The Heart of Mary in the Latin Tradition: From the Seventh to the Sixteenth Century

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. FROM THE 7th TO THE 10th CENTURY  
   Bede the Venerable († 735)  
      96  
   Other Texts  
      97  
      *Tecum corde*  
      98  
      Pseudo-Jerome  
      99

II. THE 11th CENTURY  
   Other Formulations  
      100  
   Radbod II († 1098)  
      100  
   Saint Anselm of Canterbury († 1109)  
      101  
   Ralph of Escures († 1122)  
      102

III. FROM THE 11th TO THE 12th CENTURY  
   Saint Bruno of Asti († 1123)  
      102  
   Eadmer († 1124)  
      104  
   Francon († 1134)  
      105  
   William of Malmesbury († 1145)  
      106  
   Rupert of Deutz († 1129)  
      106

IV. THE 12th CENTURY  
   Hugh of Saint-Victor († 1141)  
      110  
   Richard of Saint-Victor († 1173)  
      111  
   Saint Bernard († 1153)  
      112  
   Arnold of Bonneval († 1156?)  
      114  
   Amadeus of Lausanne († 1159)  
      115  
   Saint Aelred of Rievaulx († 1167)  
      116  
   Godfrey of Admont († 1165)  
      117  
   Eckbert of Schoenau († 1184)  
      120  
   Other texts  
      123  
      Guerric of Igny († 1157)  
      123  
      *Trudperter Hohelieth* (ca. 1160)  
      124  
      Peter of Celle († 1183)  
      125  
      Alanus of Lille († 1203)  
      125

V. THE 13th CENTURY  
   Richard of Saint-Laurent (ca. 1230)  
      127
Hugh of Saint-Cher († 1263) 130
Saint Bonaventure († 1274) 130
Conrad of Saxony (Speculum) († 1279) 132
James of Milan (Stimulus amoris) 133
Helfta 134
Mechtild of Hackeborn († 1299) 135
Mechtild of Magdebourg († 1282-94?) 136
Saint Gertrude the Great († 1301-2) 139
Two "Mariale" 142
Pseudo-James of Voragine († 1298) 142
Servasactus da Faenza, O.F.M. († ca 1300) 143
= Pseudo-Ernest of Prague 143

VI. THE 14th CENTURY 145
Ramon Lull († 1316) 146
Saint Bridget of Sweden († 1373) 146
Ludolph the Carthusian († 1378) 149

VII. THE 15th CENTURY 151
Gerson († 1429) 152
Saint Bernardine of Sienna († 1444) 154
Saint Antoninus of Florence († 1459) 156
Denis the Cathusian († 1471) 158
Arnold Bostius († 1499) 160
Pseudo-Anselm of Lucca (? 160

VIII. THE 16th CENTURY 162
John Mombaer († 1501) 162
Saint Thomas of Villanova († 1555) 163
Saint Peter Canisius († 1597) 166
A Prayer to the Heart of Mary 169

CONCLUSIONS: The Progressive Development of Terms, Themes, Titles 170
THE HEART OF MARY IN THE LATIN TRADITION
FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY*

The devotion to the Heart of Mary has evolved into and is now better known as devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. There is an historical difference between the two titles, since only the first one, for centuries, expressed directly the Bible texts: Mary "pondering . . . in her heart" (Lk 2:19) and Mary "kept . . . in her heart" (Lk 2:51). In the past two centuries, various factors contributed to the popularity of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: the confraternity founded in its honor by the pastor of Notre Dame des Victoires at Paris, Abbé Charles E. Dufriche Desgenettes (1836); the devotion to the Miraculous Medal; the Fatima movement (after 1917); and the apparitions of Our Lady of Beauraing (1932-33). In 1942, Pius XII consecrated the whole world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The devotion to the Heart of Mary developed during the Middle Ages. Thus, Saint John Eudes inherited a long tradition when he wrote the first liturgical Office and Mass in honor of the Heart of Mary (1643). Various authors have sought to summarize this tradition. Saint John Eudes (1601-1680) collected numerous texts.1 Father Bover, in 1944, produced a more elaborate anthology. In 1954, Father Angelus Walz published a study gathering Dominican texts.2 Critical works have verified the authentic attribution of many texts, as can be seen in the 'Clavis patrum

* Revised English translation of a report given in French at the "International Theological Symposium on the Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary," sponsored by His Eminence Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila (Philippines), on September 16-19, 1986, at Fatima (Portugal). In the notes, some Latin texts are more complete than their translation.


2 J. M. BOVER, "Origen y desenvolvimiento de la devoción al Corazon de María en los Santos Padres y escritores eclesiásticos," Estudios Marianos (hereafter, EstMar), 4 (1944): 59-171. This study guided our own work, except that several attributions had to be corrected. See also, P. Angelus WALZ, "De corde Mariae testes dominicaní," in Angelicum, 31 (1954): 307-51.
latinorum' or in the corrective tables of Glorieux,⁴ and of Laurentin⁵ for Migne. The works of specialists continue to be published: critical editions, and research monographs focused on this tradition. From among these, we will frequently cite the works of H. Barré († 1968).⁶ This study will treat the Latin tradition from Bede the Venerable to the sixteenth century, explaining the development of the doctrine into a devotion. There are several different periods.

I. FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE TENTH CENTURY

The writers of this period were guided by the evangelical texts and some patristic texts that mentioned the heart of Mary. They commented on Luke 2:9, 51: "Mary kept and meditated all these things in her heart (kardia)." They also made commentaries on Luke 2:35: "a sword shall pierce your soul (psyche)." Other texts—in particular some from the Old Testament that speak of the heart as the principle of life with God—played their role. The thought of Saint Ambrose, who recommended to consecrated virgins the imitation of the Virgin Mary, was frequently quoted (e.g., such phrases as: "The Virgin was . . . humble of heart . . .,"⁷ "and as Mary did: meditate in your heart"⁸). Saint Augustine inspired a deeper theological reflection by his comparison between Mary's physical maternity and her spiritual dispositions: "The maternal proximity would have been of no profit to Mary if she had not carried Christ more blessedly in her heart than in her flesh."⁹ This is another form of "first in her spirit and then in her womb." This attention to the heart, to the interior dispositions of the Mother of God, was slowly developed. Much later, Saint John Eudes would indicate, in his long commentary on this text, that Mary carried Jesus in her womb for only nine months, "but she carried him in her heart from the first of her life, and she will carry him there eternally."¹⁰

⁵ R. LAURENTIN, Cour traité de théologie mariale (Paris, 1953), pp. 119-73: "Table rectificative des pièces mariales inauthentiques ou discutées dans Migne" (hereafter, "Table rectificative").
⁸ Id., De institutione virginitis, XVI, 103: Et sicut sancta faciebat Maria . . ., conferas in corde tuo (PL 16, 330).
⁹ St. AUGUSTINE, De sancta virginitate, III.—3: . . . materna propinquitas nihil Mariae profisset, nisi felicius Christum corde quam carne gestasset (PL 40, 398).
¹⁰ EUDES, Œuvres complètes, t. 7, liv. 7, chap. 1, p. 245.
Bede the Venerable

Saint Bede the Venerable (c. 673-735), the great scholar of the Benedictine abbey of Jarrow, is without doubt the most important link with this tradition that the Middle Ages received at the beginning of the eighth century. He inherited it and enriched it. In his commentary on the text of Luke 2:19 (“Mary kept all these words meditating them in her heart”), he explained with insightful precision: Mary not only “considered them in her heart,” “kept them in her heart,” but she also put together (conferens) what she read in the Scriptures, in the Prophets, and she compared these among themselves and with what she then saw, what she then experienced. For example, Isaiah predicted: “Behold the virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son” (Is 7:14), and, on the other hand, the angel Gabriel had said: “Behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son” (Lk 1:31). The heart of Mary is her obedient faith; she is a daughter of the divine covenant with Israel, and in her heart she clings to the divine realization of these prophecies.  

The phrase “she kept all these things” (Lk 2:51), at the end of the infancy narratives, received a similar commentary. Mary kept all these things in her heart: “she ruminated about them, so to speak, and scrutinized them with great care.” She taught temperance of the mouth and of the body; she preserved in her heart the proofs of the faith. According to the rights of her virginity, she protected by her silence “the mysteries of Christ,” while meditating on them with a virginal heart. She had read the Scriptures and now they were fulfilled. Her child was the son promised to David. He was born in Bethlehem Ephrata. The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 had been fulfilled in her: “The


12 Ibid. [Lk 2:51]: Et mater eius conservabat omnia uerba haec in corde suo. Siue quae intellexit seu quae necludum intellegere uerba evangelii potuit omnia suo pariter in corde quasi ruminanda et diligentius scrutanda recondebat. Discamus ergo sanctae virgini in omnibus castitatem quae non minus ore pudica quam corpore argumenta fidei conservabat in corde (CChr 120:74; PL 92, 350C).
virgin will conceive and bring forth a son.”  

She venerated these mysteries in the depths of her heart (in sui pectoris abdito). When Elizabeth, however, under the revelation of the Holy Spirit, proclaimed these mysteries, Mary opened the heavenly treasure that she kept in her heart and the Magnificat sprang forth from it. 

Finally, in the sword predicted by Simeon (Lk 2:35) that would pierce her soul (the word heart is not used), Bede saw foreshadowed Mary’s suffering during her Son’s passion.

Other Texts

Tecum corde

Some other commentaries on the Annunciation elaborated the text “the Lord is with you” (Dominus tecum, Lk 1:28) through formulations that indicate the different modes of the presence of God in Mary, above all in her heart: “The Lord is with you: with you in your heart . . . with you in your womb, with you for aid” (Dominus tecum: tecum in corde . . . tecum in utero, tecum in auxilio). This text is found in an African homily, by a Pseudo-Augustine, dating from the end of the sixth or the


14 Id., Hom. 4, In Adventu (Luc. I, 39-55): Audita ergo responsione Elisabeth qua eam beatam inter mulieres praedicavit matrem domini sui cognominauit fide forte laudavit ad cuius ingressum se ipsam cum filio spiritu sancto relepam esse signauit non amplius tacere potuit dona quae perceperat sed quae semper animo geraebat ubi aptum tempus inuenit etiam devotionis professione patefecit. Namque ut urginalem decebat pudorem acceptum diuinitus oraculum aliquamdui silentio tegetat archanum mysterii caelestis in sui pectoris abdito venerabatur occultum expectabat reuerenter donec ipse donorum distributor quid sibi doni specialis tribuisset quid secreti reuelasset quandocumque uellet ostenderet. At postquam eadem quae sibi erant carismata praestita per alios spiritu reuelante esse patet facta cernebat mox etiam ipsa thesaurum caele quod in corde seruabat aperuit. Ait ergo: Magnificat . . . (CChr 122:25; PL 94, 17-18).

15 Id., In Lucam I [Lk 2:34-35] (CChr 120:68; PL 92, 346C).

16 Pseudo-AUGUSTINE, Appendix, Serm. 120, 3 (PL 39, 1985).
beginning of the seventh century, according to H. Barré. 17 The text is beautiful; it contains the adjuration that Saint Bernard later would develop with such great eloquence. This same Lukan text was taken up again by another Pseudo-Augustine (App., Serm. 194) that H. Barré also mentioned among three homilies In Natale sanctae Mariae which were composed after the establishment of the feast of August 15 in Rome during the seventh century. These sermons are mentioned in the homilies of Alanus of Farfa (between 744-757). 18 One sermon, in addition to referring to tecum corde (col. 2105), contains the famous final prayer to Mary: "Holy Mary, assist the unfortunate ones, help the fearful, restore the tearful, pray for the people . . . ." 19 In fact, the homily is made up of a variety of quotations; H. Barré gives some references. 20 It is falsely attributed to Saint Fulbert of Chartres, in a sermon for the Annunciation. 21 The text was also taken up by Rabanus Maurus (856) in his adaptation of the same Pseudo-Augustine sermon (App., Serm. 194), for his homily In Natale sanctae Mariae. 22 That commentary on Dominus tecum: tecum in corde . . . was further developed during the twelfth century, for example, by Radulfus Ardens († ca. 1200), a great preacher who left us more than 200 homilies. In a sermon on the Annunciation, he made the following commentary: [the angel says] "the Lord is with you. With you by essence, with you by grace, with you by incarnation; the Lord is with you in your heart, with you in your mouth, with you in action, with you in your womb . . . ." The homily ends with a prayer to Mary: "Merciful sovereign, reconcile us with the one who always is with you, so that through you he deigns to be with us." 23 All these texts specifically mention the presence of God in the heart of Mary at the angelic annunciation of the incarnation of the Son of God.

Pseudo-Jerome

The Pseudo-Jerome, author of the letter on the Assumption Cogitis me, written at the beginning of the ninth century and sometimes attributed to Paschase Radbert († ca. 865), mentioned the love, the desire, that filled the heart of Mary for her son, and used it to explain the Assumption of the soul of Mary beyond the angels: She was lifted up over the choirs of angels so she could see the beauty and the face of the

17 BARRÉ, Prières anciennes, p. 29.
18 Ibid., p. 38.
19 Pseudo-AUGUSTINE, App., Serm. 194: Sancta Maria, succurre miseris, juva pusillanimes, refove flebiles, ora pro populo . . . (PL 39, 2107A).
20 BARRÉ, Prières anciennes, p. 41.
21 Pseudo-FULBERT, Serm. 9 (PL 141, 336-340).
22 RABANUS MAURUS, Hom. 28 (PL 110, 54C).
23 RADULFUS ARDENS, Serm. 16, In Annunciatione Beatae Virginis: Dominus, inquit [angelus], tecum. Tecum per essentiam, tecum per gratiam, tecum per amorem, tecum per incarnacionem, tecum Dominus in corde, tecum in ore, tecum in opere, tecum in ventre. Ili . . . qui semper est tecum, nos, piissima domina, reconcilia, ut per te dignetur esse etiam nobiscum (PL 155, 1360BC).
Savior whom she had loved, whom she had longed for with all the desire of her heart. These texts, all together, present a doctrine of God's presence in Mary.

II. THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Other Formulations

Before continuing with this documentation, it seems useful to note other expressions—of biblical origin—used to invoke the intercession, the mercy, of Mary. In a long anonymous supplication to Mary that develops the prayer of Fulbert (Bishop of Chartres from 1006 to 1028), we find an image that prepares for the invocation to the heart of Mary: “Open the womb of your mercy by your intercession for me.” It is said in analogy with the divine mercy that Luke, for example, describes in the Benedictus: *per viscera misericordiae Dei nostri* (1:78): the merciful womb of our God. The merciful face (of God) inspires another anonymous prayer: “O most beloved and most holy ever Virgin Mary, here I stand guilty before the face of your mercy.” Finally, the image of the merciful hands is also biblical. Anselm of Lucca writes in a prayer for Countess Mathilde of Tuscany: “O most glorious sovereign, I fly to your mildness and to your singular mercy: into your most holy hands I commend my soul and my body” (cf. Ps 30:5). The hands of Mary, the face of Mary, her *viscera misericordiae* designate the person of the Blessed Virgin in her merciful love for us sinners. She imitates the mercy of God, the mercy that we all should imitate (Lk 6:36).

Radbod II

Radbod II, Bishop of Noyon and Tournai (†1098), left us a sermon on the Annunciation in which he speaks about the heart of Mary, describing how the Blessed Virgin was troubled at the greeting of the angel. His commentary has a personal character which other writers would also take up. Mary could not hide from the heavenly messenger what she thought, what she pondered in her heart: *quidve in corde suo revolverit.* Although a simple mention, this statement indicates a specific
attention to the text of the Gospel. The angel read the perplexity in the heart of the Virgin, the questioning which she had not spoken aloud: *Imo ad cogitata tanquam ad manifestata [Gabriel] respondit*. The choice of the term “heart” was evidently drawn from Luke 2:19, *conferens in corde suo*.

Saint Anselm of Canterbury

Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) is another major link in our Western tradition. This contemplative theologian united—with a rare genius—a consuming desire for God to a humble, rigorous use of all the resources of human intelligence: *fides quaerens intellectum*.

We see in Migne an entire collection of prayers compiled under Anselm’s name, and, among these, some addressed to Mary. The critical work of Dom Wilmart

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and of Dom F. S. Schmitt

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determined the authentic prayers. Among these are three *Orationes ad Mariam*. While these prayers do not invoke the heart of Mary, they had considerable importance for Marian devotion because they taught the disciples of Anselm to contemplate the mutual love that unites Jesus and Mary and also to live from it. Anselm’s invocation became a classic:

> Therefore, good Son, I ask you through the love with which you love your mother, that as you truly love her and want her to be loved, so give me the grace to love her truly. Good mother, I ask you through the love by which you love your son, that as you truly love him and want him to be loved, so ask for me the grace to love him truly.

Let us also remember how Anselm formulated with precision the foundations of Marian doctrine and devotion:

> Nothing is equal to Mary, nothing except God is greater than Mary. God gave to Mary his son, the only one begotten from his heart as equal to him whom he loved as himself, and from Mary he made for himself a son, not another, but the same one, so that naturally he would be one and the same common son of God and Mary.


Ralph of Escures

Anselm’s successor as Bishop of Canterbury, Ralph (or Radulfus) of Escures or Turbine (†1122)—who first was Bishop of Rochester and before that Abbot of Saint-Martin de Seez (Normandy) in 1089-1100—wrote a Marian homily for the feast of the Assumption when he was still in Normandy. This sermon became the most important of the Pseudo-Anselmian collection: *Intravit Jesus in castellum*, based on the text of Luke 10:38. In it Ralph quotes Luke 2:19, *conferens in corde suo*. Making a comparison between the Virgin Mary and Mary of Bethany listening to Christ, he explains how Christ was in the Blessed Virgin as “power and wisdom of God” (1 Cor 2:3). Consequently, as he expresses it: “The power of God, the wisdom of God and all the treasures of wisdom and science were in Mary... She kept all the words of the angels, of the shepherds, of the magi, and also of her own son, meditating on them in her heart” (Lk 2:19). Christ, the Word of God, dwelt in the heart of Mary; there she kept the riches of this Word: “Never did anyone taste, as did Mary, how delightful God is” (Ps 33:9).

III. FROM THE ELEVENTH TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY

Saint Bruno of Asti

The twelfth century is the great “Marian” century of the Middle Ages, but it is difficult to separate clearly from the preceding century, especially in its last stages. The disciples of Anselm, in particular, bridged the two centuries. The Benedictine tradition was, of course, continuous. Saint Bruno of Asti, Abbot of Segni (†1123), commented on the Annunciation by using Psalm 4:11-12 (“Listen, my daughter... incline your ear...”). He transforms these words into an exhortation of David to Mary: “Listen, he says, daughter of my race... See and understand and receive the Word in your heart and in your womb.” Here is an example of the tradition of adjurations to Mary to obtain her consent. Commenting on Luke 2:19 (*conferens in corde suo*), Saint Bruno notes that Mary kept in her heart all that she heard about

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35 RADULFUS OF ESCURES, *Hom. 9, In Evangel. secundum Lucam...* (Luc. 19, 38): Ergo Dei virtus et Dei sapientia, et omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae in Maria... Haec conservabat omnia verba angelorum, pastorum, magorum, nec non ipsius filii sui, conferens in corde suo (Luc. 2, 19) (PL 158, 649A).  
36 Ibid.: Nemo unquam sicut ipsa gustavit quam suavis est Dominus (Psal. 33, 9).  
Jesus and thus she could teach it to the apostles for the evangelization of all the world: "O most wise mother, . . . who collected in her heart all these words, kept them for us and confided them to her memory so that later under her teaching . . . they would be written, preached in all the world, announced to all the nations. The evangelists learned them at her school, they wrote them under her dictation . . ." It was her treasure: "And his mother kept all these words in her heart (Lk 2:51). If she had not kept them we would not have them. For we received them from her treasury." 38 It is to the heart of Mary that we owe the knowledge of these mysteries that she kept and meditated upon, so that we receive them from the treasure that she had gathered: conservabat, conferens in corde suo (cf. Lk 2:19). In a commentary on Luke 10:38ff. (Intravit Jesus in quoddam castellum), the story of Martha and Mary receiving Jesus (that was the Gospel of the Mass for the Assumption), Bruno gives the classical explanation about the active and contemplative life. He shows that the Mother of Christ excelled more than all others in both types of life. If Mary of Bethany is an example for the contemplative life because she listened to the Lord, the Blessed Virgin is a better example by far, since she kept and meditated upon the Word in her heart. She kept it for us so that we can now hear it, read it. She is the one who chose the better part:

For this virgin, the most blessed among creatures, kept more than all the others the privileges of both lives: active and contemplative. She also, like Martha, and even better than Martha, received Christ not only in her house but even into the gates of her womb. She conceived him, she begot him, she brought him forth, she carried him and, more than Martha, and more frequently, she served him. Therefore, as did Mary of Bethany, she listened to his word, and not only listened but meditated about it in her heart, and kept it for us to be read, to be heard. For it is written, "Mary kept all these words pondering them in her heart" (Lk 2:19). She deserved to contemplate and know Jesus more, not only according to his humanity but even according to his divinity. Therefore she has chosen the best part that will not be taken away from her. 39


Eadmer († 1124), secretary to and eminent disciple of Anselm, in his praise of the Blessed Virgin, De excellentaiia Beatae Mariae, describes the Annunciation by means of a comparison—for which he excuses himself—with the preparations which we, in our earthly customs, make for the coming of some important person. If we honor in such a way a prominent visitor, he asks, what can we then imagine about the preparations of everything good that took place for the coming of the heavenly and eternal King in the heart of the most consecrated Virgin (sacratissimae), who was going to give him not only a temporary hospitality in her body, but even to beget him from her own substance when he would become man? 40 Despite this admiration for the work of God in the heart of Mary, Eadmer still respects the opinion of his master, Anselm; he regards Mary as “born in sin” and “purified by her faith” at the Annunciation (PL 158, 451). His text, nonetheless, is of interest:

The heart of Mary was so well purified from all sin—if something still remained in her of sin, either original or present—that the Spirit of God truly could rest totally upon her . . . and accept her more agreeably than any holocaust through the obedience of this very chaste and simple heart to the will of God; and give to the son of God a body taken from her, when the power of the Most High would take her under his shadow. 41

But let us not forget that Eadmer later defended the Immaculate Conception of Mary in his Tractatus de Concepcione Sanctae Mariae, prepared for the new solemnity that, in his time, was celebrated in England in honor of the conception of Mary in the womb of Ann. There he explains the unique excellence of the person of the Virgin Mother of God. It is not just some admiration for a great function:

God has conferred this excellence upon the Virgin Mary, since he conceived for her an adherence to Himself by the purity of her heart and her body, that exceeds that of any other creature. O fortunate adherence! O adherence so fortunate! to adhere to the only one who really is, the only one who is supremely, the one who never abandons, who never deceives anyone who adheres to him with a sincere heart! 42

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40 EADMER, De excellentaiia B. Mariae, cap. 3, De annunl. angelica: Quod si talis apparatus fit pro adventu terreni hominis et momentaneae potestatis, quais apparatus omnis boni putamus fiebat pro adventu caelestis Regis et aeterni in corde sacratissimae Virginis, quae illum non solum erat in semet transitive hospitatura, sed etiam ex substantia sua factum hominem paritura? (PL 159, 560-561).

41 Ibid.: . . . tenemus fide . . . ita mundatum cor illius, ut vere super eam Spiritus Dei . . . totus requiesceret, ipsam voluntati Dominicae castissimo ac simplici corde obedientem, omni holocausto suavius acceptaret (PL 159, 561CD).

42 Id., Tractatus de conceptione sanctae Mariae (ed. H. Thurston and Th. Slater [Friburgi Brisgo-
The heart of Mary is of an absolute purity, as the seat of this sublime adherence to God. Thus, we understand that at the Annunciation her heart, obedient to God, was more agreeable to the Holy Spirit than all holocausts. To explain the sword predicted by Simeon, Eadmer followed the tradition that saw the realization of this prophecy in the sorrow of the Mother at the foot of the Cross. Hers was a martyrdom more painful than any corporal torture: "Any cruelty that has been inflicted upon the bodies of martyrs was light, and even nothing, in comparison with your passion that pierced by its immensity the depths of your very generous heart." 43

Francon

Francon, Abbot of Afflighem from 1122 to his death in 1134, was an excellent preacher. He incorporated two Marian sermons into his great work on grace. There he explains that God, from all eternity, had chosen Mary as his spouse and prepared her as his temple. In his commentary on the Annunciation, Francon unites the nuptial theme to the one of the history of salvation. Mary is the bride and the mother of her Lord: "The Lord is with you. In an admirable and astonishing manner, the same Lord is the bridegroom with his bride and is the son from his mother. With the bride, the bridegroom is creating a new man: a son from his mother, manifesting himself as the new man." 44 When Mary hears the greeting of Gabriel she ponders it; as a prudent virgin, she weighs in the "scale of her heart" the words of the angel; she examines the quality and the manner of this greeting: qualitatem ac modum salutationis in libra cordis ut prudens examinat. The words of the angel are transformed into an exhortation to Mary. For the Holy Spirit surely had given to the most pure heart of the Virgin such revelations and many others that the angel did not say. 45 The heart of Mary responded to the grace of God without any hesitation, without doubt. The Magnificat surged forth, expressing the great jubilation of the heart of Mary; for

viae, 1904], pp. 32-33), no. 25: Hanc excellentiam contulit deus virgini Mariae, eo quod illam pudicitia cordis et corporis sibi prae omni creatura intellexit adhaerere. O felix haerere! o haerere felix! haerere illi qui solus vere est, qui solus summe est, qui numquam deficit ulii, qui numquam decipit ulla sibi non ficto corde haerentem! Huic, pia domina, quoniam, ut dixi, adhaesisti, haesi et ipse tibi, et modo quo nec dulcius nec dignius potuit adhaerere. Quid enim inter duos dulcius, aut dignius valet esse quam esse matris ad filium, vel filii ad matrem?

43 Id. De excellenlia B.M., cap. 5: ... quidquid enim crudelitatis inflictum est corporibus martyrum leve fuit, aut potius nihil, comparatione ipsis tuae passionis, quae nimium sua immensitate transfixit cuncta penetralia tui benignissimi cordis (PL 159, 567B).

44 FRANCON, De gratia Dei, Lib. VI: Dominus tecum. Miro ac stupendo modo idem cum sponsa sponsus; idem ex matre filius. Cum sponsa sponsus, novum creando hominem; ex matre filius, novum seipsum exhibendo hominem (PL 166, 745C).

45 Ibid.: His et aliis hujusmodi, immo longe alii, et si non ab angeo dictis, a superventuro tamen Spiritu sancto mundissimo cordi Mariae inspiratis fidel adhibet dictis, nihil haesitat, nihil dubitat (747BC).
she saw great deeds, she felt great things occurring in her, while being entirely penetrated by the presence of the divinity of her Son. Mary fulfills perfectly the first commandment: loving the Son of God above all, with her whole heart, with her whole soul, with her whole spirit (Mt 22:37).

William of Malmesbury

For William of Malmesbury († 1145), this love between Mother and Son is indeed a unique, incomparable gift of God. As H. Barré has explained it, the *De quatuor virtutibus* ... is part of a more important work written by William of Malmesbury. It is the first part of *De miraculis*, a presentation of the virtues of Mary, her assumption, and other privileges which are the basis for her power of intercession (for her miracles). Mary enjoyed a unique memory. She made known all that she alone knew about her Son. This is why we say about her, *Maria conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo*. She deserved to be called *apostolorum apostola et evangelistarum evangelista*. Consequently, we all owe her the full knowledge of our salvation.

Rupert of Deutz

For our purposes, the most important writer at the beginning of the twelfth century is Rupert († 1129), Abbot of Deutz, near Cologne. He was the first to give to the Song of Songs a general Marian interpretation; he made it a commentary about the love of Christ for Mary. To appraise the place that this writer gave to the heart of Mary in his work, we have the very complete study of Joseph Lécuyer, “Rupert de Deutz et la dévotion au Cœur de Marie.” Rupert speaks a little about the heart of Mary in all his works and indicates its role in the history of salvation; this shows a theological orientation close to our modern methods. J. Lécuyer, therefore, is right when he presents the thought of Rupert according to the great stages of this history.

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46 Id., *De gratia Dei*, Lib. VII: ... beata mater, praesentia divinitatis filii tota perfusa, magna videns, magna sentiens, *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*, magno cordis jubilo decantat (PL 166, 754C).

47 Ibid.: ... beata mater, quia amori dilecti filii nihil creaturarum praeferre poterat, pro incomparabili illo dono singulariter sibi attributo, sicut ex lege didicerat, ex toto corde, et ex tota anima, et ex omni mente sua Dominum magnificat (755A).


49 Ibid., p. 235.

50 WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY, *De quatuor virtutibus quae fuerunt in B. Maria*: cap. 3 *De prudentia* ... : Debet ergo ei totus mundus salvationis suae plenam notitiam (PL 159, 582).

of our salvation. First, Rupert goes back to God, to the heart of the Father who sent his Word to earth. In a commentary about the works of the Holy Trinity as described in the Scriptures, Rupert explains that the evangelist Matthew presented the genealogy of the Word-made-flesh more according to faith than according to flesh. Because the Church existed since Adam through the faith of those who accepted the Word of God, the faith response to the Father forms the unity of the history of salvation, the unity of the history of the Church from the Old to the New Testament. Matthew revealed this mystery of unity in the genealogy of Jesus. Rupert adds as an explanation: "This Word that the faithful Virgin brought forth according to the flesh, and nursed with her milk, she first conceived in her heart and brought forth by her word through her faith." Thus he continues with the quotation of Isaiah 66:7-8: "Before the pangs of birth, she brought forth a son. Who ever heard such a thing? Is the earth able to bring forth in one day an entire nation all at once, as did Sion?" Who is this Sion? For Rupert, Sion is at the same time the faithful Israel of the Old Covenant as well as Mary, the mother of the Savior and the Church:

Who is this Sion . . . if not this blessed generation who before hearing Christ according to the flesh, through the womb of the Virgin Mary, brought forth this same man . . . and afterwards, through the preaching of the apostles brought forth, so to speak in one day, meaning in a short time, the multitude of the believers spread throughout the world?

From the heart of the Father, the Word—our salvation—was sent to the hearts of men. The saints of the Old Testament conceived the Word of God in their heart, through their faith, and have brought him forth by their words: "What was it for Moses and the Prophets to compose the Holy Scripture which is the Word of God, if not to conceive Christ in their hearts through the prophetic Spirit and give him birth by their words?" After the Ascension, through the apostles, Sion brings forth the nations. In this history of salvation, Mary, the faithful virgin, is Sion par excellence. Mary gathered in her heart the whole prophetic revelation: " . . . all the prophets,
because all the prophets and all the scriptures came together in your consciousness when the Holy Spirit came to you."  

Indeed, the Father introduced Mary to all his secrets.

In the commentary on the Song of Songs 1:4 (*Introdxut me, Rex, in cellaria sua*), Rupert lets Mary ask: "Who placed totally in me His Word that was and is in his heart, how did He not grant me also with Him everything?"  

The preceding context quoted the *conservabat in corde suo* of Luke. This latter text inspired Rupert in his many commentaries about Mary's keeping and meditating the divine secrets. These secrets meant the mysteries of the Old and the New Testaments: "I kept for you all the new and the old mysteries of the Old and the New Testaments, meditating them in my heart."  

The future also was revealed to the Blessed Virgin. The prophecy of Simeon announced the sword that would pierce her heart. Rupert comments on it when he explains the verse (1:13) *Fasciculus myrrhae dileclus meus mihi, inter ubera mea commorabitur*. Mary could say when she nursed her child: "For I was a prophetess . . . He was tied to my exterior breasts, he was nursed by these same breasts, and at the same time, between my breasts, in the innermost depths of my heart aware of the future, it was always evident by what death he was to die."  

Mary was a prophetess, her maternal compassion began already during the infancy of Jesus. Nevertheless, she also knew that he would rise from the dead. If Christ announced this resurrection to his apostles, and even to his enemies, so much more so to his mother!

Rupert also believes in an appearance of the risen Jesus to his mother. In explaining the Divine Office for the celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord, he notes that Jesus appeared to Mary, and she kept all these facts in her heart as she had done from the beginning. Therefore, it is convenient to honor Mary also in these paschal celebrations (and so, of course, every Sunday): we go to Mary, mother...

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57 Id., *In Cantica Cant.*, Lib. 1 [1-2]: . . . prophetae omnes ad te accesserunt, quia prophetiae omnium, et Scripturae omnes in tuum sensum, cum superveniente in te Spiritu sancto, convenerunt (PL 168, 842A; CChrContMed 26:12).

58 Ibid., [3]: Qui enim Verbum suum, quod erat, et est in corde suo, mihi totum infudit, quomodo non etiam cum illo omnia donavit? (PL 168, 844BC; CChrContMed 26:16).

59 Id., *In Cantica Cant.*, Lib. 6: . . . omnia nova et vetera, omnia Veteris ac Novi Testamenti sacramenta servavi tibi, conferens in corde meo (PL 168, 950B; CChrContMed 26:156).

60 Id., *In Cantica Cant.*, Lib 1: Prophetissa namque eram . . . Ad ubera deforis stringebatur, et eisdem lactabatur uberibus, simulque inter ubera intus in corde futurorum praescio, semper parebat quali esset morte moriturus (PL 168, 856AB; CChrContMed 26:31-32).

61 Id., *In Cantica Cant.*, Lib. 6 (PL 168, 947CD; CChrContMed 26:154).

62 Id., *De divinis officiis . . .*, Lib. 7, cap. 25: Verissime ergo matri Filii resurgens apparuit, sed illa, ut ab initio coeperat, ita et nunc <conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo . . .> (PL 170, 206).
of our faith, who helps us by opening to us the memories of her heart. Rupert indicates here the mystical meaning that he gives to *conservabat omnia conferens in corde suo*. Mary kept the divine secrets without revealing them before the time chosen by God: "As long as the Son of Man had to remain a little lower than the angels, so long was it for the Blessed Virgin a time to be silent." In the silence of the Blessed Virgin, Rupert sees the grace of the mystical rest in God, according to the interpretation of Canticles 5:1, *Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat*. Mary holds the primacy, a role of magisterium in this contemplation: "Indeed many daughters, many souls, have rested in the same fashion . . . but you obtained the whole mastership in this rest and you hold the whole first place in this vigil of the heart." In order to express the unique qualities of the heart of Mary, he uses the declaration of Christ announcing to the poor that he was gentle and humble of heart (Mt 11:24). It is through her humility that the Blessed Virgin was pleasing to the Most High and attracted the Word: from the heart or the bosom of the Father (*cor vel sinu Patris*), into her heart and into her bosom (*in corde sive in ulero*).

The similitude of the two expressions indicates the double generation of the Incarnate Word: in God, in Mary; it underlines that in Mary we cannot separate the presence of Jesus in her womb from his presence in her heart. Thus, the doctrinal origin of the future devotion towards the heart of Mary is well marked: Mary is Theotokos (*corde sive utero*). After the Ascension, the Blessed Virgin understood that the time to speak had come, the time to reveal to the apostles that which they could not bear before. She was also teaching the other disciples, feeding Christ to them, with the knowledge of her heart about all the Scripture: *omnia nova et vetera . . .* But in this role of "teacher of the teachers," that is, of the apostles, Mary felt the pain of the absence of her Son each time she spoke about the facts of the past: "Each time I sensed deep in my heart, in my wounded spirit, what I now say, that he had

63 Ibid.: Maria, matre fidei nostrae adjuvante, id est, *omnia verba haec, quae hactenus conservabat in corde suo . . . > jam aperientе (208AB).
64 Id., *De gloria et honore Filii hominis super Malth., Lib.II*: Quandiu Filius hominis manere debuit minoratus paulo minus ab angelis, fere tandi fuit beatae Virgini tempus tacendi (PL 168, 1340B).
65 Id., *In Cantica Cant., Lib. 5*: Et quidem multae filiae sive multae animae taliter dormierunt, sed tu dormitionis hujus totum obtines magisterium et vigiliarum cordis totum tenes principatum (PL 168, 911AB; CChrContMed 26:106).
66 Id., *De laesionе virginitatis*, cap. 6: Domina nostra sanctа Maria . . . fuit enim praе cunctis mortalibus, imо praе omni creatura, tam angelica quam humana, mitis et humilis corde (PL 170, 551A).
68 Id., *In Cantica Cant., Lib. 6*: . . . omnia nova et vetera, omnia Veteris ac Novi Testamenti sacramenta servavi tibi, conferens in corde meo (Luc. 1), proferenda in tempore suo, in tempore opportuno (PL 168, 950B; CChrContMed 26:156).
69 Id., *In Cantica Cant., Lib. 1* (PL 168, 850A; CChrContMed 26:24).
turned away, he was gone; this recollection renewed for me the sense of the past and I felt more and more that he was no longer there, he was not visibly with us.” 70

Finally, Rupert addresses a prayer to Mary that she may reveal to those who are faithful to her her intimacy with God, what God was for her, present in her heart, in her womb:

Let your words run freely, and thus open your soul that silence is protecting; confide your secret—even briefly—to the trustful ears of faithful friends to tell us how and by what you pleased the Most High: who he has been for you, first in your heart or in your womb, afterwards in your life together, in your exchanges, while you nursed him at your breasts, while you carried him with trembling arms. 71

Although we still have no prayer to the heart of Mary, we are here not far away from the devotion that will honor the Blessed Virgin in her immaculate heart. Father Lécuyer underlines the interpretation Rupert brought to Mary’s opening the secrets of her heart to the apostles. In this, Rupert prepared a doctrine that Fr. Libermann would later formulate under the title “the eminently apostolic heart of Mary.” 72 In the same spirit, Fr. William Joseph Chaminade, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, founded two religious societies (the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary—Marianists) so that their members would be consecrated “apostles” of Mary. 73

IV. THE TWELFTH CENTURY

The great writers of this century all glorify the Mater Dei et Domina Nostra. Themes related to the heart of Mary are transmitted, developed. The doctrine becomes richer and, with Ekbert of Schoenau, it finds expression for the first time in a prayer addressed specifically to the immaculate heart of Mary.

70 Id., In Cantica Cant., Lib. 5: Toties quippe sensi profundo corde, vulnerata mente istud, quod nunc dico, quia declinaverat atque transierat, ipsa commemoratione horum sensum mihi renovante ut magis ac magis sentirem eum hic jam non esse, visibilibet non comparere (PL 168, 916D).
71 Id., In Cantica Cant., Lib. 1: Laxa vocis iter, et collum tuum silentio communitum pande interdum, et tutis auribus amicorum fidelium, vel breviter eloquendo committe secretum, ut dicas nobis, quomodo vel per quid Altissimo complacueris, qualis ille tibi fuerit, primum in corde sive in utero, deinde in convictu sive in colloquio, dum lactares uberibus, dum gestares cum ulnis tremendi-bus (PL 168, 854; CChrContMed 26:29).
Hugh of Saint Victor

Hugh of Saint Victor († 1141) insists on the Holy Spirit's work of love in the heart of Mary. In his *De virginitate B.M.*, explaining the doctrine of the virginal conception of Christ, Hugh of Saint Victor clarifies that the Spirit did not act as a father, participating in the son's generation with his substance, but he acted through the love by which he inflamed the heart of Mary:

Therefore Mary conceived from the Holy Spirit, not that she received from the substance of the Holy Spirit the seed for the childbirth but because, through the love and the operation of the Holy Spirit, nature supplied, from the flesh of the Virgin, the substance for this divine childbirth. For because in her heart, in which the love of the Holy Spirit burned in a singular way, the power of the Holy Spirit made marvelous deeds, therefore, in her flesh He also worked in the same way: as the love of the Spirit did not receive any companion in her heart, so the operation in her flesh had no example.

The *prius mente* of Saint Augustine stresses the priority of Jesus' presence in Mary's spirit. Hugh of Saint Victor deepens Augustine's intuition. He stresses not only a priority, but a causality. *Quia in corde . . . ideo in carne*: because through the Holy Spirit she conceived Jesus in the heart, therefore through the same Spirit she conceived him in the flesh. Furthermore, according to the theme of Bede, Mary kept the secrets of God as a wise, prudent virgin who obeyed the Spirit. However, when she heard that Elizabeth had received knowledge of the mystery from the Holy Spirit, Mary could no longer contain the Spirit, poured out in such fullness in the depths of her heart.

Richard of Saint Victor

We must restore to Richard of Saint Victor († 1173) the "One Hundred Sermons" published in Migne (PL 177, 899-1210) and attributed to Hugh of Saint Victor. According to the research of J. Chatillon, these sermons were composed by

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74 HUGH OF ST. VICTOR, *De B.M. virginitate. Libellus epistolarius*, cap. 2: *Concepit ergo Maria de Spiritu sancto, non quod de substantia Spiritus sancti semen partus acceperit, sed quia per amorem et operationem Spiritus sancti ex carne virginis divino partui natura substantiam ministravit. Nam quia in corde, quo amor Spiritus sancti singulariter ardebat, ideo in carne ejus virtus Spiritus sancti mirabilia faciebat. Et cujus dilectio in corde illius non suscepit socium, ejus operatio in carne illius non habebat exemplum (PL 176, 872AB).

75 Id., *Explanatio in Canticum B.M.* (PL 175, 416A).

76 Ibid.: *Tunc ait Maria: Magnificat anima mea Dominum. Non ergo amplius potuit se continere, cum Spiritum, quem intra cordis sui secreta tanta plenitudine redundantem sentiebat, per alieni oris claustra cernereet erupisse (PL 175, 416C).*

Richard, probably between 1147 and 1165. To celebrate the Assumption, Richard comments on the verses (in the Vulgate) of Ecclesiasticus 24:17-18: "like a garden of roses in Jericho." Drawing from an iconography that has inspired many writers and innumerable artists, he compares Mary to the rose. The red rose symbolizes the passion of Jesus and, for Mary, the compassion of her heart.

The compassion is in the heart, the passion in the body. Compassion is not visible, passion is manifest... The Mother of God, like the red flowers of Jericho [Eccli 24:18], shined in our failing world by her compassionate presence with an admirable and singular way. For "a sword pierced her soul" (Lk 2:35). Who could becomingly weigh what sword of suffering she supported when she saw her son pending and dying on the Cross?"

Saint Bernard

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux († 1153) is the Father of the Church of his period. Without opening new paths towards the devotion itself, he condenses, in well-coined sentences, the traditional affirmations that he uses concerning the heart of the Blessed Virgin. Commenting on the Annunciation, he follows the messianic Psalm 44 (11-12: Audi filia...). Mary listened to the divine message with faith and obeyed in her heart: Inclinavit aurem suam ad obedientiam, et cor suum ad disciplinam. In order to increase the joy of the one who will be proclaimed blessed for her faith, Gabriel announces to Mary that her relative Elizabeth has conceived a son in her old age. For it was necessary that Mary would be inflamed with joy and love in an eminent degree, she who was to conceive the Son of the dilectio of the Father with the joy of the Holy Spirit. It is a grace uniquely granted to the heart of Mary: "It is only in this very devoted and very joyful heart that such an abundance of meekness and happiness could be taken." It is through her generous faith in God that Mary is the most devoted, the most joyful in heart. It is this heart that will answer Fiat to the Word, to the Word of God who comes to save us. Thus Bernard takes up, in his turn, the theme of the invitation to consent; his text is probably the most beautiful that was written:

80 Id., Serm. 4, 6: Neque enim nisi in devotissimo corde atque hilarissimo tanta se capere poterat dulcedinis et alacritatis affluentia (S. Bernardi opera, 4:51-52; PL 183, 82).
Rejoice, daughter of Sion, exult, daughter of Jerusalem (cf. Zech 9:9). Since joy and happiness were granted to you because you listened, let us now hear your answer of joy that we all want . . . This is the supplication, O merciful Virgin, that Adam addresses to you in his affliction, with his miserable descendants excluded from paradise: Abraham, David and the other patriarchs, your ancestors, they all implore you . . . O Virgin! hurry to answer. O Our Lady! pronounce the word that is expected by all the earth, by the underworld and by the heavens. The King and universal Lord Himself wants this consent, as much as He desired your beauty, for He has proposed to you the salvation of the world . . . Open, O blessed Virgin! your heart to faith, your lips to confess it, your womb to the Creator . . . . 81

In this faith Mary addressed the Holy Trinity present in her. 82 In the incarnation of his Son, God operated three “combinations” or admirable unions: in the God-made-man, the union of the divine and human natures; in Mary, the maternity and the virginity and also the union of faith with a human heart. 83

The sermon of the twelve privileges of Mary exalts their three kinds: those of heaven, those of the flesh, those of the heart. Among the latter, Bernard exalts the martyrdom of the heart. 84 The martyrdom of the Mother near her dying crucified Son is commented on with the prophecy of Simeon (Lk 2:34-35), using the word anima rather than cor. But the compassion of Mary, her martyrdom, is a death with her Son: although she hoped in Jesus’ resurrection, she suffered this martyrdom. Bernard upbraids those who would express some surprise about what he was saying:

Where do you get this wisdom that you are more surprised by Mary suffering compassion than by the Son of Mary suffering the passion? He could die in his body, and why could she not die with him in her heart? It was realized by a love (caritas) [the


82 Id., De diversis, Serm. 52, De dono divinae Sapientiae: Manifestum est fuisse in corde Virginis fidei sanctae Trinitatis (PL 183, 675B).

83 Id., In vigilia Nativit. Domini, Serm. 3, 7: Tria opera, tres mixturas fecit omnipotens illa maiestas in assumptione nostrae carnis, ita mirabiliter singularia et singulariter mirabilia, ut talia nec facta sint, nec facienda sint amplius super terram. Coniuncta quippe sunt ad invicem Deus et homo, Mater et virgo, fides et cor humanum (S. Bernardi opera [Sermones I], 4:216-17: PL 183, 98AB). In this sermon, Bernard affirms the design of God: . . . nihil nos Deus habere voluit, quod per Mariae manus non transiret (PL 183, 100A).

biblical *agapē*] which nobody possessed in a greater degree; it was realized by a love [*agapē*] after which no other like it has existed. 85

The love of Mary is the most perfect realization of the first commandment. Bernard does a free interpretation of Hebrews 4:12: "the word of God is an arrow more penetrating than a two-edged sword." He applies the comparison to the love in the heart of Mary.

The love of Christ is also a selected arrow which not only pierced the soul of Mary, but truly pierced it through and through, so that no portion of this virginal heart (*pectore*) would remain empty of love; so that, on the contrary, Mary would love with all her heart, all her soul, all her strength, that she would be full of grace. Or also [this love of Christ] surely pierced her through and through ultimately to reach us all and that all of us might receive from this fullness and that Mary might become mother of the love of which the God-Love is the Father . . . 86

Arnold of Bonneval

The Benedictine Arnold, Abbot of Bonneval († 1156?) in the diocese of Chartres, 87 describes the eminent role of the heart of Mary at Calvary, closely associating to the redemptive role of Jesus the compassion of his mother. This is now called Mary’s role in the objective redemption. 88 Comparing Calvary to the tent—or tabernacle—that Moses erected in the desert as a focus for the relationship of the alliance between God and his people, a tent in which there were two altars, Arnold describes two altars at Calvary: one in the chest of Mary, the other on the Cross in the body of


86 Id., *Serm. super Cant.*, 29, IV, 8: Est et sagitta sermo Dei vivus et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti [Heb 4:12], de quo Salvator: *Non veni*, inquit, pacem mittere, sed gladium [Mt 10:34]. Est etiam sagitta electa amor Christi, quae Mariae animam non modo confexit, sed etiam pertransivit, ut nullam in pectore virginali particulam vacuam amore relinquaret, sed tota corde, tota anima, tota virtute dilerget, et esset gratia plena. Aut certe pertransivit eam, ut veniret usque ad nos, et de plentitudine illa omnes acciperemus, et fieret mater caritatis cuius pater est caritas Deus, parturien
ti et in sole ponens tabernaculum eius, ut Scriptura impletur quae dicit: *Dedi le in lucem gentium, ut sis salus mea usque ad extremum terrae* [Isa. 49:6]. Hoc enim impletum est per Mariam, quae in carne visibili edidit, quem invisibilem nec de carne, nec cum carne suscipiet. Et illa quidem in tota se grande et suave amoris vulner acceptit . . . (S. Bernardi opera *[Sermones super Cantica canicorum]*, 1:208; PL 183, 932D-933A).


Christ. In the De laudibus, Bonneval designates explicitly the heart of Mary: "There was only one will of Christ and Mary, one holocaust that both offered to God: one in Mary, in the blood of her heart; one in Jesus, in the blood of his flesh." At Calvary, Mary unites her passion, "the blood of her heart," to the passion of the Redeemer: one will of salvation, one sacrifice; but Christ is the only victim, the only mediator of this sacrifice.

Amadeus of Lausanne

Amadeus was a novice under Saint Bernard in 1125. After having been Abbot of Hautecombe (1139), he served as Bishop of Lausanne from 1144 to his death in 1159. We have from him eight Marian homilies given, probably, at the end of his episcopate. In these, he mentions the heart of Mary several times. In Homily III, on the incarnation of the Son of God, there is only a mention, in a final apostrophe to the Virgin: "We ask you what affection moved you, what love held you, what stimulus drove you, when all of this happened in you, when the Word took flesh from you? Where was your soul, where were your heart, your spirit, your senses, your intelligence?" The answer he offers is of mystical order, using the symbolism of the burning bush (Ex 3:2): "You burned, melted by fires from above; melted in fire, you took your strength again from that fire so that you burned always and again you were melted." Thus, for the incarnation of the Word, the fire of divine love grasped the whole person of Mary—soul, heart, spirit, feelings, intelligence. At the birth of Jesus, his mother was filled with an extraordinary joy at the sight of the Emmanuel, of his incomparable light; and she offered to God the peaceful holocaust of her heart. These holocausts of her heart were the fulfillment of the first commandment: "To love her God, her Son, with all her heart: there was her treasure and her

89 ARNOLD OF BONNEVAL, De septem verbis Domini in cruce, Tract. III: ... in tabernaculo illo duo videres altaria: aliud in pectore Mariae, aliud in corpore Christi. Christus carnem, Maria immolabat animam (PL 189, 1694B).
90 Id., Libellus de laudibus B.M.V.: ... omnino tunc erat una Christi et Mariae voluntas, unumque holocaustum ambo pariter offerebant Deo; haec in sanguine cordis, hic in sanguine carnis (PL 189, 1727A).
92 AMADEUS, Hom. III: ... rogamus, quo affectu movebaris, quo amore tenebaris, quibus stimulus agitabaris, cum haec fierent in te, et Verbum carnem susciperet ex te? Ubi erat anima tua, ubi cor, ubi mens, ubi sensus, ubi ratio? (SC 72, pp. 108-9; PL 188, 1318D-1319A).
93 Ibid.: Ardebas liquefacta supernis ignibus, liquefacta in igne, vires resumebas ab igne ut semper arderes et iterum liquefieres (SC 72, pp. 108-9; PL 188, 1319A).
94 Id., Hom. IV: ... conversa ad Deum toto corde ... obtulit acceptum laborium sacrificium, et hostiam jubilationis immolavit, dedit holocausta cordis pacifica ... (SC 72, p. 128; PL 188, 1324A).
heart." It was the mystical contemplation symbolized in Canticles 5:2, *Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat.*

At Calvary, the prophecy of Simeon is realized. The Blessed Virgin suffers because of the death of her Son and through compassion for her people. She participates in the love and the cross of her Son, praying for her people, addressing the mercy of the Father, with a perfect heart. Christ suffered in his flesh; his mother in her heart. Amadeus first describes Mary crying with compassion. But, as G. Bavaud notes in his introduction, Amadeus afterwards quotes Saint Ambrose for whom Mary stood under the cross without crying. Amadeus tries to unite the two contradictory traditions and notes: "To stand . . . meaning her great firmness in this sorrow of her heart."

The resurrection of Jesus filled her with joy. She was enraptured, out of herself, in an adherence without limits to the Father. She was totally bound to God, totally driven into Him, entirely flown into the immensity of his love. Amadeus uses the Song of Songs to describe her meeting with her risen Son, the visit of the Bridegroom to his Bride: "Your flesh and your heart failed (cf. Ps 72,26); you were melted (cf. Cant.5,6) when you heard the voice of your beloved Son speaking to you." God filled to overflowing the desire of her heart.

Finally, in heaven, Mary is the most fitting holocaust for God; from the heart of the Blessed Virgin ascends the most pleasing incense. Her whole life is love. We could say: she is all heart.

Saint Aelred of Rievaulx

Saint Aelred († 1167), Abbot of Rievaulx in Yorkshire (England)—a Cistercian called the "Bernard of the North"—mentions the heart of Mary in various sermons.

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95 Ibid.: Ubi erat thesaurus ejus, ibi et cor . . . Diligebat Dominum ac Filium suum ex toto corde, ex tota mente et ex omnibus viribus suis; ex toto corde quia toto affectu; ex tota mente quia toto intellectu; ex omnibus viribus quia omni cordis intentione et mandatorum omnium executione (SC 72, p. 132; PL 188, 1324D-1325A).
96 Id., *Hom. V:* . . . tam pro nati morte, quem pro Iudaeorum perdizione ineffabili dolore gloriosae pectus urebatur (SC 72, p. 148; PL 188, 1328C).
97 Ibid.: . . . tam particeps caritatis quam crucis Iesu assumpsit orationem pro [Judaeis] et corde perfecto paternae pietatis aures compulsans (SC 72, p. 150; PL 188, 1339B).
98 Ibid.: Ille carne, illa corde passa est (SC 72, p. 154; PL 188, 1330AB).
99 St. AMBROSE, *De obitu Valentiniani consolatio,* 39 (PL 16, 1431D).
101 Id., *Hom V I:* Facta igitur extra se, suique oblitae prae gaudio, adhaesit corde latissimo Patri spirituum, et conglutinata Deo, in illum tota efferebatur, in cujus amoris immensitate tota refundebatur (SC 72, 160-61; PL 188, 1331-1332).
103 Ibid.: . . . hoc thymiana bene compositum procedit de thuribulo cordis Mariae, et universa suaviter olentia excedit (SC 72, p. 178; PL 188, 1336C).
The feast of the Annunciation celebrates the coming of the Saving Lord. When the angel announced it to Mary, it was a coming in her heart as well as in her flesh. Mary probably was reading Isaiah 7:14 at the time; the announcement of the angel made her understand that God was asking her to be that virginal mother of the Messiah. The prophecy must have stirred up in her heart fear and humility on one hand and love on the other hand: Was she worthy to be the mother of God? There was a dispute between love and fear, between fervor and humility. Mary accepted the will of God, for love filled her heart with a desire for God prior to the coming of the divine messenger. She besought God that He might come on earth and save the world. She sought God not exteriorly, not in exterior occupations, but in the secret of the nuptial chamber of her heart. For the Assumption, Aelred contemplates the Virgin who during all her life meditated on the actions and words of her Son. "Above all, the beauty of Jesus' face filled her heart."

Godfrey of Admont

Godfrey († 1165), Abbot of Admont in Styria (Austria), is a Benedictine writer who is too-little known. In some two hundred homilies, he speaks often about the heart of Jesus and more often about the heart of Mary. He exhorts his audience to imitate the holiness of Saint John, who rested on the chest of the Master at the Last Supper. When we meditate the Holy Scriptures, they are for us the chest of the Lord, in whose heart we find the spiritual, vivifying meaning of the sacred texts. For the heart of Mary, Godfrey, like Saint Ambrose, insists upon the *humilis corde*: "Although Mary was superior to all of us by her holiness, nevertheless, she placed herself..."
below all.” Therefore, the Canticle of Canticles, which can refer to the Church as well as to each faithful member, is fittingly attributed specialiter to Mary. The text, *Amica mea . . . immaculata mea* (Cant. 5:2) designates the Blessed Virgin: “very immaculate in her heart and in her body, by whom the stain that adhered to the human race by the fault of Adam had to be cleansed and abolished,” because she gave us our Savior.

In a homily on the Annunciation, Godfrey paraphrases the *Non times* of the angel: “You are fearful about human redemption; you are fearful that our human race will be condemned forever.” This commentary has its originality. At the Annunciation, the Blessed Virgin was concerned not only about herself but also about the misery of all us sinful people. She prayed to God in solidarity with all of us, *corde contrito et profunda humilitate* (PL 174, 753D). She found grace before God (Lk 1:30); she attracted God from heaven to earth. Godfrey elsewhere says that Mary in her heart offered each day her prayer and her tears for the salvation of the world. In another homily on the Annunciation, Godfrey describes the grace of the Blessed Virgin in mystical terms. Rising, in heart and body, beyond the tumult of this world, Mary passed into God. He further comments on the words of the bride to the bridegroom in Canticles 5:4: *Anima mea liquefacta est, ut dilectus loculus est . . .*. These words, said about the Church, concern Mary specialius. For since her most tender age, she knew how to overcome herself and listen to God. He mentions the same mystical grace in a sermon on the Nativity of Mary, with an explanation of the text *Abiit in montana* (Lk 1:39). Under the guidance of the Spirit, the heart of Mary, from

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112 *Ibid.: vere immaculata corde et corpore per quam macula, quae omni humano genere ex vitio primi parentis inhaesit, purgari et aboleri debit (PL 174, 38C).

113 Id., *Hom. 27. In festum Annuntiationis prima*: Times pro redemptione humana; times ne in perpetuum genus damnatur humanum (PL 174, 753B).


115 *Id., Hom. 31. In festum Annunt. B.M.V. quinta*: . . . in Deum transiens . . . tenera adhuc aetate sic semetipsam transcendere noverat, ut ab omni humano tumultu, non minus corpore quam corde, semota, recte dicere posset cum Propheta: *Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus* (Psal. LXXXIV, 9) (PL 174, 768B).
the time of her birth, was totally liberated to pass into the love of God Our Father, in full obedience to the first commandment: “You shall love God with all your heart.” 116 Mary, in the depths of her heart, loved God, her Beloved, so as to live no hour without thinking of Him. 117 In this love, she was also our mediatrix, caring for the salvation of her neighbor. 118 Mary corresponded to these graces with zeal: “striving to lift up the voice of her heart all the more strongly, since she had been judged worthy to taste, by a grace of interior savor, the inexhaustible sweetness of the one whom she was seeking.” 119 Besides, “the eye has not seen, the ear has not heard, never in any human heart such a sweetness rose up as great as the one that the most sweet Son of the Blessed Virgin has poured into the heart of this Virgin.” 120

Finally, let us note how Godfrey speaks of Mary's compassion at Calvary; he recalls “the bitter wounds of her heart that she expressed with abundant tears when she contemplated the wounds, the bleeding members of her Beloved, her first and only Son.” 121 The bodily wounds of the Son provoked the wounds of his mother’s heart. We may synthesize Godfrey’s preaching on the holy heart of Mary by stressing his mystical portrait of the Blessed Virgin. She was filled with such deep humility that she considered herself as the last of all. But through her immaculate heart, through her virginity, she is forever and very specially the Bride of the Canticle. Her heart enjoyed mystical graces to love God and all mankind; she is the maternal helper that God had foreseen at the side of the Redeemer. From birth, her heart was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; free from sin, from earthly attachments, she could transcend everything and pass into God, realizing perfectly the first commandment: love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself. Mary passed no hour on earth without giving her heart to God, without thinking of God as her Beloved, without caring for her neighbor, without praying for the salvation of man.

116 Id., Hom 75. In festum Nativ. S.M.V. prima: ... mox ut est nata ... per ducatum sancti Spiritus, eam in sua suscipientis, sic a terrenis omnibus est separata, ut toto corde transiret ad dilectionem Dei Patris juxta praeceptum Dominicae legis ... : Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex tala corde ... (PL 174, 1003C).

117 Ibid.: ... tota memoria Deum diligebat, cui soli sic inhaerebat, ut memoriam dilecti sui, regis sempiterni, nec ad horam de principali cordis sui pateretur auferri (1004B).

118 Ibid.: Sic fervens in amore Creatoris mediatrix Dei et hominum non minori charitatis affectu erga salutam vigilabat proximorum.

119 Id., Hom.31. In festum Annunt. B.M.V. quinta: ... tanto validius vocem cordis exaltare studuit, quanto suavius inexhaustam ejus, quem quaesivit, dulcedinem, per interni saporis gratiam degustare meruit (PL 174, 770D).

120 Id., Hom 67. In festum Assump. B.M.V. quarta: Oculus enim non vidit, auris non audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit quantum dulcedinis cordi instillaverit Virginis dulcissimus ipse filius Virginis (PL 174, 976A).

121 Id., Hom. 65. In festum Assump. B.M.V. secunda: ... sui dilecti primogeniti et unigeniti acerba intuens vulnera, cruenta considerans membra, amara quoque sui cordis vulnera per continua illi lacrimarum exprimit profluvia (PL 174, 969CD).
kind, as mediatrix between God and us. She served Jesus from his infancy to his death. The bodily wounds of Jesus crucified found a deep correspondence in the wounds of the compassionate heart of his mother. These graces are for us inexpressible. Our own experiences are comparable only by analogy. Mary savored and magnified in her heart this interior sweetness that her Son communicated to her heart; for Jesus the heart of his mother was the heart of the Bride celebrated in the Canticle of Canticles.

Eckbert of Schoenau

The present state of research indicates the Benedictine Eckbert of Schoenau († 1184) as the first to write a prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Brother of Elizabeth of Schoenau, he became abbot around 1166 and died in 1184. His prayer, _Loquar ad cor tuum_, edited critically by F. W. E. Roth only in 1884, was analyzed and compared with a Vatican manuscript by H. Barré. With this new critical edition of the text, Barré shows its doctrinal importance for the development of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary during the Middle Ages. The prayer is entitled, _Soliloquium ad B. Mariam Eckberti abbatis, fratris Elisabeth sanctimonialis_. Therefore it dates from the abbacy of the author. It does not merely mention or praise the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Eckbert greets this heart; he speaks to it as to the person of Mary herself: _Loquar ad cor tuum, O Maria_. Therefore, he is the first to initiate an act of devotion, or cult, towards the Immaculate Heart.

I shall speak to your heart, O Mary, I shall speak to your heart so pure, Sovereign of the universe, and I shall offer my veneration from the depths of my soul. From the depths of my heart I shall greet your immaculate heart which, the first in this world, was worthy to receive the only Son of the Supreme God, coming forth from the bosom of the Father.

(Greetings.) Hail, singular shrine, that God has sanctified for Himself in the Holy Spirit. Hail, holy of holies, that the Sovereign Pontiff has consecrated by his ineffable entrance. Hail, ark of sanctification that contains the writing of the finger of God. Hail, urn of gold that contains the heavenly manna, filled with the delights of the angels. Hail, royal court, the true Solomon's house of cedar, whose sweet fragrance surpasses all the woods of cedar. Hail, couch of gold, the most agreeable rest for the desirable beloved whose head is of perfect gold. Hail, room filled with a heavenly perfume, bringing the precious spices of all the virtues and graces. Hail, enclosed paradise, wherein the cunning seducer of Eve had never dared to crawl. Hail, sealed fountain, whose secrets the violator of hearts has never tasted, not even by the slightest sip. To whom do we compare you, to what do we assimilate the beatitude of your heart, O Mary? By what words do we worthily greet the intimate sweetness of your chaste breast?

(Congratulatory greeting.) Live, live and rejoice eternally, O holy and immaculate heart in which the salvation of the world was begun and in which the divinity has embraced our humanity, bringing peace to the world. Be filled with an eternal jubilation, you, emerald conch, whose color has never faded, you who have poured out to the Supreme King, thirsting for our salvation, the sweet nectar of faith, at that hour when, at the greeting of the archangel, you pronounced the good word (Ps 44:2), saying: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Thus, you have delighted, you have filled his heart, in such a degree that from now on, from his heaven, He would proclaim more joyously: “My delights are to be with the children of men” (Prov. 8:31). May every soul magnify you, O mother of sweetness! and may all pious tongues praise together for ever and ever the beatitude of your heart, from which our salvation has flowed forth. Amen. 

Barré compares this remarkable prayer to another text of Eckbert: the Sermo panegyricus ad bealam virginem Deiparam (PL 184. 1009-1014). There he underlines a prayer to Mary asking that she speak to the Lord’s heart: an affirmation of the

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124 Ibid., pp. 412-13. The text cited here is according to H. Barré and F. W. E. Roth. Within parentheses are indicated the readings of the manuscript of the Vatican (R) and the references to the Bible. These show how often the medieval writers quoted the Canticle of Canticles for Mary: (Soliloquium ad b. mariam Eckerti abbatis, fratris Elizabeth sanctimonialis).

Loquar ad cor tuum o Maria, loquar ad cor tuum mundum, domina mundi, et adorabo ad templum sanctum dei (Ps V, 8) ab interioribus anime mee. Salutabo ex precordiis meis immaculatum cor tuum, quod primum sub sole suscipere dignum fuit egredientem de sinu patris filium dei (R: unigenitum dei summi).

(Salutationes.)—Salve sanctuarium singular, quod sanctificavit sibi deus in spiritu sancto. Salve sanctum sanctorum, quod dedicavit summus pontifex (ineffabili) introitu suo (Hebr. IX). Salve archa sanctificationis (Ps. 131, 8) continens in te (R: se) scripturam digitii dei. Salve ura aurea (Hebr. IX, 4), habens (in se) manna celeste, plena (R: plenum) deliciis angelorum. Salve aula regalis, domus cedrina veri Salomonis, odorem habens suavitatis super omnia ligna cedrorum. Salve reclinatorium aureum (Cant. III, 10), gratissima paustatio desiderabilis (amicui), cuius caput aurum optimum (Cant. V, 11). Salve cela aromaticia celestis pigmentarii omnium virtutum et gratiarum preciosis affluens speciebus. Salve serate paradise, cui inserpere nunquam presumpsit callidus Eve seductor. Salve fons signate (Cant. IV, 22), cuius secreta nec levi degustatione unquam libavit cordium violator. Cui comparabo, vel cui assimilabo beatitudinem cordis tui, (o) Maria? Qualibus verbis digne salutabo dulcem pudici pectusculi tui?

(Congratulationis salutationis.)—Vivas, vivas et in eturnum gaudeas, o sanctum, o (R: et) amantisissimum cor, in quo salus mundi initiata est, (et) in quo pacem feros mundu humanitatem divinitatis osculata est. Jubilo sempiterno ilmearis, tu concha smaracidae, cuius vior nunc quam expalluit, que sicienti nostram salutem superno regi probatisse fidei dulce pocium (R: nettar) propinasti in illa hora, qua ad salutationem archangeli eructasti verbum bonum (Ps. XLIV, 2) dicens: Ecce ancilla domini, fiat michi secundum verbum tuum (Le I, 38). Tunc oblectasti, tunc inebrasti cor eius in tantum, ut iam ex tunc hilaror de celo suo clamitet dicens: Delicie mee esse cum filiis hominum (Prov. VIII, 31). Magnificet te omnis anima, o mater dulcedinis, et beatitudinem cordis tui, unde salus nostra profuxit, collaudet omnis lingua piorum in sempiterna secula. Amen. (Edition F. Roth, p. 286-287.)
unique intercessory role of Mary, based on the mutual love of the Son and of the Mother:

Who is as able as you, blessed Mary, to speak to the Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, you who are reclining sweetly in the most intimate embraces of your very loving Son in the eternal midday, you who enjoy his most familiar conversation in the full joy of your heart? Speak, O Sovereign Lady, for your Son is listening. 125

At the beginning of this sermon, Eckbert adjures Mary, mother of mercy, to open her heart to our prayers; for she alone can ward off the sword of the anger of the Divine Judge. 126

Eckbert uses the Aperi mihi of the bridegroom in the Canticle of Canticles when he comments on the Annunciation in a sermon, Super missus est. 127 Mary loved and attracted God in a unique manner (singulariter); the Son of God wanted to dwell in the heart of Mary in order to take flesh in her womb, as He had announced to her in the Canticle: Aperi mihi: “Behold, O Sovereign Lady, at your door stands the life that formerly your mother Eve had excluded, introducing death, and power is given to you to introduce such life into this world if you wish.” 128 The consent of the Virgin is necessary; and first in her heart: “Your holy heart, your blessed mouth, your undefiled tongue, key opening paradise, they are necessary for the whole world.” 129 Then comes the adjuration to Mary: “Speak out what you already carry in your soul, say with the voice of your ancestor David: my heart is ready, Lord . . .” (Ps 56:8). 130 We must retain the conclusions of H. Barré. The private cult to the

125 ECKBERT, Sermo paneg., 7: Et quis tam idoneus, ut loquatur ad cor Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ut tu felix Maria, quae in secretissimis amplexibus amantissimi Filii tui recubas in meridie sempiterno, ejusque familiarissimo colloquio cum plena cordis laetitia perfrueris? Loquere, Domina, quia audit Filius tuus; et quaecumque petieris, impetrabis. Invoca bonum nomen ejus super nos, ut eruamur a vetusta hac lepra carnis et spiritus. Exsurge [ ... ] virus hoc mortiferum exinanitura, quod de pomi sui reliquiis Eva nobis propinavit, quando succi noxialis gustu ebriata et, et reliquias dimisit parvulis suis (PL 184, 1014BC).
128 ECKBERT: Concupiscit in atria cordis tui, in tabernaculum ventris tui inviscerandus tibi filius, qui et olim mandavit tibi per virum sapientem dicens: Aperi mihi, soror mea . . . (Cant 5, 2). Ecce, o domina, foris stat vita, quam olim Eva parens tua mortem inducens exclusit, et data est tibi potestas introducendi eam in hunc mundum si vis (cited in BARRÉ, “Une prière,” EphMar 2 [1952]: 415; emphasis included there).
129 Id.: Cor tuum sanctum, os tuum benedictum, lingua tua impolluta, clavis reseratrix paradisi, toti mundo necessaria sunt (ROTH [ed.], Die visionen . . . , pp. 261-62).
130 Ibid.: Die quod jam in animo geris, die voce David patris tui: Paratum cor meum, dominus . . . (Ps 56,8).
heart of Mary begins with that prayer Eckbert composed as abbot, between 1166-1184, at Schoenau, in the Rhineland, near Treves. This prayer even precedes those addressed to the Heart of Jesus, for these appeared at the monastery of Helfta, a century later. The devotion to the heart of Mary arises from devotion to the Mother of God: "From the most pure womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary (uterus Mariae), we passed almost imperceptibly to her all loving heart (amantissimum cor)." Eckbert has in mind the heart that beat in the breast of the Blessed Virgin: medullam pudici pectusculi lui. Finally, let us say that the devotion to the Heart of Jesus and that to the Heart of Mary are linked by the contemplation of the mutual love between Jesus and his mother. This is the great lesson of the tradition expressed by St. Anselm of Canterbury. Some other texts of this period also prepare future developments.

Other Texts

Guerric of Igny

Guerric, Abbot of Igny between 1138-1157, was first at Citeaux for fifteen years. Saint Bernard called him his master. In a sermon on the Annunciation, Guerric uses the text of Canticles 5:2 (Aperi, soror mea) and 8:6 (Pone me, ut signaculum super cor tuum): Mary must listen to the angel with an attentive ear and open her heart to the Word of God:

Open to me, my sister, my beloved. You must not fear for your integrity: God does not intend to violate integrity, but to heal what was violated. If you prepared for the Word of God, then indeed you are not only closed, but you are sealed. Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm. Certainly Jesus, as impressed in the heart, as expressed in actions, is the inviolable seal and protection of the purity of his bride, and when he impresses himself as image for imitation, he is also the guardian of incorruption. Therefore, O faithful Virgin, may your ear be open to hear and your spirit open to believe: perceive with your ear the word of the angel and receive in your heart the Word of the Most High and conceive in your body the Son of God. Speak, O blessed one who are as humble as faithful; say: the Lord has opened my ear and I was not rebellious, I turned not back (Is. 50:5). Behold the handmaid of the Lord! I am ready to do your will; rather I shall help by my prayers if I can. Let it be done to me according to your word (Lk 1:38). To say this, to offer in this manner her devotion, all this is surely the opening of the heart to the Lord. It is also the opening of the mouth and the attracting of the Spirit.  

132 GUERRIC: In Annuntiatione Dominica, Serm. 2: Aperi mihi, soror mea, amica mea (Cantic. V,2). Non est quod timeas integritati tuae: Deus non novit integra violare, sed violata consolidare. Si Verbo Dei apta es, tum demum non modo clausa, sed et signata es. Pone me, inquit ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum (Id. VIII,6). Jesus quippe impressus in corde,
We can say the same about ourselves: the faithful soul must listen to the Word and receive it in his/her heart: “O faithful soul, open your bosom, expand your affections ... conceive the one whom the creature does not seize.” The heart of Mary is our example; Mary is the type of the Church.

_Trudperler Hohelied_

K. Rischstätter indicates the importance of a text in old German, the _Trudperler Hohelied_, composed around 1160 and following the model established by Williram, who is sometimes quoted literally. The author speaks of the heart of Mary, “which was filled with all the wisdom of the Spirit” and became “the tent of the Great King.” This heart is filled with “the most sweet divine love”; this is why “the beat of this heart is so sweet.” “The gaze of this heart is fixed on the Holy Scriptures.” But it was wounded when Mary saw her Son, “the Son of her heart,” giving his life for the salvation of the world. We cannot attribute this commentary on the Canticle to Rilindis (†1167) or to Herrade (†1196/7) of Hohenburg (presently: Mont Saint-Odile in Alsace), even though it was written for nuns and even though Herrade is known to have composed the famous _Horlus deliciarum_. Therefore, we cannot say that Rilindis and Herrade are representatives of the tradition preparing the devotion to the heart of Mary.

expressus in opere, sigillum plane et munimentum est inviolabile castitatis sponsae suae, et eo ipso quo se imprimit imitationis formam, imponit etiam incorruptionis custodiam. Sit ergo, o Virgo fidelis, auris tua aperta ad audiendum et mens tua ad credendum: aure percipe verbum angeli, et corde suscipe Verbum Altissimi, et corpore concipe Filium Dei. Dic et tu, o beata, tam humilis quam fidelis, dic: Dominus aperuit mihi aurem; ego autem non contradico, retrorsum non abii (Isai. L, 5). Ecce ancilla Domini: praesto sum ejus voluntati; quinimo juvabo votis si possum, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum (Luc. 1,38). Hoc dicere, sic suam devotionem offere, istud plane est Domino pectus aperiere, istud est etiam os aperiere, et spiritum attrahere (PL 185, 121CD).

133 Ibid.: O fidelis anima, expande sinus, dilata affectus ... concipe quem creatura non capit (123B).


Peter of Celle

Peter of Celle, who died as Bishop of Chartres in 1183, describes in a metaphorical style the graces that Mary received at the Annunciation and in her Assumption. God, by his love has formed Mary and the heart of the Virgin so that it could contain God. Peter enters upon the question of Mary’s maternal natural love, transformed by the divine grace.

Alanus of Lille

Bridging two centuries, Alanus of Lille (†1203), a Cistercian of Citeaux who was called the “universal doctor” because of his encyclopedic knowledge, speaks of the heart of Mary in his commentary on the Canticle (PL 210, 51-110). Without differentiating the terms, he uses cor or mens to indicate the person and the interior life of Mary, who became “the spiritual resting place of Christ.” All the Divine Persons dwelt in Mary with a special delight. The text *Fasciculus myrrhae dileclus meus, mihi inter ubera mea commorabitur* (“My loved one is to me a bundle of myrrh lying between my breasts”) received the classical commentary: Christ, the Beloved, through his passion provoked the sorrow of compassion, but a compassion of love in the most intimate depths of the heart: “Because He suffered for our redemption, He remained between my breasts: that is, in the intimate love of my heart.” He also insists on the maternal love of Mary. The love of the heart of Mary for Jesus is the love of a mother who forgets herself for the child who depends entirely on her:

She loved Christ with all her heart. This mother, who fed and cherished the flesh of Christ in such a way that forgetting her love for her own flesh because of the love of his flesh, would pour out all the affections of her heart, in caring for the necessities of this child, at his birth, when she nurses him with her milk, when he was crying, when he grew up. She also loved Christ with all her soul, for the Holy Spirit helped her with such vigor that He kindled in her all the salutary and holiest dispositions to strengthen her love for Christ. Finally, she loved Christ so totally and with so great a virtue that it is a sufficient title of praise to say: such a great love filled her spirit that when the disciples ran away she set aside the fragility of her sex and stood weeping beneath the cross, suffering with the dying Christ. She did not give her life


140 ALANUS OF LILLE, *In Cantica Cant.*, cap. 1, 10 (Dum esset rex): Postquam gloriosa Virgo non solum mente, sed etiam ventre concepit, factus est in ea spiritualis Christi recubitus (PL 210, 61C).

141 Ibid.: O felix mens in qua coelestes convivae, id est tres personae specialiter et spiritualiter reficiuntur!

142 Ibid.: . . . quia pro nostra redemptione passus *inter ubera commorabitur*, id est in intimo mei cordis amore detinebatur (PL 210, 62A).
for her Son suffering the passion; nevertheless, she showed how her soul suffered the compassion.  

But this love was transformed by divine charity: she lived perfectly the first commandment ("Love God with all your heart... "): 

In whom was the well-ordered love if not in the Virgin Mary who loved Christ with all her heart; that is, without error of the intelligence; with all her spirit, that is, with all her memory, without forgetting; with all her soul, that is, with all her will, without weakness?  

Christ is the only spouse, the only subject of her words, of the love of her heart, the only child of her flesh: 

_Favus distillans labia tua sponsa_: Your lips distill honey, my spouse! (Cant 4:11). For she has in her mouth, in her flesh, Christ hidden in his humanity: in her mouth, for she preaches nothing else; in her heart, for she lives nothing else; in her flesh, for she conceived nothing else. 

This love is of a mystical order. The incarnation became the supreme "exultation of the heart of the Virgin." Christ gave to his mother understanding of the Holy Scriptures; this is the meaning of Luke 2:19 (conferens: "pondering in her heart"). The text _introduxit me Rex in cellam uinariam_, "the King brought me in the house of wine" (Cant 2:4), means that Christ introduced his bride into the mysteries revealed in the Old Testament. Mary compared the reality that she lived with the promises of the prophets. The Virgin set the divine Spouse on her heart as a seal; imitating...
Christ, she became like Him. Christ is even a seal on the heart and on the arm of his bride: "The Beloved is set on the heart of the Virgin and on her arm, like a seal, for the Virgin Mary imitated her Son in her thoughts and in her actions. The heart means the thoughts, and the arm means the actions." The meaning of the word "heart" still remains polyvalent.

V. THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

In the thirteenth century, we have, on the one hand, the theologians who carried, studied the traditional doctrine, and, on the other hand, the spiritual writers, the mystics, who experienced the devotion. Above all, we must not forget that in the thirteenth century appeared the great theological treatises that synthesized the doctrinal foundations of Christian prayer, with commentaries on the Scriptures and with the patristic resources then on hand. That century also saw the rise of the cathedrals in honor of Our Lady: a language for the people.

Richard of Saint Laurent

The purpose of Richard of Saint Laurent, Penitentiary in Rouen around 1230, was to collect in his De laudibus B.M.V. all that had been said about Mary; it is a compendium of the doctrine and the devotion at the beginning of the thirteenth century; written without scientific pretension, in the then-prevailing taste for allegory. Under the title "How the Blessed Virgin has served us in her Son," he shows how salvation began in the heart of Mary through her faith, through her consent; she was the first one to receive in her heart the only begotten Son of God born from the heart of the Father: coming from the bosom of the Father to be received in the womb of the Virgin his mother; thus, in the heart and the womb of Mary, mercy and truth have met, divine justice and peace have embraced. This sweet and very loving

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148 Id., In Cantica Cant., cap. 8, 46-47: ... Virgo Maria Christum cor suum posuit ut signaculum; quia ipsi per imitationem conformata est ejusque gratia consignata (PL 210, 105D-106A).
150 RICHARD OF SAINT-LAURENT, De laudibus B.M.V. 2, in vol. 36 (1898) of the Opera omnia of St. Albert the Great, ed. A. Borgnet et al. (38 vols.; Paris: Vivès, 1890-99) (hereafter, Vivès).
151 Ibid., Lib. II, cap. 2, 2: Siquidem ex corde beatae Virginis processerunt fides et consensus, per quae duo initiata est salus mundi: et ipsum cor ejus prae omnibus creaturis dignum inventum est exeuntem de corde paterno primo suscipere unigenitum Dei, quando scilicet cor Patris eructavit verbum bonum [Psal. XLIV,2], quod de sinu Patris egrediens in sinum matris Virginis se recepit. Item, in corde ipsius et utero misericordia et veritas sibi obviaverunt, cum divina justitia paci porrigeret osculum salutare (Vivès, 36:82-83).
heart was filled with compassion "under the torrent of her Son's passion" and it was wounded by our iniquities. Richard uses the biblical terms *viscera pietatis* or *viscera cordis*, when he describes how much Mary endured within herself both the sufferings of her Son and our sufferings. It was sadness that struck her heart. But in the great love that wounded her, she gave her only Son for our lives: the fruit of her womb for our sins. Richard supports the belief in the closest cooperation of Mary in our redemption. She is the woman given by the Father to Christ dying for us as his *adjutorium simile sibi* (Gen 2:18). Having quoted Genesis 2:18, Richard gives his explanation of Isaias 63:3 (*Torcular calcavi solus*), which eliminates any direct participation. Isaiah had announced in the name of Christ:

> I have trodden the winepress alone and no man of the people is with me; this has to be understood and can be explained securely in this way: It is true, Lord, that no man is with you; but one woman stands at the foot of your cross; whatever blows, whatever wounds, whatever sufferings you feel and receive in your body, she receives in the depths of her heart by her compassion; and, as the cruel spear pierces your side, so all the swords of your sufferings pierce her soul. Therefore it is clear how much this woman has cooperated in the salvation of the world. For, when her Son gave his life for the salvation of the world, the mother—although she did not give her life for the world—nevertheless, offered it; and she did what she could.

From this facile exegesis of the *torcular solus*, let us retain Richard's understanding of the compassion of Mary's heart as cooperation in the salvation of the world, in line with the tradition of Mary as the new Eve. Elsewhere, Richard completes his thinking in a long commentary on the prophecy of Simeon. Mary suffered the most painful martyrdom in her heart, for in her heart Christ began the new creation; the sword of the maternal compassion for Jesus her Son and our Savior was for Mary a new martyrdom:

> It was the will of the Son that his mother participate in the beauty of all the saints and even exceed the beauty of them all: and as she was called the Virgin of virgins, she was also to be called martyr of martyrs: for all that took place in the Blessed

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152 Ibid.


154 Ibid.: Quod autem praedixerat Isaias, LXIII, 3, in persona Christi: *Torcular calcavi solus, et de gentibus non est vir mecum*, sic intelligendum est, et secure potest sic exponi: Verum est, Domine, quod non est vir tecum, sed una mulier adstat tibi crucifixo, quae quaecumque plagas, quaecumque vulnera, quoscumque dolores sentis et suscipis in tuo corpore, compatiendo suscipit in viscera cordis sui: et sicut dira lancea perforat latus tuum, sic ejus animam pertranseunt dolorum tuorum gladii universi. Sic igitur patet quantum haec mulier cooperata sit ad salutem mundi. Nam Filio ponente animam prae salute mundi, mater etsi non posuit pro mundo animam, exposuit tamen, et quod potuit fecit.
Virgin was new, as predicted in Jer. 31:22, "the Lord created something new on earth," and in Apoc. 21:3, "Behold, I make all things new . . ."; a new kind of martyrdom for many reasons. First, while other martyrs suffered in their body, she suffered in her soul or in her heart, according to the prophecy of Simeon, Lk. 2:35: "and a sword will pierce your soul . . .": the sword of the passion that passed through the body and the members of the Son, passed through, meaning pierced to its depths, the soul of the mother because of her compassion: her wound then was sadness of her heart. 155

Richard goes back to these themes in other texts of his work. The sword of the passion, if we may so speak, pierced the heart, the womb (viscera) of the mother as much as it pierced the body of her Son. 156 Here again Richard uses the biblical equivalence: cor-viscera, for afterwards he explains how we could apply to Mary the text of Apocalypse 12. The woman who cries out in the pangs of childbirth is an image showing Mary's sorrow at Calvary. 157 We can say that, in the redemption, the Father has given us "the body of Christ and the heart of Mary." 158

Richard, therefore, sees that the heart of Mary was in a unique manner the indwelling place of the Holy Trinity, "the nuptial bed, the tent, the resting couch of all the divine Persons." 159 It was fully open to the perfect gifts of the Father. 160


156 Ibid., Lib.IV, cap. 14, 1: Non enim minus, si fas est dicere, cor matris quam corpus Filii pertransivit gladius passionis: transivit enim membra Filii, sed pertransivit, id est, perfecte transivit matris viscera (Vivès, 36:209).

157 Ibid.

158 Ibid., Lib.XII, cap. 1, pars 12, 8. The text is an example of Richard's overly metaphorical style. The veneration and the compassionate union that we offer to Jesus' passion and Mary's compassion are like the preparation of the most excellent wine. For this, the Father gave two precious filtering vessels. The one was the body of Jesus Christ, the other, the heart of Mary. "Duo ad hoc colatoria dedit nobis Deus Pater. Unum fuit corpus Christi Jesu, aliud cor Mariae" (Vivès, 36:635, col.1).

159 Ibid., Lib.10, cap. 10, 2: . . . thalamus, lectus et triclinium Trinitatis . . . (Vivès, 36:490); Lib. 10, cap. 11: . . . cor Virginis congrue dici [potest] tabernaculum et triclinium totius Trinitatis (Vivès, 36:491).

160 Ibid., Lib. 10, cap. 2, 1: . . . Maria, jugiter suspirans ad coelestia, corde patulo hauriebat dona perfecta a Patre luminum descendentia (Vivès, 36:457).
Hugh of Saint-Cher

Commenting on Psalm 21:15b (Vulgate), Hugh of Saint-Cher († 1263) notes a possible Marian application. At the foot of the cross, Mary could say: "My heart is become like wax, melting in the midst of my bosom." Indeed Mary can be called "Heart of Christ," since she was the supreme love of her Son and because she was at the heart of the Mystical Body: *Ipsa enim dicitur cor Christi quia eam summe dilexit, et Ipsa intima fuit in corpore Christi mystico. Ipsa liquefacta est per dolorem et amorem ad ignem passionis Christi.*

Saint Bonaventure

Saint Bonaventure († 1274) is quoted among the theologians and spiritual writers who have influenced the development of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This reputation comes partly from the *Stimulus amoris* and from the oft-quoted *Speculum*; but they were not written by Bonaventure. However, other authentic texts of his are to be retained. Commenting on Mary's *Fiat*, he summarizes the tradition: "In her heart she conceived the Word of faith, in her womb she conceived the Son of God." In his sermons, Bonaventure explains the love that the Holy Spirit inspired in the Virgin. For the Annunciation, quoting Hugo of Saint Victor, he analyzes the grace that disposed Mary to consent: the absolute holy love that is the Holy Spirit inspired the dispositions of Mary's heart. In her will she desired both the virginity and the maternity required by God:

Because of the absolutely sincere love that filled her, she gave her consent not as forced, but as fully willed . . . This was the foremost and immediate disposition to the conception; for the Holy Spirit is the most holy love; therefore, the sincerity of the love in the heart of the Virgin disposed her to receive this Spirit so that she would conceive by Him the absolutely immaculate Son.

The ark of the covenant with God (in the vision of Apocalypse 11:19) is a figure of Mary, mystical ark—by the humility of her heart and by the true understand-

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161 Opera omnia (Venetius, 1600), t. 11, fol. 50r.
162 St. BONAVENTURE, Doctoris seraphici S. Bonaventurae, . . . Opera omnia, 10 vols. (Ad Claras Aquas [Quaracchi], 1882-1902) (hereafter, Ed. Quaracchi).
164 See n. 74 above.
165 St. BONAVENTURE, *In Annunt. B.M.V.*, Serm. 2: Proppter sincerissimum amorem, quo plena erat, non compulsa, non tracta, sed meru voluntate consentiens . . . Haec fuit dispositio summa et immediata ad conceptum; quia Spiritus Sanctus amor est sanctissimus, ideo sinceritas amoris in corde Virginis disponebat ad ipsum susciendum, ut de ipso conciperet Filium ommino immaculatum (Ed. Quaracchi, 9:660-61).
This attestation was the law itself that was written and put in the ark of testimony, meaning in the heart of the most blessed Virgin. For ... Mary kept all these words, meditating them in her heart: for as the ark of the covenant kept the law of Moses, so Mary kept the law of the Gospel with the right comprehension of the truth of faith and of the entire law of Christ.  

BonaVenture gives the same explanation in his commentary on Luke: “She was wise and discreet ... she was the ark containing the secrets of the divine words ... and because she not only kept and understood them, it is added: she meditated on them in her heart.”  

In heaven, Mary is said to be seated at the right of the King. The main reason is love, its “immediacy” between the heart of the King and the heart of Mary: “... as there was no intermediary between the heart of the Virgin and God, so there was no intermediary between the throne of the King and the throne of Mary.”  

The heart of Mary experienced sorrow, in particular when she lost Jesus during the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and when he died at Calvary. Mary also suffered compassion for her people since they did not recognize Jesus as savior. “Mary suffered first in losing the corporal presence of her Son; secondly, when she witnessed the passion of the Lord; thirdly, in her compassion for the blindness of her people.”  

The sorrow of the heart of Mary at Calvary was immense. Bonaventure thinks that this suffering could have caused the Virgin to faint, and we may wonder that she did not die of it. We can say that in her heart she died with her Son. Yet remaining alive, her suffering was more cruel than death. 

\[\text{[41]}\]

\[167\] Ibid.: Haec testificatio erat ipsa lex, quae scripta et posita fuit in arca testimonii, id est in corde beatissimae Virginis. Nam ... Maria autem conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo. Sicut enim arca testamenti conservabat Legem Moysi, sic ista legem Evangelii per rectam intelligentiam veritatis fidei et totius legis Christi (Ed. Quarrachi, 9:717).

\[168\] Id., In Luc., II, 140: ... tanquam prudens et discreta ... Unde Virgo fuit arca continens divinorum eloquiorum arcana ... Et quia non solum conservabat sed intelligebat, ideo additur: conferens ea in corde suo ... (Ed. Quarrachi, 7:536).

\[169\] Id., De Assumpt., Serm. III, 4: ... immediatio amoris cordis ad cor. Sicut enim nihil fuit medium inter cor Virginis et Deum, ita nihil medium inter thronum et thronum (Ed. Quarrachi, 9:695a).

\[170\] Id., In Ocl. Epiph., Serm. 5, 2: [Maria] doluit enim primo in amissione corporalis sui Filii praesentiae, secundo in visione passionis dominicae; terto, in compassione obcaecationis Judaicae (Ed. Quarrachi, 9:172a).

Conrad of Saxony

The author of the *Speculum seu Salutatio B.M.V.* is now better known, thanks to a new critical edition by P. Martinez in 1975.\(^{172}\) Konrad Holzinger, born in Braunschweig in Saxony, also called Conrad of Brunopoli or Conrad of Saxony, wrote the *Speculum* around 1264-1270.\(^{173}\) He died in 1279.\(^{174}\) The *Speculum* comments on the first part of the *Ave Maria*, the only part known at that time (and without adding “Jesus” at the end). The quotations from the Fathers and medieval writers are numerous. As indicated in the index of the critical edition, Conrad, on the heart (cor) of Mary, cites Bernard, Hugh of Saint Victor, Bede, the letter “Cogitis me” (under the name of Jerome), Eckbert (under the name of Bernard), Augustine (a pseudo-Augustine: *App. I94*). The heart of Mary did not incur the malediction of sinners: “Oh! how far from such a malediction was the very innocent heart of Mary!”\(^{175}\) The heart of Mary, so perfectly pure, did not have to do penance; it was the paradise of the Holy Spirit.\(^{176}\) The title “paradise of God” is quoted in the commentary of *Benedicta tu in mulieribus*. Mary was blessed by the grace that filled her heart: the grace of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that rendered the heart of the Virgin the one most pleasing to God, “the paradise of God.”\(^{177}\) The visit to Elizabeth is a good example of the love of Mary’s heart.\(^{178}\) The fact is that the love given by the Holy Spirit burned in it.\(^{179}\) Holy meditations constantly occupied this heart: “Our Mary was untiring and assiduous not only in her vocal prayers but also in her heart with her holy meditations.”\(^{180}\) Mary is the strong, zealous woman of Ecclesiasticus 26:16. As Bede said: “With a diligent heart, she zealously explored the divine mysteries.”\(^{181}\)


\(^{173}\) Ibid., p. 63.

\(^{174}\) Ibid., p. 14: n. [9].

\(^{175}\) Ibid., p. 159 (*Speculum*, II): O quam longe ab isto vae fuit innocentissimum cor Mariae. (Cf. St. Bernard: PL 183, 421A.)

\(^{176}\) Ibid., pp. 159-60: . . . mundissimum cor eius non fuit sentina diaboli, non fuit sepulchrum vitii, imo fuit hortus et paradisus Spiritus Sancti.[cf. Cant 4:12] . . . Quia ergo Maria tam longe fuit a cordis vae, ideo merito dictum est ei *Ave*.

\(^{177}\) Ibid., p. 390 (XII, I, 1): Vere benedicta est Maria propter gratiam cordis; propter gratiam donorum in corde, propter quam cor eius fuit deliciosissimum sicut paradisus Dei, ita ut de hac benedictione merito intelligi possit illud Eccli. 40, 17: *Gratia sicut paradisus in benedictionibus*.

\(^{178}\) Ibid., p. 207 (IV, 2): Caritas proxim debet haberi et fovere corde, ore, opere. Maria autem caritatem proximi habebat in corde et propter hoc exsurgens Maria abii in montana cum festinatione.


\(^{180}\) Ibid., p. 213 (IV, 4): . . . Maria nostra non solum ore in orationibus, sed etiam corde in sanctis meditotionibus indefessa fuit et sedula. Ipsa enim est Maria, de qua dictur Luc 2, 19: *Maria autem conservabal omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo*.

Conrad quotes also the letter “Cogitis me” on the Assumption (as written by Jerome): Mary was exalted above the angels to see the face of the Lord, “whom she had loved and desired with all her heart.” 182 In the analysis of plena gratia, the writer speaks of the fullness of the mercy of Mary’s heart; he quotes Eckbert (St. Bernard for him: PL 91, 1515CD): “The shrine of Mary’s heart was filled with the oil of mercy.” And he exhorts to prayer: “Let us ask for her oil in this world so that we may not ask for it in vain at the last judgment.” 183 The prayer is not addressed to the heart of the Virgin. Conrad also quotes the text in which Bernard speaks of the heart of Mary as bosom of her mercy: “Mary opened the bosom of her mercy to all so that all may receive from her fullness.” 184 Conrad is a good example of the formation of the tradition: the terms cor, viscera misericordiae, mens, sinus, anima are all used indifferently to describe the interior life of Mary, her union with God.

James of Milan

James of Milan (13th century) was a lately discovered writer, 185 to whom the Stimulus amoris, once attributed to Saint Bonaventure and to others, was finally restored. The meditation on Good Friday (chap. 15) is consecrated to Mary at Calvary, to her heart—that she may form our own hearts. Mary was not simply standing at the foot of the cross; in her heart she was on the cross, crucified with her Son. The wounds of her Son were united in the one wound of his mother’s heart. At Calvary this heart was pierced by the spear, nailed on the cross, crowned with thorns, mocked, scorned, filled with insults, and given to drink vinegar and gall. 186 The Virgin wanted to come to Calvary and undergo all the ignominy of the Savior’s passion. She did not consider her own interest, she was totally in Jesus:

O Sovereign Lady, you had no other thought, your heart was estranged from yourself by your sorrow, you were not in you but in the affliction of your Son, in the wounds

182 Ibid., pp. 263-64 (VI, IV, 3): ... quem amaverat, quem cupierat ex toto desiderio cordis. (Cf. “Cogitis me,” PL 30, 137B.)
183 Ibid., pp. 276-77 (VII, 4): Petamus oleum misericordiae eius in mundo, ne frustra petamus in iudicio.
184 Cf. St. Bernard, PL 183, 430C.)

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of your only one, in the death of your Beloved. Your heart did not consider the crowd (vulgus) but the wounds (vulnus); not the pressure (pressuram) but the fastening nail (fixuram); not the shouting (clamorem) but the bloody lashes (livorem); not the horror (horrorem) but the sorrow (dolorem). 187

Despite overly rhetorical comparisons, the essential point of the meditation is stressed: Christ was crucified in the intimate depths of his Mother’s heart:

. . . your whole heart, O Sovereign Lady, was occupied with the passion of your Son. O admirable reality, you are totally in the wounds of Christ. The whole Christ is crucified in the very depths of your heart (in intimis visceribus cordis tui) 188

The author asks the Virgin to impress also in our hearts the wounds of the Lord: “But, O wounded Sovereign Lady! wound our hearts and renew the passion of your Son in our hearts. Unite your wounded heart with our hearts so that with you we too may be wounded by the wounds of your Son.” 189 This union with the heart of Mary and with the wounds of Jesus is a grace; the heart of Mary is full of divine grace; and the glorious Christ becomes our consolation:

For what is now greater, O my Sovereign Lady! than to have our heart united with your open heart and with the pierced body of your Son? Is not your heart full of grace? And if this heart is open, how could not this grace course within a heart united with yours? And if your Son is the glory of the blessed, how could not the sweetness of his glory spread from his heart—since it was pierced—into a heart united with Him? 190

Helfta

During the thirteenth century, the monastery of Helfta in Saxony became the center of a highly mystical devotion to the heart of Jesus and also to the heart of the Virgin Mary. During the abbots of Gertrude of Hackeborn (1251-1291), three nuns lived and wrote an experience of the Brautmystik that would considerably influence the spirituality of the Latin Church: Mechtilde of Magdebourg, Mechtilde

187 Ibid, p. 78: Haec non considerasti, domina, quia cor tuum erat alienatum a te prae dolore, non eras in te, sed in afflictione Filii, sed in vulneribus unici, sed in morte dilecti. Non considerabat cor tuum vulgus; sed vulnus: non pressuram, sed fixuram; non clamorem, sed livorem; non horrorem, sed dolorem.
188 Ibid., p. 79: . . . totum cor tuum versum erat, domina, circa Filii tui passionem. O mira res, tota es in vulneribus Christi, totus Christus crucifixus est in intimis visceribus cordis tui.
189 Ibid.: Sed, o vulnerata domina vulnera corda nostra et in cordibus nostris tui Filii renova passionem. Cor tuum vulneratum coniunge cordi nostro, ut tecum tui Filii vulneribus pariter vulneremur.
190 Ibid., p. 80: Nam quid hodie maius est, domina mea, quam habere cor unitum cordi tuo aperto et Filii tui corpori perforato? Nonne cor tuum plenum est gratia? Et, si apertum est, quomodo illa gratia non decurrit in cor sibi unitum? Et, si Filius tuus gloria est beatorum, quomodo, si perforatus est, non emanat dulcedo illius gloriae in cor sibi coniunctum?
of Hackeborn (sister of the abbess), and Saint Gertrude the Great. These mystics lived intimately united with Christ, Mary, the angels, and the saints. Their writings were an education to the life with the three Divine Persons. These nuns expressed their mystical experience in a style inspired by the Canticle of Canticles; they also used the language of courtly love or, more exactly, of the Minne of the Germanic countries. They availed themselves freely of the latter, for their essential purpose was to glorify the God-Love. Their mysticism centered on Christ, Spouse of the Church, Spouse of every faithful soul, in particular Spouse of the virgins who consecrate their lives to him in the monasteries, by imitating Mary in her love for the Savior. The liturgy guided these mystics. The nuns of Helfta lived the mysteries of Christ throughout the liturgical year, and it was during liturgical celebrations that they experienced the visions which contributed to a remarkable devotion to the hearts of both Jesus and Mary. The Abbess Gertrude of Hackeborn understood the importance of the graces granted to these nuns, and she was rewarded for this.

Mechtilde of Hackeborn

According to the testimony of her sister Mechtilde, when the Abbess died in 1291, the Lord appeared leaning over her and with both hands opened his heart over her; she entered into this sanctuary: the sweet heart of the Savior. Afterwards, Mechtilde († 1299) saw Gertrude in her glory and asked her to pray for the community. Gertrude answered that she recommended her daughters to the most sweet heart of the most loving Lord Jesus Christ, “in whom I myself am living.”

It is the devotion of these nuns to the heart of Christ that we must first strive to understand. The Gospels speak of Jesus touched by compassion, moved to the depths of his heart. The Son of God, in his humanity—especially as the crucified Christ, with hands and feet pierced by the nails, his side opened by the spear—became the object of a great devotion during the Middle Ages; the devotion to the holy
wounds and, above all, to the wound on his side of his chest. Two texts especially attracted the attention of the spiritual writers. At the Last Supper, the beloved disciple had rested his head on the chest of his Master. And at the apparition of the Risen Christ, the unbelieving Thomas was invited to: “Put your finger into my pierced hands and your hand into my side...” (Jn 21:27). These texts became associated with the love which developed over Christian generations for the Heart of Jesus. One example was the astonishing experience of union with Christ in the life of Saint Lutgarde. Born in 1182, Lutgarde, at seventeen years of age, was the object of the attentions of a young man. She saw the Lord appear to her in his human form, showing her the wound in his side full of blood; he asked her to love him above all things. Later, Lutgarde, who became a Benedictine nun, asked Christ to give her his heart. Christ offered her the exchange of their hearts: a mystical union that illustrates his desire to be one with us. This was a kind of foreshadowing of the favors granted to the nuns of Helfta.

Mechtilde of Magdebourg

The oldest recorded apparition of the Heart of Jesus was that granted to Mechtilde of Magdebourg († 1282-94?); it occurred around 1250, before her entrance at Helfta. With her visions came passage from attention to the wounded side of Jesus to a new understanding of his wounded heart. Mechtilde’s confessor had asked her to write down her visions. She wrote them over the course of thirty years; they were gathered in the book Das fließende Licht der Gottheit (The Streaming Light of the Divinity). In 1270-71, she entered Helfta where she finished her book and enjoyed friendships with the Abbess Gertrude, Mechtilde of Hackeborn, and the young Gertrude the Great. She died among them around 1282-94. Mechtilde found consolation in the heart of Christ, wounded by the soldier’s spear; the Lord opened to her the wound of his heart. However, she also sang the joy of the soul in heaven, when the glorious Lord received her in his heart.

The visions of Mechtilde of Hackeborn († 1299) are related in the Liber specialis gratiae, a Latin version of a German original now lost. There is a different approach with Mechtilde of Magdebourg; it is the glorified Christ who opens to her the wound of his heart for the union of their hearts. The Liber specialis gratiae shows the amazing confidence of a saint, exposing—with simplicity, with talent, and with an apostolic love—her visions, her extremely confident relation with Christ and Mary. And—what is even more striking—revealing the exquisite and familiar kind-

196 RICHSTÄTTER, Die Herz-Jesu-Verehrung, pp. 77-81.
197 Rev. Mechl.
198 Cf. RICHSTÄTTER, Die Herz-Jesu-Verehrung, pp. 82-87.
ness with which both responded to her. She received signal graces that brought her into mystical union with both Christ and the Blessed Virgin. For example, at Christmas, Mary offered her the Child Jesus to embrace; the nun pressed her heart against the heart of the Child, with a prayer that greeted Jesus as the "substance" (medulla) of the heart of the Father. She offered him the love infused in her own heart. She greeted the Child:

"Hail substance of the Father's Heart, most amiable food and most blessed refection of a languishing soul. I offer you the substance of my heart and of my soul in eternal praise and glory." By divine inspiration she understood how the Son is the substance of the Paternal Heart . . . ; and the substance of the soul is that utmost sweetness that the soul deserves to feel as given by God alone through the infusion of love, when the soul despises truly all the rest. 199

Devotion to the heart of Mary is linked with devotion to the heart of the glorified Lord. On the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (called at that time the Purification of Mary), Mechtilde saw Mary holding in her hand a golden vessel that contained the love of the Divine Heart; Mary offered it to her Son with her own service:

The Blessed Virgin Mary stood at the right of her Son, holding in her hand a golden vessel; and while the soul wanted to know from her what was in that vessel, Mary answered: It is from the liquor of divine love that I want to offer to my Son with all the work that I accomplished in his service. 200

On Good Friday, around Vespers, Mary appeared to Mechtilde, holding Jesus taken down from the cross, and she told her to kiss the wounds of the Lord, first his heart three times. 201 On the eve of the Assumption, Mechtilde saw Mary lying in her bed, and the Divine Majesty bent over the abyss of the most humble heart of Mary; thus the soul of the Mother of God joined the heart of her Son:

Jesus filled this heart so abundantly with the torrent of his divine joy, that her most holy soul was absorbed and passed entirely into God. And so the most holy soul of

199 Anima vero, ut sibi videbatur, iuxta beatissimam Virginem consedebat, magno cupiens desiderio etiam amabilem infantulum osculari. Virginiae autem mater postquam Filium suum dulcissime amplexata fuerat et allocuta, tradidit ipsum etiam animae amplexandum. At illa cum ineffabili amore puerum suscipiens, cordi suo ipsum impressit, his verbis, quae numquam prius cogitaverat, salutans puerum ait: Salve paterni cordis medulla dulcissima languentis animae sagina et refectio beatissima; tibi offero cordis et animae meae medullam in aeternam laudem et gloriam. Intellexit divinitus inspirata, qualiter Filius est medulla cordis paterni . . . Medulla vero animae est illud dulcissimum, quod anima a solo Deo per amoris infusionem meretur sentire; quae omnia vere despicit (Rev. Mecht., p. 16: Lib. I, chap. 5).

200 Beata ergo virgo stabat a dextris filii, habens auream pyxidem in manu; et dum quaerebat ab ea, quid in ea haberet, respondit: Ex liquore divini cordis, quem offere volo filio meo cum omni labore, quem in servitio eius impendi (Rev. Mecht., p. 39: Lib. 1, chap. 12).

201 Rev. Mecht., p. 00: Lib. 1, chap. 10.
Mary abandoned her body with ineffable joy, without any suffering, and flew into the arms of her Son with the greatest joy; and, reclining on his heart most lovingly and most delightedly, she was led to the throne of the Trinity among the festive dance of the saints.202

An important vision described the union of the hearts in heaven. On the feast of All Saints, Mechtilde saw a triple string passing from the heart of Jesus to the most loving heart of his Mother, and from there to the hearts of all the virgins, and then going back to the heart of Christ:

Behold, a triple golden string seemed to go out from this most sweet heart in which is concealed the abundance of all beatitude. This string, passing through the most enamoured heart of the Virgin Mother, stretched out to the hearts of each virgin, and, so passing through all their hearts individually, it finally turned back from the heart of the last virgin and penetrated the divine heart.203

Thus, the circle extended to all the heavenly court, and the seer understood that this triple string coming out of the heart of the Lord symbolized the love of the three Divine Persons that unites all loving hearts through the intervention of Mary.204 A prayer to the heart of Mary taught to Mechtilde was a greeting to the holy dispositions of this heart, presented in seven articles: 1) the desires of Mary waiting for the birth of Christ; 2) her love, her humility through which she deserved to be the mother of God; 3) her piety, her affection to nourish Jesus; 4) her faithful keeping of the words of Jesus; 5) her compassion; 6) her prayer for the Church; 7) her prayer for us, from heaven.205

202 Altitudo infinitae majestatis inclinavit se in abyssum infimam, scilicet humillimum cor Virginis et torrente totius suae divinae voluptatis illud tam abunde implevit, ut anima ejus sanctissima tota absorpta transfunderetur in Deum. Sicque Mariae anima sanctissima ineffabilis gaudio e corpore exiens ab omni dolore extraneae et ulnas filii laetissime advolans et super cor suum amantissime et delicatissime se reclinans usque ad thronum excellensissime Trinitatis cum festivo sanctorum tripu­dio est deducta (Rell. Mecht., p.90: Lib. 1, chap.26).

203 Et ecce de corde illo dulcissimo in quo latet copia omnis beatitudinis, progradit videbatur funiculus triplex aurei coloris, qui pertransiens amorissimum cor virginis matris protendebatur ad singula corda virginum, sicque singillatim omnium corda pertransiens, donec de corde virginis post­tremae reflexus penetravit cor Dominicum, faciens ductu mirabili quasi choream (Rev. Mecht., p.106: Lib. 1, chap.31).

204 Ibid.: Per triplicem vero funiculum qui de corde Dei procedebat, intellexit significari amorem semper venerandae Trinitatis, scilicet Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, qui per interventum dignissi­mae matris Mariae incorruptarum virginum amatoria corda speciali suavitate pertransuendo sibi counit . . .

205 Etdatum est ei salutare Cor Virginis gloriosae in his septem articulis, in quibus nobis utilissi­mum fuit prae omnibus cordibus, post Christum. Primo, in desiderio quod prae omnibus Patriarchis et Prophetis maxime habuit ad Christi nativitatem. Secundo, in amore, quia per amorem ardentissi­mum et humillimum Mater Dei est effecta. Tertio, in pietate et dulcedine, qua tam affectuose parvulum Jesum enutrit. Quarto, in studiosa conversatione verborum Christi. Quinto, in exemplo
Saint Gertrude the Great

Saint Gertrude the Great (1254-1301/02) composed the *Exercitia spiritualia* and the *Legatus divinae pietatis* to make the Heart of Jesus known and loved. She taught in these books how to pray to him. As noted by Richstätter (p. 89), Gertrude first followed the example of Mechtilde of Magdebourg contemplating the heart of Jesus in the sufferings of his passion. Later, after the death of the Abbess Gertrude of Hackeborn († 1292), she learned of the mystical graces of her companion Mechtilde of Hackeborn. The influence of this new orientation was then felt in her own visions: the heart of the glorious Christ, of the King who spreads out the kindnesses of his heart, prevailed henceforth in the graces of union. Gertrude wanted to lead the nuns towards the most intimate union with the heart of Jesus, with the heart of Mary, according to all the demands of such a familiarity in the communion of saints. The book of the "Exercises" gives the context of such a mystical work: an experience of Christian life that springs out of the Baptismal Consecration and blossoms through the Monastic Consecration: a progress towards the Trinitarian Life through the love of Christ and of his mother. By the term "my heart," Gertrude means the interior life of union with Christ that she discovered at the time of her "conversion," on January 27, 1281, vigil of the Feast of the Purification. The Lord taught her, according to her own words, "to recollect myself at the most intimate depth of my being until then much unknown to me."

The "Exercises" abound in prayers, especially to Christ and to Mary. Several of them are inspired by devotion to the heart of Christ. For example, Exercise I ends in a contract sealed by the heart of Jesus:

> My most sweet Jesus, keep in the intimate sanctuary of your heart, which is so good, the purity of my baptismal innocence and the chart of my faith, so that under your faithful watch I may be able to present them back to you intact at the hour of my death. I beg you, impress in my heart the seal of your heart, so that I may be able to live according to you and, after this exile, come without obstacle to you in blithest joy.  

In Exercise VI (p. 23), Gertrude offers to her Lord Jesus the heart of Mary:

> May the most worthy heart and soul of your most glorious Virgin mother Mary rejoice to you for me, she whom you chose as your mother because of the necessities of my salvation, so that her maternal clemency would always be open to me. May the
very faithful care that is yours for me jubilate to you, that care by which you have
provided for me such a great advocate and patroness, through whom I might be able
to find very easily your grace, and in whom—I confidently believe—your eternal
mercy is kept for me. May you receive the jubilation of this admirable tabernacle of
your glory, the only one who has worthily served you as a holy dwelling, through
whom you are able to fulfill perfectly by yourself the measure of praise and glory
that is due to you from me. 208

The personal, mystical experience of Gertrude is described in the Legatus memo-
rialis abundanliae divinae pielalis. 209 In 1282-83, she received “the impression of
Jesus’ wounds,” 210 a stigmatization. In 1291, she asked one of the sisters to pray for
her in order to obtain the following grace: “By your wounded Heart, most loving
Lord, pierce her heart with the arrows of your love, so that she may no longer possess
anything earthly, but that she may be possessed only by the power of your Divin-
ity.” 211 She wanted to become a mere instrument of the Son of God made our Savior.
She received three times the grace of the impression of Jesus’ wounds. 212 At the end
of the second book of the Legatus, she summarized the graces that she had received:

You also have admitted me to the incomparable familiarity of your tenderness,
offering me the most noble ark of your divinity, meaning your Sacred
Heart, so that
1 have found there my delights: you gave me this gratuitously, or you exchanged it
with my own heart as a still more evident mark of your tender intimacy. Through
this divine Heart I have known your secret judgments . . . . 213

In the mystical experience of Gertrude, devotion to the heart of Mary is part of
her love for the heart of Christ. On the Vigil of Christmas, under the inspiration of
the Holy Spirit, she offered to Mary the heart of Jesus, asking him to make up for
her deficiencies committed during Advent:

Taught by the unction of the Holy Spirit, she offered to the undefiled Mother the
noblest and meekest Heart of Jesus Christ to make up for her neglects. The Blessed
Virgin received this heart with the greatest joy and gratitude; at its sight she found a

208 Ibid., pp. 232-33, Exercice VI, II. 444-54: Iubilet tibi pro me gloriiosissimae virginis matris
Mariae dignissimum cor et anima, quam tibi in matrem elegisti pro meae salutis indigentia, ut mihi
semper eius materna pateat clementia. Iubilet tibi tua fidelissima, quae tibi de me est, cura, in qua
 tu providisti mihi tantam ac talem advocatam et patronam, per quam tuam facillime possim invenire
 gratiam, et in qua fiducialiter credo mihi tuam aeternam servari misericordiam. Iubilet tibi hoc
admirabile tabernaculum gloriae tuae, quod solum tibi ministrearit dignae sancta inhabitatione per
quod tu tibimetipsi optime potes suppliere pro me modum laudis et gloriae, quae tibi debetur ex me.
209 See SC 139: Œuvres spirituelles, II. Le Héraut, Livres I -II, and SC 143: Œuvres spirituelles,
III. Le Héraul, Livre III (see “Prologue”).
210 GERTRUDE D’HELFTA (SC 139, p. 248), Le Héraut, II, chap. 4.
211 Ibid., p. 248-49, II, chap. 5.
212 Cf. C. VAGAGGINI, “La dévotion au Sacré-Cœur chez sainte Mechtilde et sainte Gertrude,”
in Cor Jesu, 2:33.
213 GERTRUDE D’HELFTA (SC 139, p. 249), Le Héraut, II, chap. 5.
delight sufficient for all homage and honor. For this most noble heart containing all
goodness showed her the sum of all that is desirable and could ever be offered to her
maternal honor from any devotion or any zeal for prayers.²¹⁴

At Matins of Christmas, Gertrude saw Mary with the Infant Jesus in her womb:

The only Son of the Most High Father was seen as a tender babe sucking with avid
delight on the heart of the Virgin. By this she understood that as the humanity of
Christ was reared by the virginal milk, so his divinity was delighted to enjoy the
purity of the most innocent and most loving heart of his mother.²¹⁵

At the Eucharist, during the singing of the words primogenitus Mariae filius,
Gertrude protested that we must say unigenitus since the Virgin gave birth to only
one Son. But Mary explained that Jesus is really the firstborn; for after him, his
mother has given birth to all of us in the womb of her maternal love (the word heart
is not used).²¹⁶ On the eve of the feast of the Annunciation, Gertrude had a vision
partially similar to that of Mechtilde of Hackeborn. At Matins, during the song of the
Ave Maria, she saw three powerful rivulets proceeding from the Father, the Son, and
the Holy Spirit. They penetrated with a very gentle impulse into the heart of the
Virgin Mother, and from her heart they went back to their origin with a powerful
impulse. From this triple impulse of the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin was shown
to be the most powerful person after the Father, the wisest after the Son, and the
most generous after the Holy Spirit. Gertrude also understood that when the Ave
Maria is recited with devotion, the exchange of love between the Trinity and Mary
becomes always efficient and extends to all the saints, the angels, and, on earth, over
all those who commemorate the angelic greeting.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Id. (SC 255, pp. 46-47), Le Héraut, IV, chap. 2, 16: ... unctione Spiritus Sancti edocta, sciens
quid faceret, obtulit intemeratae Matri praenobilissimum ac praedulcissimum Cor Jesu Christi pro
suppletione totius sui neglecti. Quod benedicta Virgo maximo cum gaudio et gratitudine susciptiens,
in aspectu illius omnis obsequii et honoris sufficiens comperit delectamentum, quia Cor illud unice
praedignissimum, ac totius boni contentivum exhibebat illi omnium desiderabilium summam, quae
unquam ex alicujus devotione, vel orationum studio possent honori ipsius materne exhiberī.

²¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 52-53, Le Héraut, IV, chap. 3, 4: Videbat etiam puerulus ille floridus, summi
Patris unicus, cor Matris virgineae aida delectatione sugere. Per quod intellexit quod, sicut huma­
nitas Christi lacte pascethatur virginali, sic divinitas delectabatur perfrui puritate ipsius innocentis­
simi et amantissimi cordis.

²¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 54-57, Le Héraut, IV, chap.3, 7: <<Nequaquam unigenitus, sed congruentissime
dicitur primogenitus meas dulcisissimus Jesus, quem primo clauso utero procreavi, et post ipsum,
imm per ipsum, vos omnes, ipsi in fratres et mihi in filios, maternae caritatis visceribus praeoptando
generavi.»

²¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 136-37, Le Héraut, IV, chap.12, 4: ... vidit tres rivulos efficacissimos procedentes a
Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto cor virginis Matris suavissimo impetu penetrare, et de corde ipsius
rursus efficaci impetususitate suam originem repetere, et ex illo influxu sanctae Trinitatis hoc beatae
Virgini donatum fore, quod ipsa est potentissima post Patrem, sapientissima post Filium, et beni­
gnissima post Spiritum Sanctum.
Helfta was a summit in the devotion to Christ, God-made-man, and particularly for the devotion to his Divine Heart and to his human heart. Mary is constantly present in their prayer, and this prayer is, above all, liturgical. The devotion to the heart of Mary is part of a Marian devotion that venerates the Mother of Christ under the traditional titles, without being a particularistic devotion. The influence of the writings of Helfta developed slowly, as recent editions have noted. The first real distribution was made by the Carthusians of Cologne, who, with Ch. Loher and Lansperge, published in Latin the *Revelationes* and the *Exercitia* of Gertrude in 1536. The importance of Helfta became manifest with the edition of Solesmes, in 1875-77, entitled *Revelationes Gertrudianae ac Mechtildianae* (in 2 volumes). Since then, research work, articles and books have finally established the reputation of the authentic writings of Helfta (see works mentioned here and in the notes).

Two *Mariale*

**Pseudo-James of Voragine**

The *Mariale aureum* was falsely attributed to James of Voragine (†1298), as explained by G. Monleone. It is an alphabetical collection of titles and allegories bestowed on Mary. All is not really gold in this *Mariale aureum*, but we find there texts collected from numerous authors. Some names are cited. Numerous quotations are also found in the authentic texts of James of Voragine. In this alphabetical list, the word *cor* is not a special rubric; however, we find it in various texts. The Word of God that was inserted in the heart of Mary like a graft and was also, according to Hebrews 4:12 ("The Word of God is alive, sharp like a two-edged sword"), carried in her heart like a sword, since she kept in her heart the words of the Lord. The

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humility of the heart of Mary was a gift to her heart. We might also quote a text that is found in various writers, a text that describes a battle that Mary suffered in her heart at the passion of her Son. She loved her Son. She also knew that the passion would save the human race. Therefore, two loves, two sorrows fought in her heart. In her love for Christ she did not want him to suffer; in her love for us she wanted this suffering.

Servasanctus da Faenza, O.F.M. (= Pseudo-Ernest of Prague)

A Mariale attributed to Ernest, archbishop of Prague, is quoted in the Polyanthea Mariana of Hyppolyte Marracci, in a long list of quotations about the word cor. This Mariale is not the work of the Archbishop of Prague, Ernest of Pardubice (1297-1364). Rather, it is the Liber de laudibus beatae Mariae, written by Servasanctus of Faenza, a Franciscan who lived at the end of the thirteenth century.

Some texts of this Mariale are of great interest for us. The heart of Mary is called "our heart," as Christ is "our head." For the seat of the vital spirit lies in the heart and our life depends on it. Therefore, since we daily call the Blessed Virgin,
Vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, we can say that she is in a certain sense the fountain of life and that we all receive life from her fullness, as our heart. The author describes the qualities of this “our heart”: promptitude, simplicity, flexibility, docility, immaculate purity, rectitude of intention, tenderness, a heart despising grandeur, desirous of heavenly goods, open to universal love (caritas), full of experience, of patience, of perseverance, unified and liberated from all preoccupation, having chosen the best part, adhering to God in everything perfectly. Mary is also our heart in another way. She possesses in the Church, in the mystical body of Christ, power, dignity, providence, influence, conformity. Mary is “Our Lady,” the noblest of all creatures, mother of the family who cares for the whole body of the Church, aqueduct that brings us every good, our own flesh and our sister, conformed and similar to us by nature. Mary is our heart, for, after God, no one is more intimate with our heart, no creature in the world is more loved by us, with such strength, such sweetness. Mary is the heart of the Spouse, Christ, and of the Bride, the Church; for she alone is vigilant over the whole body of the Church; after the death of Christ on Holy Saturday; in her alone, the life of the body remained—as in the heart. Mary is our heart. Now, when a person’s heart is good, the whole person is good; when the heart


226 SERVASANCTUS DE FAENZA, De laudibus . . . : Cor paratum per promptitudinem, simplex per simplicitatem, cereum per tractabilitatem, docile per docilitatem, immaculatum, quia sine nota culpae, purum quia sine ulla rubigine, rectum per puritatem intentionis, carneum per teneritudinem, magnum magna contingens, altum coelestia appetendo, latum omnes diligendo, abundans multa experiendo, sapiens per providentiam, firmum per patientiam, stabile per perseverantiam, unum euras fugiendo, optimum optima eligendo, perfectum Deo per omnia adhaerendo.

227 Ibid.: Cor quia sicut cor habet ad caetera membra imperium, dignitatem, providentiam, influentiam et conformitatem; ita et Maria ad Ecclesiam, unde ipsa est cor nostrum, Isa. XL: “Loquimini ad cor Jerusalem;” ipsa enim habet imperium super nos, quia Domina, Imperatrix et semper Augusta; ipsa est nobilissima creaturam;ipsa totius corporis Ecclesiae curam gerit, tanquam materfamilias;ipsa influit nobis omnia bona, quia aquaeductus;ipsa quoque caro et soror nostra, per omnia nobis conformis et similis in natura.

228 Ibid.: Cor, quia sicut nihil est in mundo quod nobis possit esse intimius corde nostro, ita post Deum nihil est in mundo, quod ita diligamus intime, dulciter, vere et fortiter, et totis visceribus, ut Mariam.

229 Ibid.: Cor Sponsi, vel Sponsae, id est Christi, vel Ecclesiae, quod pro toto corpore vigilavit in Sabbato sancto, quando Christus in sepulcro dormiebat, et tunc etiam, caeteris membris Ecclesiae deficientibus, in ea sola tanquam in corde remansit vita corporis.
is wise, the whole person is wise, and so forth. It would be so in the Church, if God inserted Mary into our intimate life, so that we would love her as our heart. May our heart be with her and may Mary nourish us in a chaste fear, in beatitude and joy. Therefore, if we love life, may Mary be *inviscerated* in us; let us keep her as our heart; let us confide ourselves (*commitemus*) totally to her care, to her custody, to her power, to her leadership (*magisterium*). This *commitemus* is an invitation to consecrate ourselves to the heart of Mary as being “our heart” (*cor nostrum*).

VI. THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Some general indications are necessary. Duns Scotus (†1308) brought to theological precision how Mary’s conception was immaculate; by preservation from original sin she was the manifestation of the Redeemer’s full triumph over sin. In religious art, Giotto (†1337) illustrated the life of St. Francis of Assisi and the stigmatization of this great mystic, founder of an order of mendicant preachers which rapidly spread far and wide. The image of the stigmata of St. Francis favored the mystical development of devotion to the five wounds of the Savior. This also contributed to direct attention toward the heart of Jesus. Giotto, on the other hand, in the chapel of Scrovegni (Arena), at Padova, represented Charity holding in her hand a heart that she receives from God and gives back to him. These iconographic representations reveal the evolution of Christian piety toward the symbol of the heart. Finally, devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows inspired the composition of the *Stabat Mater*. The *planctus Mariae* developed without, however, any centering on a special devotion toward the heart of Mary. Dom Wilmart studied the transition from the devotion of the *Gaude*—the joys of Mary—to the devotion to her sorrows; this resulted ultimately in a feast and a Mass of the Compassion that received various other titles: *De lamentatione, De planctu, In transfixione*, and ultimately *De transfixione seu martirio cordis beatae Mariae*, according to an addition of the fifteenth century. Already in the fourteenth century, devotion to the compassion of Mary...

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230 Ibid.: Cor, quia sicut cor reddit subjectum suum simpliciter, tale quale ipsum est nam cujus cor bonum, ipse simpliciter bonus, cujus cor sapiens, ipso simpliciter sapiens, et similia: ita si Maria fuerit a Deo visceribus nostris inserta, ut eam diligamus verissime sicut cor nostrum, ut sit nobis cum ipsa cor nostrum, et anima nostra, et ipsa nos enutriet in timore casto, beatitudine et laetitia. Unde si volumus vitam diligere, et dies videre bonos, ipsam nobis invisceremus; ejus gratiam omni custodia, sicut cor nostrum custodiamus, curam nostram, atque custodiam, imperium quoque ac magisterium totaliter ipsi committamus.


had become liturgical. A synod of the province of Cologne, on April 22, 1423, prescribed this feast and granted it indulgences. Among the texts that A. Wilmart published, the heart of Mary was mentioned only once: "About the sorrow of the heart of Mary when her Son was condemned to death."\(^{234}\) It is a text from a Pseudo-Innocent III, whose prayers were incorporated by the chancellor Philip of Mézieres (†1405).\(^{235}\)

Ramon Lull

The Catalan Ramon Lull (ca. 1235-1316), in his *Libre de Benedicta in mulieribus*, composed a *planctus* which is a good example of these compositions in which Mary is represented telling us her sorrow when she sees her Son dying on the cross:

Alas my Son! My heart is about to burst, as I see you die and suffer so, and I sorrowful cannot help you. And then, as I saw the side of my Son being wounded and opened with a spear, and from that wound I saw blood and water flow, it seemed that my own heart had been wounded and opened, and I, sorrowful and anguished, wringing my hands, said: "O divine and human heart that for the love of man wishes to die, and from which I see blood and water flowing out! Unhappy me! my heart dies of unbearable sorrow. O heart of my Son Jesus full of charity! All that you had within you have given to us."\(^{236}\)

Saint Bridget of Sweden

Saint Bridget of Sweden (†1373) became famous through her revelations which she dictated in Swedish and which were then translated into Latin, then compiled and organized into books and chapters. The text is Bridget's in substance. These visions, sometimes criticized, received the approval of various popes, were quoted by theologians as an authority, and were used by painters for the life of Christ. In his study of Bridget (for the DHGE, 10:722-29), Fr. Debongnie gives a prudent judgment: "We do not escape from the impression that Bridget mixed a great deal of her burning imagination with gifts from heaven."\(^{237}\) The critical edition in progress,

\(^{234}\) Ibid., p. 524: Propter cruciatus et angustias quae sustinuit cor tuum Virgo benignissima, quando filius tuus dulcissimus Jhesus, clamantibus Judaeis: Crucifige, crucifige, adjudicatus est morti.

\(^{235}\) Ibid., p. 521.

\(^{236}\) RAMON LULL: Ay, Fill meu! Lo cor me cuyda esclatar com axi us veix morir e penar e no us pusc jo dolorosa ajudar. En aprés, com viu ab una lança lo costat del meu Fill nafrar e obrir ed aquella nafra sanc e aigua viu exir, semblant me fo que lo meu cor me hagués hom nafrat e ubert, e jo trista e angoxosa torcia mes mans e deya: Ah cor divinal e humanal que per amor d home vols morir, del qual sanc et aigua veix exir! Mesquina mor se lo meu cor de dolor que no u pot més soferir. Ah cor del meu Fill Jesús ple de caritat! Tot quant dins tenies, tot nos ho has dat (*Libre de Benedicta tu in mulieribus*, p. 5, no. 6; his *Obres. Edicio original*, 10:322 [*Libre de Sancta Maria . . .* , ed. Salvador Galmes (Palma de Mallorca, 1915)]).

\(^{237}\) Cf. art. "Brigitte de Suède" (by P. Debongnie), in DHGE 10:727.
being prepared by the Academy of Stockholm (Sancta Birgitta Revelationes, ed. Carl-Gustave Undhagen), will render a great service for the knowledge of these texts and for their study. On devotion to the heart of Mary, Church tradition has retained some frequently quoted texts from St. Bridget. Of particular significance is the vision in which the Blessed Virgin explains to the seer her sorrow at the time of the passion:

Consider my daughter, the passion of my Son. His members were for me, so to speak, my members and like my own heart. For, as other sons used to be in the wombs of their mothers, so was Jesus in me. But He was conceived from the fervent charity of divine love, the others, however, from the desire of the flesh. Therefore John, His cousin, said rightly: "The Word was made flesh." For it is by charity that He came and was in me. Indeed, the Word and charity formed Him in me. He himself was for me like my heart. When He was born from me, I felt as if half of my heart was born and went out of me. And when He suffered the passion, I felt as if my heart suffered the passion. For when something is half outside and half inside, when it is tortured, what is outside suffers the same suffering as what is inside. In the same way, when my Son was scourged and tortured it was as if my heart was scourged and tortured. I was the nearest one to Him in His passion, and I was not separated from Him. I stood very near to His cross and, as what is close to the heart is tortured more severely, in the same way, my sorrow was deeper than that of all the others. When He looked at me from the cross and I looked at Him, then streams of tears flowed from my eyes. When He saw me consumed by my sorrow, He was so afflicted from my sorrow that all the pain of His wounds was as if lessened in comparison with the sorrow that He saw in me. Therefore, I dare to say that His suffering was my suffering because His heart was my heart. For as Adam and Eve sold the world for an apple, so my Son and myself: we redeemed the world as if with one heart. Therefore, my daughter, think what I was in the death of my Son and it will not be difficult for you to quit the world.

238 St. BRIDGET OF SWEDEN, Revelationes, Lib. 1, cap. 35: Considera, filia, passionem filii mei! Cuius membra fuerunt michi quasi membra mea et quasi cor meum. Nam ipse, sicut alii filii in viscibus matris solent esse, sic fuit in me. Sed ipse conceptus est ex feruenti caritate diuine dilectionis, alii autem ex concupiscencia carnis. Unde bene dicit Iohannes, frater consobrinus eius: "Verbum caro factum est." Nam per caritatem ipse venit et erat in me. Verbum autem et caritas ipsum fecerunt in me. Ipse quippe erat michi quasi cor meum. Propterea, cum nasceretur ex me, sensi ego, quod quasi dimidium cor meum nasceretur et exiret ex me. Et cum ipse pateretur, sensi; quod quasi cor meum paciebatur. Sicut enim illud, quod dimidium est extra et dimidium intra, et si illud pungitur, quod extra est, eque sentit dolorem, quod intus est, sic ego, cum flagellaretur et pungeretur filius meus, quasi cor meum flagellabatur et pungebatur.

Ego eciam fui propinquior ei in passione nec separabam ab eo. Ego stabam vicinus cruci eius et sicut hoc grauius pungit, quod vicinus est cordi, sic dolor eius grauior erat pre ceteris michi. Cumque respexit ad me de cruce et ego ad eum, tunc de oculis meis quasi de venis lacrime exibant. Et cum ipse me cerneret dolore confectam, in tantum amaricabatur de dolore meo, quod omnis dolor vulnorum suorum erat quasi sopitus sibi pre dolore meo, quem in me videbat. Propterea audacter dico, quia dolor eius erat dolor meus, quia cor eius cor meum. Sicut enim Adam et Eua vendiderunt
Bridget speaks of this intimacy between Mary and Jesus with her own maternal experience (she had eight children from her marriage with Ulf Gudmarsson) and with the mystical experience of her own union with Christ and Mary.

In another vision, Mary answered Bridget's desire to know how to love and praise both the Son and His Mother.

I am the queen of heaven. You are solicitous to know how you should praise me. Know for certain that any praise of my Son is my praise. And whoever dishonors Him dishonors me, for we both have loved one another so fervently that we were both as one heart. And He honored me who was an earthly vessel with such honor that He exalted me over all the angels. Therefore, you ought to praise me in this way: "Blessed are you God, Creator of all, who deigned to descend into the womb of the Virgin Mary . . . ." 239

The "Little Office of the Virgin Mary," composed in Rome between 1350-1360 by Bridget and her confessor Peter Olovsson, 240 mentions the heart of Mary pierced by cruel thorns at the sight of the body of her Son suffering so much pain. In a verse of the hymn for Friday's night office we read: "Let us consider the thorns that wounded the heart of the trembling mother when she saw the body of her Son suffering so many pains." 241

At the night office for Monday, the second lesson is the Sermo angelicus. As God created the sun, the moon, and the stars, for our world, we can speak about similar lights for Mary: her obedience (the sun), her faith (the moon), the thoughts of her heart (the stars). In her heart, Mary, from the moment she first knew God, burned with a divine charity and remained in it until her death:

The thoughts of your heart appeared similar to the stars in this, that from the first moment you had knowledge of God, you remained so fervent in the divine charity


239 Ibid., Lib. I, cap. 8: Ego sum regina celi, Tu sollicita es, quomodo laudare me debes. Scias pro certo, quod omnis laus filii mei laus mea est. Et qui inhonorat eum, inhonorat me, quia ego sic feruerunt dilesi eum et ipse me, quod quasi unum cor ambo fuimus. Et ipse me, quae eram vas terrenum, sic honorifice honoravit, ut supra omnes angelos me exaltaret. Sic ergo laudare debes me: "Benedictus sis tu, Deus, creator omnium, qui in uterum Mariae virginis descendere dignatus es . . . (Ed. crit., p. 259).


148
until death, that at the sight of God and of the angels, all your thoughts appeared
more beautiful than the stars to human sight. 242

At the night office of Friday, the second lesson teaches that Mary, knowing the
prophecies, considered in her heart, from the infancy of Jesus, the body of her Son
covered by wounds in the passion. The sword of sorrow came nearer and nearer to
the heart of the Blessed Virgin as the time of the passion drew nearer. 243 But after
the entombment, Mary, in her faith in the Resurrection, knew joy in her heart:
Thus, the stings of sorrow vanished from the heart of the mother and the delight of
the consolation began to be renewed in her sweetly, because she knew that her Son’s
troubles were now totally at their end and that he would rise with his divinity and
humanity on the third day to eternal glory, and from that moment on, no pain had
to be suffered, nor could be suffered. 244

Ludolph the Carthusian

Ludolph the Carthusian, or Ludolf of Saxony (†1378), wrote a Vita Jesu Christi 245 which in reality offers to the reader remarkable meditations on Jesus’ life. They were published in 1474 at Strasbourg and knew a great success, with numerous
reeditions. They inspired the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. Ludolph
quotes textually numerous authors, from the Fathers to the most recent writers 246
—a remarkable incorporation of our tradition. He recommended a spiritual reading
which is a meditation that imitates Mary: she consented to be united corporally to
the eternal Word and for that she was united with him spiritually. The heart of Mary
signifies meditation on the life of Jesus. Ludolph explained the conservabat omnia,
following the tradition that represented Mary keeping in her heart all the mysteries

242 Sancta BIRGITTA, Opera minora, ed. Sten Eklund, 2 vols. (Uppsala, 1972), 2 (Sermo ange-
licus):90, cap. 5, 13: Stellis quoque cogitaciones tui cordis, in hoc similis apparebant, quod a tempore
illo quo primo Dei cognicionem habuisti, ita feruens in diuina caritate vsque ad mortem permansisti,
quod Dei atque angelorum aspectui, omnes cogitaciones tue nitidiores quam stelle humano visui
apparebant.
243 Ibid., pp. 122-24, cap. 17. For example, no.7: Quando autem [Jesum] pannis inuoluebat, tunc
in corde sue considerabat, quam acutis flagris totum ipsius corpus lacerandum erat . . .
244 Ibid., p. 127, cap. 18, no. 23: Tunc eciam a corde matris dolorum stimuli fugierunt et consola-
cionum delectacionem cepit in ipsa suauiter renouari, quia sciebat, quod Filii sui tribulaciones iam erant
ex toto finite ipsumque cum delitate et humanitate die tercia ad eternam gloriem debere resurgere ac
deinceps nullam molestiam debere nec posse pati.
245 LUDOLF THE CARTHUSIAN, Vita Jesu Christi e quatuor evangeliis et scriptoribus ortho-
246 Cf. DS p 9:1134 (“Ludolphe le Chartreux,” by W. Baier). For the Marian devotion, see also
of Christ that she alone knew and waiting respectfully for the moment chosen by God to reveal them. 247 When the boy Jesus was lost when his parents went back to Nazareth after the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the heart of Mary was wounded by an inconsolable sorrow. 248 All the facts of the infancy, all that Mary heard and knew about her Son, according to Luke 2:51, she meditated in her heart, in her memory, “quasi ruminating, pondering and examining everything very carefully.” 249 At Calvary, the heart of Mary was totally united with Christ; she prayed to the Father for him. As explained by Arnold of Bonneval, there were two altars, one in Mary and the other in the body of Christ:

Mary stood with the others near the cross bodily, but she was transferred onto the cross with all her spirit. She did not avert her eyes from her Son. She suffered as he suffered, and with all her heart she prayed to the Father for him.... In the passion you saw two altars, one in the breast of Mary, the other in the flesh of Christ. Christ immolated his flesh, Mary her soul.... What the Son suffered in his body, Mary suffered in her heart. 250

The sword predicted by Simeon penetrated the womb of the Mother at the foot of the cross. The nails, the spear, pierced her soul; the sight of her crucified Son lacerated her heart: “The wounds of your Son were your wounds; the cross of your Son was your cross; his death was your death.” 251

Ludolph retains in this chapter on Calvary two other oft-used themes: Christ suffered from seeing the sorrow that afflicted the heart of his mother; and Mary suffered by receiving a mere man, the apostle John, in place of her divine Son. 252

247 LUDOLF, Vita Jesu ...., pars I, cap. 98: Maria ... secreta Christi quae noverat, nulli divulgare volebat, sed tacito corde scrutans, congruum tempus quo Deus haec divulgari vellet, et quomodo vellet reveranter expectabat (Ed. 1865, p. 44).

248 Ibid., p. 73, pars I, cap. 15: ... Maria sine spe anxiabatur et consolari non poterat. Haec diligenter recogita: quantis vulneribus et cruciatibus cor beatae Virginis tunc sauciatum fuerat; quae suspiria, quae lamenta, quae anxietates pertulerit, cum quaesitum Filium non invenit

249 Ibid., p. 76: Omnia quippe quae de Domino vel a Domino dicta vel facta cognovit ... in corde et memoria, quasi ruminanda et diligentius scrutanda, recondebat.  

250 Ibid., p. 660, pars 2, cap. 63: Stabat Maria cum ceteris iuxta crucem corpore, sed in cruce tota migravert mentem. Non avertabat oculos a Filio, angustiabantur ut ipse, et toto corde orabat Patrem pro eo .... In passione duo videbis altaria: unum in pectore Mariae, aliud in Christi carne: Christus carmem, Maria immolatam animam .... Quod Filii eius corpore, ipsa sustinet corde.

251 Ibid., p. 664, pars 2, cap. 63: Revera viscera tua penetrat gladius, configit animam tuam lancea et clavus, laniat mentem tuam spinarium auleus, lacerat cor tuum Filii tui amarus aspectus .... Vulna Filii tui sunt vulnera tua; cruc Filii tui, et crux tua; mors eius, mors tua.

252 Ibid., p. 664B, pars 2, cap. 63: Pensemus insuper qualiter in illa commendatione cor virginem anxiabatur, cum ei pro Filio alienus, et pro homine Deo homo purus dabatur.
VI. THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

We enter into a period of important and historic changes. The Turks conquered Constantinople (1453); it was the end of the Byzantine empire. During the second part of this century, printing was invented. Works of spirituality and collections of sermons rapidly became the object of many editions. Within the cities, the bourgeoisie dominated a new social order. Renaissance art and new biblical studies manifested the new mentality. The Latin Church developed great devotion to the mysteries of the life of Jesus and, therefore, also to the mysteries of the life of Mary. The practice of the Rosary arose from this devotion. The iconography of the hearts of Jesus and Mary became more precise. Richstätter describes an illumination of the fifteenth century (kept at the Seminary of Cologne, the image is glued into an edition of St. Bonaventure, dated 1509). It represents the heart of Jesus pierced by the spear and the heart of Mary pierced by a sword; the inscription reads: Speculum divini amoris ("the mirror of divine love"). This representation anticipates the symbol which St. Francis de Sales later gave to the Visitation Sisters: one heart pierced by two swords. The Analecta Hymnica shows us the liturgical and paraliturgical development of the use of the expression "heart of Mary," especially from the fifteenth century on. Fr. Narcissus García Garcés dedicated a long article to the topic el corazón de María en la poesía religiosa de la Edad Media, collecting some 170 references. With reason, he noted that the vocabulary of this attention to the heart and to the interior life of Mary was quite varied; the terms spiritus, anima, animus, mens, intima, viscera, sinus, praecordia, and pectus were all employed, along with cor.

Some typical expressions are cited. Ferit gladius doloris / Plenum divi cor amoris / Senis vaticinio affirms the fullness of love of the heart of Mary. The text previously quoted from the office composed by St. Bridget—Pensemus matris servuli / Spinæs cordis acerrimas, / Dum vidit corpus filii / Poenas pati quam plurimas—reminds us that the thorns around the heart of the mother became an iconographic theme to symbolize Mary's sorrow upon seeing her crucified Son. The qualifications

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253 RICHSTÄTTER, Die Herz-Jesu-Verehrung, p. 246.
254 AHMA (see n. 240 above).
256 Ibid., p. 177.
257 AHMA 8:54, no. 57 (De Doloribus BMV [15thC]), 2a.
258 AHMA 12:68, no. 108 (De Compassione BMV), 2.
corde materno, materna viscera, pia viscera, and castae parenti viscera—among others—all became common in hymnology.

Gerson

The chancellor of the Sorbonne (Paris), John Gerson (1363-1429) wrote a long commentary on the Magnificat (Collectorium super Magnificat), a work of theological spirituality. André Combes, in the encyclopedia Maria, has explained the richness of this text; he entitled his analysis “Mary, mediatrix of theological speculation and of interior life,” as a fitting expression of the “Gersonian discovery” of the mystery of Our Lady. In a treatise on the Canticle of Canticles, Gerson describes the “canticle of the heart or of the hearts (canticordum),” by which he meant the “new canticle” that comes from the new heart announced by Ezekiel (36:26) and that the Church continues to sing to the glory of God. It is an interior song; the melody is from within, “in the heart of our spirit or in the spirit of our heart.” It was used, he points out, by our Psalmist Mary in her own canticle of canticles, one wholly new because God made everything new over the earth “when the woman encompassed the man” (Jer 32:22). Her Magnificat is the most excellent example of this canticordum. Gerson prays Mary to assist us; for in the heart of the Virgin Mary, a holy and new love singularly burned:

Therefore assist us, 0 full of grace; deign to accept our praise of you, that by this praise we may open an order that is new but sure and true. For, because a holy and new love singularly burned in your heart, the Holy Spirit worked marvels in your virginal flesh and your heart expressed this salutary word: My soul magnifies the Lord.

259 Ibid., p. 65, no. 104 (De Compassione BMV), 3.
260 Ibid., no.108 (In Lamentatione BMV), 3.
261 Ibid., p. 66, no. 105 (De Compassione BMV), 1.
262 Ibid., p. 63, no. 99 (De Compassione BMV), 2.
266 Ibid., p. 570, Tomus II, 2: Canticum tale novum rationabiliter appellatur canticordum, id est canticum cordis vel cordium. . . . sua modulatio est introrsus vel in corde mentis vel mente cordis, quemadmodum usa est psaltes nostra Maria in suo canticó canticorum prorsus novo, quia novum fecerat Dominus super terram, dum jam mulier circumdabat virum.
267 Ibid., Tomus II, 4: Canticordum hujsusmodi fuit excellentissime in illa Beata quae cecinit Magnificat anima mea Dominum; et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. Praeponimus hanc Beatam in exemplar pulcherrimum . . .
268 Ibid., p. 571: Adsis igitur nobis, 0 gratia plena; dignare te nos laudare et laudando disciplinam novam, sed certam et veram, aperire. Tu, inquam, cujus in corde, quia sanctus et novus amor singulariter ardebat, Spiritus Sanctus in carne virginali mirabilia faciebat, et cor eructabat verbum illud bonum: magnificat anima mea Dominum.
The novelty of this canticle is admirable in Mary, "our tambourine drummer" (tym­panistria nostra), an allusion to Miryam, sister of Aaron, celebrating the Exodus (Ex 15:20). This novelty, that Hebrews 4:12 calls "division of the soul and the spirit," is caused by "the living, efficacious word of God" that penetrates the thoughts, the intentions of the heart. It is the celebration of the wedding between the spirit of Mary and God:

The deiform spirit of Mary was espoused to God, her Lord and Lamb, who was like the bridegroom coming forth from his chamber, the True Sun of Justice, setting up his tent in the heart of Mary, the woman clothed with the sun, the chaste virgin betrothed to the one Spouse, Jesus Christ. 269

This song of the heart of Mary resounded in countless ways, for Mary meditated, compared in her heart, all the truth of the Gospels. She sang a new canticle that no other spirit could or would ever be able to sing. If in our corrupted bodies, our spiritual hearts can form so many thoughts and affections that our iniquities are submerged, let us then conjecture on the marvels that the Holy Spirit of wisdom operated in this saint of all saints. 270

Gerson continues this analysis, seeking also to conjecture how this song of Mary's heart compares with our own states of spirit. Finally, he admires the musical quality of this song, the sweetest, the most learned song:

The song of the heart of Mary was a melody created according to the artistry of the sweetest and the most learned music. Surely, if the Holy Spirit, filling the apostles, taught them all truth, and if their hearts, inspired by the Holy Spirit, resounded in various voices proclaiming the marvels of God, so too, Mary, according to the Damascene, was surpassed by no one more illustrious. Furthermore, if according to the tradition of Dionisius, the divine law is that any perfection of inferiors be eminently present in their superiors, since Mary was elevated by grace, not only over men and women but also over all the choirs of angels, who would deny her the highest musical knowledge? 271

269 Ibid., Tomus II, 6: Nubebat deiformis Mariae spiritus Deo suo Domino et agno, qui erat tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo, verus sol justitiae, ponens tabernaculum suum in corde Mariae, quae erat mulier amicta sole et desponsata uni viro virgo casta Jesu Christo.

270 Ibid., p. 574, Tomus II, 16: Canticordum Mariae vocibus innumeris musicalibus resonabat dum in corde suo conferebat omnem secum evangelicam veritatem; dum praetera cantabat canticum novum quod nullus alter spiritus cantare poterat aut poterit. Itaque si tot in cordibus nostris spiritualibus, cogitationes et affectiones possimus eliciendo formare, quos corpora corrupta, quos propriae iniquitates supergressae caput nostrum gravant, obtundunt, obnubilant, mergunt; conjecturet pius et solers animus quid in illa sanctarum sancta Spiritus Sapientiae sanctus et multiplex operatur . . . .

271 Ibid., p. 577, Tomus II, 27: Canticordum Mariae fuit secundum omnem artem musicae suavisissimae doctissimaeque modulatum. Sane si Spiritus Sanctus replens Apostolos, docuit eos omnem veritatem, si eorum corda afflata Sancto Spiritu voices diversas intonant, fantur Dei magnalia; si rursus Maria secundum Damasum, a nullo vincitur illustrium; si amplius, secundum Dionysii tradi-
Gerson is cited for the rules he offered to eliminate all excesses from the devotion. He had the reputation of a severe censor, but his piety, and in particular his Marian devotion, is warm and profound.  

Saint Bernardine of Siena

The initiator of the devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, the Franciscan saint, Bernardine of Siena († 1444), was one of the great apostles of his time. In his eleven sermons on the Blessed Virgin, he takes his inspiration from his predecessors, in particular Ubertino de Casale († 1329-41), Peter John Olivi († 1298), and Simon of Cascia († 1348); he even copies them. In his sermons, a kind of Marian Summa of that time, he preaches on the heart of Mary.  

In Sermon IX, *De Visitatione B.M.*, he makes a commentary on the words of Mary taken from Luke and John. Bernardine humbly confesses that he feels very presumptuous to dare to comment on these words issued from the heart of the Mother of Jesus. But he alludes to the words of Jesus: “The good man brings out of the good treasure of his heart good words.” And he adds that we can find no better human example (*melior homo*) than Mary, who was the hostess of God in her heart and in her womb. He takes *homo* in the biblical meaning of this term, which, for example, the German language translates by *Mensch* and not by *Mann* (= the Latin *vir*).

Where can we find a better treasure than the divine love, the ardent love, that burned in the heart of the Blessed Virgin? Then, the seven words pronounced by Mary are seven acts of love, seven flames risen from the furnace of her heart:

Therefore, from this heart, as from the furnace of divine ardent, the Blessed Virgin brought forth good words, meaning words of the most ardent love. For, as from a vessel filled with the best wine can come out only a fervent fire, so from the mother of Christ could come out only a word of the highest divine love and ardor. . . . These
seven words, as expressions and acts of love, were pronounced in admirable steps and order, as if they were seven flames of the furnace of her heart. 277

Sermon VI of the treatise De Beata is dedicated to the love of Mary expressed in her consent to the word of God for the Incarnation of the Son of God. A text taken from Peter Olivi 278 explains that Mary, entirely purified in the Annunciation, consented from the depth of her heart: ex lotis viscerebus et medullis toto corde consensit. 279 God moved the heart of the Blessed Virgin with the greatest love, since she was to become the Mother of God: “The state of mother of God to which God elected the Blessed Virgin was the highest state that could be given to a mere creature. Therefore, the love of God in that choice prepared in the highest way and moved the heart of the Blessed Virgin to this task.” 280 The grace granted to Mary, her holiness, surpasses the graces of all “rational and spiritual” creatures. Indeed, she did not conceive Christ only in her heart by faith and love, but the extreme ardor of divine love formed the sacred humanity in her womb. 281 At Calvary, Mary suffered compassion in her heart for her Son who was her all. In her was realized the prophetic word of the Psalmist (Ps 37:11): Cor meum conturbatum est in me. If the heart of Augustine was plunged into darkness by his sorrow at the death of a friend, 282 all the more was the heart of Mary afflicted by such darkness, because of her love as Mother of Jesus, described as a “maternal, natural, gratuitous, social love.” 283 As indicated by the

277 Ibid., pp. 123-24: De hoc igitur corde, quasi de fornace divini ardoris Virgo beata protulit verba bona, id est verba ardentissimae caritatis. Sicut enim a vase summo et optimo vino pleno non potest exire nisi . . . incendium fervens, sic quippe a Christi matre exire non potuit verbum nisi summi summeque divini amoris atque ardoris . . . Haec septem verba secundum septem amors processus et actus sub miro gradu et ordine sunt prolata, quasi sint septem flammae fornacei cordis eius.

278 P. OLIVI, De Domina, q. 1 (VIII, 20-23).

279 St. BERNARDINE, Opera omnia, 6:117, Sermo VI, In Annunt. gloriosae Virginis, art. II, cap. 3.

280 Ibid., p. 118, art. III, cap. 1: Sed status maternitatis Dei, ad quem Deus Virginem eligebat, erat summus status qui purae creaturae dari posset. Ergo Dei electrix caritas altissimo modo praevenient et movit cor Virginis ad hoc opus.

281 Ibid., 4:552, Feria II post Dom. Olivierum, Serm. LI, De admirandis gratiis b. Virginis, art 3, cap. 1: . . . factum est, ut non solum per fidem et dilationem Christum conciperet corde, verum etiam et carmen illius ex purissimis sanguinisibus eius divini amoris superexcessivus ardor in virgineo utero sine virili consortio formaret et generaret.

282 St. AUGUSTINE, Confessiones, IV, cap.4, 9: Quo dolore conturbatur est cor meum (PL 32, 697).

283 St. BERNARDINE, Opera omnia, 6:82, Tractatus De Beata Virgine, Serm. II: De gloriose nomine Mariae, et quod interpretatur ‘amarum mare,’ Art.II: De quatuor affectionibus seu passionibus, secundum quas beata Virgo summam amaritudinem passa est propter mortem filii sui, Cap. I. Quod cor Virginis in morte filii miro modo conturbatur ac per consequens amaricum est [These titles and subtitles are an example of the homilies’ medieval presentation]: [Text] Prima affectio seu passio de
title of the chapter, this *obtenebratio cordis* was one of extreme bitterness (*maxima
amaritudo*).\(^{284}\)

Saint Antoninus of Florence

The Dominican saint, Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence (†1459), was the
builder of the convent of Saint Mark that became famous through the paintings of
Fra Angelico. Antoninus’ theological *Summa* benefited from the invention of print-
ing in 1477. In this work, he dedicated forty-four chapters to Mary, a real treatise
that begins (cap. 2) with the text of John 19:27: “Behold your mother.”\(^{285}\) To the
sword predicted by Simeon to Mary, he gave the various meanings that had become
traditional. First, it is the sword of sorrow. When we speak of a great sorrow, we say,
“A sword pierced his heart, although his body was not wounded.”\(^{286}\) This is only an
indication of ordinary vocabulary. Antoninus used the term *anima* to speak of the
compassion of Mary: a sorrow that arose from the love of the Mother of God for her
Son; Mary was more than a martyr (*plusquam martyr*). Secondly, the sword, accord-
ing to Hebrews 4:12, means also the Word of God that pierces the soul, laying bare
the depths of one’s heart. Antoninus gives a long commentary on Luke 2:19, *confe-
rens in corde suo*, linking it with the prophecy of Simeon and the identification of
the sword with the Word of God made in Hebrews 4:12: *Vivus est enim sermo Dei . . .
penetrabiltior omni gladio ancipiti.* Thus, he sees the “heart” to mean the intellective
soul of Mary that the Word of God touches and pierces, for the Virgin understood
the mysteries in the light of the Holy Scriptures.\(^{287}\) Mary read the prophecies and she
understood that she was living their realization: “Since Mary had read and heard the
Scriptures and since she saw them progressively fulfilled one by one, in this way the
sword of the Word of God pierced her intellective soul. . . . Therefore Mary kept all
these words meditating them in her heart.”\(^{288}\) Antoninus quotes Bede (PL 92, 335),

morte amici est cordis contenebratio, sicut ait Augustinus de socio suo morto: “Contenebratum est
cor meum.” Si igitur hoc fuit in amore sociali, quanto magis in amore maternali, naturali, gratuito et
sociali? Siquidem beata Virgo filio suo per maternalem amorem unita fuit, per amorem naturalem ei
copulata fuit, per amorem gratuitem summe coniuncta fuit, per amorem socialem ei per triginta
annis sociata fuit.

\(^{284}\) Cf. the chapter title (given above): Cap. I. *Quod cor Virginis in morte filii miro modo contene-
bratum ac per consequens amaricatum est.*

\(^{285}\) SANCTI ANTONINI . . . *Summa Theologica*, 4 vols. (Graz, 1959: facsim. repr. of 1740 Ver-
ona ed.), 4:911E-1250A: *Titulus XV, De dono pietatis.* (Cap. 2 begins at col. 916D.)

\(^{286}\) Ibid., col. 1184A: cap. 36, I.

\(^{287}\) Ibid., col. 1185D: cap. 36, II.: Ostendit Simeon in hoc, prudentiam Mariae non ignoram esse
mysterii; pertransivit ergo gladius verbum Dei animam Mariae intellectivam . . .

\(^{288}\) Ibid., col. 1185E: Et quum B. Maria legisset et audisset Scripturas, & successive videret
explaining that Mary compared in her heart the annunciation by the angel with Isaiah 7:14, *Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium*. Then he develops his commentary. At the time of her visit to Elizabeth, Mary, passing through the mountains, meditated in her heart the Canticle of Canticles (2:8) and saw in herself its realization:

   Going through the mountains of Judea, and meditating in her heart the words of the Canticle, "Behold my beloved comes leaping on the mountains," she could say in her heart: "This is now fulfilled." [In particular] "My beloved Son, whom I love in the highest degree, is similar to the gazelle that makes great leaps." 289

Antoninus further summarizes these "leaps" that Mary contemplated in her heart: "My beloved came down from heaven in my womb, after that into the crib; from there he mounted the cross and, after that, he descended to hell; with the resurrection he ascended over the earth and afterward went to heaven." 291 At the birth of Jesus, Mary meditated in her heart the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6: "A child is born for us"; and, when she considered the place of his birth, she meditated in her heart the fulfillment of the prophecy of Micah 5:2 about Bethlehem and the ruler of Israel to be born in this little town. 292 Antoninus also quotes other prophecies that Mary could have meditated on in her heart, experiencing their fulfillment: the *Gloria* of the angels (Lk 2:14) linked with Psalm 18; the circumcision and Exodus 4:25; the coming of the magi and Psalm 71:10 (*Reges Tharsis*) and Isaiah 60:6; the presentation at the temple and Malachi 3:1 (not a text for the Purification); the flight into Egypt and Isaiah 19:1 [Antoninus, in error, says Jeremiah]; the slaughter of the innocents and Jeremiah 31:15. . . 293 Antoninus ends this commentary with the words: "and we could say the same about the other mysteries." 294

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singula impleri; sic gladius verbi Dei pertransibat animam ejus intellectivam . . . Unde in isto Evangelio dicit Evangelista, quod Maria conseruabal omnia verba haec . . . conferens in corde suo. (Antoninus here makes reference to Bede.)

289 Ibid., col. 1186C: . . . per montana Judaeae transiens conferens in corde suo, quod ait Salomon in Cantic. 2: *Ecce dilectus meus venit saliens in montibus . . .*, poterat dicere illud in corde suo: Modo impletum est illud.

290 Ibid.: *Similis est dilectus meus* filius summe a me amatus, *capreae*, quae facit magnos saltus . . .


293 Ibid.

294 Ibid., col. 1188C: Et sic de aliis mysteriis dici posset.
Denis the Carthusian

Denis of Ryckel († 1471), who entered the Carthusian monastery of Ruremonde in 1423, wrote, over the course of his forty-eight years of monastic life, a monumental work which was so important for contemplation it merited him the title of “ecstatic doctor.” In his treatises he gave to the Mother of God the eminent place that she had received in the Church’s tradition, quoting texts abundantly (but sometimes making the incorrect attributions that were current in his time). For this contemplative monk, the heart means our will to love God: diliges Dominum Deum ex toto corde; our spirit which the Holy Spirit knows and examines; the source of our thoughts, our deep intentions, our inmost tendencies: cordis intima. A few of his texts speak specifically of the heart of Mary, and these convey expressions that had become traditional. In the De dignitate et laudibus B.V.M.—written around 1458—Denis uses St. Bernard to speak about the twelve privileges of Mary. The twelve stars that crown the Woman of Apocalypse 12 can signify, among other meanings, the gifts that God showered upon Mary. In particular, in the heart of the most bountiful Mary, there were, shining like stars: the three theological virtues, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the promise of virginity, and the fulfillment of the evangelical counsels (according to the state of life of Mary). We can also divide these privileges into three kinds: those of heaven, those of the body, those of the spirit; the latter are afterwards called “the prerogatives of the heart” of Mary: “the gentleness of modesty, the devoutness of humility, the magnanimity of faithfulness, the martyrdom of the heart.” The texts dedicated to the compassion of Mary at Calvary insist on the separation that Mary suffered at the death of her Son, who was the joy of her heart, her only consolation:

Now, O sovereign! he is taken away from you, he abandons you [this Jesus] who was the only comfort of your life, the joy of your heart, the light of your eyes. To see him, to hear him, to think of him, to speak with him, to follow him, to live with him, to

296 Ibid., 35:56bD, Expositio hymni: Veni, Creator Spiritus: Infunde amorem, . . . cordibus.
297 Ibid., 34aC, Expos. hymni: Audi, benigne condilor: Scrutator alme cordium, . . . cognitor mentium.
298 Ibid., 121aD, Expos. hymni: Jam lucis orto sidere: Sicut pra cordis intima, id est, cogitatione, appetitio, intentiones, machinationes mentis . . . .
300 Ibid., 145aA: . . . mansuetudo pudoris, devoutio humilitatis, magnanimitas credulitatis, martyrion cordis.
serve him, to be united with him, to adhere to him, was your only consolation and your utmost joy. 301

Denis describes at great length the interior passion of the Mother at the foot of the cross. He follows the order of the episodes described in the gospels. At the death of Jesus, Mary would also have died if her all-powerful Son had not supported her. The afflictions of the maternal heart, the expression of this sorrow, are noted in a manner that evokes the artistic representations of the time:

Then, around three in the afternoon, when all was accomplished, inclining his head and speaking with a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. And thus, O Mary! if the all-powerfulness of your dying Son had not maintained you in life, you also would have expired with him. And at that moment, what an affliction for your maternal heart, what lamentation, what desolation, what words of affection and of sorrow, what a sad sight, what gestures of mourning!

This compassion of the heart came from the incomparable, ineffable love of Mary for her Son. And this love (natural, acquired, gratuitous) was the source of a compassion, more bitter than death:

At the foot of the cross of Jesus stood his Mother. We can ponder through many points of view how very heartily and very bitterly and very lovingly the most faithful and kindest Mother, the Virgin Mary, had compassion for her only Son in his passion. First, and mostly because of her incomparable and ineffable love for her most beloved and only Son, the more heartfelt and intense this love was, the more bitter was the compassion that it produced in the heart of the most merciful Mother. Finally, there was a triple love of the Mother for her Son: natural, acquired, gratuitous; and each love was most intense in her, as is evident from what was already said. Therefore, this maternal compassion arising from all these kinds of love was ineffably sorrowful and painful and piercing, more severe than a corporal martyrdom, and even more afflicting than death. 303

301 Ibid., 35:562bA, De praeconio et dignitate Mariae, lib. 3, art. 24: Jam enim, o Domina, avertatur tibi, et ipse deserit te, unicum vitae tuae solatium, cordis tui gaudium, et lumen oculorum tuorum. Quem cernere, quem audire, cogitare, loqui, prosequi, cui convivere, ministrare, uniri, adhaerere, unicum tibi erat refrigerium et laetitia summa.

302 Ibid., 563aA: Porro, circa horam nonam, quam jam omnia consummata exsisterent, inclinato capite altaque intonans voce, emisit spiritum. Et tunc, o Maria, nisi morientis omnipotentia te conservasset, et tu quoque simul utique espirasses. Et modo, quae mox cordis tu materni pressura, quis gemitus, quae desolatio, quam affectuosa planctuosa verba, quam tristis adspectus, quam moestissimi gestus!

303 Ibid., 36:139aC, De dignitate et laudibus B.V.M., lib. 3, art. 24: Stabat justa crucem Jesu Maria mater ejus. Quam praecordialissime et amarissime amorosissima, fidelissima ac benignissima mater virgo Maria Unigenito suo compassa sit in passione illius, ex multis potest perpendi. Primo et maxime ex incomparabili et ineffabili amore quem ad dilectissimum et unigenitum suum habuit Filium: qui quanto precordialior atque intensior exstibit, tanto acerbiorum in corde piissimae Matris produxit compassionem. Denique, triplex fuit amor Matris illius ad Filium suum, videlicet naturalis,
Denis also notes that we cannot really disclose the mysteries, the secrets of the heart of Mary, for, when she was holding in her hands the Son of God, on the one hand she adored God in him and on the other hand she embraced him as her child.  

Arnold Bostius

The Carmelite Arnold Bostius (1445-1499) analyzes the "Behold your mother" (Jn 19:27) as addressed to everybody. And he adds that the Carmelites must hear it as addressed to them and that they should consider Mary as their Mother. One part of the text, which appears in only one manuscript, speaks of the heart of Mary open to all our necessities. In the following quotation, parentheses are used to indicate this special text:

Behold your mother, O venerable assembly of the Carmel! although mother of all for many reasons, Mary is more particularly your mother. (I have said to you a word worthy to be accepted. For, if Mary is your mother, therefore Jesus is your brother, therefore his Father is your Father, therefore his reign is your heritage. Behold your mother, therefore the grace of Mary is your treasure. For, mothers gather treasure for their sons. Behold your mother: all our necessities ascend to her heart; she is moved with pity in her maternal womb [viscera] over any son and brother.) Therefore, love her, venerate her, as present everywhere: and from this hour on, receive her as your mother, so that she will assume you in her glory at the end.

Pseudo-Anselm of Lucca

We include here—for the fifteenth century (?)—a collection of texts which are still anonymous, the meditations De salutatione B. V. Mariae and Super Salve Regina that have been attributed to Anselm of Lucca. According to Casimir Oudin, these

acquisitus, gratuitus: quorum unusquisque intensissimus fuit in ea, ut patet ex praedictis. Idcirco compassio illa materna ex cunctis illis emanans amoribus, inenarrabiliter fuit poenalis et dolorosa ac penetrativa, corporali martyrio gravior, ac ipsa morte amarus.

Ibid., 39bAB, De dignitate et laudibus B. V. M., lib. 1, art. 18: Quis cordis tui arcana nobis poterit reserare, optima et praeamabilissima virgo Maria? Qualiter cogitatum tuum ad utrumque flectebas, dum unum eundemque Filium Dei ac tuum in manibus tenens, nunc adorares ut Deum altissimum, nunc osculareris ut tuum puerulum?

works were published during the sixteenth century in Paris under the name of Le Maistre Martin (Martinus Magister); but the *Artificiosa contemplatio super Salve Regina* of this author is completely different. In the *Meditatio de Salutatione B.V. Mariae*, the author first comments on the word *Ave* and summarizes his long greeting in a last address: "Therefore, *Ave*, My Sovereign, my Mother, and even my heart and my soul, Virgin Mary." Mary's heart was transformed by the passion of her Son into total bitterness. We can enter into the heart of Mary through our compassion for Jesus crucified and for her heart fixed on him: repenting intimately for our iniquities, occasion of such a death. The heart of Mary indeed became an immense sea of suffering.

Sure, they enter well into your heart and they are continuously in your heart, those who meditate continuously on the passion of your Son . . . for it is impossible, O very merciful Mother, to enter into the wounds of your Son and not enter into your heart, because these wounds have their place forever in your heart . . . .

It is a delightful consolation to hear someone speak of Mary; it is more delightful to think of Mary; but the most delightful consolation is to enter into the heart of Mary through the wounds of Christ. We do not go away from the passion of Christ when we decide not to go out of the heart of his Mother. Why are we so united to the crucified Christ when we remain in the heart of the Blessed Virgin? "There man becomes totally virginal, entirely holy, entirely divine."

The meditation on the *Salve Regina* contains an address to Mary, to Our Lady who enraptures hearts (rap-

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Let us also note that the text of interest for us (PL 149, 582) is found again among those of a Pseudo-Bonaventure (PL 184, 1077-1080C), a chapter of the *Stimulus amoris* (3, 19) in the Vivès edition. It is not an authentic part of this work, according to the critical edition of the *Stimulus amoris* of James of Milan (see n. 184 above).


308 Ibid. 7: Hoc ergo duplex intremus mare, scilicet tuo Filio crucifixo, et tuo cordi sibi infixo compatiendo, et de nostris iniquitatibus, quae tantae necis fuerunt necis occasio, intime contristando, si volumus cor tuum intrare quod factum est mare magnum et nimium spatiosum (PL 149, 582 AB).

309 Ibid., 582B: Hi certe bene intrant cor tuum, et sunt continue in corde tuo, qui Filii tui ruminant continue passionem. Impossibile est enim, mater piissima, Filii tui intrare vulnera, et non intrare cor tuum, quia illa vulnera sunt in corde tuo perpetuo collocata.

310 Ibid., 582BC: Dulce est de te audire, sed dulcius de te cogitare, et dulcissimum et nimis suavissimum per Christi vulnera intrare cor tuum.

311 Ibid., 582C: Ibi fit homo totus virgineus, totus sanctissimus, totus divinus . . . .
The delightfulness of Mary gives us peace, rest. The author of this text is a mystic; the embrace of the most sweet sovereign of all hearts fills him with love:

O Sovereign, who enraptures hearts with your delightfulness: and now, you have enraptured, O sovereign, my heart; and where, may I ask, did you place it so that I may find it? . . . O ravisher of all hearts! when will you give me back my heart? . . . when I ask this from you, you smile at me; and immediately through your delightfulness I find repose, quietness. When back into myself I ask again my heart, you embrace me, O most delightful one, and immediately your love inebriates me. Now I do not distinguish my heart from your heart, and I cannot ask from you anything else except your heart. But since my heart is filled fully with your love and is quieted by your love, govern it with your heart, keep it in the blood of the Lamb, and put it in the side of your Son. 312

VII. THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

John Mombaer

Moving from the fifteenth into the sixteenth century, we must not overlook John Mombaer (1460-1501). In his *Rosetum Exercitiorum, spiritualium et sacrarum Meditationum*, 313 he indicates prayers to the divine heart of Jesus. The prayer to the heart of Mary is linked with this devotion to the heart of her Son: “O Mary, pierced by the sword of Simeon, through the heart of your Son wounded by love and through the sorrows of your own heart which was wounded with his heart, wound also my heart with the love of God.” 314 On the other hand, the *Pharetra divini amoris*, by John Just or Gerecht Lansperge (1489-1539), is considered in an article on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by A. Hamon “as the first handbook of [this] devotion,” 315 of the numerous prayers quoted there—prayers addressed to the “most merciful,” “pierced,” “most loving,” “most kind” . . . 316 Furthermore, as Hamon previously stated, it is through Lansperge and his colleague Loher that the devotion...
of Saint Gertrude to the hearts of Jesus and of Mary became really known; the *Insinuationes divinae pietatis* were published in Cologne in 1536.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Christian art developed an image of the *Mater dolorosa* with a sword or several swords piercing her breast. Manuel Trens\(^\text{317}\) notes before that time an altarpiece from the fifteenth century in the parish church of Maluenda, Saragossa; it is a *Pietà*, but Mary holds a sword over the chest of her Son, and the point is hidden in the mantle of the Virgin.\(^\text{318}\) This artistic representation of the sword predicted by Simeon could even date back to the fourteenth century.\(^\text{319}\) Some engravings from the sixteenth century represent as many as fourteen swords piercing the left side of the *Mater dolorosa*; the heart is not represented. Later, the image stabilizes, with seven swords corresponding to the seven sorrows of Mary—this in relation with the devotion that, from five sorrows, passed to seven in the common list of the Blessed Virgin’s sorrows.\(^\text{320}\)

Two witnesses from this period should suffice to demonstrate the continuation of the tradition concerning the heart of Mary: Saint Thomas of Villanova and Saint Peter Canisius.

Saint Thomas of Villanova

Saint Thomas of Villanova († 1555), an Augustinian monk who became Bishop of Valencia in 1544 and who was called the father of the poor because of his charity, has left us in his homiletic work\(^\text{321}\) a significant number of Marian sermons. His doctrine is a good example of the devotion of the *siglo de oro* in Spain. Although his mentions of the heart of Mary were traditional, the eloquence and the prayerfulness of this orator made them expressive. Thomas admires the divine influence of the Child-God on the heart of his mother during the nine months of his life within her.\(^\text{322}\) This thinking prepared the *Elevations* of Bérulle: “O most sacred dwelling place of God! By what beams of light this infinite sun, covered by the cloud of the flesh, irradiated the most pure spirit of this Virgin . . . ! O what fervors he impressed from the womb of his mother in her heart.”\(^\text{323}\) For Christmas, he comments on the text of Luke, “She kept all these things, meditating them in her heart.” Mary enjoyed the

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\(^{318}\) Ibid., p.221.

\(^{319}\) Ibid., p.223.

\(^{320}\) Ibid.

\(^{321}\) Divi Thomae a Villanova, *Opera Omnia*, 6 vols. (Manila, 1881-87).

\(^{322}\) Ibid., 4:81, *In Nativ. Domini, Serm. 9*, no. 2: O sacrosanctum Dei habitaculum! qualis fragantia ex illo Flore, qui erat in utero tuo, respirabat in corde tuo!

\(^{323}\) Ibid., p. 423, *In Assumpt. B.M.V., Serm. 1*, no. 6: O quibus radiis Sol ille infinitus, nebula carnis opertus, purissimam huius Virginis mentem irradiabat . . . ! o quos fervores in corde illius e gremio imprimebat!
coming of the shepherds and their message, the song of the angels; it is the beginning of the Church. Mary meditated on all these mysteries in her heart, comparing them with the prophecies. She kept them in the secret of her heart (armario cordis); she revealed them only much later, to teach them to the apostles after the passion of the Lord; she was the wise Virgin, zealous for the honor of God and for the service of all. But if Mary kept in her heart the mysteries of the infancy, so much more deeply was she attentive to the mysteries of the passion of Jesus. These she not merely meditated in her heart but suffered without anything being omitted:

Christ was born in Bethlehem and all were filled with joy; ... and you, O holy Virgin, what did you do at that time? The evangelist says, “Mary kept all these words, meditating them in her heart.” Therefore, if she was so attentive, so absorbed in meditation at the time of Jesus’ birth, what about the time of his death? I would believe, without being deceived, that anything that Jesus suffered, Mary not only meditated on profoundly in her heart but she also suffered them without any omission. It was a special grace of her Son.

Celebrating the birth of the Savior, the preacher addresses Mary herself to tell her his admiration. Who can explain the joy of Mary? Her love was ardent, but she did not lose her sense of reality; for the Gospel shows her very attentive in caring for all the necessities of the divine Child:

O holy Virgin! who can explain sufficiently the exuberance of your joy in this hour? Who can contemplate, even in spirit, the streams of heavenly delights and sweetness that flowed and filled your heart in this childbirth? ... And what astonishes me more, when you sustained these more than seraphic ardors in your breast and when your heart, like a furnace of the Holy Spirit, was completely consumed by a magnificent ardor, nevertheless, you were not enraptured in ecstasies, nor cast out of your senses.

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324 Ibid., p. 17, In Nativ. Domini, Serm. I, no. 11: ... gaudebat notam hominibus supernae Civitatis filiorum laetitiam, quam jam dudum ipsa beatis auribus audierat. Gaudebat, et tacito intus animo cuncta volvebat, conservans omnia verba haec, ut ait Evangelista, conferens in corde suo. Sicut prudentissima, sicut sapientissima, sicut honoris Dei communisque utilitatis veritis testimonium omni fide majora, quam ut, cum opus esset, ad omnium utilitatem rei ordinem, prout gesta est, fideli in aperiret. Unde ab illa, ut creditur, post domini passionem discipuli domini et Apostoli, eorum quae nunc de his Evangelica narrat historia, multa didicerunt.

325 Ibid., 2:241, Fer. 6 in Parasceve, Serm. I: Nascitur Christus in Bethlehem, et omnes replentur gaudio: ... et tu, o Virgo sacra, quid interim facis? Maria autem, inquit Evangelista, conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo. Si igitur tam attenta, tam meditabunda, dum Filii nascitur, quid dum moritur? Crediderim, nec me mea fallit opinio, quod quidquid ille passus est, totum non solum profunde meditata es in corde tuo, sed etiam, nec puncto quidem praetermissa, passa. Specialis fuit Filii sui gratia.

326 Ibid., 4:89, In Nativ. Domini, Serm. 16, no. 2: O Virgo sacra! quis explicare sufficiat tuorum
To celebrate the Assumption of Mary into heaven, Thomas of Villanova comments on the gospel of Martha and Mary and shows how the Blessed Virgin eminently united the active life and the contemplative life that the two sisters represented. The Blessed Virgin, more than Mary of Bethany, has been the “foremost disciple of the Savior,” sitting at his feet to listen to him; for, during thirty-three years, she was at the school of the Master, listening to him and keeping all in her heart. 327 The second part of Sermon IV on the Assumption shows in a special way the admiration Thomas has for the contemplative life of Mary. He uses Psalm 44 to sing the glory of Mary, the fervor of her heart, filled with all the purest thoughts and all virtues: “The glory of the King's daughter is all within, in her fervent heart, ‘in her clothing inwrought with gold,’ in her most pure thoughts, in her most ardent desires, in the multiple variety of virtues of all kinds.” 328 Mary in her occupations was constantly in prayer according to the spiritual meaning given to Canticles 5:2: “I sleep, but my heart is awake. As if she said: exteriorly I am asleep, busy with my activities, but interiorly I am awake, always intent on praying.” 329

For Thomas, the conferens in corde suo means also for Mary a complete absorption in the grandeur of the mysteries that she lived:

After she had become mother of God at the announcement of the angel, she was absorbed in the magnitude of the mysteries that were fulfilled in her and immersed with all her spirit in this immense ocean of love, as if enraptured interiorly in some continuous ecstasies, as the evangelical reading reveals, “she kept all these words, meditating them in her heart.” 330 After the Ascension, he sees her in unceasing contemplation of her union with Christ and teaching these mysteries to the disciples:

She reconsidered in her soul all the mysteries that she had seen and heard, going through them with tireless spirit: how she conceived him, how she brought him forth,
what was said to her in the temple by Simeon, what she underwent with him in Egypt, the words, the miracles, the doctrine, the conversation, the death, the resurrection, the ascension, and all the rest that the most prudent and wisest Virgin summed up diligently in her heart; and just as she knew all this perfectly, she taught it to the disciples. 331

But such a life of love is beyond our understanding; we cannot describe it: "The feelings of your heart, O Virgin! surpass our capabilities: they exceed our endeavors; you flew higher than our intuition is able to keep up; your life has not to be written but rather pondered: how could our pen reach where our spirit cannot reach?" 332

Saint Peter Canisius

Saint Peter Canisius (1521-1597) is well known through his catechetical work. He was also a great theologian very devoted to Our Lady. He wrote his *De Maria Virgine incomparabili et Dei genitrice sacrosancta libri quinque* 333 after the Protestant Reformation, to show that the doctrine and the devotion concerning the Mother of Jesus constituted an important, integral part of our Christian faith. As in his Catechisms, he writes with concision and an extreme care of the Tradition, and also a full awareness of the Protestant positions about Marian devotion. Various texts are devoted to the heart of Mary. They formulate themes that had become traditional, with numerous quotations of or references to the Fathers and other theological or spiritual writers. According to Le Bachelet, Canisius cites "more than 90 Fathers and doctors of the first eight centuries; and for the later periods . . . around 110 writers." 334 The heart of Mary was the purest of hearts (Mary being the first to pronounce the vow of virginity); the humblest (through her humility, she merited to conceive from the

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331 Ibid., p. 452: Mysteria omnia quae viderat, et audierat animo retractabat, assidua mente percurrens, quomodo eum conceptit, quomodo peperit, quid in templo ei dictum fuit a Simeone, quid cum illo sustinuit in Aegypto, verba, miracula, doctrinam, conversationem, mortem, resurrectionem, ascensionem, et caetera omnia quae virgo prudentissima, et sapientissima, in corde suo assidue conferebat, et prout optime noverat, discipulos edocebat.

332 Ibid.: Motus cordis tui, 0 virgo, nostram superant facultatem, nostros conatus excedunt; altius volasti, quam noster sustineat intuits, vita tua non debuit scribi, sed cogitari: qua non pertingit animus, quomodo perveniet calamus?


Holy Spirit, the Emmanuel); the most fervent (in her incredible love for God and for others); and the most able to keep in memory the events of her life, from the first years of her infancy. In her heart, Mary realized how much the promises of God are true, how good God is for those of upright heart. Therefore, Luke summarized all this in his conservabat omnia conferens in corde suo. Mary’s life was a contemplation, an experience, superior to all the others mentioned in the Bible:

May others attribute how much they want to Moses, Elijah, John, Paul, and to all those who formerly already loved wisdom with the greatest holiness and had greatly practiced the contemplative life. But who, if he is wise, would not place Mary above all these others as the most experienced in the highest wisdom and in divine contemplation? I shall say, who but Mary was so dedicated to what is sacred that she was free to devote herself intently from her first years to the supreme and eternal good? Through this devotedness who but she could likewise see and taste how sweet the Lord is (Ps 33:9), and how good the God of Israel is for those who are upright of heart (Ps 72:1)? Therefore, when she was made to bear and then care for the child Jesus, there is nothing else more praised by Luke (Lk 2:7) than that she kept untiringly all that happened, as she was accustomed to do, and that she meditated all these things accurately in her heart.

Canisius admires the extreme mutual love that from the first years of Mary’s infancy united her heart with God’s love for her. She could use the Holy Scripture to express the plenitude of love that filled her heart, saying with Psalm 72:26, “My flesh and my heart fail: [O] God of my heart, my portion for all eternity,” or with Psalm 84:2, “My heart and my flesh exult in the living God.” It is in this way that the intention of her heart was continually turned toward the supreme good: tendebat ad sublimia intentione continua cordis. The Magnificat shows how much Mary’s heart exulted, being filled with the Holy Spirit: “O humble and likewise highly exalted Virgin, who magnified so admirably the Lord and, filled with the Holy


336 Ibid., col. 783. Tribuant alii quantum velint, Moysi, Eliae, Ioanni, Paulo, alisque sanctissime jam olim philosophantibus, et in contemplante vita multum exercitatis. Quis vero, si sapiat, Mariam his omnibus in summa sapientia et contemplatione divina peritissimam non antependat? Mariam, inquam, sacratis rebus adeo deditam, ut summo aeternoque bono inde a primis annis intente vacaret, et vacando videret simul et gustaret, quam suavis esset Dominus (Psal. XXXIII, 9), et quam bonus Israel Deus his, qui recto sunt corde (Psal. LXXII, 1). Igitur illa jam puerpera facta, et circa puerum Jesum sollicita, non alia de re magis a Luca commendatur (Luc. II, 7), quam quod omnia quae acciderent, sedulo, more suo videlicet, conservaret, et in corde suo accurate conferret.

337 Ibid., cols. 784-85.

338 Ibid., col. 787.
Spirit, exulted with incredible ardor in God her savior, not less in her body than in her heart.”  

Mary was not some onlooker, indifferent to the life, to the miracles, of her Son; her heart was attentive: “Miracles occurred about the infancy of the Lord. [Mary] surely had not been an idle observer but a zealous listener to the Word.”  

Luke clearly proclaims: “Mary kept all these words meditating them in her heart.”  

Canisius repeats his comment to explain it:  

Mary is not an idle onlooker or a careless auditor of the things that happened here and there, but an ardent mediatrix and observer, so that she could consign these works of the divine economy to the sacred and secret chest of her heart, and retain what she had consigned . . . .”  

The Blessed Virgin knew through the prophets that Christ had to suffer and die for us. When the time of the passion came nearer and nearer she felt the sorrow:  

Mary, as prophetess, was acquainted with the prophetic literature, and she understood among other mysteries of Christ that her Son had to die . . . Therefore, if she knew this in advance, an immense sorrow and anxiety broke into this maternal heart at the approach of the Lord's passion, since she depended totally on her Son and all her hope and consolation was fixed in him alone.  

But if those who have compassion for the passion of Christ are to reign with him, so much the more would Mary receive eternal joy after her heart had suffered so much at Calvary:  

If it is promised to the true members of Christ who suffer with their head: if we suffer with him, we also will reign with him . . . : how great a joy and a reward, I should say, Christ in his kingdom, with the greatest liberality, will repay his Mother, who so intimately suffered with him and very faithfully stood by until his death, pierced by as many spears and swords as she suffered immense torments and sorrows because of Christ, being consumed by them in her most sorrowful heart.  

339 Ibid., col. 1234, Lib. 4, cap 5: O humilem simul et excelsam Virginem, quae Dominum adeo mirabiliter magnificavit, et plena Spiritu sancto non minus corpore, quam corde in Deo salutaris suo cum ardore incredibili exsultavit!  

340 Ibid., col. 1211, Lib. 4, cap. 2: Accedebant et miracula circa Domini infantiam gesta, quorum ipsa non fuit otiosa certe spectatrix, simulque auscultatrix verbi sedula . . . .  

341 Ibid., col. 1344, Lib. 4, cap. 17: ... non [Maria] otiosa spectatrix, vel negligens auditrix eorum, quae sese passim offerebant, sed sedula meditatrix et observatrix, ut sacro et arcano pectoris sui scrinio illa divinae dispensationis opera commendaret, commendataque conservaret . . . .  

342 Ibid., col. 1421, Lib. 4, cap. 25: Testatur Bernardus, ac probat Dionysius Rickelius, quod Maria, utpote prophetissa, in prophetis litteris exercitata, inter alia mysteria, Christum Filium moriturum intellelxerit . . . Hoc ergo si praecognovit, ingens profecto maeroris ac pavoris affectus, cum Dominicae passionis tempius appeteret, in cor illud maternum irritut; quippe cum ab hoc Filio tota penderet, omnemque suum spem et consolationem in eo solo defixam haberet, nihilque illi charius in terris et optabilius esse posset.  

343 Ibid., col. 1437, Lib. 4, cap. 26: ... si veris Christi membris capiti suo compatientibus promis-
A Prayer to the Heart of Mary

Neither Thomas of Villanova nor Canisius addressed their prayer to the heart of Mary. We have seen that Mombaer gave witness of such a prayer at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Another such invocation is quoted in the prologue of volume 32 of the Analecta Hymnica (pp. 5-6), but Dreves cannot indicate either a date or an author. He takes the text from the Parnassus Marianus of Balingen, printed in Douai in 1624. The prayer is in the style of the sequences, so numerous at that time; the strophes begin with the Ave of the greeting of the angel Gabriel, the Latin Ave translating the Greek Chaire that gave rise to so many Byzantine litanies in honor of the Theotokos.

This long sequence invokes, under various titles, the heart of the Mater dolorosa. The six strophes evoke the sorrow of Mary's heart, caused by the six wounds of her crucified Son. They honor the head of the Savior crowned with thorns, the four wounds of his members pierced by the nails, and the side (not his heart) opened by the centurian's spear after his death. The alternation corpectus (heart/breast) indicates another origin of the prayer. Earlier, we noted how by this time the Mater dolorosa was represented with one or several swords piercing her breast. But, first of all, the devotion venerates the mother who carried the God-man in her womb and nursed him as her child:

1. Hail, heart of the bountiful mother, heart pierced by the cruel thorns fixed on the head of the Son; they pierced his head, they lacerated your breast by the fault of a lost world. Fix my understanding, so that it may not wander but comprehend. May you with Jesus, and Jesus with you, always remain gently with me, embracing courageously your wounds.

2. Hail, heart of the mourning mother, heart that suffered frightful torments when the nail fixed the right hand of Jesus on the cross; O blessed nail, that tore both the divine Son and the breast of his gentle Mother. O merciful mother of the redeemer, give me gently the hand of your love; touch my leprosy and I shall be clean. Touch my wound and I shall be healed; and halt the sinner [from sin].

3. Hail, breast of the kind mother, in whom the wound of the left hand impresses a cruel wound; this nail that was impressed in you and that slays Jesus destroys the death caused by our faults. O Mother of God, by your suffering and saving awe, strike my flesh that it may be on guard against sins, whilst dreading the tremendous judgments of the Lord.

4. Hail, sacred heart of the mother, heart that I contemplate wounded by the point piercing the right foot. To you runs the loving heart, to you the sobbing spirit is avidly sighing. Oh! if only the sweet perfume of your chastity might strike me with...
hooking arrows, so that, the world of the flesh being extinguished, your mercy might take me victorious into heaven.

5. Hail, afflicted heart of the mother, heart that suffers with the Son the grievous blow on the left foot. You committed no sin, but all the punishment is tormenting you, all the strokes are hurting you. I am stained with faults, I am defiled with crimes; do not deliver me to the merited punishments, so that with meek humility and humble poverty I may be added to your subjects.

6. Hail, heart of the honorable mother whose intimate thoughts were torn by the sword according to the testimony of Simeon, while the most cruel spear of the armed soldier opened the side of your dead Son; in you conspired together the thorns, the nails, the cross and the hard whips that lacerated your Son, so that with the dying Son there was no consolation remaining for the spirit of the Mother. 344

CONCLUSIONS: The Progressive Development of Terms, Themes, Titles

H. Barré says at the beginning of his article on Eckbert’s prayer: “The history of the origins of devotion to the holy heart of Mary has still to be written.” 345 As a matter of fact, the entire history of the development of this devotion is still to be written.

This inquiry, encompassing more than 900 years—from the High Middle Ages to the sixteenth century, reveals a vast anthology of texts which are significant to know and understand the terms, the titles, and the themes that became traditional about

344 1. Ave, matris cor benignae, / Quod crudeles pungunt spinae / Nati fixae capiti, / Illi caput perforarunt, / Tibi pectus lacerarunt / Mundi culpa perditi. / Fige meum, ne vagetur, / Intellectum, sed rimetur / Plagas tuas dulciter, / Tu, cum Iesu, Iesus tecum, / Maneatis semper mecum / Amplectendo fortiter.
2. Ave, matris cor lugentis, / Quod diris clavus tormentis / Dextrae manus afficit; / Felix clavus, qui / Divinum / Natum simul et benignum / Matris pectus conficit. / Pia mater redemptoris, / Tui leniter / Amoris / Mihi manum adhibe, / Tange lepram, et mundabor, / Tange vulnus, et sanabor, / Et peccantem cohibe.
4. Ave, matris cor sacratum, / Quod contemplor cruentatum / Dextri pedis cuspide! / Ad te currit cor amantis / Animusque singultantis / Te suspirat avide. / O si tuae castitatis / Suavis odor hamatis / Me sagittis feriat, / Ut exstincto carnis bello! / Tua pietas in caelo / Me victorem capiat.
5. Ave, matris cor adflictum, / Quod cum nato gravem ictum / Laevi pedis pateris, / Nullam culpam / Cum patraris, / Omni poena cruciaris, / Omni plaga laederis. / Ne me culpis maculam, / Me sceleribus foedatum / Poenis dede meritis, / Ut cum miti humilitate / Humilique paupertate / Tuis addar subditis.
6. Ave, matris cor honestae, / Cuius Simeone teste / Ensis fidit intima, / Dum defuncti latus nati / Rupit militis armati / Hasta crudelissima; / In te spinae coniurarunt, / Clavi, crux et quae foedarunt / Flagra dura filium, / Ut cum nato morienti / Maternae supersit menti / Nullum refrigerium.

the heart of Mary. It was during the seventeenth century, with Saint John Eudes, that the devotion to her heart received its liturgical consecration, the fruit of a long maturation. From a survey of the history of the terms, themes, and titles related to the heart of Mary which developed over the lengthy course of those preceding centuries, one is able to draw some conclusions.

A. The study of the terminology shows that doctrine and devotion were formed with quite a diversified vocabulary, one developed to describe the spiritual life of the Blessed Virgin. Still, at the end of the sixteenth century, the term heart was not a "privileged" one.

B. The traditional themes expressed by Bede (at the beginning of the period here studied) were repeated and enriched from century to century. His commentary on conferens in corde suo made very explicit the meaning of the Greek symbaloussa (Lk 2:19): Mary “ruminated, put together, compared” what she was experiencing and what she heard. Further, her contemplation became comparison with the prophecies made to her people Israel, for she knew the Holy Scriptures. Wise Virgin, she first kept the secrets of God in the silence of her heart, waiting God’s invitation to reveal them. This moment came when the Spirit gave Elizabeth knowledge of these mysteries. In the Magnificat, Mary opened the treasure of her heart. In some Pseudo-Augustinian sermons, the expression Dominus tecum in corde, in sinu, was taken up by anonymous homilists to affirm the unique presence of God in Mary at the Annunciation, the manifestation of the Incarnation of God our Savior.

This attention to the heart of Mary was minor—one might say, marginal. But it grew up with the general development of Christian spirituality. For instance, Anselm of Canterbury gave to this tradition his formulation—so expressive—of the mutual love that united Jesus and Mary, a love that the Church shares and asks us to live. Likewise, his contemplation of the Son born of the Father’s heart prepared for the theme of the heart of Mary receiving this Son. Ralph of Escures indicated another theme frequently taken up by others. As gospel for the Assumption, the liturgy (at that time) used the episode of the two sisters, Martha and Mary, receiving Jesus into their home at Bethany. They represented respectively the active and the contemplative life. The Blessed Virgin united both ideals. She was the great contemplative. She possessed Christ in her heart—meaning that she held there all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3); the very Word of God, had filled her life, her heart. She also was the greatest servant of the Lord—at his service throughout her entire life.

Bruno of Asti (†1123) developed a theme, already found in the Pseudo-Augustinian sermon 120 (App.). Using the messianic Psalm 44, he showed David exhorting Mary to listen to the angel and receive the Word in her heart and in her womb. He also preached that Mary, having kept all these things in her heart, taught them to the apostles for the evangelization of the world. Without Mary, we would not know
the mysteries of the infancy of our Savior. Eadmer celebrated the blessed "adherence" of Mary's heart to God, a formulation that foreshadowed Bérulle. A disciple of Anselm, Eadmer meditated on the compassion of Mary as the fruit of her most sorrowful martyrdom. He specified that hers was the martyrdom of the heart.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were also rich in developments. Rupert of Deutz provided an important progression in the doctrinal elaboration that prepared the devotion (as Lécuyer has explained). Rupert was the first to dedicate a commentary on the Canticle of Canticles to the mutual love of Jesus and Mary. Further, it was in the history of our salvation and in the history of the Church that he saw the place of Mary and of the union of her heart with God. The saving Word came from the Father's heart. By faith, humans have given God an answer, starting with Adam. It was the mystery of Sion: Israel, Mary and the Church (inseparably united). From generation to generation, Sion (through her faith) brought forth the Word in the heart of those who believe in the Word. Mary was this Sion in the fullness of time. In her heart, the Father gathered the whole Revelation—past, present, future. The humility of the Blessed Virgin attracted the Word; from the heart of the Father, the Word came into the heart, the womb of Mary: \textit{in corde sive in utero}. Here was the doctrinal origin of the devotion: Mary is Theotokos, \textit{corde sive in utero}. Finally, Rupert called Mary \textit{magistra apostolorum}, the formulation that prepared the ground for devotion to the apostolic heart of the Blessed Virgin.

Hugh of Saint Victor deepened the Augustinian theme of the \textit{prius mente quam ventre}. The Holy Spirit began his work of love in the heart of Our Lady; through the love that burned in her heart, the power of the Spirit wrought the Incarnation of the Son of God. Bernard of Clairvaux emphasized certain themes, and, because of his great authority, his texts had a considerable influence. Among his most influential expressions were his description of the compassion, the martyrdom of the heart; his comparison of the love of God with an arrow that pierced the heart of Mary, to fill it with divine love; his treatment of the ineffable joy of the Mother of God and, above all, of God's asking Our Lady for her consent to the coming of his Son and to receiving him in her heart, in her womb. Arnold of Bonneval saw two altars on Calvary for the same sacrifice. Christ and his mother are one in their will to offer this sacrifice: Jesus in the blood of his flesh, Mary in the blood of her heart. Amadeus of Lausanne insisted on the extraordinary graces (one might say, the charisms and the mystical graces) with which the heart of Mary was filled: her joy at the birth of Christ and at his resurrection; her compassion for both her Son and her people, Israel; her love, which was the most perfect fulfillment of the first commandment. Finally, \textit{Ubi thesaurus, ibi et cor} : her heart was the most agreeable homage to God in heaven. Aelred of Rievaux offered a portrait of Mary meditating on the actions and words of Jesus and contemplating in her heart the image of the beauty of her Son's face.

Though not as well known as Rupert of Deutz, Godfrey of Admont deserves special mention. He also saw in Mary, in a unique sense, the Bride of the Canticle. He
spoke of the graces that filled the heart of this Bride, her total union of heart with God from her infancy (but not as an immaculate conception), the "interior savor" communicated by her Son, her constant prayer for the salvation of the world, her compassion—all ineffable graces. It was with Eckbert of Schoenau that private devotion, in its proper sense, was expressed in a remarkable prayer: "I shall speak to your heart, Mary . . . I shall greet . . . your immaculate heart. . . . Hail, singular sanctuary . . . ark of sanctification . . . may you live and enjoy an eternal happiness, O holy, O most loving heart. . . ." H. Barré has explained how Eckbert's devotion to the immaculate heart of Mary derived from faith in the mystery of the Virgin Mother of God, the mystery of the mutual love of Jesus and Mary.

C. With the texts (summarized above) up to the time of Eckbert, there was developed already a kind of litany of titles to be given to the heart of Mary. During the following centuries, this litany was repeated and enhanced.

For Richard of Saint Laurent, Mary's heart was the heart in which faith and consent inaugurated salvation; the heart in which justice and peace embraced; the heart given to us by the Father; the heart, tabernacle of the Holy Trinity, that was open to the perfect gifts of the Father of all lights. With Bonaventure, Mary's heart was one of sincere love, formed by the Holy Spirit, to conceive the Son of God; the heart, ark of the covenant, which kept the law of Christ and the mysteries of the Word; the heart, perfectly near to the heart of God. For Conrad of Saxony, the very innocent heart of Mary did not know malediction. It was a garden, paradise of the Holy Spirit; the most delightful heart, paradise of God; a tireless heart, zealous in holy meditations; the vigilant heart of the strong woman. James of Milan made known the heart of the mother, crucified with her son—so united with the Crucified, that her heart was pierced by the spear, nailed to the cross, crowned with thorns, scoffed at, heaped with insults.

The three nuns of Helfta had mystical experiences, on the one hand, of the heart of Christ, the suffering servant, glorified forever in heaven, and on the other hand, of the heart of Mary in her union with the heart of her Son. Mechtilde of Hackeborn received from Mary a special prayer—in seven articles—to greet the holy dispositions of the heart of the Blessed Virgin during her life and now in heaven: a heart desiring, wishing for the Messiah; a heart full of love, of humility, of compassion for the Lord; a heart that prays for the Church. Gertrude the Great invited others to an intimate union with Mary's heart to praise Christ: "May offer jubilation to you, for me, the most worthy heart and the soul of the glorious Virgin Mary . . . ." Among the visions of Mechtilde and Gertrude, there was one that, for each of them, had an almost identical theme: the three streams (Gertrude) or links (Mechtilde) that passed from the Holy Trinity to the heart of Mary and to all the heavenly court, and to all those who prayed the Ave Maria. It was an expressive symbol of our union to the divine charity through the heart of Mary. The Mariale of Servasanctus of Faenza
(†1300) called the heart of Mary "our heart": If Jesus is the head of his mystical body, Mary is its heart. A remarkable title was thus added to the litany in formation: Mary, heart of the mystical body, heart of the Church: cor nostrum.

After James of Milan, Bridget of Sweden described the compassion of Mary's heart as a perfect union with the passion of the Savior. Her text became an "authority," for Bridget told us that, in a vision to her, Mary herself had described this union: the Word made flesh, since his birth, was "my heart" . . . ; "his suffering was my suffering, as his heart was my heart . . . ; we have redeemed the world as if with one single heart." The mutual love of Jesus and Mary made of them one single heart. The Anselmian tradition found here a remarkable formulation. For Bernardine of Siena, the seven "words" of the Blessed Virgin, as reported in the Gospels, were seven flames of love that burst forth from her heart. A meditation of a Pseudo-Anselm of Lucca was a prayer to Mary to obtain the grace to be "filled with her love." It was a mystical charism: "I do not distinguish my heart from your heart"—the union of one's heart with Mary's heart. Thomas of Villanova added to the litany of these titles a new one: the heart of Mary as the heart of the most perfect disciple of her Son, a heart whose love is beyond our understanding.

Two prayers to the Immaculate Heart end this inquiry: an invocation by Mombaer: "O Mary, pierced by the sword of Simeon, through the heart of your Son . . . through the sufferings of your own heart . . . wound also my heart with the love of God," and a sequence (inspired by the Ave Maria), Ave Matris cor benigne . . . , venerating the heart of Mary wounded at Calvary by the five wounds of her Son. In short, the texts show that this devotion is born from the reading and the meditation of the Holy Scriptures. The texts of Luke that describe Mary keeping, meditating on, all these things in her heart are the main source. The Canticle of Canticles is understood as a revelation of the love of God for his people, for Israel, for the Church, for each of the faithful, and—in the most eminent sense—for Mary. Henceforth, the Marian interpretation passes from some texts to the entire Canticle. Thus a tradition developed: a meditation of the Church on the interior life of Mary, on the love of Our Lady for God and for his Word—meaning the prophetic Word of God revealed to Israel and, above all, the Word who became her Son.

With the general development of Christian piety, the Church learned to contemplate both the love of God for Mary and the love of Mary for God. Anselm of Canterbury expressed the mutual love of Jesus and Mary in a prayer seeking to share it. With Eckbert, we have the first prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and we note that this prayer preceded the prayers to the heart of Jesus. It is evident that our love for Mary is constantly united with the love for Christ. But it is not the devotion to his Passion that is the source of devotion to the heart of Mary, as is the case with the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The diversity of the vocabulary expressing the interior life of Mary shows—through the alternation cor/sinus or cor/pectus, for example—that the devotion is derived from the mystery of the Virgin.
Mother of our Savior. The contemplation of Mary in the mystery of the Annunciation (the Incarnation) and, generally, in all the infancy mysteries is the first biblical/ doctrinal source of the devotion to the heart of Mary. In conclusion, the related texts use the term “heart” primarily in its symbolic meaning: an excellent image to signify the spiritual life of Mary; her life of grace; her maternal union with the Son of God, her child; her life of love for God and for us.

With Rupert of Deutz we discover the deepest doctrinal meaning of our devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. From the heart, from the bosom, of the Father, the Word came and was received in the heart, the womb, of the Blessed Virgin to become our brother, our head, the Savior. In imitation of his eternal generation, the Son of God wanted to have a human generation in the heart, in the womb, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as type of our own regeneration. Rupert prepared a doctrine that with Vatican II became familiar to us: Mary, type of the Church and model of the New Creation.

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