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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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He entered the International Marianist Seminary, Regina Mundi, at Fribourg, Switzerland, in 1956, and was ordained to the holy priesthood in July, 1959. After completing his seminary, he continued his studies in theology at the General Administration of the Society of Mary in Rome.

The present article, "The Nature of Mary's Influence in the Distribution of Grace," is taken from the International Marianist Seminary journal, Etudes Marianistes 3 (1960), 2-16, and represents a serious attempt to justify the physical cooperation in the distribution of graces claimed for Mary by a number of eminent theologians. The article is reprinted with the permission of the editor and publisher.
Mary’s Influence in the Distribution of Grace

Ralph J. Doorack, S.M.

My interest in this subject was aroused by several of Fr. Chaminade’s* references to Mary’s influence in our spiritual life: he (and others do the same) uses expressions which indicate that he considered Mary’s influence as something quite real. “We have all been conceived in Mary, we must be born of Mary and formed by her to the likeness of Jesus Christ.” He even suggests that we ask Mary for specific traits of conformity with Christ which shows again that He thought of Mary’s influence as something very effective. On another occasion he writes: “It is in the virginal womb of Mary that Jesus Christ willed to form Himself to our likeness, and it is there likewise that we must be formed to His likeness, adjust our morals to His, our inclinations to His and our life to His.” Father Chaminade is evidently speaking of an actuality — of the here and now — and not of our spiritual birth from Mary some two thousand years ago when she gave birth to the Redeemer. In the same place Father Chaminade writes: “It is Mary who in some manner will undertake his religious education.”

We could draw attention to many other citations but these suffice to show that Father Chaminade considered this influence as something quite real and important in our spiritual life. What, then, is the nature of this influence? To speak of Mary’s influence in our spiritual life is to speak of her role in the distribution of grace. What, then, is her role in the domain of grace? Mary is Mediatrix of all grace. This includes her universal intercession. She also has the title of Distributrix of grace. But some theologians would identify this with her intercession by interpreting Mary’s role in the distribution of grace as only a moral intervention. This, however, would not seem to sufficiently explain some of the accepted expressions of Mary’s intervention in grace. For example, St. Bernardine of Siena is quoted as saying:

From the moment that the Virgin conceived the Word of God in her womb she acquired a certain jurisdiction and authority over all the temporal processions of the Holy Spirit, so that no one receives any grace from God except according to the dispensation of His Mother.

* Father Chaminade is the Founder of the Society of Mary (Marianists). The bicentennial of his birth is being celebrated this year.

1 Direction II, par. 420.
2 Ibid., par. 421.
3 Ibid., par. 338.
4 Ibid., par. 343.
6 Cited in COLOMER, La Virgen Maria, p. 201.
And St. Grignon de Monfort says:

_We wish to say that the Holy Spirit, by the intervention of the Holy Virgin, whom He wills to use . . . reduces His fecundity to act in producing in her and by her Jesus Christ in His members, a mystery of grace unknown even to the most learned and pious of Christians._

We have as well such expressions as: "all grace through the hands of Mary," or "Mary does for us in our spiritual life all that she did for Christ in His natural life," or "neck of the mystical body," or finally, "channel of all heavenly favors." All of these expressions would be but flimsy hyperbole if Mary's role is limited to that of intercession alone. Father Sauras, O.P., maintains that to reduce the terms "neck" and "aqueduct" to "Mary's petition on our behalf" is to make of Mariology a "science of words - a theological nominalism." In short, a denial of Mary's direct role in the distribution of life-giving grace implies a denial of her spiritual Motherhood in the real and complete sense of the word.

The question, then, is this: Is Mary's role in the distribution of grace one of efficient (of physical) instrumental causality?

Needless to say, many theologians have already embraced this line of thought: Cardinal Lepicier, Cardinal Mercier, Hugon, Bernard, Garrigou Lagrange . . . The Holy Fathers, especially the more recent ones, have repeatedly referred to Mary's role as Mediatrix and have invited theologians to explore this specific theory. To quote the most recent and most explicit - marvelously so - statement of all, in "Ad Caeli Reginam" Pius XII tells us:

_From this association with Christ comes the royal function by which she can dispense the treasures of the Divine Redeemer's Kingdom. Finally, from this association with Christ, comes the unfailing efficacy of her maternal intercession with the Son and with the Father . . . .

Moreover, the Blessed Virgin has not only received the grade of excellence and perfection which is supreme after that of Christ Himself, but has also received some sharing of that efficacy by which her Son and Our Redeemer is rightly and properly said to reign over the minds and wills of men. For if the word of God performs miracles and gives grace through the Humanity He has assumed, if He employs the Sacraments and His Saints as instruments for the salvation of souls, why should He not use His Mother's office and efforts to bring us the fruits of the Redemption?_
The predecessors of Pius XII should be understood and interpreted in light of this more explicit statement. As Father Neubert explains:

*It would be a faulty procedure to examine each papal pronouncement as though it were separate from all others. In matters of doctrine a pope does not contradict his predecessors; he has the intention and the consciousness of teaching the same doctrines as they did, though seeking, perhaps, to make them clearer and more complete. Together with his predecessors, he forms a single person, but one whose thinking has matured and now is expressed more exactly. The three most recent popes, several of whose assertions are more precise than those of their two predecessors, realized that they were but prolonging the same thought, and even alluded to this fact. Thus the statements of Popes Leo XIII and Pius X should be interpreted in the light of those pronounced by Popes Benedict XV, Pius XI and Pius XII.12*

The quotation of Pius XII above draws attention to and separates Mary's role as dispensatrix of grace and as intercessor.

*From this association ... by which she can dispense the treasures... Finally, from this association ... comes the unfailing efficacy of her maternal intercession...*

This by itself seems to rule out that opinion which reduces Mary's distribution of grace to a moral causality, i.e., to intercession and nothing more. But the Holy Father is more explicit still. He says Mary "has also received some sharing of that efficacy by which her Son and our Redeemer is rightly said to reign over the minds and wills of men." How does Christ reign over our minds and wills if not by the distribution of grace, with His Sacred Humanity as the physical instrument of that distribution? Finally, in the clearest of terms, He indicates that He sees no obstacles to conceiving Mary's role in distributing grace as an instrumental causality: "... if God employs the Sacraments and His saints as instruments for the salvation of souls, why should He not use His Mother's office and efforts to bring us the fruits of Redemption?"

That Pius XII's immediate predecessors made official pronouncements that can be understood in this same way is at once evident. To choose but a few:

*Beginning with her Assumption, according to a divine decree, Mary began to watch over the Church, to assist us and protect us as a Mother, in such a fashion that having been the collaboratrix in the mystery of the Redemption, she was equally the collaboratrix in the grace which would forever flow from that mystery; for a power so to say unlimited was confided to her for this purpose13 (Underlining mine). By this community of pain and will between Christ and Mary "she merited to become in a most worthy manner the Reparatrix of the*

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lost world” and the Dispenser of all the gifts that Jesus purchased for us by His bloody death ... and since she was appointed by Christ to be His associate in the work of human salvation, she merits for us congruously, as they say, what Christ merited for us condignly, and she is the chief minister of the graces to be dispensed. 14

As a result of Mary’s union with Jesus in the redemptive passion, the varied graces which we receive from the treasury of the Redemption are distributed to us, so to say, through the hands of the Virgin of Sorrows. 15

These statements can be taken at their face value, i.e., not as mere figures of speech, since they come from the supreme teaching authority which is not given to an inexact expression of doctrine. Father Neubert notes that: “Rome is extremely careful not to permit others, much less herself, to use exaggerated expressions, especially in those statements concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the Church knows that the faithful are naturally inclined to take literally all that is said in her honor. 16” But the Popes themselves in their continual use of expressions like those cited above have never mentioned that these expressions are to be understood only in a metaphoric or hyperbolic sense. Just the contrary, Pius XII’s pronouncement tells us to understand them in their most forceful meaning.

Before going further let us establish more precisely what we understand by Mary’s instrumental causality in the distribution of grace. Hugon 17 defines instrumental cause as an efficient cause which is elevated by a principal agent so as to attain an effect superior to its native or inherent possibilities. The influence it exerts on a subject is an influence communicated to it by another (the principal agent) on whom the effect ultimately depends. Still, the instrument has its own proper action which renders it suitable as an instrument in bringing about this effect. For example, the proper act of a knife is cutting, an action which makes it a suitable instrument for the artist (principal agent) in making a statue.

The influence or power which elevates the instrument so that it operates on the same level and to the same effect as the principal agent has no basis or roots in the instrument itself; it is essentially transient and is found in the instrument only in the very act of its being applied to the effect. The effect is the result of the combined efforts of instrument and principal agent, but the instrument attains the effect only as dependent on and applied by the principal agent.

The instruments used by finite creatures must possess an activity in proportion to the effect to be produced. God has no need of instruments. When He uses an instrument, it is by way of pure condescension, for the glory of His creature. There is no need therefore that the activity of the

15 BENEDICT XV, AAS, X, p. 182.
16 NEUBERT, op. cit., p. 81.
17 HUGON, O.P., La Causalité Instrumentale.
instrument be proportionate to the effect envisioned. Nevertheless, if it is to be a real instrument, it must possess a certain aptitude to concur in the divine works, i.e., it must possess as its own some action of which God can make use. For it is only in deploying its proper activity that it exercises instrumental activity. The best examples of this are the operations of Christ's Sacred Humanity as the instrument of performing miracles. The movements of His will, of His touches, of His regards, were the natural action and preliminary disposition which God elevated and applied to superior effects. The same is true of the natural activity of the sacraments to cleanse, to nourish, to anoint.18

Can we, then, hold that Mary is the physical instrument of the grace she distributes? By her intercession Mary is the moral cause of the grace she distributes, as Christ, in His Humanity, is the principal moral cause of redemption and of the application of all grace here and now. Furthermore, it is all but universally accepted that Christ's Humanity was the physical instrument of our redemption and is today the physical instrument of the distribution of all grace which He merited for us. To deny this present efficacy to Christ's Humanity in its glorified state would be to attribute to it less dignity now than what it had in its possible state. For then it enjoyed the dignity of instrument conjoined to the Divinity, whose natural actions merited and satisfied for us, an instrumentality (and so dignity) which would not be His in the distribution of the fruits of redemption.

In view of His instrumentality, all grace distributed to us depends on Christ's actual consent. The acts of His humanity — intellect, will and affections — concur in applying grace to us. The love of the Sacred Heart is the instrument elevated and used by the Divinity to produce in us at each instant the divine life of grace.19 Cor Jesu, fons vitae et sanctitatis.

As for Mary, there seems to be no intrinsic reason which militates against her being the physical instrument (in dependence on Christ) in the distribution of all grace. As the divinity so elevates and uses the Humanity of Christ, so God, the principal agent, could communicate to the acts of Mary's intellect and will the power of producing the life of grace in souls — an effect which evidently exceeds the native force of any creature, of Christ's Humanity as well. This power would have no basis in Mary herself and would be found in her only in the act of applying grace. Her act of knowing and willing would be the preliminary disposition or activity required if she is really to be an instrument. Being elevated and applied by God these acts would attain the very effect of God Himself, but an effect produced by their combined activity. The acts of Mary's will are in no way proportionate to causing such an effect in the human soul, but they are acts which God can make use of. The activity of the minister of the Sacraments is a classic example of this. The will of the priest and his words of forgiveness, ego te absольvo, effectively cleanse

18 Cf. HUGON, op. cit., Chapter 1.
19 Ibid., pp. 111-114.
and makes use of these acts. In themselves, the actions of Christ as acts of His Humanity were in no way proportionate to the miraculous effects they caused and yet God used them to this end.

the soul of the penitent and bestow grace, but only because God elevates It may be objected that as an instrument Mary is not in contact with all men and therefore has no effect on them. This same objection applies to the instrumentality of Christ's Humanity. The answer lies in this—that when the Divine power uses an instrument, this instrument itself need not actually be present to the effect. Witness Christ's miraculous cures at a distance. It is the principal agent which applies the influence of the instrumental cause to the effect, so it suffices that the instrument be in contact with the principal cause and that this latter actually touch the term of operation. If the principal cause is infinite, distance is no problem; the influence of the instrument can be felt everywhere since the Cause which applies it is everywhere. God who is present in Mary and present in us can project upon us the loving action of our Mother.

Having seen the possibility of Mary's being a physical instrument of grace, what reason do we have for saying that God actually does use Mary's maternal activity in this way? Granted that an absolute proof seems out of the question, we do have solid motives for affirming it. Immediately there comes to mind Mary's parallel and analogous position with that of Christ. By His intercession Christ is the principal moral cause of all grace; Mary too intercedes for us. Christ's acts of interceding are raised to the level of physical cause of the production of grace; the same would seem to be fitting for Mary.

However, the most basic, the most solid, of all reasons is Mary's association with Christ in our redemption. This is the motive repeatedly evoked by the Popes for attributing to Mary the title of Dispensatrix of grace. For example, Pius XII tells us explicitly that it is because Mary was Christ's "associate in the labors of the Divine Redemption" that she now "dispenses the treasures of the Divine Redeemer's Kingdom."

Why do we attribute to Christ's Humanity a physical causality in the distribution of grace, if not because that was the role played by His Humanity in our redemption? If, then, we are to hold that Mary now operates as an instrument in the distribution of grace, we must seek the basis of this contention in the nature of her association with Christ in the work of our salvation. That is, did Mary cooperate with Christ in such a way that we can say that she shared with her Son the role of physical instrument of salvation? Only if the Blessed Virgin effectively

20 Matt. 8, 13.
22 GARRIGOU LAGRANGE, op. cit., p. 237. He says here: "Theology will hardly advance beyond serious probability in this question."
24 Summa, III, Q. 46, art. 6; Q. 49, art. 1.
25 Such a question supposes, of course, Mary's complete dependence on Christ (the Instrument conjoined to the Godhead) and the free decree of the divinity to so
merited grace with Christ, is it really and truly hers to bestow. What then was the nature of her cooperation in our redemption?

This is a vast and much disputed question. We will only indicate our line of thought without attempting a fullblown treatment of each and every facet of the problem.

Christ redeemed us by the whole of His life on earth but two events especially stand out: the Incarnation in which He actualized His consent to save mankind – Ecce venio – and the Passion in which He culminated His mission on earth and in which He effectively merited and satisfied for all men. If Our Blessed Mother cooperated in an active and effective way in our redemption it should show itself above all in these two all important moments. Such a cooperation can be satisfactorily demonstrated, so much so that it is common and certain doctrine, fidei proxima, that Mary is associated with Christ in the work of our redemption as secondary and subordinate cause. This is very much in line with Father Chaminade’s thought who saw in the Mother of God the active associate of Her Son-Redeemer. “To be the Mother of God is to be the Redemptrix of men; it is to be the cause of the salvation of the universe.” Mary’s cooperation was that of Mother. She began this role at the moment of her consent and so from her fiat follows her life of Co-redemptrix, just as Christ’s life of Redeemer follows from His consent on entering the world: “Behold, I come to do thy will, O God.” Let us then examine this consent.

At the Annunciation we see God asking Mary for a free consent to the Incarnation; a free consent, and therefore a conscious consent. Mary knew, at least in a general way, God’s plan of redemption, i.e., that Her Son was to be Divine, that He would be the Savior, that He would save by His dolorous passion and that she was to have some place in all this. We could argue this from an analysis of the conversation between Mary and the angel and from her knowledge of the prophets. The supreme dignity of this vocation and God’s respect for His own Mother are perhaps still more convincing arguments. Would God have His Mother play a less responsible and so a less free and exalted role than say the prophets or John the Baptist? Besides, for Mary not to know that Her son was divine or that He was the Messias would amount to a positive ignorance on her part of a fundamental truth of faith. Moreover, in His gift of Self to Mary – and in her to all men – we can say without hesitation that God willed His most sublime of gifts to be given a worthy response – a response of love and liberty which demands that Mary know and appreciate the nature of the gift. The only adequate response to a personal gift is a like gift of self. We claim for Mary, then, a special grace which

associate her with the Redeemer. We can say that Mary’s cooperation was necessary, not in the sense that it supplied something deficient in the action of Her Son, but that God in His plan of redemption, had willed to depend on her cooperation and so had fitted her with the dignity and grace to so cooperate.

26 GARRIGOU LAGRANGE, op. cit., p. 184.

27 Les Cahiers Gris, No. 1; as cited in COLE, The Spiritual Maternity of Mary according ..., Chaminade, p. 141.

not only enlightened her understanding so that she grasped the full extent of what was to take place in her but which also elevated her will to embrace Christ and all His members — the whole Christ — in an immeasurable love.

We know that Father Chaminade thought in this vein.

When Mary gave her consent to the Incarnation of the Word in her chaste womb, she evidently knew the plan of the Redemption in its fullest extent and accepted it with love; she understood that in conceiving Jesus, she was conceiving Him in His entirety, that is, both His natural Body and His Mystical Body; she could not separate Him from what was to form but one body with Himself.29

Leo XIII is quite explicit on her knowledge:

In the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus trembles and is sorrowful unto death, and in the praetorium where He is scourged, crowned with thorns, condemned to death, Mary is not present; but she knew and saw clearly all these things long beforehand. For, when she yielded herself to God as His handmaid for the office of Mother ... she shared with her Son in the painful expiation for the human race.30

The first object of Mary's consent is the Divine Maternity, but with this she consented to our salvation as known and willed. For this, her cooperation was by no means a merely material cooperation by which Christ received flesh of a woman. "She consented to become the Mother of God only because of our salvation.31" The Virgin became Mother of God for the same reason that Christ became man, for the restoration and regeneration of men.32 It is an act proper to Mary, by which she inseparably associates herself to Christ and so to our salvation. In fact, thereby, she entered with her whole being into the hypostatic order — the order of redemption. As Alfaro explains, at the Annunciation Our Blessed Mother knew her Son as the Redeemer and gave her consent for a maternity of such a Son, and so implicitly accepted God's design on that Son. She gave her Son and herself through her maternity to the Divine will for the Salvation of men.33

The Incarnation is salvation begun — the actual beginning of redemption. The Passion and Resurrection can not be separated from the Incarnation as if they were only accidentally joined thereto. In a real sense, the whole of Christ's life is one act of redemption. The passion is already foreseen and accepted in the assumption of passible flesh and will but constitute the completion of the act begun at Mary's fiat. From this it follows that, given the actual economy of salvation, Our Lady, by her consent gave a direct, immediate and necessary cooperation in the work of

29 Le Petit Traité de la connaissance de Maria, p. 48. As cited in COLE, op. cit., p. 44.
30 'cunda Semper, Sept 8, 1894. As cited in COLE, p. 46.
31 CHAMINADE, 17th Meditation, Retreat of 1822. As cited in COLE, p. 41.
32 LLAMERA, O.P., La Maternidad Espiritual de Maria, Estudios Marianos III (1943), pp. 79-80.
33 ALFARO, op. cit., p. 198.
our salvation.\textsuperscript{24} Father Llamera too sees in Mary’s consent an efficient and immediate influence in our incorporation and regeneration in Christ and in the whole work of redemption.\textsuperscript{35} We conclude from this, that by her consent, Mary performed in our regard a real maternal act of the order of grace — an act of its nature destined to bring us the divine life of grace.

However, a real maternal action gives of what is proper to the Mother. Can we say that Mary gives us her grace? — that She is a source of grace? There is but one source of grace, the capital grace of Christ. To be a source of grace Mary must be so in union with and in dependence on Christ, i.e., in some manner she must share in His grace of Headship.

Father Chaminade claimed for Mary just such a union.

\textit{It is in her and by her that Jesus Christ in communicating His life to us has made us participants of His nature, so that we are born spiritually of Mary because of her ineffable union with Jesus Christ, the Father of our souls.}\textsuperscript{36}

This union is based on the mutual exchange of life between Jesus and Mary at the moment of her fiat. Christ received from His Mother His human life and with it capital grace by which He is constituted Head of all men. In return Christ gave to Mary a participation of this grace of Headship by which she really bestows life on her children, the members of Christ. So that as He depended on Mary for natural life, we depend on her for our spiritual life.

\textit{At the same time that Jesus Christ in the blessed womb of Mary received in addition to His glorious life, His divinely human or theandric life, He received a life of influence over His mystical members as well. By means of it He is their Head and communicates His grace to them. In receiving this life of influence from Mary, he communicates it to her in return so that she may be the Mother of Christians. Mary is then our life.}\textsuperscript{37}

In Christ, His fullness of grace gives Him the role of Head; in Mary, her fullness of grace received from Christ gives her the role of Mother.

\textit{... We owe to the Blessed Virgin the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation and by it all the graces whose plenitude is in Jesus Christ, Our Head. Mary is the source of that plenitude in order to transmit it to us maternally. It is in this sense that the Angel salutes her as full of grace, and that pious scholars apply to her the text of St. John: “de plenitudine ejus omnes accepmus.”}\textsuperscript{38}
Father Llamera posits a similar share in Christ’s capital grace for Mary. As the capital grace of Christ is derived from the hypostatic union, so Mary’s maternal grace is an overflow of the Divine Maternity. Her fullness of grace demanded by the Divine Maternity is considered as the constitutive element of her spiritual maternity. Her coredemption is, then, a function of her spiritual maternity as Christ’s redemption is a function of His Headship.\footnote{Fr. Llamera considers regeneration of mankind as the end of Mary’s maternity; for him, her coredemption is the means to this end. Fr. Sebastian, O.F.M., rather considers Mary’s coredemption as the constitutive element of her spiritual maternity. (Cf. Estudios Marianos III, p. 141 and SEBASTIAN, Mary’s Spiritual Maternity in “Mariology,” edited by Carol.)}

By her \textit{fiat} Mary embraced the full compass of the redemption. We cannot, then, limit her cooperation to the Incarnation. As mentioned, the whole life of Jesus and of Mary after the Annunciation form but one act of Redemption flowing from their first consent continually reaffirmed and brought to fruition on Calvary. The object of Mary’s consent was a Son-Redeemer and so hers was a consent to God’s command on His life. Her compassion under the cross was the continuance and completion of that consent at the very moment of the consummation of the life of her Son. In the actual order chosen by God, the effective consent of Mary out of love for us (affectionate consent) was a necessary element in our salvation, so much so that Jesus would not have been offered up had not Mary voluntarily disposed herself thereto.\footnote{ALFARO, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 156.}

Father Chaminade’s conception of the process of redemption was manifestly similar to this.

The sacrifice of Calvary is for Mary, just as it is for Jesus Christ, only the consummation of a sacrifice started at the Incarnation. How many times has she not given this consent since she has had the happiness of being his Mother. She renews it in some manner all the moments of her life.\footnote{De la devotion à la Ste. Vierge, Ses fondements, Les Cahiers Gris I, p. 32. As cited in COLE, p. 127 and 129.}

The sole justification of Mary’s presence at Calvary is to actively cooperate with Jesus in His sacrifice.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{If Mary had not been conducted to the foot of the cross by the Holy Spirit for the accomplishment of great mysteries, propriety would have prohibited her from being present.}\footnote{Sur la Ste. Vierge, Mère des Chrétiens, Les Cahiers Cartonnés III, p. 2. As quoted in COLE, p. 130.}
\item \textbf{In the presence of the holy women at the foot of the Cross, there is nothing which is not according to the law of grace, and even of nature. But that Mary, the Mother of Jesus should be present — here we see the Strong Woman, the Mother of Sorrows, who receives in her heart all the blows which pierced the heart of her Son; here we see a mystery of incomprehensible love. Mary is at the foot of the Cross as advocate of the human race and Mother of the Elect.}\footnote{16th Instruction, \textit{Sur la Ste. Vierge}, Retraite de 1823, Notes de M. Laugeay, p. 430. As quoted in COLE, p. 131.}
\end{itemize}
It was necessary that Christ should suffer so that He might enter into His glory. It was necessary also that His august Mother should suffer along with Him in order that she should bring us forth to the life of grace in union with Him.44

Mary not only suffered with her Son, she was there to offer up the same victim – the same sacrifice.

Is it not beyond all doubt that at the moment in which the Blessed Virgin saw the executioners preparing to crucify her adorable Son, she offered Him to God, as being not only the Son of God, but also her own Son and because by her title of Mother, she had rights and real authority over Him?45

She knows that by the Son Whom she is immolating and by the very fact of her immolation, as by the sacrifice of the Incarnation, that she is the Mother of the human race, whose salvation is in the death of Jesus. She wishes, then, the death of Jesus, because she wills the life of the human race.46

Pius XII gives expression to this same concept of Mary’s sacrifice on Calvary:

Free from all sin, original and personal, always intimately united with her Son, as another Eve, she offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the Children of Adam, sin-stained by his fall, and her mother’s rights and mother’s love were included in this Holocaust.47

Mary’s consent at the foot of the cross, with its offering up of Her Son for our salvation is the most important factor in her participation in Christ’s sacrifice – it constitutes a real and effective cooperation in our salvation. By this, she merited grace for us and satisfied for our sins.

We can best terminate this section in the words of Father Stanley, S.M.

This second Fiat, this consent to the death of Christ which made of her our Co-redeemer, made her spiritual maternity effective and final. For as the fullness of grace of Christ’s Headship, received at the time of the Incarnation, was by His death on the cross released to flood by means of the sacraments into His members, so Mary’s participation in this fullness of grace, conferred on her at the moment of the Incarnation, was released as well to flow into all the members of the Mystical Body. “In Christ was the fullness of divinity,” Father Chaminade says. “And of this fullness we have all received.” Then he adds, “All this fulness has been placed in Mary.”48

We have pointed out Mary’s active, efficient cooperation with Christ in those acts which accomplished our salvation. In view of this we can maintain that she played a role of physical instrumentality in our re-

44 Petit Traite..., p. 43. As quoted in COLE, p. 131.
45 L’Oraison en Union Avec Marie, Cf. Spirit of our Foundation I, n.° 331, p. 420.
46 Petit Traite..., p. 44. As quoted in COLE, p. 137.
48 STANLEY, S.M., The Mystical Body of Christ according to ... Chaminade, p. 121.
demption — in total dependence on Christ, but still as a direct instrument of redemption whose actions merited grace for us.

As Christ heavenly role of mediation is the result of His merit and satisfaction in reconciling us to God, so for Mary her role in heaven is the result of her maternal cooperation in this reconciliation. The distribution of grace is one of the mysteries of human salvation — the fruition of all the preceding. How could God decree the fulfillment of salvation to depend on the free and effective cooperation of Mary and then revoke that decree after her perfect cooperation in all the mysteries that gained for us redemption? To do so, would seem to reward her with less dignity than was hers during her painful, but most intimate, role with Christ here on earth. No, the gifts and call of God are without repentance. (Rom. 11, 29.) Mary's effective role in distributing grace can be but the logical consequence of her intimate and effective role in obtaining this grace for us. It is, indeed, a necessary maternal function flowing from her spiritual maternity of grace merited in union with Christ. By this activity she continues to be the Mother of each of us. In a word, Christ has dominion over all grace since He merited all grace; Mary, in subordination to Christ, has dominion over all grace since she merited all grace.

Not to see the most pure Mary in the entire economy of religion is to be ignorant of the mystery of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has disposed of all in His religion in such a way that the Blessed Virgin has participated and cooperated in everything.

In terminating, we point out that the question of Mary's causality in the distribution of grace cannot be given too much attention, for she is our Mother in direct proportion to the reality of her influence in our spiritual regeneration — a process starting with her fiat and continuing through the ages in each individual. While it is true that her intercession, a role of moral causality in the acquisition of grace, "suffices" to explain her spiritual maternity, yet her maternity seems so much more intimate and perfect if grace, our very spiritual life, is produced in us through the instrumental activity of Mary. In this way, her maternal love in our regard becomes a real influence in our life; our confidence in her ability to really distribute grace becomes all the stronger; and we are motivated to give Our Blessed Mother an ever-increasing importance in our efforts toward a full Christ-like life.

49 COLE, op. cit., p. 188.
50 Fr. Sauras holds that Mary gives of her own supernatural being and by an action properly her own, i.e., by a physical instrumental causality. He considers anything less as insufficient to give Mary a true and proper spiritual maternity. Op. cit., pp. 336 ss.
51 Some theologians claim that Mary's merit for us was de condigno. Cf. COLOMER, La Virgen Maria, p. 221; GREGORIO DE JESUS CRUCIFICADO, Lugar que ocupa Maria en el Cuerpo Mistico, Estudios Marianos V (1945) pp. 275-277; and LLAMERA, El Mérito Maternal Corredentivo de Maria, Estudios Marianos XI (1951) pp. 98 ss.
52 CHAMINADE, De la Compassion de la S. V., Les Cahiers Gris I, p. 160. As quoted in COLE, p. 16.