved in the "Commemoratorium de Casis Dei" addressed to Charlemagne. It places the death of Mary on Mt. Olivet where a church is said to commemorate this event. Perhaps the writer tried to connect Mary's passing

with the Church of the Assumption as the sister tradition connected it with the cenacle. At any rate, we may conclude that about the beginning of the fifth century there existed a fairly general tradition that Mary had died in Jerusalem, and had been buried in *Gethsemani*. This tradition appears to rest on a more solid basis than the report that Our Lady died and was buried in or near Ephesus. As thus far historical documents are wanting, it would be hard to establish the connection of either tradition with apostolic times.

Problems in Mariology

Mariology is a field in which deeply felt pious beliefs of the faithful and hagiography may conflict with theological and critical historical reviews of beliefs and practices. This conflict was recognized as early as the year 1300 by William of Ware who described the tendency of some believers to attribute almost everything to Mary. Bonaventure warned against Marian maximalism. “One has to be careful as to not to minimize the honour of our Lord, Jesus Christ.” Both minimalist and maximalist have always seen in Mary a sign of the Church and viewed her as a model for all Catholics.

In the 20th century, Pope Pius XII, “the most Marian Pope in Church history” warned against both exuberant exaggerations and timid minimalism in the presentation of Mary. The Vatican II dogmatic Constitutio, *Lumen Gentium* was specifically written in 1964 to avoid both Marian maximalism and minimalism. Pope John Paul II was also careful to avoid both maximalism and minimalism in his Mariology and avoided taking personal positions on issues which were subject to theological debate.

Protestant Mariology

Some early Protestants venerated and honored Mary. Martin Luther said of Mary: “the honor given to the mother of God has been rooted so deeply into the hearts of men that no one wants to hear any opposition to this celebration... We also grant that she should be honored, since we, according to Saint Paul’s words [Romans 12] are indebted to show honor one to another for the

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sake of the One who dwells in us, Jesus Christ. Therefore we have an obligation to honor Mary. But be careful to give her honor that is fitting. Unfortunately, I worry that we give her all too high an honor for she is accorded much more esteem than she should be given or than she accounted to herself.”¹ John Calvin said, “It cannot be denied that God in choosing and destining Mary to be the Mother of his Son, granted her the highest honor.” Zwingli said, “I esteem immensely the Mother of God” and “The more the honor and love of Christ increases among men, so much the esteem and honor given to Mary should grow”. Thus the idea of respect and high honour was not rejected by the first Protestants; but rather it was the matter of degrees of honor given to Mary, as the mother of Jesus, that Protestant Reformers were concerned with, and therefore the practical implications for Mariology are still a **matter of debate**.

- ❖ *John Wycliffe*: The pre-Lutheran reformer John Wycliffe reflected the Marian spirit of the later Middle Ages in one of his earlier sermons: “It seems to me impossible that we should obtain the reward of Heaven without the help of Mary. There is no sex or age, no rank or position, of anyone in the whole human race, which has no need to call for the help of the Holy Virgin.”
- ❖ *Martin Luther*: Despite Luther’s polemics against his Roman Catholic opponents over issues concerning Mary and the saints, theologians appear to agree that Luther adhered to the Marian decrees of the ecumenical councils and dogmas of the church. He held fast to the belief that Mary was a perpetual virgin and the Theotokos or Mother of God.² Special attention is given to the assertion, that Luther some three-hundred years before the dogmatization of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX in 1854, was a firm adherent of that view. Others maintain that Luther in later years changed his position on the Immaculate Conception, which, at that time was undefined in the Church, maintaining however the sinlessness of Mary throughout her life. Regarding the Assumption of Mary, he stated that the Bible did not say anything about it. Important to him was the belief that Mary and the saints do live on after death. ”Throughout

his career as a priest-professor-reformer, Luther preached, taught, and argued about the veneration of Mary with a verbosity that ranged from childlike piety to sophisticated polemics. His views are intimately linked to his christocentric theology and its consequences for liturgy and piety.”³ Luther, while revering Mary, came to criticize the “Papists” for blurring the line, between high admiration of the grace of God wherever it is seen in a human being, and religious service given to another creature. He considered the Roman Catholic practice of celebrating saints’ days and making intercessory requests addressed especially to Mary and other departed saints to be idolatry.

- ❖ *John Calvin*: John Calvin accepted Mary’s perpetual virginity and the title “Mother of God”, in a qualified sense. He considered himself the real follower of Mary¹ because he freed her from misuses of these titles and undeserved “Papist” honour which is due only to Jesus Christ, and for returning this honour to him alone.⁴ Calvin stated that Mary cannot be the advocate of the faithful, since she needs God’s grace as much as any other human being. If the Catholic Church praises her as Queen of Heaven, it is blasphemous and contradicts her own intention, because she is praised and not God. Calvin expressed deep concern over its possible “superstitious” use of the title “Mother of God” from the teachings of the Council of Ephesus.
- ❖ *Karl Barth* (1886–1968): Karl Barth, a Reformed Protestant, was a leading 20th century theologian. Aware of the common dogmatic tradition of the early Church, Barth fully accepted the dogma of Mary as the Mother of God. In his view, through Mary, Jesus belongs to the human race; through Jesus, Mary is Mother of God. Barth also agreed with the Dogma of the Virgin Birth. It meant to him that Jesus as a human does not have a father and that as the Son of God he has no mother. The Holy Spirit, through whom Mary conceived, is not just any spirit, but it is God himself whose act must be understood spiritually and not physically.⁵ Mary is “full of grace” according to Barth, but this grace is not earned but totally given to her. Regarding Mary’s virginity after birth,

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Barth argued that the Church adopted this position not because of Mary but in defence of its Christology. Barth considered the Roman Catholic veneration of Mary a terrible mistake and idolatrous heresy.

Issues in Protestant theology

Mother of God: The designation *Theotokos* (in Greek, Θεοτοκός) or “Bearer of God” for Mary emerged in the Church of Alexandria and was later adopted by the patristic-era universal Church at the Council of Ephesus in 431. It is a statement of Christological orthodoxy (See: hypostasis) in opposition to Nestorianism and also a devotional title of Mary used extensively in Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Oriental Orthodox, and Anglican liturgy. The second verse of a well known Protestant hymn, *Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones*, is directly addressed to Mary and is based on an Orthodox prayer. Presently the Lutheran World Federation accepts⁶ the teachings of the Council of Ephesus and other ecumenical councils of the patristic-era Church, including the formulation “Mother of God” as a function of Christ’s hypostatic union. Luther says: “We too know very well that God did not derive his divinity from Mary; but it does not follow that it is therefore wrong to say that God was born of Mary, that God is Mary’s Son, and that Mary is God’s mother.”⁷

Mariolatry: In the 18th and 19th centuries various groups of Protestants began to use the term *Mariolatry* to refer to the Catholic, Anglo-Catholic and Eastern Orthodox practices of Marian veneration and devotion. In their view, the attention paid to Mary is extreme, and may not only distract from the worship of God, but actually borders on idolatry. This trend has taken various directions over time, in that while some Protestants have at times softened their attitude towards it, others have strengthened their opposition in the 21st century. For instance, during the May 2006 celebrations at Our Lady of Walsingham in England, As Anglicans and Catholics held a Marian procession, Protestant hecklers held banners that condemned Masses, idolatry and “Mariolatry”.

Five Myths about Mariology

Mariology is one of the most controversial aspects of Catholicism for Protestant Christians. Unfortunately, it's also one of the most misunderstood. Here are 5 of the most common myths about the Catholic Church's theology and veneration of the Mother of God:

- ❖ **Myth 1: Catholics worship Mary:** This is nowhere near the truth, yet it's still a common accusation made by Protestants. In reality, Catholics believe that Mary is just a creature, a fellow Christian, and saved by the grace of Jesus like the rest of us (see Myth 2). In case there was somehow doubt about this, the Second Vatican Council in chapter 8 of LG is explicit regarding Mary: “[N]o creature could ever be counted as equal with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer. [...] The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary.” (LG 62).
- ❖ **Myth 2: Catholics think Mary didn't need a Savior:** Catholics believe that Mary was saved by the grace of Jesus Christ just like everyone else. Protestants (or anyone) who think otherwise are usually confused about the Church's dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception says that Mary, “at the first instant of her conception, *by a singular privilege and grace of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind*, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin...” “[H]ence,” the Church concludes, “*she was redeemed in a manner more sublime.*” (*Ineffabilis Deus*). In other words, the fact she was conceived without Original Sin, and afterwards never sinned, happened due to the gratuitous grace of Jesus Christ. Thus, in Scripture, Mary in all truthfulness “rejoices in God my Savior.” (Luke 1:47).
- ❖ **Myth 3: Catholic Mariology contradicts the Bible: Truth:** Not only does the Bible *not* contradict Catholic Mariology, but it *supports* it. A lot could be said here, but here are a few examples: Regarding the Perpetual Virginity of Mary: The Bible never says Mary had other children, and the “brothers and

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sisters” of Jesus traditionally have been understood as simply referring to close relatives of Jesus. In support of the doctrine, theologians since the early Church have interpreted Mary’s confusion about how she would conceive Jesus, despite the fact she was about to marry Joseph, as an indication she had taken a vow of virginity. Regarding the Hail Mary prayer: The Bible says Christians should pray for each other (which is what the Hail Mary prayer asks Mary to do for us: “pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.”). And the first few lines are simply quotes from the Bible: “Hail Mary, full of grace” is how the angel Gabriel greeted Mary at the Annunciation; “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus” is what St. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, exclaimed when Mary visited her. (Luke 1).

- ❖ **Myth 4: Mariology is a late medieval corruption of the faith: Truth:** Actually, the earliest Christians were intensely interested in Mary’s unique role in salvation history. Though Mariology, like all areas of theology, has developed and matured over time, Protestants may be surprised at what they find if they read about the early Church fathers’ profound insight of Mary being the new Eve.
- ❖ **Myth 5: Mary obscures Jesus: Truth:** It’s actually precisely the opposite: Mary’s entire life points to and honors Jesus. In Scripture, after St. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, venerates Mary upon seeing her (“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”; Luke 1.42-43), Mary immediately deflects all the glory back to God: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.” (Luke 1.46-48). Does Scripture obscure Jesus when it tells the stories of the faithful? Of course not: remembering the lives holy men and women who served God by the grace of Jesus and honoring them is a way to ultimately honor God. The same is especially

true of Mary, the perfect example of faith and the Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Five Phases of the Evolution of Modern Mariology

Before exploring the proposed sixth phase let us first look at the five prior phases and how each shapes the issues that present themselves now. The Mariological journey, as it can be called, is the Church's search for the theological substance of Mary's role in Christian faith and theology and what that means for Christianity in general. This is something very different to exploring the popular form of piety and devotion at a given time or how that popular piety and devotion is reacted to, as well as, reacted against. Rather, it is the attempt by the Church to locate Mary, fully and only human, in relations to and within the great doctrines of the Church: the doctrine of the Trinity, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, soteriology and eschatology.

The first phase in the Church's thought on Mary is the Gospel view of Mary and the Church as one figure that is seen in Luke's infancy narratives and John's Gospel reference to the mother of Jesus as 'woman'. Typology is critical to this endeavour where Mary, like Jesus, is seen to be a type prefigured in Scripture, and herself as prefiguring the Church; the new covenant as fulfilment of the Old is an essential element of this interpretation. The second phase is the fathers' development of Christology and ecclesiology where Mary played an important elucidating and clarifying role and, through which Mary is declared Theotokos and described as type of the Church. The church fathers took over 400 years to express in a coherent, consistent and logical manner the meaning of the apostolic witness and the rule of faith, the one God of the Father, Son and Spirit, and the Son as fully human and fully divine. At that critical formative time of developing Christian self-understanding the comprehension of Mary's role was not to the forefront of theological considerations, even if Mary's presence was critical as exemplified by Paul's insistence to one community that Jesus was 'born of woman' (Gal. 4.4). In the first two phases the women, and the men, who prefigure

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Mary in the Old Testament can be identified as a distinct and important element of Christianity's understanding of Mary. Mary, like Jesus, is prepared for through a genealogy of faith both of Israelites and gentiles. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus contains five women and is completed in Mary. The movement of salvation history, from creation and the fall – humanity's alienation from God and itself – God's call to Abraham, the father in faith, reaching its apex in Mary's response to God's call to her, means that a consideration of Mary is a consideration of those in faith who prefigure her, and, as just noted, a consideration of that which she prefigured: the Church, the body of Christ.

The third phase is seen clearly in St. Bernard of Clairvaux's writings on Mary, which considered Mary as a stand-alone person distinct from the Church, facilitating the development of Marian piety, culminating in the dogmas of the immaculate conception (1854) and bodily assumption (1950). This development of a stand-alone Marian piety reflected in the Hail Mary (eleventh century) and *Salve Regina* (twelfth century) occurred as Christianity became the settled and established religion of Europe; perhaps the assuredness of the Church in the Middle Ages allowed for the emphasis to pass to Mary. This phase, however, also saw a divergence in emphasis in the Western Church following the Reformation where in the Lutheran tradition Mary's role significantly diminished. This divergence arises, Karl Rahner argued, from the fact that Protestantism knows a theology of the cross, but not of glory, which would encompass and underline Mary.

The Enlightenment era constitutes the fourth phase. The dominant role played by the historical-critical method within biblical interpretation, and theology in general, during this period created a hostile environment for thought on Mary. The separation of the Mary, as with the Jesus, of history and faith reflects the dominance of the positivistic science and mathematical formalism of the Enlightenment era. The connections or relationships of Scripture are discarded and, instead, each aspect is atomized and then reconstructed again into a

version acceptable to the Enlightenment worldview. In its strictly scientific manifestation, such a worldview cannot even consider a beyond or before the material world, a transcendence, and never seeks to search for the truth of a thing, its 'in-itself', content instead with models and process maps as an explanation of the material world. As this worldview became the 'reasonable' worldview, faith and the idea of God breaking into and acting in history became to be viewed as 'pre-critical', naïve, particularly negatively impacting on Mary - Jesus, in this scenario, can remain a wise man, but Mary no longer makes sense to the narrative.

The fifth phase, the modern period, consists of three aspects. The first relates to Vatican II's Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (1964). John XXIII's desire for a refined, scriptural Mariology to renew Catholic Mariology is the basis of chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium*. Important rediscoveries of patristic thought on Mary and her role in the development of Christology and ecclesiology occurred in the second half of the twentieth century and are reflected in *Lumen Gentium*'s description of Mary as type of the Church: Mary is indivisibly linked with the Church and each is understood through the other. This rediscovery rebalanced thought on Mary so that she is not a stand-alone figure floating high above us but stands with the Church. The second aspect is the ecumenical dialogue and movements in relation to Mary over the last 50 years reflecting the desire to seek common ground on Mary among the Christian denominations. The proceedings of the conferences of the Ecumenical Society for the Blessed Virgin Mary, founded in 1967, provide an invaluable source of ecumenical research and dialogue on Mary.⁸ The third aspect is feminist theology, which is ambiguous towards Mary, seeing her as a negative for the concrete situation of women in Christian society. And although a comparison with other non-monotheistic cultures such as China and Japan indicate that the negative experience of women in society is not dependent on the Judeo-Christian tradition, feminist theology's initial findings and arguments should be critique and refined so that the valuable insights can be included in the next phase of Marian thought.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Basely, Joel R. (2005). *Festival Sermons of Martin Luther*. Dearborn, Michigan: Mark V Publications. p. 167.
- ² Remigius Bäumer, *Marienlexikon Gesamtausgabe*, Leo Scheffczyk, ed., (Regensburg: Institutum Marianum, 1994), 190.
- ³ Bäumer, *Marienlexikon*, 191.
- ⁴ John Calvin. "On John 2:1-11". *Commentary on John*. **1**. Retrieved 2008-05-19.
- ⁵ *Church Dogmatics*, I, 2, 157.
- ⁶ "The Ecumenical Councils and Authority in and of the Church", *7th Plenary of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission in Sandbjerg, Denmark*, The Lutheran World Federation, 10 July 1993.
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Chapter 2

Mary in Sacred Scripture

A true understanding of Mary and her role in salvation can come only from a full understanding of Scripture and the portrayal of Mary in Scripture. This full understanding comes from careful study of the two covenants between God and His people, the Old and the New. Mary is the bridge between the Old and the New Covenants. The two covenants are basic to the divine plan of salvation and Mary's role in salvation history becomes apparent when we see that she is the living embodiment of fundamental themes in the Old and the New Testaments: as the Daughter of Zion, the Ark of the Covenant, the new Eve working with the new Adam. Once we come to understand the scriptural Mary our entire understanding of the meaning of Scripture will be transformed. In fact the various Marian doctrines and devotions only dimly convey the full majesty of Mary as she is portrayed in Scripture. Luke 1 and 2 alone, as we shall see, is a compendium of all the major Marian doctrines. Continued reflection on Scripture is essential for a better understanding of the

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Mary that the first Christians, the Fathers of the Church and even the Protestant Reformers saw in Scripture.

For the early Christian Church the place of Mary in Scripture involved three dimensions. First, Mary was seen as the meeting-point of the old and the New Testaments embodying both the People of Israel (the “Daughter of Zion”) and the new-born Church. Secondly, Mary was seen in relation to the divine plan of salvation as the New Eve working with the New Adam. Thirdly, Mary was understood against the background of what we call the seven splendors, the references in Genesis, Isaiah, Micah, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, Galatians and Revelation. We will outline all three of these dimensions and then review them in more detail.

b. Two Centuries without the Scriptural Mary

Over the last two centuries many Christians have lost the Scriptural Mary venerated and praised by all Christians in every other century. Two factors in particular led to this loss. The first was the decision to ignore the interpretations of Scripture adopted historically by the Christian faithful and to replace these with one’s own interpretations. The second was the decision to ignore the divine inspiration of Scripture so as to make interpretations solely using the criteria and tools employed by professional historians. The first factor led to the Fundamentalists and the second to the Liberals.

Neither Liberal New Testament scholars nor Fundamentalists can be of great help to the Bible-believing Christian who seeks to know the truths shown in Scripture. Although the Liberal scholars can speculate on the sources and dates and the various possible meanings and senses of the New Testament texts they cannot tell us what truths God intended to teach through these texts. Only the early Christian community inspired by the Holy Spirit could determine the true divinely-intended meaning and interpretation of these texts. Similarly, since they have cut themselves off from 20 centuries of Spirit-inspired Christian interpretation, Fundamentalist writers can only offer us their own speculations on the meanings and senses of the various passages in Scripture. And these speculations are just as uncertain and arbitrary as the speculation of the Liberal scholars.

The real issue for the Christian believer is not whether we should rely on Scripture alone but whether or not we can have an authoritative interpretation of Scripture. From the time of the early Church the Christian community has affirmed and taught what they hold to be an authoritative, consistent and binding interpretation of Scripture.

Ultimately both Liberals and the Fundamentalists seek to determine the intentions of the New Testament writers. This may involve a lot of discussion on the connotation of various Greek terms and the like. But the intention of the writers is precisely what we can never really know. And even if it were possible to discern the intention of a particular biblical writer, it may turn out that this is not the intention decreed by God for a particular verse. For instance, the writer of an Old Testament prophecy may have no idea what is required for the fulfillment-of the prophecy - this will become known only at the time that the prophecy is fulfilled. Only the Christian community - because it would be guided by the Holy Spirit - can make progress in determining the divine intention and even the actual writer of a text may not grasp the true intention served by the text.

It might be said that the interpretations historically made by the Christian community may not be acceptable to today's New Testament scholars. But an interpretation guided by the Holy Spirit has an authority far higher than the arbitrary interpretation of a New Testament scholar. The historic interpretations of the Christian community are reflected in the writings of the Fathers, Councils, and liturgies.

c. The Rediscovery of Mary in Scripture

Despite the negative impact of Liberalism and Fundamentalism on theology, modern exegesis has also led to the rediscovery of Mary in Scripture. This rediscovery has been spearheaded by such major scholars as Ignace de la Potterie, Stefano Manelli, Rene Laurentin, A. Feuillet and William Most who have used the resources of contemporary exegesis to re-discover the Scriptural Mary known to the Christian world from the beginning.

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For biblical studies on Mary this is a time of rediscovery. The biblical Mary of the apostolic community and the Fathers was deeply rooted in the Old Testament and the entire salvific message of the New Testament. The overwhelming presence of Mary in Scripture led both to the great definitions of Marian doctrine and the liturgical devotions. Without an understanding of the Scriptural portrait of Mary it is difficult to truly appreciate the Marian doctrines. Even at the time of the Protestant Reformation, the Marian imprint on Scripture was evident to both Catholics and Protestants. It was certainly evident to Martin Luther.

Many Post-Reformation Protestants, however, seem to be suffering from collective amnesia on the question of Mary. Despite their ardent commitment to Scripture, the Fundamentalists have failed to see any Marian connection in Scripture. Nevertheless today Protestant and Catholic exegetes and theologians have rediscovered the Marian “mother lode” not just of the New but also of the Old Testament. Like the Fathers, the modern exegetes now see Mary as the Daughter of Zion, the embodiment of Nation Israel, as the Ark of the Covenant, as “transformed by grace”, as the New Eve, as the bride at the Messianic Wedding Banquet and as the Church. If this development in understanding was simply a modern fad we could legitimately call it into question. But it is actually a rediscovery of what the Christian community from the earliest times and the Scriptures themselves so obviously tell us about Mary. In this chapter on Mary in Scripture we will look first at Mary’s role as the link between the two Testaments, followed by a review of the Marian data in Luke 1-2, Genesis-Revelation and the rest Of the New Testament and finally an analysis of the seven splendors of Mary in Scripture. Anyone who comes to see the full spectrum of Marian material in the Bible will spontaneously see the fittingness of the titles and doctrines of Mary.

Before proceeding further a word must be said about the fact that many of the Scriptural themes relevant to Mary are given as prophecies or prefigurings. Most Christians know that many of the events narrated in the New Testament are fulfillments of Old

Testament prophecies. The general idea that New Testament events fulfill Old Testament prophecies and pre-figurings comes not just from the Evangelists but from Jesus Himself: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." [Luke 4:21]. On some occasions the New Testament writers draw the reader's attention to the fact that a specific event is the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy: for example, "And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, *and He was numbered with the transgressors*" [Mark 15:28]. On other occasions, the reader is left to discern for himself the prophetic connection: for instance, the portrayal of Christ as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world is an obvious reference to the fulfillment of the Old Testament Passover in which lambs were sacrificed. The fulfillment of the prophecies and pre-figurings of Jesus and Mary in the Old Testament are thus not always heralded as such in the New. The faithful, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, discerned the prophetic fulfillment. Marie Isaacs points out that Luke did not usually spell out the prophetic connection of events but made these connections clear through allusions: "The primary data for ... theological reflection was not only the traditions about Jesus but also the OT. In Matthew this is obvious, not least because the evangelist himself makes it overt. By using the formula, 'All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet', he tells us clearly that he is viewing the events of the birth of Christ against the backcloth of the OT. When we look at the Infancy Narrative in the Third Gospel, we find no such direct reference to the OT. But this does not mean that Luke's account is any the less a reflection upon scripture. It is simply that his method of introducing his texts is different from that of Matthew. Rather than use direct quotations he employs a welter of allusions to the OT. This is most obvious in the canticles. These great hymns of thanksgiving and praise, put into the mouths of Mary and Zechariah, are a pastiche made up of phrases taken from the Jewish scriptures ... Luke is so steeped in the language and thought of the OT that the Magnificat and Benedictus abound in both. And the same can be said, not only of the canticles, but also of the narrative sections of Luke's account of the birth of Christ."

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An appropriate ending to this section is the conclusion of Stefano Manalli's powerful new scriptural study of Mary, "All Generations Shall Call Her Blessed": "Among many possible choices there are two texts of sacred Scripture that would express most forcefully and symbolize most meaningfully, the mystery of Mary: expressing her extraordinarily graced personality; emblematic of her universal salvific mission linked with that of her Son until the end of human history. The first is that of Genesis: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and your seed and her seed: she will crush your head, and you will lie in wait for her heel" (3:15). The second is that of Revelation: "And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (12:1).

Prophecy and final (eschatological) fulfillment, Incarnation and redemption are recapitulated in these two biblical texts intertwined with one another in delineating for us the exalted figure of Mary: at her first appearance in the Old Testament as "the morning rising" (Song 6:9), and in the New Testament with the full brightness of midday, "clothed with the sun" (Rev 12:1).

In the first text (Gen 3:15), significantly called the Protoevangelium, we are made aware of the figure and mission of Mary that foretell the messianic salvation of mankind. The "woman" is the Mother of the Messiah-Redeemer, prefigured and symbolized down the subsequent centuries and millennia on many pages of the ancient revelation that accompanied and illumined the path of the Chosen People. In the second text (and its context: Rev 12:1-18), as it were a summary of the entire biblical "revelation" of the mystery of Mary, we contemplate her image and mission in the splendor of the eternal midday, the superhuman prodigy of maternal Queenship over the created universe, over both heaven and earth.

In the first text (Gen 3:15) we preview, antithetically, the reality of Mary's mission: in opposition to the serpent (the "enmity"); in union with the Messiah-Redeemer (her "seed") fighting and crushing the head of the serpent; in contrast with Eve, seduced and conquered by the serpent (Gen 3:13; 2 Cor 11:13). The prophetic vision

embraces the entire salvific plan. In the words of Genesis 3:15, “there opens a vision of the whole of Revelation,” writes Pope John Paul II, “first as a preparation for the Gospel and then as the Gospel itself”. The dramatic scene of Genesis 3:15 speaks of mystery and in revealing it pinpoints our gaze on this “woman”, so heroic and sublime - the antithesis of poor Eve - who goes forth with her Son to reverse the fortunes of fallen man.

In the second text (Rev 12), we contemplate, in meta-historical synthesis, the reality of the person and mission of Mary, the “woman” radiant in grace (“clothed with the sun”), in royal majesty over the angels (the crown of “stars”) and over creation (“the moon under her feet”), Mother of God incarnate (“the male child”) and Mother of the Church (“the rest of her offspring”), which is the Mystical Body of Christ, begotten and co-redeemed by her on Calvary amidst sufferings (“she cried out in the anguish of delivery”), the powerful adversary, Satan (“the great dragon”), checkmated and rendered impotent by the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, of the Assumption, and of the Queenship.

The tableau of Revelation 12 is complete with its magnificent scenario, rich in illustrative detail, even if in every instance not easily understood. On this scene converge, marvelously coordinated, every dimension of the redemptive plan traced out in the Old and New Testaments touching the “mystery of that ‘woman’ who, from the first chapters of the Book of Genesis up to the Book of Revelation, accompanies the unveiling of God’s salvific plan for humanity.” In the light of Revelation 12, we can formulate these fundamental conclusions about the “mystery of that ‘woman’”.

- Mary is the “woman” (Rev 12:1), the same “woman” of the Protoevangelium (Gen 3:15), of whom “is born” the son of God; sent by the Father (Gal 4:4);³ the “woman” present and wholly absorbed in the sufferings of her Son crucified on Calvary (Jn 19:25-26).
- Mary is the “virgin” who is shown alone with the Son, without husband, in the proto-evangelium (Gen 3:15), then in Isaiah (7:14), and in Micah (5:2); her virginity prefigured by the “burning

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bush” (Ex 3:1-11), by the “rod of Aaron” (Num 9:16-24), by the “fleece of Gideon” (Jg 6:36-40), by the “enclosed garden, sealed fountain” (Song 4:12); finally, described by St. Matthew and by St. Jude in terms of the most essential biographical and historical facts of her life.

- Mary is the “mother”, pregnant and giving birth to a son, though remaining a virgin, according to the prophecies of Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14, Micah 5:1-2; and the woman “Mother of the Lord” or “Mother of Jesus”, as she is called eleven times in the New Testament; she is the “mother” of mankind, represented by St. John on Calvary (Jn 19:25-27).
- Mary is the “spouse”: not only the virginal, legal spouse of St. Joseph (Mt 1:18; Lk 1:27), but the virginal, real spouse of God the Father who willed her to be the Mother, according to His human nature, of His only-begotten Son (Gal 4:4); the spouse of God the Son, the redeemer, who intimately associated her with Himself in His redemptive work, as the new Eve beside the “new Adam”; the spouse of God the Holy Spirit, who, overshadowing her enabled her to conceive Jesus (Lk 1:35).
- Mary is the woman immaculate: namely, she is the only human creature unstained by sin, because, together with her Son, she is the unvanquished, victorious adversary of the infernal serpent (Gen 3:15); not only this, but she is the only creature “full of grace” (Lk 1:28), true panhaghia (all holy one), pure “dawn” (Song 6:9) of the sun who is Christ, “fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature” in order to become Mother of Word Incarnate.
- Mary is the co-redemptrix, associated with her Son in the work of ransoming man from sin (Gen 3:15), strong as “an army set in array” (Song 6:9), already prefigured by the “strong”, courageous women of Israel, present at the foot of the cross on Calvary (Jn 19:25-27).
- Mary is the Mediatrix, who brings Jesus to men and men to Jesus, who cares for things spiritual and temporal (Lk 1:39ff.; Jn

2:1-11) present and active at the birth of the Church on Calvary (Jn 19:25-27) and in the Cenacle (Acts 1:14).

- Mary is the Queen, who wears on her head the crown of twelve stars (Rev 12:2) signifying the angels (the “stars”), the twelve tribes of Israel (the Chosen People) and the twelve apostles (the Church). She is the Queen assumed into heaven, carried on the wings of the “great eagle” (Rev 12:14), dashing to the ground the destructive furies of the “dragon” (Rev 12:3-4). She is the “exalted daughter of Zion”, seated as “Queen at the right hand” of the King in the kingdom of heaven (Ps 44:10).
- Mary is the woman “blessed” for the faith she placed in the words of the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation (Lk 1:45), for hearing and observing the Word of God (Lk 11:27-28), for her faithful fulfillment of the will of the Father (Mk 3:31-35), as the “poor one of Yahweh” (Ps 9) and “the handmaid of the Lord” (Lk 1:38).

From the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation, therefore, we may well underscore how this “woman” according to the design of God the Father is always one with her Son, always relative to that Son, “leaning upon her beloved” (Song 8:15), intimately associated with Him in the same mission of saving man and leading him back to the bosom of the Father.

At every crucial point in the history of salvation, from the Protoevangelium, after the fall of our first parents (Gen 3:15), to the announcement of the incarnation of the Word (Lk 1:26ff.), from the beginning of the public mission of Jesus at Cana (Jn 2:1-11), to His redemptive sacrifice consummated on the Cross (in 19:25-27), up to the accomplishment of the very last detail in the universal salvific plan (Rev 12), Mary is the “woman” always present with her Son, never alone, to fulfill her role of “generous companion and humble handmaid of the Lord”.

And together with the Son there are “children”, these also brothers and “co-heirs” of Christ (Rom 8:17), who constitute the Mystical Body, the Church. Thus, in Genesis 3:15, the “woman” is presented

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together with her “seed” (which also has an inclusive sense); at Cana (Jn 2:1-11) the “woman” is with the first “disciples” of Jesus; on Calvary (Jn 19: 25-27), at the foot of the Cross the “woman” has beside her John the Evangelist, who represents all the “disciples” of Jesus; in Revelation 12, finally, the “woman” is found again with “the rest of her offspring” (the Church).

To conclude, then, Mary’s whole reason for existing is found in the Son (and in the children), according to the salvific plan of God the Father. Without the Son, Mary would not have existed at all. This is a thesis dear to dogmatic theologians, and “soundly based on fact”.

It is necessary to observe how, by prophecy in the Old Testament, by existence in the New, the maternity and the co-redemption, the mediation and the Queenship - all rooted in the divine, virginal maternity - give us the most complete biblical and theological portrait of Mary as the “woman” conceived and willed by God “from the beginning and before the world was created” (Sir 24:14), planned by Him “in one and the same decree, with the Son (bull Ineffabilis Deus), “blessed” among all women (Lk 1:42), “woman” with all the potential of the so-called “eternal feminine”, “woman” virgin, daughter, spouse, mother, each to the full extent of perfection these terms signify, in living relation with God the Father, of whom Mary is daughter, with God the Son, of whom Mary is Mother, with God the Holy Spirit, of whom Mary is spouse; in living relation with the Church and with mankind, of whom Mary is “mother in the order of grace”.

Thus, Mary realizes in herself the highest synthesis of nature and grace; an ineffable synthesis at its base and at its crown, alpha and omega, as it were, of the human person associated with the Divine Person of the Word Incarnate - the divine “alpha and omega” (Rev 1:8) - the work of universal salvation, by a unique, absolutely exclusive, distinctive relation: the “relation” of virginal maternity embracing the corporal and the spiritual, the human and the divine.(2)

2. Mary the Bridge between the OT and the NT

(a) Introduction

The richness of the Scriptural portrait of Mary is manifested most prominently in the Old Testament prophecies and prefigurings of Mary and the New Testament passages that portray her as the link between the Old and the New Covenants. Mary serves as a link between the two Covenants not just through parallel or prophetic verses but by embodying common themes. She is a bridge between the Old and the New Testaments because Scripture shows her representing both the people of Israel and the Church begun by her Son. The Scriptural images of Mary in the context of both Testaments are astounding in their variety. We see Mary as:

- The New Eve, the Virgin Mother prophesied in the Old Testament
- The embodiment of all the qualities prefigured in the heroines of the Old Testament
- The people of Israel, the Daughter of Zion
- The Ark of the Covenant: the parallels are too numerous to be ignored
- The Church
- The exalted Mother of Jesus
- The Mother of all the Faithful
- Spouse, Mother and Daughter

The mystery of Mary's role in the Old and the New Covenants is brilliantly underscored by Ignace de la Potterie: "A very important insight of modern exegesis has brought to light that the mystery of Mary forms in some way the synthesis of all the former revelation about the people of God, and of all that God by his salvific action wishes to realize for his people. In Mary are accomplished all the important aspects of the promises of the Old Testament to the Daughter of Zion, and in her real person there is an anticipation which will be realized for the new people of God, the Church. The history of revelation on the subject of the theme of the Woman Zion, realized in the person of Mary, and continued in the Church,

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constitutes a doctrinal bastion, an unshakable structured ensemble for the comprehension of the history of salvation, from its origin up to its eschatology. A vision of the mystery of Mary, biblically founded, ecclesiologically integrated and structurally developed, gives then a complete image of the concrete realization of the total mystery of the Covenant.”¹

In *Down to Earth: The New Protestant Vision of the Virgin Mary*, the Protestant theologian John de Satge highlights Mary’s position with respect to the Old and the New Testaments: “She is the climax of the Old Testament people, the one to whom the cloud of witnesses from the ancient era look as their crowning glory, for it was through her response to grace that their Vindicator came to stand upon the earth. In the order of redemption she is the first fruits of her Son’s saving work, the one among her Son’s people who has gone all the way. And in the order of her Son’s people, she is the mother.”

Three other Scripture scholars may be cited here. In an ecumenical conference on Mary, Ralph Russell draws attention to the witness to Mary in Scripture as a whole:

Scripture must be seen as a whole. The Holy Spirit who inspired it means it to be seen in entirety. Then the ‘Woman’ in Genesis will be answered by the Woman in the Book of Revelation (ch. 12), the Fall will go to the Annunciation, Adam with Christ (cf. St Paul), Eve with Mary. This is the way the earliest fathers saw Scripture and if we look through their eyes we shall not be tempted to think that the Bible has little to say about Mary’s place in the work of her divine Son, the one redeemer. Another way of approach is to ask what is the central event to which all salvation history builds up? St. Paul answers that: ‘When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman’ (Gal 4:4). What more has Scripture to tell us about this?

The Old Testament prophets, struggling, against the spirit of proud self-sufficiency, to shift attention from man to God, had spoken of the anawim, the humble and lowly people, who ‘leant upon the Lord, the holy one of Israel, in truth’ (Is. 10:20). They were not necessarily

poor as a class, for David was one, but they usually were. They were conscious of their need for God, ready to wait and serve, with the trusting love of a child for their saviour. This is the meaning of the 'poor' in the Isaian passage which Jesus applies to himself: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor' (Luke 4:18; Is 61:1); and the first of the Beatitudes is 'Blessed are the poor in spirit' (Matt. 5:3; cf. Luke 6:20). The flower of the poor and humble of the Lord is the 'handmaid of the Lord, who said 'let it be to me according to your word'. and 'he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, (Luke 1:38, 48).

From other Old Testament themes, provided they are read with traditional Jewish and Christian interpretations, there emerges the figure of the woman, mother of the redeemer. There is Matthew's interpretation of Isaiah: 'All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son'" (Matt. 1:22ff.; Is. 7:14). There is Genesis 3:15, the enmity between the woman and the serpent, her seed and his seed, of which more later. There is the prophetic figure of the Daughter of Sion. This takes us to St. Luke and the Annunciation.

The angel says to Mary: 'Hail full of grace, (or 10 favoured one)', the Lord is with you,. And then 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have favour (or 'grace') with God.

And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus (Yahweh-Saviour) (Luke 1:28-31). The Old Testament background to this is Zephaniah 3:14-17: 'Sing aloud, O daughter of Sion ... The Lord is in your midst ... Do not fear, O Sion, the Lord your God is in your midst (your womb), a warrior who gives victory'. So in Luke 'hail' means rejoice, with messianic joy, and Mary, 'favoured one' or 'full of grace' is seen as the Daughter of Sion, who realizes the hopes and longings of Israel's history, and in a more wonderful way the Lord will be in her midst. The angel goes on, in the words of the prophecy of Nathan, to tell

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her that her Son will be the Messiah, and when Mary asks 'How shall this be, because I have not husband?' he explains: 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, Son of God' (Luke 1:32-35). 'Overshadow' refers to the Shekinah, the cloud of God's presence which went with the Israelites in the desert, filled the temple of Solomon, appeared at the transfiguration and the ascension, and according to Israelite tradition, covered with its shadow the Ark of the Covenant (cf. Exodus 40:35). Thus Mary, like the Ark, becomes God's resting place on earth. 'Son of God' is a messianic title, but its full meaning will be gradually unfolded, and gradually also Christian faith will come to Be what it means to be God's Mother. Mary's humble answer, "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" is an unhesitating acceptance of her place in God's redemptive plan. This is what the second century fathers saw, together with its consequences for salvation: "The knot of Eve's disobedience, says Irenaeus, 'was untied by Mary's obedience, and in her obedience Mary became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race' (Adv. Haer. 3, 22, 4; PG 7, 959)."

Rene Laurentin sees Mary's presence in the OT on three planes: Mary is seen to be envisaged in three ways by the Old Testament.

I. Moral Preparation: From among mankind disgraced by sin, God untangles a line of faith and holiness at the end of which his Son will be able to be born into the human race without the contamination of sin. The last stage of this progress is found in the privileged circle of the "poor of Israel." Mary explicitly places herself in this group in the Magnificat (Lk. 1:48, 52).

II. Typological Preparation: God's plan for the world works toward accomplishment according to the slow cadence of human duration, slowed down the more by the inertia of sin. God does not bring perfection to be all at once, but gradually. At each stage of the plan of salvation - Israel, the Church, heaven - one can discern the sketch and prefiguration of the perfect forms that will be reached at the end. At each stage in the development of an embryo the imperfect

forms of the organs on their way to full formation can be detected. There is no more delicate task than to appreciate these developmental relationships. In the final analysis, only Scripture and Tradition can authentically discern typological equivalents. In what concerns Mary, the types are found principally in three lines:

1. First there are the women of the Old Testament, notably those who were favored with miraculous births, those who were ancestors of the Messiah, those who contributed to the triumph and salvation of Israel. By taking up in connection with Mary the words that concerned Sarah, "Nothing is impossible with God," (Gen 18:14 and Lk. 1:37), or Judith (Jud 13:18-19 and Lk. 1:42), Luke gave the first guidelines for this typology.
2. But Luke compares Mary especially to Israel in its ensemble. He identifies her with the Daughter of Zion according to Zeph. 3:14-17, an identification that is found again in substance in John 19:25-27 and in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse ...
3. Finally, the Daughter of Zion was the place where Yahweh rested. Thus Luke glimpsed in Mary the new Ark of the Covenant, the eschatological resting-place of Yahweh Savior. In this comparison he opened the way to a typology involving sacred objects ...

III. Prophetic Preparation: Mary was prefigured not only by realities corresponding to her in nature or function, but also by words that announced her in advance ... Two series of texts merit attention:

(a) Eschatological texts whose meaning applies to Mary and at the same time to the Church; (b) Texts that apply to the Mother of the Messiah.

Stefano Mannelli tells us: The Mariology of the Old Testament has all the essential characteristics of a Mariology at its "roots". In that Mariology are contained in fact the "roots" of that unique, precious plant that is Mary most holy. From those "roots" has sprung, in the New Testament, the one "full of grace" (Lk 1:28), the Mother of God and of the new humanity. In these mariological texts of the Old Testament are discovered the "roots" of the mystery of Mary,

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predestined “in one and the same decree” (*Ineffabilis Deus*) to be the “woman”. Mother of the New Adam, with whom she is united in the same “enmity” for the serpent whose head is to be crushed (Gen 3:15). This “woman” is the Virgin Mother of Emmanuel, that is, of “God with us” (Is 7:14). She is the “woman in travail” bearing God made man, the Savior of the “remnant of Israel”, of the People of God (Mic 5:1-2).

The two mysteries of the Incarnation and of the redemption, foreshadowed in these prophetic oracles, are intimately linked to the mysteries of the Immaculate Conception (Gen 3:15), the divine and virginal maternity (Is 7:14), and the co-redemption (Gen 3:15) attributed to the “woman in travail” of Bethlehem (Mic 5:1-2).

Together with these three fundamental Mariological texts, we also find in the Old Testament an abundance of minor texts that converge to give to those “roots” a certain consistency in prefiguring and symbolizing the extraordinary personality of Mary. Thus, we discover the “roots” of Mary in the “daughter of Zion” (Mic 4:8), in “the poor of Yahweh” (Ps 9), in “the strong woman” (Sir 26:2) who works for the regeneration and salvation of the people. We find her prefigured by Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel, by Miriam, the sister of Moses, by Deborah, Abigail and Ruth, by Judith and by Esther. We can read of the virtues and sanctity of Mary in the various and richly allusive biblical symbols, such as the burning bush, the fleece of Gideon, the holy ark, the rainbow, Jacob’s ladder, and in many others ...

We find, then, the Mariology of the New Testament already “sketched” in that of the Old. The figure and mission of Mary are already limned in the prophecies, in the figures, and in the symbols of the Old Testament. The prophecies foretell and describe her personality, outlining its primary characteristics: Mary’s freedom from original sin because of her enmity with the serpent, her divine maternity as the Mother of “God with us”, her virginal maternity as the virgin “in travail”, the universal co-redemption because of her victory over the serpent whose head is crushed...

In the New Testament, the entire Mariological content of the Old Testament is found to be fulfilled in the reality of the person and life of Mary, as the “woman”, as the “virgin”, as the ‘mother” of the Emmanuel, as the exalted “Daughter of Zion”, as endowed with those sublime gifts and virtues of more admirable women of the Old Covenant, and by the more suggestive, poetic symbols employed by the sacred writers. The great St. Augustine, therefore, was right when he wrote that “in the Old Testament is hidden the New, and in the New the Old becomes clear.” That is especially true of Mariology, which has sprouted and flowered in the New Testament, as it were, from its “roots” in the Old. Mariology has developed from an admirable Old Testament “sketch” to that still more admirable portrait painted in the New.

St. Andrew of Crete once wrote that our Lady is “the seal of the Old and of the New Testament; she is clearly the fulfillment of every prophecy.” In the era of the Old Covenant Mary is invited to be the mother of the Messiah because she has “won favor with God.” In the era of the New Covenant she will be called blessed by “all generations” because she has “believed.”

(b) Old Testament Prophecies on Mary

The most famous Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah are Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14 and Micah 5:1-4. In all three prophecies the Mother of the Messiah plays a prominent part. The Genesis prophecy will be considered in a section below. Here we will study the prophecies in Isaiah and Micah.

These are the prophecies in Isaiah and Micah: “The Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” [Isaiah 7:10-14].

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“But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace”, Micah [5:2-4].

Concerning the prophecy in Isaiah which was made by the Prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz urging him to trust God rather than to rely on the Assyrians, Stefano Manelli points out, “Biblical- theological exegesis correctly insists on one literal, messianic, and Marian interpretation of this well-known prophecy: the Emmanuel of whom the prophet speaks is exclusively the future Messiah, Jesus Christ, and the childbearing virgin is exclusively Mary, the Virgin Mother of Jesus ... One must consider the well-nigh unanimous agreement with this interpretation on the part of the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers, both in the East and in the West, from St. Justin on. So, too, the uninterrupted teaching of the Magisterium of the Church, the witness of the liturgy and of sacred art (as early as that of the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome) have favored this interpretation.” Concerning modern theologians who deny this interpretation, Manelli writes, “they run counter to the practically unanimous view of the exegetical tradition and of the Faith of the Church. Yet modern, rationalistic exegetes cannot avoid facing the fact that if there are any prophecies of the Old Testament expressly cited in the new as fully verified, one is this precise passage from Isaiah, cited verbatim by St. Matthew and clearly referred to by St. Luke.”

The prophecy is significant also for understanding Mary: “One of the fundamental... points of Isaiah’s prophecy surely concerns the virginal conception and parturition of the Mother of the Emmanuel. This is the object of the Church’s belief in the perpetual, virginal integrity of Mary, before, during and after childbirth. The special

sign that Isaiah offers the King on behalf of God is in fact this: a pregnant virgin, that is to say, a virgin who conceives a child while remaining a virgin; and a virgin giving birth, that is to say, a pregnant virgin who bears a son while still remaining a virgin - hence a virginal conception and virginal parturition: in conception and in the act of giving birth the Mother of the Immanuel remains always ,the virgin, ... With the virginal maternity is foreshadowed the royal and divine maternity, given that the Emmanuel is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that He is a royal descendant of David because, being born of Mary, He is also of David's lineage. Still another detail, particularly significant, is this: the prophet Isaiah states that the Mother of the Messiah will herself name her son, the fruit of her virginal womb ('She shall call his name Emmanuel' [Is 7:14]), even though this was contrary to traditional usage, whereby the father named the child. St. Luke underscores this same detail in recounting how the angel informed Mary she was to name the child she bore: 'You shall call his name Jesus' (Lk 1:31). The correspondence between prophecy and fulfillment on this point is perfect. Finally, the relation between the prophecy of Isaiah and that of Genesis is not to be overlooked. Mattioli writes: 'The reference of the Isaian text to the Protoevangelium (Gen 3:15) seems clearly evident. The mother and son, the Almah and the Immanuel, announced by Isaiah, appear neither more nor less than further delienations of the 'woman', and of the 'seed', the Issah and the Zera, promised in Genesis.

Manelli addresses one possible objection that could arise: "How can Ahaz verify the 'sign' the prophet offers, if the sign, will come to pass only eight centuries later? The difficulty can be resolved in this way. Isaiah in prophesying does not address himself to Ahaz, but to the 'house of David, (7:13), because the prophecy was intended to serve a far broader and weightier end, namely, that the Lord would keep his promise to preserve the line of David, and to make David's throne forever' stable through the Immanuel."

The Scripture scholar William Most addresses another kind of objection: "We cannot help noticing too that though many today deny that Isaiah 7:14 speaks of a virgin birth - although St. Matthew

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saw it - Mary could not have missed it. For she saw it being fulfilled in herself. It is true the Targum as we now have it did not mark this passage as messianic. But we know why, thanks to some splendidly honest modern Jewish scholars: Jacob Neusner (*Messiah in Context*, pp. 173 and 190), Samson Levey and E.J. Schoeps. Neusner tells us (p.190) that when the Jews saw the Christians using this prophecy, they pulled back, and said it was not the Messiah. But they gave themselves away, for the Targums do mark Isaiah 9:5-6 as messianic, and everyone admits that the child in 7:14 and 9:5-6 is the same child, for both passages belong to what is commonly called the book of Emmanuel.”

About the prophecy in Micah, Manelli writes: This Messiah-liberator, the prophet foretells, will be born in the tiny town of Bethlehem in the land of Ephrathah, not the Bethlehem of Galilee. Moreover in the prophecy it is said that the Messiah’s origins are “from of old, from ancient days”. The expression from ancient days can also mean everlasting days and thus would expressly indicate eternity, that is, the divine origin of the Messiah rather than merely His long descent from David. The prophet Micah, therefore, would appear to have foretold both the earthly and heavenly places of birth, both the human and divine origins of the Messiah...

Meriting particular interest is the fact that Micah, rather than directly foretelling the Messiah, foretells His Mother instead, or more precisely, “a Queen-mother whom God raises up from his people to beget a new king, at a specific place and time and so in reality.” [D. Colombo]. Furthermore, in making this prediction, the prophet adopts a phraseology so exact that its meaning must have been perfectly obvious to this listeners: the woman in travail shall bring forth. This brings one to the well-founded supposition that the people were already well acquainted with the prophecy of Isaiah: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son... For the prophet Micah, the concise expression, “the woman in travail shall bring forth”, was sufficient to make himself understood by everyone...

Finally, in the light of the prophecy already fulfilled, so in this prophecy as in that of Genesis 3:15 and in that of Isaiah 7:14, the

figure of the mother is presented alone with her son. No earthly father of the Messiah-Savior is mentioned in any of the three great Old Testament prophecies. The mother appears always as virgin mother. The “virginity” of the mother is the ever-present, luminous backdrop for the event of the Annunciation and that of the birth of the Messiah. This virginity is an evident sign that the Messiah is truly a new creation, the new humanity, the beginning of the salvific era: the redemption.” (10)

(c) Old Testament Pre-figurings of Mary

In addition to prophecies, many of the individuals and events in the Old Testament pre-figure New Testament individuals and events. Just as the Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness, for instance, Jesus spent 40 days in the desert. The twelve tribes of Israel pre-figure the coming of the 12 Apostles. Because Jesus exercised His Messianic Office as Priest, Prophet and King, all the priests, prophets and kings of Israel in some sense pre-figured Him. Similarly, many of the heroines of the Old Testament pre-figured Mary and at times the parallels are startling.

A table of comparisons is given below:

Sarah and Mary

“Free” wife of Abraham unlike Hagar the slave wife. Although sterile she bears Isaac in her old age through a miracle of God. Isaac is the father of a great nation [Genesis 11]. Mary is the “free” wife who is free of any subjection to sin - “whoever commits sin is the slave of sin” [John 8:34]. She is a voluntary virgin who nevertheless conceives and bears her Son through a miracle. Her Son Jesus is the Head of the Mystical Body, the “firstborn among many brethren.” [Romans 8:29].

Rebecca and Mary: Wife of Isaac who played a key role in the history of salvation. Abraham asked his servant Eliezer to request Rebecca to be the wife of Isaac. Her brothers tell Rebecca: “May you increase to thousands of thousands and may your seed possess the gates of their enemies.” [Genesis 24:60]. Rebecca dresses Jacob

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in the clothes of his older brother Esau to secure the blessing of Isaac. God the Father asks the angel Gabriel to request Mary to be the Mother of God the Son. Mary's seed are the multitudes "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Mary clothes Jesus in human flesh and offers Him to the Father to secure His blessing on the human race.

Rachael and Mary: Jacob is entranced by Rachel's beauty. Rachel is the mother of Joseph who was sold for 20 pieces of silver. Joseph comes to power in Egypt and is the savior of his family. Mary has "found favor with God". Her Son Jesus is sold for thirty pieces of silver. By His death He becomes the savior of the human race.

Miriam and Mary: Miriam the sister of Moses, the liberator of the People of God, and the sister of Aaron, the first priest of the Old Covenant. Miriam is present with Moses and Aaron at the "Tent of Meeting" in which the Lord descended and spoke to them. Just as Miriam was associated with the lawgiver of the People of God, Mary is associated with the Supreme Lawgiver Who Moses pre-figured. Similarly Mary is associated with the High Priest of the New Covenant who again is pre-figured by Aaron.

Deborah and Mary: Deborah saves her people from the Canaanites by helping Barak victoriously lead a small army against the much larger army of Sisera. Deborah is a prophetess and renowned for her mercy. Judges 5 is a song of praise from Deborah to the Almighty thanking Him for the victory over Sisera. Mary assists Christ in His redemptive mission - a mission He performs against all odds. Mary is the Queen of Prophets and Merciful Mother. Deborah's song is a foreshadowing of the Magnificat.

Ruth and Mary: Ruth, a Moabite, is the wife of Boaz and the mother of Obed the grandfather of David. She leaves her people behind and declares herself the servant of Boaz. Mary will bear a Son in the line of David. She offers herself as a handmaiden of the Lord.

Abigail and Mary: Abigail means “exaltation of the Father.” Because of her great virtue David marries her and makes her queen of the house of David. In I Samuel 25:41, she tells David, “Behold your servant Mary.” Mary’s exaltation of the Father is seen especially in the Magnificat. Because she has won favor with Him, God the Father makes her the Spouse of the Holy Spirit and the Mother of the Son. At the Annunciation, Luke 1:38, she says, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord.”

Esther and Mary: Esther is chosen to be queen by King Ahasuerus for her beauty. All of Esther’s people have been condemned to death through the schemes of an enemy. She alone is excepted from this condemnation. Esther manages to foil the schemes of the enemy and saves her people from death. Alone of her race, Mary was not subject to Original Sin, the condemnation to spiritual death. She assists her Son in His mission of defeating the enemy and rescuing her people from the decree of damnation. She continues to intercede for her people as they continue in their journey from death.

About the influence of the Old Testament pre-figurings on the New Testament, Marie Isaacs, a Baptist, writes: Luke portrays Mary as the supreme example of the faithful of Israel, of whom the Messiah was to be born. He does this, not only the way he structures the narrative, but also in the language he employs: language which is full of OT allusions and symbols. To miss these is to fail to appreciate the claims that Luke is making. Already we have seen that Mary is one of the anawim. Now we must explore the other biblical allusions.

OT Titles Attributed to Mary

1. Daughter of Zion: Perhaps the most striking and obvious Marian image in Scripture is that of the Daughter of Zion. The Daughter of Zion representation of Mary is evident in the parallelism between a great number of texts in the Old and the New Testaments. In the Old Testament Zion is shown as Spouse and Daughter, Virgin and Mother as is Mary in the New. Daughter Zion is the Spouse of Yahweh, Mother of the People of God (Mother Zion), the Virgin

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Israel. Many of the Old Testament texts describing the Daughter of Zion are amazingly enough applied to Mary, for instance in Luke 1:26-38, John 2:1-12, John 19:25-27. “Here,” writes de la Potterie, “the Old Testament texts of the ‘Daughter of Zion’ are applied to a definite woman. ... This is precisely the reason why, in the Fourth Gospel, both at Cana and at the Cross, Jesus addresses Mary calling her ‘Woman.’”, (17). “The definite woman Mary,” he continues, “the Mother of Jesus, is in a certain way the historical realization of this symbolic figure, who is called in the prophets - depending on the context - the ‘Daughter of Zion,’ the ‘Mother-Zion’ or the ‘Virgin Israel.’ All of Israel’s expectation of salvation was projected upon this symbolic figure of the ‘Messianic Daughter of Zion’; this symbolic figure, described by the prophets, is concretized at once in a daughter of Israel, Mary, who thus becomes the personification of the messianic people in eschatological times.” (18). A truly biblical interpretation of Mary will see her as representing both the people of Israel and the future Church.

The comparison of Zephaniah 3:17-17 and Luke 1:28-33 is especially striking: “Rejoice, Daughter of Zion, the King of Israel, Yahweh, is IN you. Do not be afraid Zion, Yahweh your God is in your womb as a strong Savior.” [Zephaniah 3:14-17] “Rejoice so highly favored. The Lord is WITH you. Do not be afraid, Mary ... Listen, you are to conceive in your womb and bear a son and you must name him “Yahweh Savior.” He will reign [Luke 1:28-33].

Applying the Daughter of Zion symbolism, de la Potterie notes, “More and more frequently today’s exegetes translate the first word of the angel to Mary, ‘Chaire’, by ‘Rejoice!’ ... It is interesting to verify that in the Septuagint the formula ‘Chaire’ always appears in a context where Zion is invited to the messianic joy in the perspective of the future (Joel 2:21-23; Zp 3:14; Zc 9:9; cf. Lm. 4:21). In the announcement to Mary, the angel utilizes the formula which the prophets employ to invite the eschatological Zion to rejoice in the salvation which God accords her. Thus we read in the prophet Zephaniah 3:14-15: ‘Shout for joy, daughter of Zion!’ ... In the tradition of the Greek Fathers of the Church and in the Byzantine

liturgy, the words of the angel have been almost universally understood and explained as an invitation to joy.

It is clear that from the very first words of the angel there is already an echo of the theme of the 'Daughter of Zion.' The joy which was announced by the prophets in the Old Testament to the people of Israel - the Woman Zion - diffuses itself and comes to be focused on one particular woman, Mary, who unites in her person, so to speak, the desires and the hopes of all the people of Israel. The Fathers of the Church also understood it in this way."

Writes Rene Laurentin: The first word of the angel, *chaire*, does not correspond to the ordinary Hebrew greeting of peace, *shalom*, the equivalent of our "Good day!" or "Hello!" It is rather the echo of the greetings of messianic joy addressed by the prophets to the Daughter of Zion in Zech. 9:9, Joel 2:21-27, and especially Zeph. 3:14-17. Once this motif of eschatological joy has been proclaimed, it is the Lord who is to come into the midst of Israel, or translating in its etymological sense the expression *bequirbek* employed here, "in the womb" of Israel. The message of the angel echoes that of Zephaniah but this time with respect to an immediate realization.

... This first revelation of the Incarnation... is something accomplished ... simply by the virtual application of the Old Testament scriptures to the new event. Illuminated by Scripture, the event discloses its divine dimensions; actualized by the event, Scripture attains a marvelous and unforeseen fulfillment ...

The joy announced by the angel is messianic joy, the eschatological joy expressed by Zephaniah. Mary who receives the angel's message, is the "Daughter of Zion": she stands for Israel at this decisive hour. The presence of the Lord in Israel's midst, this new and mysterious presence announced for the last days, becomes a conception and a childbearing for her. Finally Zephaniah designates the one whom she is to bear under the name "Yahweh Savior". According to the Hebrew, this is the very meaning of the name "Jesus," designated by the angel, and this name thereby takes on the fullness of its etymological meaning.

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John McHugh notes that the passages in Joel and Zechariah are modelled on the Zephaniah passage which is the most ancient of the three. He describes Zephaniah 3:14-17 as “two short poems in which the prophet envisages the day of salvation as already begun, and calls upon the Daughter of Zion to rejoice with all her heart, not to fear, because the Lord is with her, as her king and saviour. This is exactly the message of the angel in Lk 1:28-33 ... The texts of Joel and of Zechariah carry the same message in almost the same phrases.” In his commentary on the Magnificat, McHugh points out that when Mary “speaks of what God has done for her, she speaks of what God has done for Israel: that is, she speaks of herself as the Daughter of Zion.”

Respected Protestant scholars such as A.G Herbert (“The Virgin Mary as the Daughter of Zion”), A. F. Knight (“The Virgin and the Old Testament”) and the Swedish Lutheran Harald Sahlin (“Der Messias und das Gotteovolk”) have also acknowledged Mary’s identification with the Daughter of Zion.

2. Ark of the Covenant

In speaking of Mary as the bridge between the Old and the New, we are inevitably led to the theme of Mary as the Ark of the Covenant. From Luke’s initial characterization of Mary as the Daughter of Zion we are led to his grand vision of Mary as the Ark of the Covenant, a vision that is continued in both the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation. As noted earlier, Luke’s way of introducing Old Testament themes or prophecies is through allusions rather than direct assertions of “prophetic fulfillment.” In introducing Mary as the Ark, he draws on Old Testament texts that any Jewish reader would understand and identify with the Ark.

Rene Laurentin draws attention to the similitude between Exodus 40:34,35 and Luke 1:35: “The divine overshadowing, designated by the characteristic word *episkiasei*, evoked the cloud which was the sign of Yahweh’s presence. This cloud was seen for the first time when the Mosaic worship was established. With its shadow it covered the Ark of the Covenant, while the glory of God - that is,

God himself - filled it from within. In her turn Mary is going to be the object of this double manifestation: a presence from above that signifies transcendence, and a presence of the Lord from within. That is what is implied in the comparison of the two texts:

- ❖ Exodus 40:34: “The cloud covered the Tent of meeting and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle.” Luke 1:35: “The power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God.” The same idea seems to be taken up in the episode of the visitation, a story told in reference to the account of the transfer of the Ark in 2 Sam. 6:1, 14 ... The episode of the Visitation is drawn up in close parallelism with 2 Sam 6:14, the story of the transportation of the Ark of the Covenant, narrated just before the messianic prophecy (7:1-17) to which Luke 1:32-3 alludes. The events, the atmosphere, the terms used to describe them correspond closely: the ascent of the Ark (2 Samuel 6:5) and the ascent of Mary (Luke 1:39), the joyous outcry of the people and Elizabeth’s cry of greeting; the exultation of David and of John the Baptist. At times the expressions are in striking correspondence with each other:
- ❖ 2 Samuel 6:9: “However can the Ark of Yahweh (- My Lord) come to me?”
 - Luke 1:43: “Why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of My Lord?”
 - 2 Samuel 6:11: “The Ark of Yahweh remained for three months in the house..”
 - Luke 1:56: “Mary remained about three months in the home of Elizabeth.”

In short, in the marvelously artful account of the Visitation the image of the Ark of the Covenant is worked into the person of Mary, and here and there in a typological approach it is possible to see that the “Lord” whose mother she is is no other than the “Lord” who resided in the Ark.

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The theme is taken up a final time at the end of the infancy gospel. As Jesus enters the Temple Simeon greets him as ‘the glory of Israel, (Luke 2:32). This is a divine title. The glory of Yahweh that had deserted the Temple once it was bereft of the Ark of the Covenant now reenters the Temple as Mary comes there carrying Jesus. Thus it is that Simeon can die happy (Luke 2:26, 29); he now can “see death” since he has “seen the glory of the Lord.” The time has been fulfilled. Here Mary, eschatological Daughter of Zion and new Ark of the Covenant, accomplishes her mission in a way in bringing to the Temple the one whose place it properly is. This is what Jesus himself will affirm in the very last episode of the infancy gospel, that of his being found in the Temple: ‘I must be in my Father’s house.’ [Luke 2:49].

Manelli points out the following parallels between the Visitation and the transportation of the Ark of the Covenant from the house of Abinadab to that of Obededom and to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:1-15): The two “journeys” take place in Judea; the shouts of jubilation of the people and of Elizabeth; David and John the Baptist “exult for joy”; the presence of the Ark and that of Mary are blessing for the house; the Ark and Mary remain in the house for three months. (24)

About the Ark symbolism, John McHugh writes: [Luke 1] Verse 35 asserts that this creative, life-giving Power of the Most High will overshadow Mary. Luke’s choice of the word ‘overshadow, is of first importance. Several recent writers, Lutheran, Anglican and Roman Catholic, have stressed the significance of this verb in this context: they see in it an indication that the Divine Presence descended on Mary as it had once descended on the Ark of the Covenant. At the very end of the Book of Exodus, when the Tent has at last been completed, the writer adds: ‘Then the Cloud enveloped the Tent of Witness, and the Tent was filled with the Glory of the Lord. And Moses could not enter the Tent of Witness, because the Cloud was overshadowing it, and the Tent had been filled with the Glory of the Lord’ (Ex 40:34-5). In the Greek Old Testament, words meaning ‘to overshadow, are comparatively rare, and they are nearly always found in passages which speak of the presence of God ... In Is

4:2-6 the prophet ... promises that on the Day of Yahweh, the Divine Presence will once again overshadow the purified Daughter of Zion with its glory.

St. Luke, when he wrote the word ‘overshadow’ must have known what associations it would evoke in the Jewish mind. No Jew, reading the words ‘A Power of the Most High will overshadow thee’, could fail to think of the Divine Presence or Shekinah. The meaning of Lk 1:35, therefore, is that the creative Power of God’s Holy Spirit is going to descend upon Mary, as the Glory of the Lord had once descended upon the Tent of Witness and filled it with a Divine Presence (25).

A number of exegetes have commented on the parallels between the Infancy narrative in Luke and the Prologue of the Gospel of John. There is reason to believe that John refers both to the Virgin Birth and to the Ark symbolism:

- John 1:13: “Not born of blood or of the desire of the flesh or of the desire of God.”
- Luke 1:34: “I do not know man.” John 1:13: “But of God.”
- Luke 1:35: “The power of the Most High will cover you
- John 1:14: “And the Word was made flesh and pitched his tent among us.”
- Luke 1:35-46 and 2 Samuel 6 on the theme of the Ark of the Covenant.

In this passage from John there is an allusion to “the tent or tabernacle where God resided since the making of the Covenant (Exodus 40:34-35; cf. 25:8; 26, etc.).”

This symbolism and its relationship to Mary continues in the Book of Revelation. John explicitly brings out this nuance in Revelation 21:3 ‘Behold the tent of God with men; he will tent with them.’ It will be noted that in this text (and apparently in Revelation 11:19 and 12:1, two closely linked verses) the ‘tent’ is also a ‘woman’: ‘I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband, and then

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I heard a loud voice call out from the throne, ‘Behold the tent of God with men ... 1 (21:2-3). ‘Then the sanctuary of God in heaven opened, and the Ark of the Covenant could be seen inside it ... Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, adorned with the sun ... She was pregnant.’ (11:19-12:1). When the book of Revelation was written there were no chapter divisions and so there should be a continuous flow from 11:19 to 12:1: the revelation of the Ark of the Covenant in God’s temple in Heaven is followed immediately by the vision of the woman clothed by the sun because the Ark is identified with her who is none other than Mary.

The identification of the Ark of the Covenant with Mary, so clear to Jewish readers of Luke and John, was grasped by the early Christian community as confirmed by references in ancient liturgies, litanies, hymns such as the Akathistos and the writings of the Fathers (for instance Athanasius). Thus the affirmation of Mary as the Ark of the Covenant directly derived from Scripture became a part of the Apostolic Faith. The Ark lies at the center ‘of the Old Covenant and its continuation into the New Covenant in the person of Mary is an invitation to awe-filled meditation on the Marian role in the mystery of salvation.



Chapter 3

Enigmatic Marian Passages

There are several enigmatic Marian Passages in the four gospels that are often misinterpreted by the non-Catholic Churches.

Matthew 1:24-25 (*Joseph “knew her not until then ..)*

Scripture’s statement that Joseph “knew [Mary] not until she brought forth her firstborn” would not necessarily mean they did “know” each other after she brought forth Jesus. *Until* is often used in Scripture as part of an idiomatic expression similar to our own usage in English. I may say to you, “Until we meet again, God bless you.” Does that necessarily mean after we meet again, God curse you? By no means. A phrase like this is used to emphasize what is being described before the *until* is fulfilled. It is not intended to say anything about the future beyond that point. Here are some biblical examples:

- 2 Samuel 6:23: And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to (*until*) the day of her death. (Does this mean she had children after she died?)

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- 1 Timothy 4:13: Until I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. (Does this mean Timothy should stop teaching after Paul comes?)
- 1 Corinthians 15:25: For he (Christ) must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. (Does this mean Christ's reign will end? By no means! Luke 1:33 says, "he will reign over the house of Jacob *forever* and of his kingdom there shall be no end.")

In recent years, some have argued that because Matthew 1:25 uses the Greek words *heos hou* for "until" whereas the texts I mentioned above from the New Testament use *heos* alone, there is a difference in meaning. The argument goes that *Heos hou* indicates the action of the first clause does not continue. Thus, Mary and Joseph "not having come together" would have ended after Jesus was born.

The problems with this theory begin with the fact that no available scholarship concurs with it. In fact, the evidence proves the contrary. *Heos hou* and *heos* are used interchangeably and have the same meaning. Acts 25:21 should suffice to clear up the matter: "But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, I commanded him to be held until (Gk. *heos hou*) I could send him to Caesar."

Does this text mean that Paul would not be held in custody after he was "sent" to Caesar? Not according to the biblical record. He would be held in custody while in transit (see Acts 27:1) and after he arrived in Rome for a time (see Acts 29:16). The action of the main clause did not cease with *heos hou*.

Now let's look at some reasons to believe in Mary's perpetual virginity. Among the many we could examine, we will briefly consider three:

1. In Luke 1:34, when Mary was told by the angel Gabriel that she was chosen to be the Mother of the Messiah, she asked the question, literally translated from the Greek, "How shall this be since I know not man?" This question makes no sense unless Mary had a vow of virginity. When we consider that Mary and

Joseph were already “espoused,” according to verse 27 of this same chapter, we understand Mary and Joseph already have what would be akin to a ratified marriage in the New Covenant. They were married. That would mean Joseph would have had the right to the marriage bed. Normally, after the espousal the husband would go off and prepare a home for his new bride and then come and receive her into his home where the union would be consummated. This is precisely why Joseph intended to “divorce her quietly” (Mt 1:19) when he later discovered she was pregnant. This background is significant because a newly married woman would not ask the question “How shall this be?” She would know - unless, of course, that woman had taken a vow of virginity. Mary believed the message, but wanted to know how this was going to be accomplished. This indicates she was not planning on the normal course of events for her future with Joseph.

2. In John 19:26, Jesus gave his Mother to the care of John even though by law the next eldest sibling would have the responsibility to care for her. It is unthinkable that Jesus would take his Mother away from his family in disobedience to the law. Some claim Jesus did this because his brothers and sisters were not there. They had left him. Thus, Jesus committed his Mother to John, who was faithful and present at the foot of the cross. This claim betrays a very low and unbiblical Christology. As John tells us, Jesus “knew all men” (cf. Jn 2:25). If James were his uterine brother, Jesus would have known he would be faithful along with his “brother” Jude. The fact is Jesus had no brothers and sisters, so he had the responsibility, on a human level, to take care of his Mother.
3. Mary is depicted as the spouse of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. In Luke 1:34, when Mary asks the angel how she will conceive a child, the angel responds: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.” This is nuptial language hearkening back to Ruth 3:8, where Ruth said

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to Boaz “spread your skirt over me” when she revealed to him his duty to marry her according to the law of Deuteronomy 25. When Mary became pregnant, Joseph would have been required to divorce her because she would then belong to another (see Dt 24:1-4; Jer 3:1). But when Joseph found out that “the other” was the Holy Spirit, the idea of his having conjugal relations with Mary was not a consideration.

4. An obvious question remains: Why did St. Joseph then “take [Mary] his wife” according to Matthew 1:24 if she belonged to the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is Mary’s spouse, but Joseph was her spouse and protector on this earth for at least two obvious reasons.
 - First, as Matthew points out in his genealogy in chapter 1, Joseph was in line to be a successor of David as King of Israel. Thus, if Jesus was to be the true “son of David” and king of Israel (see 2 Sm 7:14, Heb 1:5, Rv 19:16, 22:16), he needed to be the son of Joseph. As the only son of Joseph, even though adopted, he would have been in line for the throne.
 - Also, in a culture that did not take too kindly to espoused women getting pregnant by someone other than their spouse, Mary would have been in mortal danger. So Joseph became Mary’s earthly spouse and protector as well as the protector of the child Jesus.

Mark 3:20-35; Matthew 13:55-56

At first sight, one might think Jesus was rejecting His Mother, when He told the crowd that whoever does the will of His Father is brother, sister and mother to Him. Wilfrid Harrington (in: *Mark*, Glazier, Wilmington, 1979, p. 47) sadly errs when he says she did not believe in Him.

To grasp this, we need to notice that the passage has three parts: first, a group Mark calls the *hoi par’ autou* (= those about him, his relatives, more on this presently) think He is beside Himself for preaching so intently, not taking time to eat. They go out to get Him, apparently by force. Secondly, His enemies charge He casts out devils by the devil, and He says that is the unforgivable sin. Third,

His Mother and brothers come to a crowd where He is teaching. It is announced that she is there. He replies: Who is my mother...

We do not know for certain who are in the *hoi par' autou*. It could mean those about Him, or His relatives etc. The most anti-Marian exegete Harrington feels certain that that group is the same as the group in verses 31-35. He says: "For Mark [3:31-35] is a continuation of vv. 20-21... his own did not receive him." He even says that the passage "may be seen to distinguish those who stood outside the sphere of salvation, and those who are within it." That seems to mean she was "outside the sphere of salvation"! This is horrendous! Harrington is in gross error for several reasons. First, even if she was in the group of the *hoi par' autou* it would not follow that she did not believe in Him. Even an ordinary Mother is apt to stand up for her son when others turn on him. So she could have gone along to try to restrain the others. Secondly, Form and Redaction Criticism has shown us that a passage may be made up of several once independent units. That easily could be the case here, especially in view of the ill-fitting second unit. Third, and most important, St. Luke clearly pictures her as the first believer. We may not make one Evangelist contradict another!. And Vatican II taught, in LG 56 that at the annunciation she "totally dedicated herself to the work and person of her Son."

What really happened in the verses 31-35 is this. Jesus was teaching dramatically, and comparing two things, the dignity of being physically the Mother of God, and the privilege of hearing the word of God and keeping it. She was, of course, at the peak in both categories. Hence Vatican II said in LG 58: "In the course of His preaching, she received the words in which her Son, extolling the Kingdom beyond the reasons and bonds of flesh and blood, proclaimed blessed those who heard and kept the word of God, *as she was faithfully doing*. The situation is the same in the incident of Mt. 12. 48-50. In fact, it is probably the same occasion as that reported in Mark.

About the "brothers" of Jesus. Hebrew used the word *ah* for all sorts of relatives, since it had few words for precise names of

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relationships. Yes, Greek did have them, but in so many places in the NT we must look to the underlying Hebrew to understand. E. g. , in Rom 9. 13 Paul cites Mal 1:2-3: "I have loved Jacob and hated Esau." Hebrew and Aramaic lack degrees of comparison. So we would have said: love one more, and the other less. In 1 Cor 1:17 Paul says: "Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach." Yet Paul had just said he did baptize some. Again, the lack of degrees of comparison explains. In Rom 5:19 we meet the word "many" as receiving original sin. But all did. There is a Hebrew *rabbim*, which means: "the all who are many". Paul *always* uses Greek *polloi* (when used as a noun) to mean what *rabbim* expresses. Again, the word *yada* usually translated as *know* actually means both *know and love*.

Further, If Jesus had 4 brothers and at least two sisters (cf Mt 13. 55 and Mk. 6. 3) it would be much out of place to ask John, at the time of his death, to take care of her. James the "brother of the Lord" was alive in 49 AD (Gal 1:19). He should have cared for her. Also in Mk 3:20-21, younger brothers in that culture would not have dared to go after an older brother - He was firstborn. And in the Temple at age 12, if there were younger brothers, Mary would have stayed home - women not obliged to come. But only Jesus is mentioned.

Also a Rabbinic tradition, starting with Philo, held that Moses, after his first encounter with God, never again had sex with his wife. (Cf. J. P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew* (Doubleday, 1991, pp. 240-41) who admits this even though he works so strenuously to prove that Jesus had 4 true brothers and at least two sisters, never seeing the implication for Our Lady!). What of Our Lady, who had borne the God-man in her womb for 9 months! As for Joseph, knowing that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, would he dare to intrude?

As to the word *until* and *first born* in Mt 1:25: The word *until* often indicates no change after the point mentioned, e.g., Mt 22:42-46; Dt 34:6; 2 Samuel 6:23. As to *first born* it designates a special status in the Hebrew family, need not mean any other sons after that. A Greek tomb inscription at Tel el Yaoudieh (cf. *Biblica* 11,

1930, 369-90 for a woman who died in childbirth: “In the pain of delivering my firstborn child, destiny brought me to the end of life.” So at least, no one can prove the “brothers” were blood brothers.

Brothers of Jesus (Mk 6:1-6)

In Mark, a crowd asks of Jesus, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are his sisters here with us?” (6:3). In Luke, when Jesus is told by a crowd gathered to hear him speak, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you,” Jesus famously rejects them: “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it” (8:19-21). And John writes that after Jesus performed his first miracles in Cana, “he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days” (2:12).

The evidence may seem clear, but scripture scholars and theologians have been debating these and other passages for nearly two millennia, arguing whether those brothers and sisters were in fact biological siblings, step-siblings, “half” siblings, or not even siblings at all, but cousins.

The first recorded argument was between St. Jerome and another fourth-century theologian, Helvidius, who had written that after the virgin birth of Jesus, Mary had other children with her husband, Joseph. St. Jerome disagreed, indicating that by the fourth century at least some of the church community believed that Mary had stayed a virgin for the rest of her life. These children of Mary, Jerome said, were from Mary of Clopas, Jesus’ aunt and his mother’s sister, making them cousins. He claimed that the Greek word *adelphios* could refer to cousins, not just biological siblings.

Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis and a contemporary of Jerome and Helvidius, threw another possibility into the hat. He argued that the siblings weren’t cousins, but Joseph’s children from a previous marriage, making them the step-siblings of Jesus. Joseph isn’t mentioned outside of the birth of Jesus, causing some to believe that he was much older than Mary and died before Jesus’ public ministry.

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It is conjecture, but some apocryphal works, such as the Protoevangelium of James, the Gospel of Peter, and the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, all seem to indicate a tradition of belief that Jesus' brothers and sisters were the children of Joseph.

These three general arguments continue to be defended and disputed by scholars today, whose positions depend mostly on their particular traditions and how they interpret early church theology. The New Testament writers didn't leave a clear picture of what first-century Christians thought about Mary's virginity after the birth of Jesus, if they left any details at all. All we can say for sure is that Jesus' family tree looks just as complicated as those of many modern families.

Why do Catholics teach that Mary was a virgin throughout her life when the Bible clearly says that Jesus had brothers? The following are the four reasons:

1. *The Meaning of Brother*: The first thing to understand is that the term *brother* (Gk. *adelphos*) has a broader meaning than uterine brothers. It can mean a biological brother, but it can also mean an extended relative, or even a spiritual brother. Take Genesis 13:8 for example. Here the word *brother* is being used to describe the relationship between Abraham and Lot, who were not biological brothers but uncle and nephew: “*So Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers”* (Gen 13:8, NIV; see also 14:12). Because of the Bible's broad semantic range of “brother,” we can rest assured that although St. Paul writes, “[Jesus] appeared to more than five hundred...brothers at the same time” (1 Cor. 15:6), we need not infer from this verse that Mary gave birth to more than 500 children!
2. *Children of Mary?*: These “brothers” are never once called the children of Mary, although Jesus himself is (John 2:1; Acts 1:14).
3. *Other Women Named Mary*: James and Joseph (also called Joses), who are called Jesus' “brothers” (Mark 6:3) are indeed

the children of Mary - Just not Mary, the mother of Jesus. After St. Matthew's account of the crucifixion and death of Jesus, he writes: "There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him; among who were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee." (Matt. 27:56; see also Mark 15:40).

4. *Consensus of the Early Church*: The earliest explanation of the "brothers" of the Lord is found in a document known as the *Protoevangelium of James*, which was written around A.D. 150. It speaks of Mary as a consecrated virgin since her youth, and of St. Joseph as an elderly widower with children who was chosen to be Mary's spouse for the purposes of guarding and protecting her while respecting her vow of virginity. Though this document is not on the level of Sacred Scripture, it was written very early, and it may contain accurate historical traditions. The following three quotes from the early Church clear this fact:
 - Athanasius of Alexandria: "Therefore let those who deny that the Son is from the Father by nature and proper to his essence deny also that he took true human flesh of Mary Ever-Virgin [*Four Discourses Against the Arians* 2:70 (c. A.D. 360)].
 - St. Jerome: "You say that Mary did not continue a virgin: I claim still more that Joseph himself, on account of Mary was a virgin, so that from a virgin wedlock a virgin son was born [*Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary* 21 (A.D. 383)].
 - Pope St. Leo I: "The origin is different but the nature alike: not by intercourse with man but by the power of God was it brought about: for a Virgin conceived, a Virgin bore, and a Virgin she remained [*Sermons* 22:2 (A.D. 450)].

Thus the same Church today affirm: Jesus is Mary's only son, but her spiritual motherhood extends to all men whom indeed he came to save: "The Son whom she brought forth is he whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren, that is, the faithful in

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whose generation and formation she co-operates with a mother's love (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 501).

The exact nature of the relationship between the Saviour and his "brethren"

The texts cited at the beginning of this article show beyond a doubt that there existed a real and near kinship between Jesus and His "brethren". But as "brethren" (or "brother") is applied to step-brothers as well as to brothers by blood, and in Scriptural, and Semitic use generally, is often loosely extended to all near, or even distant, relatives (Genesis 13:8, 14:14-16; Leviticus 10:4; 1 Chronicles 15:5-10, 23:21-22), the word furnishes no certain indication of the exact nature of the relationship. Some ancient heretics, like Helvidius and the Antidicomarianites, maintained that the "brethren" of Jesus were His uterine brothers the sons of Joseph and Mary. This opinion has been revived in modern times, and is now adopted by most of the Protestant exegetes. On the orthodox side two views have long been current. The majority of the Greek Fathers and Greek writers, influenced, it seems, by the legendary tales of apocryphal gospels, considered the "brethren" of the Lord as sons of St. Joseph by a first marriage. The Latins, on the contrary, with few exceptions (St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, and St. Gregory of Tours among the Fathers), hold that they were the Lord's cousins. That they were not the sons of Joseph and Mary is proved by the following reasons, leaving out of consideration the great antiquity of the belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary. It is highly significant that throughout the New Testament Mary appears as the Mother of Jesus and of Jesus alone. This is the more remarkable as she is repeatedly mentioned in connexion with her supposed sons, and, in some cases at least, it would have been quite natural to call them her sons (cf. Matthew 12:46; Mark 3:31; Luke 8:19; Acts 1:14). Again, Mary's annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Luke 2:41) is quite incredible, except on the supposition that she bore no other children besides Jesus. Is it likely that she could have made the journey regularly, at a time when the

burden of child-bearing and the care of an increasing number of small children (she would be the mother of at least four other sons and of several daughters, cf Matthew 13:56) would be pressing heavily upon her? A further proof is the fact that at His death Jesus recommended His mother to St. John. Is not His solicitude for her in His dying hour a sign that she would be left with no one whose duty it would be to care for her? And why recommend her to an outsider if she had other sons? Since there was no estrangement between Him and His “brethren”, or between them and Mary, no plausible argument is confirmed by the words with which he recommends her: *ide ho uios sou*, with the article before *uios* (son); had there been others sons, *ide uios sou*, without the article, would have been the proper expression.

The decisive proof, however, is that the father and mother of at least two of these “brethren” are known to us. James and Joseph, or Joses, are, as we have seen, the sons of Alpheus, or Clopas, and of Mary, the sister of Mary the Mother of Jesus, and all agree that if these are not brothers of the Saviour, the others are not. This last argument disposes also of the theory that the “brethren” of the Lord were the sons of St. Joseph by a former marriage. They are then neither the brothers nor the step-brothers of the Lord. James, Joseph, and Jude are undoubtedly His cousins. If Simon is the same as the Symeon of Hegesippus, he also is a cousin, since this writer expressly states that he was the son of Clopas the uncle of the Lord, and the latter’s cousin. But whether they were cousins on their father’s or mother’s side, whether cousins by blood or merely by marriage, cannot be determined with certainty. Mary of Clopas is indeed called the “sister” of the Blessed Virgin (John 19:25), but it is uncertain whether “sister” here means a true sister or a sister-in-law. Hegesippus calls Clopas the brother of St. Joseph. This would favour the view that Mary of Clopas was only the sister-in-law of the Blessed Virgin, unless it be true, as stated in the manuscripts of the Peshitta version, that Joseph and Clopas married sisters. The relationship of the other “brethren” may have been more distant than that of the above named four.

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The chief objection against the Catholic position is taken from Matt 1:25: “He [Joseph] knew her not till she brought forth her firstborn son”; and from Luke 2:7: “And she brought forth her firstborn son”. Hence, it is argued, Mary must have born other children. “Firstborn” (prototokos), however, does not necessarily connote that other children were born afterwards. This is evident from Luke 2:23, and Ex 13:2-12 (cf. Greek text) to which Luke refers. “Opening the womb” is there given as the equivalent of “firstborn” (prototokos). An only child was thus no less “firstborn” than the first of many. Neither do the words “he knew her not till she brought forth” imply, as St. Jerome proves conclusively against Helvidius from parallel examples, that he knew her afterwards. The meaning of both expressions becomes clear, if they are considered in connexion with the virginal birth related by the two Evangelists.

Why did Jesus call his mother “Woman”? (Jn 2 :1-12; 19:25-27)

According to customs of the time, a first-century Jewish wedding would not have been a private family celebration, but a public event recognizing the union of the bride and groom as well as the joining of the two families. The celebration typically took place in the groom’s own home, which was made open to guests for several days and thus open to public scrutiny.

It was the responsibility of the groom’s family to ensure there was enough food and drink for all the guests. To fulfill this public social role, most families needed to draw not only on their own family resources, but also on the help of colleagues from their social group. How well the feast went communicated to guests the family’s social status and honor. To run out of wine at a wedding feast, therefore, would have inflicted grave humiliation on the groom’s family, signaling that they were unable to fulfill their role adequately and that they lacked the social connections to preserve their honor.

This social context sheds much light on the crisis facing the bride and groom at the wedding feast of Cana. But it also gives us insight into Mary’s role in this scene. Mary is the first to notice the impending

disaster. She alone is aware of what is about to unfold, and she brings this crisis to the one person who can solve the problem: Jesus.

Mary's Mediation

The Catholic tradition has pointed out how this scene expresses Mary's compassion and attentiveness to others' needs. *Lumen Gentium* describes Mary at Cana being "moved with pity." Pope John Paul II said Mary was "prompted by her merciful heart" to help this family by bringing her concern for them to Jesus: "Having sensed the eventual disappointment of the newly married couple and guests because of the lack of wine, the Blessed Virgin compassionately suggested to Jesus that he intervene with his messianic power."

This scene also serves as a pattern for Marian intercession. Just as Mary at Cana noticed the family's needs before anyone else did, so Mary in heaven continues to notice our needs before we do. And just as Mary at Cana brought those needs to Christ, so does she continue to bring our needs to her Son through her intercession for us. In *Redemptoris Mater*, John Paul II wrote that this scene at Cana exemplifies "Mary's solicitude for human beings, her coming to them in the wide variety of their wants and needs." He continues: At Cana in Galilee there is shown only one concrete aspect of human need, apparently a small one of little importance ("They have no wine"). But it has a symbolic value: this coming to the aid of human needs means, at the same time, bringing those needs within the radius of Christ's messianic mission and salvific power. ... Mary places herself between her Son and mankind in the reality of their wants, needs and sufferings.

No Wine, but Much Faith: Mary's statement to Jesus - "They have no wine" (Jn. 2:3) - also reveals her great faith. Jesus is simply a guest at the wedding. He is not responsible for the festivities, and He does not have any wine at His disposal. From a human perspective, therefore, Jesus is not the person one would turn to for help. A more natural choice would be the steward in charge of the feast, the servants, or the bride and groom's family.

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Nevertheless, Mary's instinct is to turn to Jesus with this predicament. In this moment of crisis, Mary seeks out Jesus and says to Him, "They have no wine." This indicates that she believes Jesus can do something about the catastrophe at hand. And since Jesus is not in charge of the feast and does not have a large quantity of wine with Him, Mary seems to be asking for more than natural help. She hopes Jesus will perform some kind of extraordinary work to solve the problem. What makes Mary's faith in Jesus even more striking is the fact that up to this point in the Gospel story, Jesus has yet to perform any public miracles. Though Mary has not witnessed Jesus do miraculous works before, she still has faith in His supernatural power and believes He can help. In this way, Mary anticipates the great faith Jesus spoke of to Doubting Thomas: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (Jn. 20:29). As one commentator expressed, "Our Lord's words to Thomas apply exactly to Mary's attitude at the wedding feast of Cana; she had never seen a miracle, but she believed." And as John Paul II pointed out, Mary here also anticipates the faith of the disciples who will come to believe in Jesus only *after* they have witnessed the miracle of water being changed into wine (Jn. 2:11). Mary, on the other hand, believed in Jesus' supernatural power *before* she ever saw it manifested.

Calling Mother "Woman": Next, we come to one of the most perplexing verses regarding Mary in the Bible. After Mary tells Jesus, "They have no wine," Jesus responds, saying, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come" (Jn. 2:4). At first glance, these words seem harsh - as if Jesus is pushing His mother away. Imagine a mother calling her 14-year-old son to the dinner table for supper, and the son responding by saying, "Woman, what do you have to do with me? My hour has not yet come!" To our modern ears, these words sound more like those of a rebellious teenager than of the holy Son of God! However, if we consider this verse in light of ancient Jewish culture and in the wider context of the story of the wedding feast at Cana, it becomes abundantly clear that these words reflect no opposition between Jesus and Mary, but rather something positive, indeed something beautiful, about their relationship.

Pushing Mary Away?: First, in John's Gospel, Jesus uses the title "woman" to politely address other women with whom he has a positive relationship. This is seen, for example, when Jesus tenderly appears to Mary Magdalene on Easter Sunday (Jn. 20:15), when He forgives the sins of the woman who committed adultery (Jn. 8:10), and when He draws the Samaritan woman to faith in the Messiah (Jn. 4:21). Given the positive way this address appears in John's Gospel, Jesus calling Mary "woman" would not indicate a rebuke or lack of affection.

Second, in Biblical times a man might address a female as "woman," but nowhere else in the ancient Greco - Roman world or in ancient Israel do we have a known example of a son addressing his mother with this title. Jesus addressing His own mother as "woman" would be unique in all of antiquity. This suggests that Jesus has some particular purpose in calling His mother "woman" - a purpose that goes beyond the normal, congenial way He addresses other women. When applied to Mary, this title likely has some important, symbolic purpose (which will be considered below).

Third, consider how Mary herself interprets Jesus' words: Does she walk away from the scene feeling sad, hurt, or rejected in any way? Just the opposite: She hears Jesus' words and immediately says to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn. 2:5). Mary interprets Christ's response so positively that she confidently believes Jesus is going to fulfill her request, and she tells the servants to be ready to do whatever her Son commands.

Finally, Jesus' own actions indicate that He looks with favor on Mary's petition. And He supplies much more wine than Mary or anyone at the feast would have imagined. The six stone jars used for ritual purification (Jn. 2:6) each would have held 15 - 24 gallons of water. Thus, when Jesus has those jars filled and changes all that water into wine, He ends up providing some 120 gallons' worth for the wedding party. Now, if that tremendous overabundance is meant to be a *rejection* of Mary's request, it is hard to imagine what *fulfillment* would look like! Far from denying Mary's petition, Jesus provides in a way that exceeds all expectations.

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A New Creation Week: Therefore, whatever Jesus' words "woman, what have you to do with me ... " may mean, they do not imply a negative relationship between Jesus and Mary. Now let us consider the positive significance that the title "woman" has for Mary in light of the opening two chapters in John's Gospel. The Gospel of John starts with the words "In the beginning....," which harken back to Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In the next four verses, John goes on to write of light, life, creation, and light shining in darkness - once again, images taken right out of the creation story (Jn. 1:2 - 5). By drawing on these themes from Genesis, John introduces the story of Jesus against the backdrop of the story of creation, highlighting how Jesus comes to bring about a renewal of all creation.

Some scholars have noted how John's Gospel continues this creation theme by setting up a series of days that establishes a new creation week. The sequence begins in 1:1 with the phrase "In the beginning." John then demarcates a second day in 1:29 with the words "The next day ... " He then uses the same phrase to note a third day in 1:35 and a fourth day in 1:43. Finally, after the succession of these first four days, the story of the Wedding at Cana is introduced as taking place three days after the fourth day: "On the third day there was a marriage at Cana ... " (2:1). The third day after the fourth day would represent the seventh day in the Gospel of John. Consequently, the wedding at Cana comes at the climax of the new creation week, the seventh day.

The New Eve: Now we are ready to understand the profound meaning of Jesus calling His mother "woman" at the wedding feast of Cana. Highlighting how this scene takes place on the seventh day of the new creation week, John's Gospel leads us to view Jesus and Mary in light of the creation story. And in this context, Jesus calls Mary "woman." With the Genesis themes in the background, this title would bring to mind the "woman" of Genesis, Eve (Gen. 2:23; 3:20). This woman of Genesis played an important part in the first prophecy given to humanity. After the fall, God confronted the serpent

and announced his eventual defeat, saying: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise his heel.” (Gen. 3:15)

Given at the dawn of creation, these words, known as the *Protoevangelium* (“First Gospel”), foretell how the woman one day will have a seed, a son, who will crush the head of the serpent (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 410). Centuries later, at the wedding feast of Cana, this prophecy begins to be fulfilled. By calling Mary “woman” with the creation story in the background, Jesus in the narrative of John’s Gospel is not merely addressing her politely as He does Mary Magdalene or the Samaritan woman. Rather, He is identifying Mary as the woman of Genesis 3:15. Far from rebuking His mother or distancing Himself from her, Jesus, in calling Mary “woman,” honors her in a way no woman had ever been honored before. She is the New Eve, the woman whose long-awaited Son will defeat the devil and fulfill the prophecy of Genesis.



Chapter 4

Marian Doctrines and Titles

The primary focus of the Church, then as now, is Jesus. After the age of the apostles and the writing of the New Testament, the Church continued to explore its understanding of Jesus. The question of the identity of Jesus was at the heart of controversies within the Church well into the fifth century. The great councils of Nicaea 325, Constantinople 381, Ephesus 431, and Chalcedon 451 all concerned themselves with the identity of Jesus. Finally, at Chalcedon in 451 it was defined that Jesus was one person, the second person of the Trinity, with two natures, fully human and fully divine.

As a result of the theological process that led up to this affirmation, a deeper understanding of Mary also began to develop. Thus it was that the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus 431, who gathered to condemn Nestorius' view that there were two persons in Jesus, were also able to declare Mary as theotokos, (bearer of God), because in Jesus there is only one divine

Person. And so, in the fifth century, we do not find a developed mariology, but we see the beginnings of attempts to consider the person of Mary in her own right. The two doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption are not treated in Scripture, but are later theological developments.

The following section will trace the importance as well as the implications of the Marian doctrines.

Mother of God

The Council of Ephesus (431) attributed to Mary the title, Mother of God. This needs to be read against the Council's declaration that in Christ there are two natures, one divine and one human, but only one person. Indeed, according to the Council the holy virgin is the Mother of God since she begot according to the flesh the Word of God made flesh. This decision was further explained by the Council of Chalcedon (451) which says with regard to Mary's divine motherhood:

“...begotten from the Father before the ages as regards his godhead, and in the last days, the same, because of us and because of our salvation begotten from the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, as regards his manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten...”

Mary's most fundamental privilege is that of being the Mother of God. We do not mean she produced the divine nature, of course. But her Son is God, so she is the Mother of God. Similarly, Mrs. Jones shares only in the production of the body of her son John, not at all in the making of his soul. Yet we do not say she is mother of the body of John Jones, but of John Jones, the person. Pius XI quoted St. Thomas Aquinas with approval in saying that “From the fact that she is the Mother of God, she has a sort of infinite dignity from the infinite good that God is. (*Lux veritatis*, Dec. 25, 1931, citing St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae* I. 25. 6. ad 4).

Mary conceived her son by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). The Archangel first told her that her Son was to be the

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Son of the Most High. However, any devout Jew could be called a son of God. But there was more: the angel told her He would reign over the house of Jacob forever: right then she would know He was to be the Messiah, for Jews then commonly believed the Messiah would reign forever. Finally, the angel said He would be conceived when the Holy Spirit would “overshadow” her. That word, she would know, was the one use to describe the Divine Presence filling the ancient Tabernacle in the desert (Exodus 40:35). Her Son was to be called Son of God “for this reason”. So that He was the Son of God in a unique sense. From this alone she likely knew of His divinity, especially when she would add the words of Isaiah 9:5-6 that the Messiah would be “God the Mighty.” Even though the Jews found that text hard, she, full of grace, would readily grasp it.

Ever Virgin

The expression perpetual virginity, ever-virgin, or simply “Mary the Virgin” refers primarily to the conception and birth of Jesus. From the first formulations of faith, especially in baptismal formulas or professions of faith, the Church professed that Jesus Christ was conceived without human seed by the power of the Holy Spirit only. Here lies the decisive meaning of expressions such as “conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary,” “Mary’s virginal conception,” or “virgin birth.” The early baptismal formula (since the 3rd century) state Mary’s virginity without further explaining it, but there is no doubt about its physical meaning. Later statements are more explicit. Mary conceived “without any detriment to her virginity, which remained inviolate even after his birth” (Council of the Lateran, 649).

Although never explicated in detail, the Catholic Church holds as dogma that Mary was and is Virgin before, in and after Christ’s birth. It stresses thus the radical novelty of the Incarnation and Mary’s no less radical and exclusive dedication to her mission as mother of her Son, Jesus Christ. Vatican II reiterated the teaching about Mary, the Ever-Virgin, by stating that Christ’s birth did not diminish Mary’s virginal integrity but sanctified it. The Catechism of the Catholic Church ponders the deeper meaning of the virgin bride and perpetual

virginity (499-507). It also maintains that Jesus Christ was Mary's only child. The so-called "brothers and sisters" are close relations.

Virginal conception means Jesus was born without the intervention of a man. Both Matthew and Luke make this clear. If we believe the Gospels, we will understand that readily. The teaching of the Church, already in the oldest creeds, which call her "ever-virgin," tells us she remained a virgin during and after His birth. Some have tried to say the teaching on her virginity was not physical, but just a way of expressing her holiness. But it is more than that: Vatican II (Lumen Gentium #57) wrote that His birth "did not diminish, but consecrated her virginal integrity." That word "integrity" refers to physical condition.

Therefore when the Gospels speak of the "brothers and sisters" of Jesus, they do not mean other children of Mary. The Hebrew words were very broad, could cover any sort of relationship. For that matter, modern English uses these words even more broadly for members of fraternities and sororities.

Immaculate Conception

The solemn definition of Mary's Immaculate Conception is like Divine Motherhood and Perpetual Virginity part of the christological doctrine, but it was proclaimed as an independent dogma by Pope Pius IX in his Apostolic Constitution "Ineffabilis Deus" (December 8, 1854). Though highlighting a privilege of Mary it in fact stresses the dignity and holiness required to become "Mother of God." The privilege of the Immaculate Conception is the source and basis for Mary's all-holiness as Mother of God.

More specifically, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception states "that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege from Almighty God and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, was kept free of every stain of original sin."

This dogma has both a "negative" and a "positive" meaning which complement each other. The "negative" meaning stresses Mary's

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freedom from original sin thanks to the anticipated or retroactive (here called preventive) grace of Christ's redemptive act. By the same token, the dogma suggests Mary's all-holiness. This "positive" meaning is the consequence of the absence of original sin. Mary's life is permanently and intimately related to God, and thus she is the all-holy.

Although difficult to explain, original sin provokes disorderliness in thought and behavior, especially with regard to the primacy of God's presence in our life. Consequently, in declaring Mary immaculately conceived, the Church sees in Mary one who never denied God the least sign of love. Thus, the dogma declares that from her beginning Mary was exceptionally holy and in constant union with the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.

The angel's greeting to Mary is traditionally translated "Hail, full of grace," but this has been disputed in modern times. Vatican II, Pope John Paul II and others understand the Greek of Luke 1:28, *kecharitomene*, to mean "full of grace". The word is a perfect participle, a very strong form. The root verb, *charitoo*, means to put someone into the state of grace/favor. And especially, the word is used instead of her name, in direct address. Pius IX, in defining the Immaculate Conception, said that even at the start, her holiness was so great that "none greater under God can be thought of, and no one but God can comprehend it"!

Other Beliefs Regarding the Salvific Role of Mary

1. Co-Redemptrix

The title, "Co-redemptrix," refers to Mary's unique participation with and under her Divine Son Jesus Christ, in the historic Redemption of humanity. The prefix, "Co," comes from the Latin "cum," which means "with." The title of *Co-redemptrix* applied to the Mother of Jesus *never places Mary on a level of equality with Jesus Christ, the divine Lord of all, in the saving process of humanity's Redemption*. Rather, it denotes Mary's singular and unique *sharing with her Son* in the saving work of Redemption for the human family.

The Mother of Jesus *participates* in the redemptive work of her *Savior Son, who alone could reconcile humanity with the Father in his glorious divinity and humanity.*

Mary's entire existence has been one of cooperation with the Lord. So it was on Calvary. She who was preserved by God from Original Sin at the moment of her conception and heard from the mouth of Simeon that "you yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed"[3] accepted the salvific death of her Son not with a "hands-off" approach but instead by embracing it. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962–65), in its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, painted this picture of Our Blessed Lady's collaboration with the Almighty, which included her heroic surrender to Christ's ignominious death:

After this manner the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and *lovingly consenting* to the immolation of this victim which was born of her.[4]

Deacon Miravalle spells out precisely what Mary did alongside her dying Son.

Mary uniquely participated in the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary and in the *acquisition* of the graces of Redemption for humanity (theologically referred to as "objective redemption"). Mary offered her Son and her maternal rights in relation to her Son to the Heavenly Father in perfect obedience to God's will and in atonement for the sins of the world. Mary's offering of her own Son on Calvary, along with her own motherly compassion, rights and suffering, offered in union with her Son for the salvation of the human family, merited more graces than any other created person. As Pope Pius XII confirmed in his encyclical *On the Mystical Body*, Mary "offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father, together with the holocaust of her maternal rights and her motherly love, like a New Eve for all children of Adam." [5]

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Despite her enormous grief as she watched her Son die, Our Lady generously “yielded” Jesus to the purpose the Father through the Holy Spirit intended, namely the reconciliation of the human race to its Creator. Although what Mary did on Calvary was *secondary* and *subordinate* to what Christ did, it was, nevertheless, *necessary* because God made it so. In His unparalleled wisdom, the Lord required this all-encompassing - and real - sacrifice from Mary, who said her *fiat* with incredible trust in God as she had at the Annunciation.

2. Mediatrix of All Graces

The term *Mediatrix* is used to “refer either to the general category of Mary’s Maternal Mediation with Christ the one Mediator... or to her specific role in the distribution of the graces acquired by Jesus, the New Adam, and secondarily by Mary, the New Eve, at Calvary.”[6] For our purposes, we will employ the latter meaning. The late Marianist Fr. Emil Neubert, S.T.D., presented a useful discussion of Jesus as Mediator and then Mary as Mediatrix. But first, he addressed the significance of “mediator.” A mediator is one who places himself between two persons in order to unite them, either because there is a reconciliation to be achieved or a favor to be obtained. To fulfill his role, the mediator must be acceptable to both parties that are to be united; the closer he is to them, the easier it will be for him to mediate.

In the supernatural order, the two persons to be brought together are God and man who have become separated by sin. Then what about Jesus as the Mediator - in fact, the *only* Mediator - between God and man? Jesus as man is the perfect mediator between God and man, being hypostatically united to God and constituted by Him the spiritual head of the human race.

Jesus alone is a perfect mediator because He alone was able to merit in all justice our reconciliation with God and the graces which the appeased God was going to give to us. There is only one God, proclaims St. Paul, and only one Mediator between God and man,

Christ Jesus become man, who gave Himself as a ransom for all. No other foundation can be laid than the one which has been given, Jesus Christ.

Having set the stage, Fr. Neubert plunged into the matter of Mary as Mediatrix. This foundation established, the faithful attribute a certain function of mediation to Mary, at the side of Jesus. Mother of God and Mother of men, it seems clear that she too is to serve as a bond between Him and them. But her mediation, far from diminishing that of Christ, results from it and seems to complete it: it is carried out under Christ and in union with Christ from whom it receives all its efficacy.

Mary uniquely participated in the *acquisition* of the graces of Redemption by Jesus Christ (objective redemption) and, therefore, the Mother of Jesus, above all creatures, fittingly participates in the *distribution* of these graces of Redemption to the human family (theologically called “subjective redemption”). By distributing sanctifying grace, Mary is able to fulfill her role as Spiritual Mother, since she spiritually nourishes the faithful of Christ’s body in the order of grace. Mary’s God-given ability to distribute the graces of Redemption by her intercession is an essential element and full flowering of her role as Spiritual Mother. For true motherhood goes beyond the birthing of children to include their nourishing, growth, and proper formation.

Clearly, Mary’s cooperation in Jesus’ redeeming Death (co-redemption) opened her to continuing service to the Mystical Body of Christ as the *distributrix* of sanctifying grace (mediatrix). As the Mother of the disciple whom Jesus loved, and by extension, *our* Mother, Our Blessed Mother had on Calvary and still has in Paradise overflowing concern for her sons and daughters, caring for all her children and especially those who approach her. We shall see below that God was not finished with the Maiden of Nazareth but instead bestowed upon her another kind of maternal office (*munus maternum*), namely *Advocate*, that redounds to His glory and our temporal good and everlasting benefit.

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3. Advocate

In his *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary*,^[14] the late Holy Ghost Fr. Michael O'Carroll, S.T.D., wrote about Our Blessed Lady as Advocate: From medieval times the word *Advocata* signifies Mary's special power of intercession. It is first found in the Latin (largely the only) version of the *Adversus Haereses* by St. Irenaeus "that the Virgin Mary should become the advocate of the virgin Eve." ...

Advocata applied to Mary is certainly found in the twelfth century. It is in the *Salve Regina*, and was taken up by St. Bernard: "You wish to have an advocate (*advocatum*) with him [Christ]," he asks in the *De Aqueductu* and answers, "Have recourse to Mary." In the second sermon for Advent he exclaims: "Our Lady, Our Mediatrix, our Advocate (*Advocata*), reconcile us to your Son, commend us to your Son, represent us before your Son." While there is a long-standing tradition of using "Advocate" to refer to the Mother of God, this rich term has also been used to describe Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.^[16]

Calling the doctrine of Advocate the "third aspect of Our Lady's spiritual motherhood and her mediation at the service of God and man,"^[17] Deacon Miravalle, echoing Fr. O'Carroll's citation of St. Irenaeus, weighs in on the meaning of this title:

The term, "advocate," is derived from the Latin term, "*advocare*," which means to "speak on behalf of another." This is precisely Mary's motherly role as Advocate, to speak as our principal and most powerful intercessor to her divine Son on behalf of the human race. The title of Advocate for the Mother of God is one of her most ancient titles, dating back to the second century with St. Irenaeus, who called Mary the "Advocate" for Eve, the first Mother of the living. The Catholic Faithful have long been used to invoking Mary's celestial intercession. In fact, one of the first lessons learned by Catholic children is that they can always count on the help of their Spiritual Mother in Heaven. Our Blessed Lady's intercession is strong and sure; we daily avail ourselves of it with confidence.

4. Spiritual Motherhood

On the floor of the Council, Pope Paul VI declared Mary Mother of the Church. This was not entirely new. Pius XII, in a message to the Marian Congress of Ottawa, Canada, on July 19, 1947 said: “When the little maid of Nazareth uttered her fiat to the message of the angel... she became not only the Mother of God in the physical order of nature, but also in the supernatural order of grace, she became the Mother of all, who... would be made one under the Headship of her Son. The Mother of the Head would be the Mother of the members.”



Chapter 5

Mary in the Early Church

As in Scripture, so too in the infant Church we see the attention of the faithful rightfully focused first and foremost on Jesus Christ. The divine primacy of Jesus Christ (with its appropriate worship of adoration) had to be clearly established before any subordinate corresponding devotion to his Mother could be properly exercised. Nonetheless, the beginnings of acknowledgement and devotion to the Mother of Jesus is present from apostolic times in the living Tradition of the early Church.

The first historic indications of the existing veneration of Mary carried on from the Apostolic Church is manifested in the Roman catacombs. As early as the end of the first century to the first half of the second century, Mary is depicted in frescos in the Roman catacombs both with and without her divine Son. Mary is depicted as a model of virginity with her Son; at the Annunciation; at the adoration of the Magi; and as the orans, the “praying one,” the woman of prayer.¹

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A very significant fresco found in the catacombs of St. Agnes depicts Mary situated between St. Peter and St. Paul with her arms outstretched to both. This fresco reflects, in the language of Christian frescoes, the earliest symbol of Mary as “Mother of the Church.” Whenever St. Peter and St. Paul are shown together, it is symbolic of the one Church of Christ, a Church of authority and evangelization, a Church for both Jew and Gentile. Mary’s prominent position between Sts. Peter and Paul illustrates the recognition by the Apostolic Church of the maternal centrality of the Savior’s Mother in his young Church.

It is also clear from the number of representations of the Blessed Virgin and their locations in the catacombs that the Mother of Jesus was also recognized for her maternal intercession of protection and defense. Her image was present on tombs, as well as on the large central vaults of the catacombs. Clearly, the early Christians dwelling in the catacombs prayed to Mary as intercessor to her Son for special protection and for motherly assistance. As early as the first century to the first half of the second century, Mary’s role as Spiritual Mother was recognized and her protective intercession was invoked.²

The early Church Fathers, (also by the middle of the second century), articulated the primary theological role of the Blessed Virgin as the “New Eve.” What was the basic understanding of Mary as the “New Eve” in the early Church? Eve, the original “mother of the living,” had played an instrumental, though secondary role, in the sin of Adam which resulted in the tragic fall of humanity from God’s grace. However, Mary, as the new Mother of the living, played an instrumental, though secondary, role to Jesus, the New Adam, in redeeming and restoring the life of grace to the human family.

Let us examine a few citations from the early Church Fathers that manifest this growing understanding of Mary’s spiritual and maternal role as the “New Eve,” who as the “new Mother of the living,” participates with Christ in restoring grace to the human family.

- ❖ St. Justin Martyr (d. 165), the early Church’s first great apologist, describes Mary as the “obedient virgin” through whom humanity

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receives its Savior, in contrast to Eve, the “disobedient virgin,” who brings death and disobedience to the human race: “(The Son of God) became man through the Virgin that the disobedience caused by the serpent might be destroyed in the same way in which it had originated. For Eve, while a virgin incorrupt, conceived the word which proceeded from the serpent, and brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary was filled with faith and joy when the Angel Gabriel told her the glad tidings... And through her was he born...”³

- ❖ St. Irenaeus of Lyon (d.202), great defender of Christian orthodoxy and arguably the first true Mariologist, establishes Mary as the New Eve who participates with Jesus Christ in the work of salvation, becoming through her obedience the “cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race”: Just as Eve, wife of Adam, yet still a virgin, became by her disobedience the cause of death for herself and the whole human race, so Mary, too, espoused yet a Virgin, became by her obedience the cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race.... And so it was that the knot of Eve’s disobedience was loosed by Mary’s obedience. For what the virgin Eve bound fast by her refusal to believe, this the Virgin Mary unbound by her belief.⁴ The teaching of St. Irenaeus makes evident the Early Church’s faith and understanding that Mary freely and uniquely cooperates with and under Jesus, the New Adam, in the salvation of the human race. This early patristic understanding of Mary’s unique cooperation appropriately develops into the later and more specified theology of Marian Coredeemption.
- ❖ St. Ambrose (d.397) continues to develop the New Eve understanding, referring to Mary as the “Mother of Salvation”: It was through a man and woman that flesh was cast from Paradise; it was through a virgin that flesh was linked to God... Eve is called mother of the human race, but Mary Mother of salvation.⁵
- ❖ St. Jerome (d.420) neatly summarizes the entire patristic understanding of the New Eve in the pithy expression: “death through Eve, life through Mary.”⁶

The Second Vatican Council confirms this early understanding of Mary as the “New Eve” by the Church Fathers, as well as the Fathers’ certain testimony to her active and unique participation in man’s salvation: “Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man’s salvation through faith and obedience.... Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert with him (Irenaeus) in their preaching: “the knot of Eve’s disobedience was untied by Mary’s obedience: what the virgin Eve bound by her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith.” Comparing Mary with Eve, they call her “Mother of the living” and frequently claim: “death through Eve, life through Mary” (Lumen Gentium, No. 56).

Direct Prayers Addressed to Mary

The Christian witness of the first centuries of the Church also provides us with examples of direct prayer to Mary as a means of intercession to the graces and the protection of her Son.

- ❖ St. Irenaeus, Mary is an “Advocate,” or interceding helper, for Eve and for her salvation.⁷ St. Gregory Thaumaturgis (d.350) depicts Mary interceding for those on earth from her position in Heaven.⁸
- ❖ St. Ephraem (d.373), the great Eastern doctor and deacon, directly addresses the Blessed Virgin in several Marian sermons. Direct prayer to Mary is also found in a sermon of the great Eastern Father, St. Gregory Nazianzen (330-389).⁹ By the last part of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth, we have numerous explicit examples of direct prayer to the Mother of God, for example in the writings of St. Ambrose, as well as by St. Epiphanius.¹⁰
- ❖ As already referred to, the most complete ancient prayer to the Blessed Mother historically preserved is the Sub Tuum Praesidium (250 A.D.):

We fly to your patronage,
O holy Mother of God,

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despise not our petitions
in our necessities,
but deliver us from all dangers.
O ever glorious and blessed Virgin.

- ❖ Note that by the third century, our early Christian brothers and sisters already accepted Mary under the title of “Mother of God,” even though this title would not be solemnly defined for another two hundred years. Further, the early Church realized that direct prayer to Mary did not consist of forms of idolatry or adoration, as is sometimes mistakenly interpreted in our day, but rather as a spiritual communication of love and petition to the Mother of Jesus, who continues to care for the Mystical Body of her Son by her intercession.
- ❖ Moreover, the *Sub Tuum* prayer tells us that the early Christian community went to their motherly Advocate especially in times of trial and danger. The acknowledgement of Our Lady’s special intercession, especially for the Church in times of danger, continues to our present day.¹¹
- ❖ By the time of the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., where Mary is formally declared the “Mother of God,” we have cathedrals dedicated to her in the central ecclesial locations of Rome, Jerusalem and Constantinople. After the Council of Ephesus, the Church experiences an extraordinary flourishing of devotion to the Blessed Virgin both in the East and the West, the quantity and quality of which would exceed the most comprehensive study. Historians have compared the expansive spreading of Marian devotion in both Eastern and Western “lungs” of the Church to the post Anno Domini development of Western civilization itself. Marian prayers, Marian liturgical feast days, Marian icons, Marian paintings and Marian artwork became ubiquitous throughout the Christian world after the Council of Ephesus.

The Second Vatican Council attests to this tremendous flourishing of Marian devotion from the early Church onward: From the earliest times the Blessed Virgin is honored under the title of Mother of

God, whose protection the faithful take refuge together in prayer in all their perils and needs. Accordingly, following the Council of Ephesus, there was a remarkable growth in the cult of the People of God towards Mary, in veneration and love, in invocation and imitation, according to her own prophetic words: “all generations shall call me blessed, because he that is mighty hath done great things to me” (Lk 1:48) (Lumen Gentium, No. 66).

Historians have further testified to the vast influence of Marian devotion upon the overall development of Western civilization. The British historian, Kenneth Clark (not a Catholic) describes in his excellent work, *Civilization*, the dramatic effect of devotion to the Blessed Virgin on Western civilization. He describes Mary as: “the supreme protectress of civilization. She had taught a race of tough and ruthless barbarians the virtues of tenderness and compassion. The great cathedrals of the Middle Ages were her dwelling places upon earth. . . in the Renaissance, while remaining Queen of Heaven, she became also the human Mother in whom everyone could recognize qualities of warmth and love and approachability. . . The all-male religions (a reference to Israel, Islam and the Protestant North) have produced no religious imagery - in most cases have positively forbidden it. The great religious art of the world is deeply involved in the female principle.”¹²

Dignity of Women

Along with the impact of devotion to Mary on Western civilization, the fruitful effects of Marian devotion on the proper dignity of woman has also been historically verified. The noted historian, William Lecky (neither Catholic nor Christian but a self-professed rationalist), offered these comments about the influence of Mary on the West:

The world is governed by its ideals, and seldom or never has there been one which has exercised a more salutary influence than the medieval concept of the Virgin. For the first time woman was elevated to her rightful position, and the sanctity of weakness was recognized, as well as the sanctity of sorrow.

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No longer the slave or toy of man, no longer associated only with ideas of degradation and of sensuality, woman rose, in the person of the Virgin Mother, into a new sphere, and became the object of reverential homage, of which antiquity had no conception... A new type of character was called into being; a new kind of admiration was fostered. Into a harsh and ignorant and benighted age, this ideal type infused a conception of gentleness and purity, unknown to the proudest civilizations of the past.

In the pages of living tenderness, which many a monkish writer has left in honor of his celestial patron; in the millions who, in many lands and in many ages, have sought to mold their characters into her image; in those holy maidens who, for love of Mary, have separated themselves from all glories and pleasures of the world, to seek in fastings and vigils and humble charity to render themselves worthy of her benedictions; in the new sense of honor, in the chivalrous respect, in the softening of manners, in the refinement of tastes displayed in all walks of society; in these and in many other ways we detect the influence of the Virgin. All that was best in Europe clustered around it, and it is the origin of many of the purest elements of our civilization.¹³

As no other besides her Son, the Mother of Jesus and the rightful doctrine and devotion granted to her from Scripture and the early Church, and further developed throughout the ages, has borne fruit in a proper respect for person, a proper respect for the unique dignity of woman, and a new cultivation of all that is good in Western civilization. We conclude with the words of Dante from the classic *The Divine Comedy*, which typifies well the strength of devotion to the Blessed Virgin that has been evidenced throughout the history of the Church, based on the truth about her as revealed in the Bible and Apostolic Tradition: With living mortals you are a living spring of hope. Lady, you are so great and have such worth, that if anyone seeks out grace and flies not to thee, his longing is like flight without wings.¹⁴

Footnotes

1. Cf. John Murphy, "Origin and Nature of Marian Cult" in Juniper Carol, O.F.M., ed., *Mariology*, Vol. III, Milwaukee: Bruce, 1961, pp. 4-5.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 3ff.
3. St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, ch. 100, *Patrologia Graeca* (PG) Migne, 6, 709-712.
4. St. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, Bk. 3, pg. 32, I; PG 7, 958-959.
5. St. Ambrose, *Epist.* 63, No. 33, *Patrologia Latina* (PL) Migne, 16, 1249-1250; *Sermon* 45, No. 4; PL, 17, 716.
6. St. Jerome, *Epist.* 22, No. 21, PL 22, 408; cf. Walter Burghart, S.J. "Mary in Western Patristic Thought," in Carol, ed., *Mariology*, Vol. I, Bruce, 1955.
7. St. Irenaeus, in J. Barthulot, *Saint Irénée: Démonstration de la Prédication Apostolique*, traduite de l'Arménien et annotée, in R. Graffin and F. Nau, *Patrologia Orientalis* (PO), vol. 12, Paris, 1919, pp. 772 et seq.
8. Murphy, "Origin and Nature of Marian Cult," *Mariology*, Vol. III, p. 6.
9. PG 35, 1181; Murphy, "Origin and Nature of Marian Cult," *Mariology*, Vol. III, p. 6.
10. Cf. Ambrose, *De virginibus*, lib. 2, cap. 2; PL 16, 221ff; *De instit. virginis*, nn. 86-88; PL 16, 339-340; Epiphanius, *Adv. haer.*, 3, t. 2; PG42, 735, 742; Murphy, "Origin and Nature of Marian Cult," *Mariology*, Vol. III, p. 6.
11. Cf. John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation Christifidelis Laici*, December 30, 1988, end of closing prayer.
12. Kenneth Clark, *Civilization*, as quoted in Dan Lyons, *The Role of Mary Through the Centuries*, Washington, New Jersey, World Apostolate of Fatima.
13. Cf. Lyons, *The Role of Mary Through the Centuries*.
14. Dante, "Paradise" in *The Divine Comedy*, Canto 33.



Chapter 6

Mariological Heresies

There mainly six mariological heresies in the history of the Catholic Church: Ebionism, Helvidianism, Valentianism, Collyridianism, Nestorianism and Iconoclasm:

Ebionism

Ebionism teaches that Joseph is the natural father of Jesus and that Mary and Joseph conceived Jesus in the way that all parents conceive children. Ebionism was an early Jewish Christian movement that taught that Jesus was merely a mortal man with two human parents who reached the highest state of human sanctity and thereby received the honorific title of "son of God." Many liberal Protestant pastors and teachers now hold to this view.

Many Church Fathers derive the name "Ebionite" from a supposed founder named "Ebion," a Jewish Christian who was said to have lived at Pella, across the Jordan, after the destruction of Jerusalem. Modern scholars see the origin of the name in the Hebrew

word *ebyon*, meaning “poor.” This term originally was applied to Christians because they came from lower social groups and tended to be poor (Gal. 2:10, Acts 11:28-30, 24:17, Rom. 15:25-31, 1 Cor. 1:26-29, 16:1-2, 2 Cor. 8-9). Over time, the term “Ebionite” (Hebrew *Ebyonim*) came to be applied to Jewish Christians and later to heretical Jewish Christians. This last sense is the one with which we are concerned.

There were three groups of Jewish heretics in the early Church: A strict party, the Judaizers, claimed that all Christians must accept circumcision and keep the Mosaic Law in order to be saved. A milder party, sometimes called the Nazarenes, claimed that all Jewish Christians must be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law, even though Gentile Christians need not. A Gnostic Jewish group, sometimes called the Elkasaites, insisted on keeping the Mosaic Law and added pagan cosmic speculation and the worship of angels.

Development of the Heresy: Ebionism started as a broad movement rather than with a single leader. Even if Ebion of Pella was a real person, many beliefs of Ebionitism were common in early Jewish Christianity, especially the insistence on observing the Law of Moses. In Acts 10 it was revealed to Peter that the ceremonial precepts of the Jewish Law were no longer binding, especially those dealing with ritual purity and the separation of Jews and Gentiles. Up to this time Christians viewed themselves as a particular sect of Judaism and assumed one must be a Jew (a circumcised keeper of the Law of Moses) to be a Christian. The new revelation given to Peter showed this was not the case, though it did not convince all Jewish Christians living in Jerusalem. Those not convinced became heretics by failure to keep up with authentic revelation.

Some time later, a group of early Ebionites (Judaizers) went to Syrian Antioch, where Paul was headquartered, and taught the necessity of circumcision for salvation. This ignited a major controversy in the early Church and led to the first Church council in A.D. 49. This did not completely stop the heresy, and in later years groups of Ebionites continued to plague the apostle Paul’s ministry.

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Following the two destructions of Jerusalem (A.D. 70 and 135), Ebionitism waned, but did not die out until the fifth century. As the Church matured Ebionites became more distinct from Catholic Christianity. They rejected most of the New Testament and composed edited forms of Matthew's Gospel in Hebrew or Aramaic. Three of these were known as the Gospels of the Ebionites, the Nazarenes, and the Hebrews.

The Gnostic group of Ebionites, also called the Elkasaites, had a book they received from their supposed founder, Elxai. This book was said to be received by Elxai in 101 and was brought to Rome in 220 by the Syrian Alcibiades. According to Origen, the book was said to have fallen from heaven, though according to Hippolytus Elxai was said to have received it from an angel who was the Son of God. One difference between these Ebionites and ordinary Gnostics was that they maintained the unity of the God of the Old Testament with the God of the New. "Regular" Gnostics claimed that Jehovah (whom they termed "the Demiurge") was separate from the New Testament God of Love. In the second century and later, the claim that Jesus was a mere man became the most noted doctrinal claim of Ebionitism. Some have suggested this influenced the development of Islam and its similar view of Jesus.

Orthodox Response

The decisive step in refuting the Judaizers was taken in A.D. 49 at the Council of Jerusalem, where the apostles, joined by the presbyters of that Church decreed that it was not necessary for the Gentile converts to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law. At this council, Peter issued the basic decision (Acts 15:7-11), Paul and Barnabas gave supporting evidence (15:12), and James the Just proposed four pastoral codicils to make implementation of the decision easier (15:13-21). The result was a circular letter (15:23-29) which was in force for all Christian communities (16:4). This did not stop the Judaizers, and Paul was forced to combat them on later occasions, most notably in his epistles to the Galatians and the Romans.

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The Gnostic Ebionites were also dealt with in the New Testament, though no council was convened to deal with them. In his epistle to the Colossians, Paul warned against anyone trying to compel his readers to obey the Mosaic Law or to indulge in Gnostic practices, such as the worship of angels (Col. 2:16-18). The book of Hebrews is also at pains to stress the superiority of the Son to angels (Heb. 1:1-14), and many have detected anti-Gnostic themes in the Gospel and epistles of John.

The situations with the moderate Ebionites or Nazarenes was different. Unlike the Judaizers, they did not insist that Gentiles be circumcised, and, unlike the Gnostics, they did not try to combine the Christian faith with pagan elements. For this reason there was hesitancy in dealing with them decisively. The New Testament bears witness that three of the chief apostles - Peter, James, and Paul - tried to get along with rather than attack this group. We are told in Galatians 2:11-16 that in Antioch Peter once stopped eating with Gentiles in order to appease the sentiments of certain Jews visiting the city. This caused Paul to rebuke him publicly (as later saints had occasional need to rebuke a pope) because he was acting hypocritically, teaching that Gentiles could be saved without the Law, yet behaving as if they were still outsiders who had to be avoided for reasons of ritual purity. This episode shows that, although the Nazarenes were wrong, that Christian Jews did not need to keep the Law of Moses, and, while Peter knew it, there was still a tendency on the part of some apostles to accommodate them.

The connection with James and the Nazarenes is evident. In Galatians 2:12 we are told that it was certain men associated with James who came to Antioch and prompted Peter to refrain from eating with the Gentiles. In Acts 15:20 James is concerned with the sensibilities of the Jewish Christians, who would be scandalized by unrestrained Gentile converts. In Acts 21:18-26 he and his group prompt Paul to perform a public acknowledgment of the Law, similar to Peter's. Paul himself accommodates the Nazarenes on a number of occasions. In 1 Corinthians 7:18 he seems to suggest it is permissible for a Jew to continue to live as a Jew once he has

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converted to Christianity. Paul's circumcision of Timothy in Acts 16:3 was certainly an accommodation of Jews and possibly Jewish Christians. The chief act of accommodation in Paul's career is the incident in Acts 21. James and the presbyters at Jerusalem convince Paul to undergo Jewish purification rituals and have sacrifices offered at the Temple.

The explicitly stated purpose of this act is to show Paul's subjection to the Law so that "all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you [Paul] but that you yourself live in observance of the law." Many have suggested that this appeasing of the Nazarenes set Paul in the same position Peter had been in at Antioch and that it was partly in rebuke of this that God allowed Paul to be captured and taken prisoner, eventually going to Rome for trial (Acts 21:27-28:31).

Aside from these efforts made to appease the Nazarenes, the New Testament teaches against them. Paul correctly rebuked Peter (Gal. 2:11). He indicated that he himself was not under the Law and only made it appear as if he were in order to win converts from the Jews (1 Cor. 9:20-21). He said that Old Testament ceremonies were not only not binding on Gentiles, but that they had truly passed away (Col. 2:13-17). He proclaimed the passing away of the Law of Moses as an entity (Rom. 7:1-6) and that Christians are not under the Mosaic Law but under grace (Rom. 6:14-15). After the apostolic age Ebionitism continued to be a problem for the Church, and all three sects of Ebionites, the Judaizers, the Nazarenes, and the Elkasaites, survived into the age of the Church Fathers. Those writing against them included Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus, Epiphanius, and Jerome.

Helvidianism

Helvidias taught that Mary was a virgin at Christ's birth, but after the birth of Christ, she and Saint Joseph engaged in marital relations and conceived a number of children. While the early Protestant Reformers affirmed the perpetual virginity of Mary, most subsequent Protestants hold the view of Helvidias. The Helvidians argue that

the brothers of Jesus mentioned in the gospels are the offsprings of Mary.

It is true that a group of persons closely connected with the Saviour appears repeatedly in the New Testament under the designation “his brethren” or “the brethren of the Lord” (Matthew 12:46, 13:55; Mark 3:31-32, 6:3; Luke 8:19-20; John 2:12, 7:3-5; Acts 1:14; 1 Corinthians 9:5). Four such “brethren” are mentioned by name in the parallel texts of Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 (where “sisters” are also referred to), namely, James (also mentioned Galatians 1:19), Joseph, or Joses, Simon, and Jude; the incidental manner in which these names are given, shows, however, that the list lays no claim to completeness.

Two questions in connexion with these “brethren” of the Lord have long been, and are still now more than ever, the subject of controversy: (1) The identity of James, Jude, and Simon; (2) the exact nature of the relationship between the Saviour and his “brethren”.

The identity of James, Jude and Simon: James is without doubt the Bishop of Jerusalem (Acts 12:17, 15:13, 21:18; Galatians 1:19; 2:9-12) and the author of the first Catholic Epistle. His identity with *James the Less* (Mark 15:40) and the *Apostle James, the son of Alphaeus* (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18), although contested by many Protestant critics, may also be considered as certain. There is no reasonable doubt that in Galatians 1:19: “But other of the apostles [besides Cephas] I saw none, saving James the brother of the Lord”, St. Paul represents James as a member of the Apostolic college. The purpose for which the statement is made, makes it clear that the “apostles” is to be taken strictly to designate the Twelve, and its truthfulness demands that the clause “saving James” be understood to mean, that in addition to Cephas, St. Paul saw another Apostle, “James the brother of the Lord” (cf. Acts 9:27). Besides, the prominence and authority of James among the Apostles (Acts 15:13; Galatians 2:9; in the latter text he is even named before Cephas) could have belonged only to one of their number. Now there were only two Apostles named James: James the son of Zebedee, and James the son of Alphaeus (Matthew

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10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). The former is out of the question, since he was dead at the time of the events to which Acts 15:6 ssq., and Galatians 2:9-12 refer (cf. Acts 12:2). James "the brother of the Lord" is therefore one with James the son of Alpheus, and consequently with James the Less, the identity of these two being generally conceded. Again, on comparing John 19:25 with Matthew 27:56, and Mark 15:40 (cf. Mark 15:47; 16:1), we find that Mary of Cleophas, or more correctly Clopas (*Klopas*), the sister of Mary the Mother of Christ, is the same as Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joseph, or Josés. As married women are not distinguished by the addition of their father's name, Mary of Clopas must be the wife of Clopas, and not his daughter, as has been maintained. Moreover, the names of her sons and the order in which they are given, no doubt the order of seniority, warrant us in identifying these sons with James and Joseph, or Josés, the "brethren" of the Lord. The existence among the early followers of Christ of two sets of brothers having the same names in the order of age, is not likely, and cannot be assumed without proof. Once this identity is conceded, the conclusion cannot well be avoided that Clopas and Alpheus are one person, even if the two names are quite distinct. It is, however, highly probable, and commonly admitted, that Clopas and Alpheus are merely different transcriptions of the same Aramaic word Halphai. James and Joseph the "brethren" of the Lord are thus the sons of Alpheus.

Of Joseph nothing further is known. Jude is the writer of the last of the Catholic Epistles (Jude 1). He is with good reason identified by Catholic commentators with the "Judas Jacobi" ("Jude the brother of James" in the Douay Version) of Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13, otherwise known as Thaddeus (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18). It is quite in accordance with Greek custom for a man to be distinguished by the addition of his brother's name instead of his father's, when the brother was better known. That such was the case with Jude is inferred from the title "the brother of James", by which he designates himself in his Epistle. About Simon nothing certain can be stated. He is identified by most commentators with the Symeon, or Simon, who,

according to Hegesippus, was a son of Clopas, and succeeded James as Bishop of Jerusalem. Some identify him with the Apostle Simon the Cananean (Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18) or the Zealot (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). The grouping together of James, Jude or Thaddeus, and Simon, after the other Apostles, Judas Iscariot excepted, in the lists of the Apostles, (Matthew 10:4-5; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13) lends some probability to this view, as it seems to indicate some sort of connexion between the three. Be this as it may, it is certain that at least two of the “brethren” of Christ were among the Apostles. This is clearly implied in 1 Corinthians 9:5: “Have we not the power to carry about a woman, a sister, as well as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?” The mention of Cephas at the end indicates that St. Paul, after speaking of the Apostles in general, calls special attention to the more prominent ones, the “brethren” of the Lord and Cephas. The objection that no “brethren” of the Lord could have been members of the Apostolic college, because six months before Christ’s death they did not believe in Him (John 7:3-5), rests on a misunderstanding of the text. His “brethren” believed in his miraculous power, and urged him to manifest it to the world. Their unbelief was therefore relative. It was not a want of belief in His Messiahship, but a false conception of it. They had not yet rid themselves of the Jewish idea of a Messiah who would be a temporal ruler. We meet with this idea among the Apostles as late as the day of the Ascension (Acts 1:6). In any case the expression “his brethren” does not necessarily include each and every “brother”, whenever it occurs. This last remark also sufficiently answers the difficulty in Acts 1:13-14, where, it is said, a clear distinction is made between the Apostles and the “brethren” of the Lord.

Valentinianism

Valentinianism taught that Holy Spirit *deposited* the Christ Child in her womb and that Mary was the a surrogate mother, but not truly Christ’s genetic mother. Valentinian the Gnostic (d. 160) taught that the Son of God passed through Mary like water through a straw.

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The Apostle Paul refutes this when he writes, “God sent His Son, made of a woman.”

The Valentinian system of beliefs incorporated perhaps the most extensive view of humanity. The Craftsman is the creator of humans, according to the Valentinian Gnostics.

The corpus is the physical element of the body. There are three non-corporeal parts. The first is the demonic part is the chous. The second part is the rational soul, called the psyche. The third is the spiritual seed, called the Pneuma.

The Valentinians believed that there are three essential kinds of people (corresponding to the children of Adam and Eve). Carnal people (those descended from Cain) are those that do not respond to the spiritual seeds. To them, the seed has fallen on their path, but they do not respond; instead, they choose to continue on their material existence without the gnosis. Psychic people (those descended from Abel) are those that are dominated by their soul. When the spiritual seed drops on the path of a psychic person, the seed chokes on the worldly concerns of the psychic. The third type of person is the spiritual person. The spiritual person is descended from Seth. The spiritual seed of these people bears fruit, as their seed lands on what the Valentinians consider “good earth”, or the path walked by the spiritual people.

From these human descriptions, Valentinus developed the pneumatic equation. This simply states that both humans and the world are flawed. Essentially, the human will only be able to recognize the error of humanity and the world through gnosis. Thus, salvation is not necessary, in the sense that salvation is to happen after death. Rather, Valentinus prophesized that humanity does not need saving - it needs transformation. The only way to transform humanity is through gnosis. From here, Valentinus described what he called spiritual self-knowledge. Before a human receives gnosis, the ego is the epicenter of all thought and living. When an individual’s life centers on the ego, they live in ignorance. The attainment of gnosis provides

a spiritual self-awakening to become the inverse equivalent to the ignorance from the ego.

Valentinus believed that those that worshipped material items suffered from hylecticism. Those that worshipped the mind and emotional soul suffered from psychism. The real healing work of Jesus is known by replacing the attachment to such material things with spiritual freedom.

Collyridianism

Collyridianism is the heresy that holds that Mary is a divine goddess worthy of the worship of adoration. The heresy was popular in pre-Islamic Arabia (AD 300s-500s) and it is likely the reason that the Arabic Quran wrongly assumes that the Christian Trinity is God, Jesus, Mary. The heresy's name of Collyridianism comes from the Greek word *ἐπιεὶδνῆδ* meaning "bread roll" since adherents offered quasi-Eucharistic bread sacrifice to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The heresy of the Collyridians was very simple: They worshiped Mary. This was in direct conflict with the Catholic Church's condemnation of idolatry, which had been condemned by God himself: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you

shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God" (Ex. 20:3-5; cf. Deut. 5:7 6:14; 1 Cor. 4:8-6, 10:19-20; Eph. 5:5). This proscription applies not just to statue

worship, but to the worship of anything besides God.

Orthodox response: It is ironic that the most diligent opponent of the Collyridians was

Epiphanius (315- 403), the bishop of Salamis. He was widely renowned

for his learning and holy asceticism and was a close friend of

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Jerome, but he was also a rude and querulous man who garnered many enemies, some of whom were fellow bishops.

Though Epiphanius's efforts to quash the Collyridians were laudable and his theological and scriptural reasoning against their idolatry was sound, he himself was not free from error in the area of honoring God's friends. The vehemence of his opposition to the Collyridians' idolatry was rivaled by his fanatical opposition to icons.

Epiphanius wrote against the Collyridians in his most important apologetic work, *Panarion* (Medicine Box [374-377]), a tour-de-force refutation of over eighty heresies known to him. He refuted the two extreme and diametrically opposed Marian heresies of his day, Collyridianism (which overly exalted Mary) and Antidicomarianism, an Arabian movement that debased Mary's status and virtues, to the point of claiming "that holy Mary had intercourse with a man, that is to say, Joseph, after the birth of Christ" (*Panarion* 78:1).

The Collyridians were primarily women who developed a syncretistic combination of Catholicism and pagan goddess cult customs. After describing the "awful and blasphemous ceremony," in which they adorn a chair or a square throne and spread a linen cloth over it for their ritual, Epiphanius writes, "Certain women there in Arabia have introduced this absurd teaching from Thracia: how they offer up a sacrifice of bread rolls in the name of the ever-Virgin Mary, and all partake of this bread" (<*Panarion*> 78:13). He emphasizes the

difference between Mary and God: "It is not right to honor the saints beyond their due" (*ibid.* 78:23); "Now the body of Mary was indeed holy, but it was not God; the Virgin was indeed a virgin and revered, but she was not given to us for worship, but she herself worshiped him who was born in the flesh from her... Honor Mary, but let the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be worshiped, but let no one worship Mary, . . . even though Mary is most beautiful and holy and venerable, yet she is not to be worshiped" (*ibid.* 79:1, 4).

With Epiphanius we can say that anyone who worships Mary or any other creature is committing idolatry and must be rebuked. We should look to Scripture, at the case of the angel who rebuked John for his temptation to idolatry, to see how to admonish modern-day Collyridians: “At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!’” (Rev.19:10). No doubt, our Lady herself would say this to any who would seek to worship her.

Modern parallels: Collyridianism is seen today in various forms. Those “hyper-Marian” groups and writers who overly exalt Mary and focus on her to the exclusion (or near exclusion) of Christ are guilty of something approaching idolatry. Modern feminism is the source of a recycled Collyridianism that worships a “mother goddess” and seeks to “re-image” God in female terms.

Nestorianism

Nestorianism teaches that Jesus is two “persons.” The archbishop Nestorius (yes, not all archbishops are orthodox) denied that Mary was the “Theotokos” or “Bearer of God” by saying that she was the mother only of the “human Jesus” and not the “divine Jesus.” On the contrary, the Catholic Church teaches that Christ is one person with two natures: divine nature and human nature. Hence Mary is the mother of the divine Person who is the Son of God. Logically, she is the Mother of He who is God the Son. She is the Mother of God, though not the Mother of the divine essence of the Trinity.

Nestorianism is basically the doctrine that Jesus existed as two persons, the man Jesus and the divine Son of God, rather than as a unified person. This doctrine is identified with Nestorius (c.386-451), Patriarch of Constantinople, although he himself denied holding this belief. This view of Christ was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431, and the conflict over this view led to the Nestorian schism, separating the Assyrian Church of the East from the Byzantine Church.

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The motivation for this view was an aversion to the idea that “God” suffered and died on the cross, be it the divinity itself, the Trinity, or one of the persons of the Trinity. Thus, they would say, Jesus the perfect man suffered and died, not the divine second person of the Trinity, for such is an impossible thought - hence the inference that two “persons” essentially inhabited the one body of Jesus. Nestorius himself argued against calling Mary the “Mother of God” (*Theotokos*) as the church was beginning to do. He held that Mary was the mother of Christ only in respect to His humanity. The council at Ephesus (431) accused Nestorius of the heresy of teaching “two persons” in Christ and insisted that *Theotokos* was an appropriate title for Mary. The problem with Nestorianism is that it threatens the atonement. If Jesus is two persons, then which one died on the cross? If it was the “human person” then the atonement is not of divine quality and thereby insufficient to cleanse us of our sins.

Iconoclasm

Iconoclasm teaches that images are idolatrous. Iconoclasm condemns images of Christ, Mary, and the saints. On the contrary, the Catholic Church defends the use of Christian (not pagan) images since Christ became visible through the incarnation.

Iconoclasm literally means “icon-breaking,” which includes the religious as well as political destruction of images or monuments, usually - though not always - those of another religious group. Iconoclasm is frequently a component of major domestic political or religious changes. Iconoclasm is the belief that there should not be religious pictures or sacred images or religious monuments because they are seen as a form of idolatry. People who engage in or support iconoclasm are called “iconoclasts,” a term that has come to be applied figuratively to any person who breaks or disdains established dogma or conventions. Conversely, people who revere or venerate religious images are called “iconolaters.” In a Byzantine context they are known as “iconodules” or “iconophiles.”

Though iconoclasm may be carried out by people of different religions, it is often the result of sectarian disputes between factions

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of the same religion. For example, the making of portraits of Christ and the saints was opposed in the early Christian church, but icons had grown to become a very popular form of worship by the end of the 6th century. The defenders of icon worship emphasized the symbolic nature of the images. There was opposition to this worship which led to the “iconoclastic controversy” by the Byzantine emperor Leo II in A.D. 726. This controversy continued in the Eastern Church for more than a century before icons were once again accepted.

The iconoclastic controversy stimulated the Byzantine artists to strive for spiritual revelation in religious art rather than for naturalistic representation. The churches of the Eastern Orthodox Church are generally decorated only with flat pictures, bas-reliefs, and mosaics. Iconoclasm was also a feature of the Protestant Reformation. The Puritans were especially hostile to the use of religious images, and some Protestants still consider their use idolatrous.

In Christianity, iconoclasm has generally been motivated by a literal interpretation of the Ten Commandments, which forbid the making and worshipping of “graven images” (see Exodus 20:4). Statues and portraits of saints and religious figures were also common in the Western church, though some Protestant sects eventually rejected them. Islam still bans all icons, and iconoclasm has played a role in the conflicts between Muslims and Hindus in India.



Chapter 7

Mariology of Vatican II And Ecumenism

In order to understand the Vatican II era, a little historical summary is needed. Simply put, the century approaching the council (1962-65), beginning with Pope Pius IX's infallible decree on the Blessed Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception (*Ineffabilis Deus*, December, 8, 1854), up and through Pope Pius XII's infallible papal bull on her Assumption into heaven (*Munificentissimus Deus*, November, 1, 1950) represents what is called by some as "high" Mariology. Here, Fritz explains that before the council, Mary's placement and role in salvation history is exalted for a maximalism, or maximalist, Marian emphasis. So much was she emphasized that going into the council, according to Mariologist Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins, some bishops asked St. Pope John XXIII to either make a statement, or declare a dogmatic decree, giving Mary a new title: Coredemptrix and/or Mediatrix of all graces. Msgr. Calkins further notes that even the first draft of *Lumen Gentium's* (Dogmatic

Constitution, “On the Church”) in chapter eight on the Blessed Virgin Mary, desired to acknowledge the validity of the term; but in the redactions, it was taken out due to ecumenical concerns.

By the closest of all conciliar votations (17), the independent Marian draft schema was set aside. Instead, the Marian thesis was incorporated into the schema “On the church.” As such, the date of this vote, October 29, 1963, is “ground zero” for post-Vatican II Mariology. Thus, a shift in momentum occurred in the ethos of the Church regarding the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary for Catholics. With a new paradigm came a new ethos, intentional or unintentional, that was promoted, in which the role of Mary must now be subsumed, in favor of other considerations (e.g., ecumenical). The question is then, how do we, interpret this shift?

Rahnerian Mariology and Vatican II

Peter Joseph Fritz is providing an answer¹ via a Rahnerian Marian ethos.² That is, even though this work was not published until 2004, Rahner’s thinking behind it was present at the council through his influence; for he participated as a *peritus* - an expert advisor at the council. Fr. Rahner was associated with a group of theologians who promoted *Nouvelle Théologie* (New Theology) and was, at first, pre-censored from lecturing or writing without prior approval. This meant that he was effectively banned from the council. Then, in November of 1962, he was appointed by St. Pope John XXIII, giving him direct access to not only the council Fathers, but to the drafting of the documents. In fact, he was one of seven theologians who had a hand in drafting the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. This is the document that contains the revised and reworked schema on the Blessed Virgin Mary that then became chapter eight. According to Fr. Vorgrimler (a theological collaborator of Rahner), Rahner had an influence on most of the other documents as well.

This Vatican II Mariological paradigmatic shift reverberated into all areas of ecclesial theology and liturgy, through a new hermeneutic or interpretation that went beyond the council’s purview and became

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what is described as a new ethos, the “Spirit of Vatican II.” This “Spirit” is often in contrast over, and at times, against, the letter of Vatican II. It is to be hoped that this “Spirit of Vatican II” was an unintended consequence following the council, although Cardinal Kasper, who worked as an assistant to Fr. Hans Küng - also a *peritus* - has recently been quoted as saying, “In many places, (the Council Fathers) had to find compromise formulas, in which, often, the positions of the majority are located immediately next to those of the minority, designed to delimit them. Thus, the conciliar texts themselves have a huge potential for conflict, opening the door to a selective reception in either direction.”³

Nevertheless, a rupture or fissure ensued which pitted ecclesial ethos as either before, or after, Vatican II. The topic of a ruptured ecclesial ethos was addressed during the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops. The Synodal Fathers, on the 20th anniversary of the closing of Vatican II, called for a “return to the sacred,” and a proper relationship between the letter and Spirit of Vatican II. However, it would not be until 2005, in his Christmas address to the Roman Curia, that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI (at the time of Vatican II, he was, of course, Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, also a *peritus*), would call for a proper “hermeneutic of continuity,” as opposed to an interpretation of rupture - thereby settling the dispute or debate. Pope Emeritus Benedict has firmly established the proper, post-Vatican II ethos for the future by interpreting the documents of Vatican II as in keeping with the Church’s traditional Magisterial teachings, and not reading the documents of Vatican II up against, or opposed, to them.

All this brings us back to Fr. Rahner, and the newly released *Assumptio-Arbeit* (2004) on the Blessed Virgin Mary and her Assumption. Fritz notes that while it was written in 1951, Rahner’s censor prevented *Assumptio-Arbeit* from being published due to its disharmony with Pope Pius XII’s *Munificentissimus Deus*, then considered to be the new dogmatic decree on Mary’s Assumption. Fr. Rahner critiques this particular papal bull on Mary as being too

limited to her “privileges and prerogatives,” and not fitting her role as the “Eschatological Woman”. Rahner would rather see a Mariology that would usher in a new emphasis in all areas of theology, based on the Eschaton (e.g., Mary as the New Eve, and the eschaton being the linchpin to all theological categories) in which grace and freedom coalesce in the *Vorgriff* (a Rahnerian neologism representing a cosmic comprehension). Hence, Fritz posits that Rahner was seeking a fundamental-theological transposition of Mary being moved away from the center (where von Balthasar had placed her), to Mary and the saints being close to, but not quite on, the periphery of the theological existential.

What is meant by this is that Rahner would rather propose, as a founding principle of Mariology, that her reception of grace be emphasized, rather than her maternity. He would have Mary, not as a Platonic ideal, but as a referent for the whole of humanity. For Rahner, the times have changed. Generations who loved the Blessed Virgin Mary have given way to a new generation that finds in emphasizing Mary’s uniqueness - via exalted titles and privileges - a divisive force. (Again, this is Rahner’s perspective.) Instead of forcing us toward the center, these Marian titles and privileges drive people away, and not toward, the center. Peter Joseph Fritz agrees. The problem here is (and this will be addressed below) just what is “the center?”

In short, Rahner’s Mariology - which includes the saints in their examples of existential living in grace - considers in Mary’s Assumption a theological emphasis, not for Mary’s sake, but for humanity’s. That is, Mary’s cosmic end (in heaven) is our end; and we should live our daily lives in grace, as she did hers. However, Fritz relates that while Rahner found value in the veneration of Mary (and by connection, any of the saints), that veneration is optional - not required for Catholics. For Rahner, veneration of Mary, or any saint, is not a duty; whereas loving one’s neighbor in charity is. For Rahner, veneration may be conducive to personal holiness, but only if it leads us to neighborly charity. Thus, for Rahner, Mary and the saints can occupy neither the center nor the edges, but move within

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the “middle ground” of Christian existentialism, whose center is in constant motion. Thus, for Fritz, Rahner’s Mariology is vindicated by the council’s 17-vote margin of victory in which the proper emphasis on Mary is not as a stand-alone “Saint of saints,” but rather, as the model Christian - in and amongst the Church, in the Church, and as part of the Church.

Peter Joseph Fritz concludes by bemoaning the fact that there is a sector within the Church in the United States which seeks to return to devotions to Mary, and “especially the rosary, to the center of Catholic life.” He characterizes it as being mean-spirited to those who do not have such devotions. He speculates that these “pro-Mary group(s) (are) rather anti-Rahner”; moreover, that Rahner gets the blame for ruining “mid-century” (sic) Marian fervor, “thus betraying the Church.” For Fritz, he will have none of it. His paper is an attempt to maintain a post-Vatican II ethos by holding onto an openness, both to Marian veneration and veneration of the Eucharist (but never in the center, and never out of a notion of “strict enforcement of ‘the sacred’”); and, to “an openness that uses multiple paths - some manifestly sacred, and others not - to advance toward enjoyment of God(?). In fact, it may be both, so long as the former does not cancel out the latter tout court. This last clause, of course, is the key.”

Peter Joseph Fritz’s primary thesis is that Rahnerian Mariology is the Church’s post-Vatican II Mariology as supported by the paradigm shift in emphasis at Vatican II - from Mary and the saints at the center of Catholic life prior to Vatican II, to Mary and the saints somewhere near, but not on, the periphery of Catholic life after Vatican II. The thesis was substantiated by the newly published - but censored until 2004 - 1951 Rahnerian work on the “Assumption of Mary.” The thesis is controversial to the extent that a whole subculture of Catholicism was built, in large part, around the devotion and veneration due to the Mother of God during the so-called “Marian Century,” from 1854 to 1950, and up to Vatican II as noted above, but was abruptly shifted, or ended, at the council in favor of other concerns and considerations, mainly ecumenical.

Fritz acknowledges that something happened “mid-century” (viz., the Council of Vatican II, hence the use of “sic” in the text above), which “ruined the Marian fervor . . . thus betraying the Church.” He rejects any association that Rahnerian theology would have played in the ruination of Marian devotion and, rather than betraying the Church, his, Rahner’s, Mariology refocuses or situates the proper relationship between the saints, Mary, and “the center” which presumably is God. Although in rereading the article, one does not get a straightforward answer on what does occupy the center. For Rahner, Mary, or the saints, are not there at the center, and whatever the center is - it moves. Thus, dogma plays a role, Rahner admits, in Christological doctrine, for example; but on the other hand, he says, “The concept of ‘central truths’ is very ambiguous.” This has something to do with the Rahnerian anthropological/theological construct of the *Vorgriff*, which Rahner understood as the mind’s ability to reach out to the infinite. Thus, anthropology is theology, and theology is anthropology. Yes, it is confusing.

The author’s style is clear, and he refrains from using Rahnerian neologisms, like the *Vorgriff*, which helps in trying to understand someone who can be very dense. The author does us a great service in informing us on this new Rahnerian work on the Blessed Virgin Mary. However, the article is not for the novice, or the beginner in theology or philosophy. Being a Thomist, I am not well schooled in Rahnerian theology; however, I am also not unfamiliar with his teaching. Fritz’s article needs to be read and understood by those who study Mary - Mariologists - because whether he knows it or not, herein explains, in part, the paradigm shift in Marian ethos at Vatican II and immediately thereafter.

What now needs to be better understood is the post-Vatican II, unofficial promulgation of an ethos that led to a dismantling of a Marian subculture of Catholicism; beginning with what Mariologists call the “decade of silence” regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary. A subculture ethos that was pro-Marian before the council became overnight the “Spirit of Vatican II,” with a bias against not only her, but also the veneration of the saints, relics, and even the Blessed

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Sacrament, outside of Mass. For example, the act of worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass via Benediction was greatly diminished following the council. ⁶ Besides Pope Emeritus Benedict's analysis of the post-Vatican II period of reform in his Christmas Address of 2005, where can we find the proverbial "smoking gun" as it were, pointing to the beginning of this momentum shift?

Well, we do have the date of the Marian schema votation of October 29, 1963. This remains a fixed point of the Marian paradigm shift. However, the promulgation of a post-Vatican ethos is another matter. Who would promote such an ethos is another question? The answer is, perhaps, answered by Peter Joseph Fritz himself. He comments that Rahner was blamed by the pro-Mary segments of the Church for "allegedly ruin(ing) the Marian fervor of mid-century Catholicism" (he means at Vatican II), and he proposes to answer that critique with his paper as "a partial venture in that direction." Here, he wants us to think that Rahner's *Assumptio-Arbeit* should stand as something new to the theological world (2004); whereas it is anything but, since we now know that its author was not only involved in the drafting of *Lumen Gentium's* chapter eight - albeit behind the scenes as one of seven; he also was most influential publicly after the council with his various commentaries promoting a post-Vatican II ethos. If anything, this brings to mind a whole host of questions as to Rahner's influence over this document and others.

Did St. John XXIII know of *Assumptio-Arbeit* prior to appointing Rahner a *peritus*? This needs to be asked since there must have been some reason for Rahner's pre-censure status prior to Vatican II. What role did Karl Rahner play in removing any title that would validate Mary as "Coredemptrix and/or Mediatrix of all graces" - since it appeared in the first draft? Or conversely, did Rahner have a hand in incorporating the meaning of this proposed title into *Lumen Gentium's* §56, §57, and §58, as Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins observes? Pope Paul VI wanted to entitle chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium* "Mary, Mother of the Church," but this was nixed by the drafters; did Rahner play a part in this decision? Could the Censor (s) of Rahner's estate be withholding other works, letters,

diaries, that could further intimate the state of his thought around these events; works that would give Mariologists a better understanding of the Vatican II Marian paradigm shift, and its post-Vatican II ethos?

Nevertheless, the final, proper interpretation of the documents of Vatican II has been given to us by Pope Emeritus Benedict in a timeless image, namely the “hermeneutic of continuity.”⁷ In that, Vatican II must be seen or understood as part of the Church’s two-thousand-year-old Magisterium or doctrinal teaching. One cannot now say, “before and after Vatican II,” the ethos of the Church is thus and thus. Now, one would say that the Church’s proper ethos is in continuity with the ages, with the saints of old, with the Body of Christ. This is why the Ignatian phrase, *Sentire Cum Ecclesia* (To Think with the Church) is so very important for theologians. While one’s desire to fulfill this phrase may ebb and flow in a variety of ways, the *Analogy of Faith* remains constant. The Church cannot undo or reverse her teaching; particularly doctrine that applies to salvation from revelation.

Mariology and Ecumenism

A major point of divergence between Roman Catholics and Protestant borders on Mariology. Protestants repeatedly question the rationale behind the reverence Roman Catholics give to Mary. The council gives a number of reasons why such reverence is due (cf. *Lumen gentium*, n. 53).

First, she is to be honored because she received the Word of God in her heart and in her body and thus gave life to the world. Secondly, she is Mother of God and of the Redeemer. Thirdly, she was redeemed in a more exalted fashion by reason of the merits of her Son. Fourthly, she is the beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Fifthly, because of this gift of sublime grace, she far surpasses us. Being of the race of Adam, she, she is united to all who are to be saved. Yet, she is a pre-eminent and wholly unique member of the Church, and a type and outstanding model of the Church in faith and charity.

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The Mariology of the second Vatican Council flows from what is taught by the Holy Spirit and has its links with Christology and Ecclesiology. This has an implication: what we say about Mary must be consistent with what we say about Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. The following statement of the council should be read along that line of thought: “this sacred synod, while expounding the doctrine on the Church, in which the divine Redeemer brings about our salvation, intends to set forth painstakingly both the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of the Incarnate Word [Christology] and the Mystical Body, and the duties of the redeemed towards the Mother of God [ecclesiology], who is mother of Christ and mother of men, and most of all those who believe” (*Lumen gentium*, n. 54).

The council, recognizing that Mariology is an on-going discussion and a work in progress, goes on to add that its intention was not to present a comprehensive doctrine on Mary. Neither was the intention to decide questions which the work of theologians is yet to fully clarify. “Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and also closest to us.”⁴

A clear distancing of Catholicism from the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura* is discernible when the council points out that what she teaches about Mary is shown in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the earliest documents of Christianity.⁵ Examples of what the Holy Spirit says of Mary in the sacred writings of the Old Testament and of the New Testament can be found in Gen 3: 15; Is 7:14; Mic 5:2-3; Mt 1:22-23; Lk 1:28 among many others. It is of crucial importance to stress with the council, under the influence of the Pauline insight expressed in the letter to the Galatians, that at the fullness of time, the Son of God took human nature from her “that he might in the mysteries of his flesh free man from sin” (*Lumen gentium*, n. 55). The importance of this enfleshment of the Word in the womb of Mary for our redemption can be illustrated by the position adopted by St. Thomas Aquinas in his Christology and

soteriology that Christ saved us through the instrumentality of his humanity. That this is a major point of divergence between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, and this influences the different attitudes to Marian doctrine and devotion.

In a way that sums up the joyful mysteries of the Rosary, the council teaches us that the union between Mary and her Son's work of redemption "is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death" through the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation, and the Finding in the Temple (*Lumen gentium*, n. 57). Here we find an exemplification of the dictum *lex orandi lex credendi*. The Church's Marian prayers, in this specific instance the Rosary, point to what is believed as doctrinally sound Mariology.

The council goes on to address the contentious issue of Mary and the unique mediation of Christ. First, the teaching of 1 Tim 2:5-6 is reiterated: "there is one God and one mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ, who gave himself a redemption for all." Then comes a useful doctrinal clarification for which we must be grateful to the Holy Spirit speaking through the conciliar fathers. It is said, by way of this clarification, that:

Mary's function as mother of men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. *But the Blessed Virgin's salutary influence on men originates not in any inner necessity but in the disposition of God. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. It does not hinder in any way the immediate union of the faithful with Christ but on the contrary fosters it* (*Lumen gentium*, n. 60).

This doctrinal clarification is necessary to forestall any exaggeration in the cult of Mary in the Church. The cult of Mary is justified by the fact that "Mary has by grace been exalted above all angels and men to a place second only to her Son, as the most holy mother of God who was involved in the mysteries of Christ" (*Lumen gentium*, n. 66). It is justified by the teaching of the Council of Ephesus on the

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title of Mary Mother of God, and takes its inspiration from the prophetic words of Mary's Magnificat: "all generations shall call me blessed, because he that is mighty has done great things to me" (Lk 1:48). However, this cult "differs essentially", not just in grade, from the cult and adoration which is offered equally to the three persons of the Trinity, the Incarnate Word, the Father and the Holy Spirit.⁶ Consequently, the council, desirous of an ecumenically sensitive Marian cult, strongly urges theologians and preachers of the word of God to be careful to refrain as much from all false exaggeration as from too summary an attitude in considering the special dignity of the Mother of God. Following the study of Sacred Scripture, the Fathers, the doctors and liturgy of the Church, and under the guidance of the Church's magisterium, let them rightly illustrate the duties and privileges of the Blessed Virgin which always refer to Christ, the source of all truth, sanctity and devotion. *Let them carefully refrain from whatever might by word or deed lead the separated brethren or any others whatsoever into error about the true doctrine of the Church (Lumen gentium, n. 67).*

Mariology and the Challenge of Ecumenical Dialogue

The exhortation of Vatican II towards an ecumenically sensitive Marian cult is to be seen within the context of the desire for communion and reunion of the divided people of God. This *votum unitatis* challenges us to revisit the theological basis of our point of divergence of Marian doctrine. In this regard, the brief but invaluable study of the Dominican theologian of blessed memory, Yves Congar, shall be my guide and point of reference.⁷

In the previous section of this paper, I had indicated that the conciliar reaffirmation in *Lumen gentium*, n. 55 of the article of faith that the Son of God took human nature in the womb of Mary is of crucial importance to any authentic Mariology. That reaffirmation is, in itself, indicative of the inextricable link between Christology and Mariology. Any de-emphasis or outright denial of the humanity of Christ, which was one of the temptations in the history of the Christological controversy, will also have serious implications for

the way the role of Mary in the plan of salvation is viewed. To deny the human nature in Christ is to negate the position of the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, that the humanity of Christ was the instrument for our salvation. I had indicated that I would return to this point in this part of the paper. That is what I intend to do at this point.

Congar identified two factors at the basis of the Protestant de-emphasis of the role of Mary in the plan of salvation. The first factor is the vigorous one-sidedness of the negative theological anthropology of classical Calvinism and Lutheranism. The second factor is the consequent inability of classical Protestantism to relate the humanity of Christ to the work of redemption. I shall begin by explaining the negative anthropology before explaining the resultant Christology and its corresponding Mariology.

The negative theological anthropology of classical Calvinism and Lutheranism emphasized the total corruption of human nature and exclusive transcendence of God. It was the view of this anthropology that original sin fatally destroyed human nature. Consequently, there is nothing good in human nature. This is quite different from the theological anthropology of Roman Catholicism which views human nature not as totally destroyed but wounded by original sin, and still capable of life in spite of sin. According to Congar,

Owing to their persuasion of the total corruption of human nature on the one hand, and of the exclusive transcendence of God on the other, these extreme interpretations of the gospel of redemption have always, at their maximum, so weighted the emphasis on the divine initiative as virtually to exclude the possibility of effective human co-operation in the work of salvation.⁸

Thus human nature is totally corrupt and cannot co-operate with God in his redemptive work. One Protestant principle that depicts this is *sola gratia*. The human nature is fatally wounded, God is utterly transcendent, therefore, only grace, no good works can save us. Simply put, God does everything. Just sit down and fold your arms. How does this affect Mariology?

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Since human nature is totally corrupt because of original sin, and since this total corruption makes human co-operation with the work of salvation impossible, there can be no room for a human being like Mary to co-operate in the work of salvation.⁹ If, as one who had human nature like ourselves, she cannot co-operate with God in his work of salvation, then it makes no theological sense to engage in any cult of Mary. Her inability to co-operate with God means, for the Protestant, that she cannot intercede for us. Her inability to play a part in the plan of salvation extends also to the Church. Being an assembly of human beings, the Church, says Protestantism, cannot mediate salvation to us.

Congar therefore wonders: “if neither the human race as such, nor the Church nor our Lady has any active part in the work of salvation the question cannot but occur what of the co-operation of Christ’s human nature?”¹⁰ The answer to this question inevitably leads to the second factor underlying the Protestant attitude to Mary, that is, the Christology consequent and correspondent to the negative theological anthropology that has just been highlighted.

In presenting the answer of Protestantism to the question, Congar was able to bring to focus the fact that the differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism “are rooted in divergent views of the nature and purpose of the Incarnation itself, those views being themselves in their turn rooted in a distorted idea of the relation of the humanity Christ assumed for our sakes to the fallen nature of mankind and the resultant methods of God’s power for saving us.”¹¹

Congar was of the opinion that this divergence of Christologies between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism is exemplified in those words of Luther which his biographers consider as characteristic. In the words of Luther: “Christ has two natures. What does it mean to me? If it brings with it this name, Christ, glorious and consoling, it is on account of the service and the hard task he undertook for me; this it is that gives him his name. That he should be by nature God and Man is his concern. But that he should have consecrated his service, that he should have poured out his love in becoming my

Savior and my Redeemer, in this do I find my consolation and my good. To believe in Christ is not to know that he is a Person who is both man and God; that avails nothing to anyone. It is to believe in that Person as Christ; that he came from God and came into the world. This is the service from which his name derives.”¹²

The implication of these words have been succinctly put by Congar. It meant little to Luther that Christ had two natures. That his human nature took part in the work of our redemption was of no importance to Luther. We were not saved by the human co-operation of Christ. In fact, what took place at the redemption was not mutual co-operation between God and man but a transposition of situation whereby God substituted for man. Salvation came about through the exclusive agency of the Godhead without any instrumental role of Christ’s humanity as Aquinas contended.

The consequence of such a Christology for Mariology is not difficult to identify. If the humanity of Christ played no role in our redemption, then there is no theological sense in speaking of the role of Mary his Mother, a human being, in the work of redemption. That also applies to the Church. To deny the importance of the humanity of Christ is to deny the importance of the mediatory role of the Church.

Endnotes

- ¹ Peter Joseph Fritz, “Between Center and Periphery: Mary and the Saints in Rahner,” *Philosophy & Theology* 24, no. 2 (2012), 297-311.
- ² A long “lost” 1951 unpublished thesis on the Blessed Virgin Mary by the theologian Fr. Karl Rahner (1904-84) has resurfaced. In German, it is called, *Assumptio-Arbeit*, and was published in 2004 in the *Sämtliche Werke (Collected Works)*, volume 9 of 32).
- ³ Cardinal Walter Kasper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, April 12, 2013.
- ⁴ *Lumen gentium*, n. 54. This does not give the Catholic theologian the licence to write just anything on Mary. It is to be presumed here that such work is to be done within the framework provided by the Church’s Magisterium. The Church will always have to exercise her ministry of guiding the development of dogma. It is my contention in this paper that any doctrinal statement on Mary should not ignore what is set down by Vatican II’s *Lumen gentium*.

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- ⁵ The references to Patristic authors in *Lumen gentium*, n. 56 is instructive: Germanus of Constantinople, Anastasius of Antioch, St. Andrew of Crete, and St. Sophronius. The council presents the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as one that was already alluded to by the Fathers: “it was customary for the Fathers to refer to the Mother of God as all holy and free from every stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature” (n. 56).
- ⁶ This clarification addresses the objection implicit in the remark of the Protestant theologian, Paul Tillich, that Roman Catholicism has made Mary a kind of fourth person of the Trinity, in which case the Trinity becomes a “Quarternity”.
- ⁷ See his *Christ, Our Lady and the Church: A Study in Eirenic Theology*, Westminster, MD, The Newman Press, 1957.
- ⁸ *Christ, Our Lady and the Church*, x.
- ⁹ The dogma of the Immaculate Conception, according to which, by the merits of her Son, Mary was preserved from original sin from the moment of her conception, would nullify the attribution of corrupt human nature to Mary. But again, this is a major point of disagreement between us and our separated brethren.
- ¹⁰ *Christ, Our Lady and the Church*, 19.
- ¹¹ *Christ, Our Lady and the Church*, xii.
- ¹² Quoted in *Christ, Our Lady and the Church*, 25.



Chapter 8

Marian Devotions and Apparitions

Of the many forms of devotion to Our Lady, there are some which have been especially recommended by the Church. Devotions which involve the use of physical objects are not superstitious, because these objects are not thought to have any power in themselves. Rather, they are external aids to interior devotion to the Mother of God.

1. The Rosary

An especially great Marian devotion is the Rosary. There is an ancient tradition that St. Dominic received the Rosary from Our Lady in an apparition at Prouille in 1206 A.D. as a weapon against the Albigensian heresy. What is entirely certain is that in one way or another, numerous Popes have spoken of St. Dominic as author of the Rosary, without pronouncing on the authenticity of the Prouille vision. They have strongly recommended the Rosary. Vatican II in its Constitution

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on the Church # 67 wrote that whatever the Church has ever recommended in Marian devotion should still be considered of great importance. Not long after, Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical *Christi Matris Rosarii* pointed out that that statement obviously included the Rosary. Countless are the favors individuals have experienced through the Rosary. The whole Church benefitted especially when in October 1571, Pope St. Pius V announced that the Christian fleet had won a decisive victory over the Muslim fleet at Lepanto in the Gulf of Corinth. The Muslims were trying to take over all Europe. The Pope explicitly attributed that victory to Rosary processions being held the day of the victory; in addition, every man on the Christian flagship had been given a Rosary before the battle. Our Lady at Lourdes and at Fatima called for a great increase in the prayer of the Rosary, declaring it one of the conditions needed for world peace and the conversion of Russia.

2. *The Brown Scapular*

Another recommended Marian devotion is wearing the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. There are many Scapulars, all valuable, but this one is eminent among them. There is a very ancient tradition that St. Simon Stock, Superior of the Carmelite Order in England in 1251, after imploring the help of Our Lady, was favored with a vision in which she gave him the Scapular, saying: "This will be a privilege for you and for all Carmelites, that he who dies in this will not suffer eternal fire." The historical evidence for this vision is very impressive, and gives at least some degree of moral certitude that the vision really did take place. To gain this promise one must be enrolled in the Confraternity of the Scapular. Pope Pius XII, on the 700th anniversary of this vision, wrote to the Major Superiors of the Carmelites, clearly showing his belief in it: "For not with a light or passing matter are we here concerned, but with the obtaining of eternal life itself, which is the substance of the Promise of the Most Blessed Virgin which has been handed down to us."

However, the Pope warned that the mere physical wearing of the Scapular is not enough: “May it be to them a sign of their Consecration to the Most Sacred Heart of the Immaculate Virgin, which in recent times we have so strongly recommended.” If one then uses the Scapular as the outward sign of living such a Marian consecration, then faith in the fulfillment of the promise is well justified. In fact, Pope Pius XI said (*Explorata res*, Feb. 2, 1923): “Nor would he incur eternal death whom the Most Blessed virgin assists, especially at his last hour. This opinion of the Doctors of the Church, in harmony with the sentiments of the Christian people, and supported by the experience of all times, depends especially on this reason: the fact that the Sorrowful Virgin shared in the work of the Redemption with Jesus Christ.” In other words, a solid Marian devotion is certain to bring one close to Jesus Christ, and so will assure one of reaching salvation, even if the vision to St. Simon Stock might *not* be authentic. Also, when Vatican II said that all things recommended by the Magisterium of the Church towards her should still be considered matters of great importance, the Scapular was clearly included, for numerous Popes have recommended it strongly.

3. Medals

There are many religious medals that are sacramentals. One of these is the Scapular medal. It may be used in place of the cloth scapular, although the cloth is to be preferred. It needs to be blessed before use, while the cloth Scapulars that replace the original one blessed in the enrollment need not be blessed.

It is important to notice that some Scapular medals are incorrect. On one side there must be the image of Our Lord, pointing at His Heart (this Heart is sometimes omitted), on the other side, any image of Our Lady.

Especially well known is the Miraculous Medal. In 1830 The Blessed Virgin appeared three times in the chapel of the motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, to Catherine Laboure, then a novice. It is a medal in honor of the Immaculate

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Conception. St. Catherine was canonized in 1947. Her body was found incorrupt, and attracts many pilgrims to the original shrine.

4. The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Do you have trouble praying? If you're like me, or anyone else who prays, the answer is: yes! The "Little Office" is helpful for those who pray, because it combines the objective structure of the Church's prayer with the warmth of Marian devotion. The "Little Office" is an imitation of the Church's official prayer, called the Liturgy of the Hours, and is composed primarily from the Psalms. Like the divine office, it is divided into different 'hours' meant to sanctify different times of day. It is "little," because it is greatly shortened and simplified, and adapted in a devotional mode by using prayers and antiphons about the Blessed Virgin Mary. The 'objectivity' of this structure is great for those of us who recognize that we don't always know how or what to pray, because we can let the words of the Scriptures speak for us.

5. The Litany of Loreto

Our names, especially nicknames, express something of who we are and what we can do. The Litany of Loreto" seems like a compendium of names of Mary. We can contemplate the work of God in Mary under each of these names which express different facets of her fullness of grace, and we can also beg for graces which correspond to these names. As a student and preacher-to-be, I like to pray to Mary *Seat of Wisdom*, and I think of how Mary lives her life completely in light of God as the highest cause of all things, which is true 'wisdom.' We might be led to awe in what it means for her to be *Mother of God* when we contemplate how God has also placed her as *Queen of Angels*. Or again, when we pray to her as *Mother of divine grace*, I think of how her willing and worthy motherhood of God overflows spiritually to all of us, as Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote that she "mothers each new grace/ that now does reach our race." In this sense, this 'compendium' is a catechism.

6. *The Angelus*

This prayer is named from the first word of the prayer, “The angel of the Lord Declared unto Mary.” It is a simple and brief set of prayers, easy to memorize, typically prayed at the beginning, middle and end of the day. It lays the mystery of the Annunciation before our eyes in the midst of the worries and occupations of our life. What graces can we seek here? The mystery is multi-faceted. Mary receives the Incarnate Son in her womb by her *fiat*. Looking upwards from the Incarnation, we contemplate the mystery of the Trinity, the Father who sends the Son, and the Virgin overshadowed by the Spirit. Looking sideways from the mystery of the Incarnation, we see the passion, death and resurrection for which Jesus was made man. It is also the mystery of God’s prevenient grace to us, which is both unmerited and unbidden. On the moral level, we can contemplate our own need to be attentive and obedient to the voice of God in the unexpected times and ways He speaks - which we live out when we punctuate our days with the Angelus.

7. *The Scapular*

The scapular devotion, in its postage-stamp-sized variety, is a sort of symbolic sharing in the mission and prayers of a religious order. The most famous version is probably the Brown Scapular, which was given to the Carmelite friar St. Simon Stock. It has a rather hefty promise with it: preservation from the fires of hell. As the Church teaches, sacramentals exist to dispose us to receive the effects of the sacraments (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1667). This sacramental, then, does not entail making an end run on the need for the sacraments, especially the sacrament of penance. Mary promises us her intercession to be inserted in - and remain inserted in - this divinely revealed order, if we are faithful in devotion to her. The physical aspect of the scapular- it is worn- makes it a tangible reminder of Mary’s power to intercede for us.

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8. Consecration to Jesus through Mary

St. Louis de Montfort, a French priest who was a Dominican tertiary, popularized this project in his book *True Devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary*. In a certain sense, this isn't a single devotion but the culmination of a fullness of devotion to Mary. As he says, "we consecrate ourselves at one and the same time to Mary and to Jesus. We give ourselves to Mary because Jesus chose her as the perfect means to unite himself to us and unite us to him." One favorite image which St. Louis de Montfort uses to describe Mary is the "mold of God"- that is to say, the form which molds us into the image of the Image who is her Son. As one Dominican friar wrote, the consecration "is a practical form of recognition of her universal mediation and a guarantee of her special protection."

9. The Seven Sorrows of Mary

Our Lady of Sorrows (Latin: *Beata Maria Virgo Perdolens*), Our Lady of Dolours, the Sorrowful Mother or Mother of Sorrows (Latin: *Mater Dolorosa*), and Our Lady of Piety, Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows or Our Lady of the Seven Dolours are names by which the Blessed Virgin Mary is referred to in relation to sorrows in her life. The following are the seven sorrows of Mary.

1. Simeón's prophecy. (Lk. 2, 22-35) Oh my Sweet Mother! Upon the presentation of baby Jesus in the temple, the prophecy of old Simeón brought you considerable pain when you heard him say: "This Boy was born to ruin and resurrect many in Israel, and a sword will pierce your soul". Thus the Lord wanted to mix your joy with such a sad omen. Pray one Hail Mary and one Glory.
2. King Herod's persecution and flight to Egypt. (Mt. 2, 13-15) Oh Sweet Virgin I want to join you in all the hardships, tasks, and fears that you suffered when fleeing to Egypt in the company of St. Joseph to save the life of baby Jesus. Pray one Hail Mary and one Glory.

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3. Jesus lost for three days and found in the temple. (Lk. 2, 41-50)
Immaculate Virgin! Who could imagine the suffering of the loss of Jesus for three long days and the tears shed during that long period? Allow me to wipe them and keep them in my heart that they may be my holocaust and gratitude towards you. Pray one Hail Mary and one Glory.
4. Mary finds Jesus carrying the cross. (Vía Crucis, 4^a station) Truly, it was a street of bitterness and sorrow to find Jesus so dirty, disheveled, and covered with sores, carrying the cross, atoning for the sins of the world, past, present and future. Poor Mother! I want to console you wiping your tears with my love. Pray one Hail Mary and one Glory.
5. The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord. (Jn. 19, 17-30) Mary, Queen of martyrs, the pain and the love is the force that takes them after Jesus, what horrible punishment to watch the cruelty of those minions of hell piercing with nails the feet and hands of the Redeemer! You suffered all this for my love. Thank you, Mother, thank you. Pray one Hail Mary and one Glory.
6. Mary receives the body of Jesus from the cross. (Mk. 15, 42-46) Mary has the body of Jesus in her arms. What did you feel Mother? Did you remember when he was a child curled up in your arms? For this pain, my Mother, I ask that I may die in your arms. Pray one Hail Mary and one Glory.
7. The grave of Jesus (Jn. 19, 38-42) You accompanied your Son to the tomb and must leave him there, all alone. Now your sorrow increases, you must return amongst those that have killed your Son, because He died for all our sins. And You pardon us and You love us. Mother of mine, pardon and mercy. Pray one Hail Mary and one Glory.

Major Feast Days of Blessed Virgin Mary

- | | | |
|------------|---|----------------------------------|
| January 1 | - | Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God |
| January 8 | - | Our Lady of Prompt Succor |
| February 2 | - | Presentation of the Lord |

Mariology

February 11	-	Our Lady of Lourdes
March 25	-	Annunciation
May 13	-	Our Lady of Fatima
May 31	-	Visitation
June 27	-	Our Mother of Perpetual Help
August 15	-	Assumption (<i>Holy Day of Obligation</i>)
August 22	-	Queenship of Mary
September 8	-	Birth of Mary
September 12	-	The Most Holy Name of Mary
September 15	-	Our Lady of Sorrows
October 7	-	Our Lady of the Rosary
November 21	-	Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
December 8	-	Immaculate Conception *
December 12	-	Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Month of Mary is May.

The Month of the Rosary is October.

The Feast of the Immaculate Heart is the Saturday following the Second Sunday after Pentecost.

The First Saturday of each Month is also dedicated to Marian Devotions.

Some Approved Marian Apparitions

The Church does not require belief in any apparition or other private revelation. However, she does exercise her maternal judgment for the protection of the faithful in declaring some apparitions to be inauthentic, others to be “worthy of belief.” Investigations into alleged apparitions are rigorous. The three which follow have been judged worthy of belief, and devotions related to them have been encouraged by the truth. Each has miracles associated with it which are unexplainable by the best scientists in the world, as testimony to its authenticity.

Lourdes

Our Lady appeared 18 times at Lourdes, in the Pyrenees mountains in southern France, in 1858, to Bernadette Soubirous, a fourteen year old peasant girl. A spring appeared there which feeds the baths at the shrine today. Many miraculous healings are reported from bathing in the waters. The fact that there is no spread of infection, even though no sanitary precautions are taken when people with all sorts of diseases take baths there, is a marvel in itself. Many miracles take place when the Blessed Sacrament passes in procession during the great pilgrimages. In passing, we notice that this fact testifies to the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist there, a Presence which only the Catholic Church has, and only the Catholic Church teaches. There is a medical bureau there, to which any qualified M. D. can come to check alleged cures. Early in this century, Dr. Alexis Carrel came to scoff, but was converted instead. The Church's demands for checking and proof of alleged miracles are so stringent that in the more than a century since 1858 only a few more than 60 miracles have been approved. Madame Bire in 1908 came there, blind because her optic nerve was withered; she regained her sight when the Blessed Sacrament passed. But when the Doctors inspected her eyes, they found she was able to see even though the nerve was still withered - arranged, doubtless, to keep anyone from saying it was a case of suggestion. The nerve did recover within a few weeks.

Guadalupe

On December 9, 1531 an Aztec Indian, Juan Diego, saw the Virgin Mary near Mexico City. She put her image on his cloak, a cloak still to be seen in the great shrine of Guadalupe. The fiber of the cloak should have disintegrated in about 30 years, but is still sound. Scientific checks find that the process of impressing the image is nothing known to science. And there are images in the eyes of the picture of several persons, who probably were present when the image appeared. The images are threefold, just as they would be found in a living eye (following the Purkinje Sanson Law).

Mariology

Fatima

Momentous for our own times is the shrine of Fatima Portugal, where Our Lady appeared 6 times to three small children, each less than 10 years of age. She asked for penance, the Rosary, and Immaculate Heart devotion, saying that on these conditions, God would keep Russia from spreading her errors throughout the world - this was said at a time when Russia was still greatly religious, under the Czar. The great miracle of the sun dancing on Oct 13, 1917 was seen by thousands, including nonbelievers. The clothing of all had been drenched from heavy rain, yet when the sun settled down again, all clothing was found to be dry. Hallucinations do not dry clothing.