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MARY IN THE LENT AND EASTER SEASONS: LITURGICAL REFERENCES

The promulgation of the *Collectio Missarum de Beata Maria Virgine*¹ on August 15, 1986, has been hailed by many, and rightly so, as a timely and valuable contribution to the Church's tradition of liturgical devotion to the Mother of God.² Its importance seems obvious for this second meeting of the Mariological Society dedicated to "Mary in the Mysteries of Christ Celebrated in the Liturgical Year." Without the *Collectio* it would be difficult to imagine two days devoted to the study of Mary in the cycle of Lent-Easter-Pentecost.

Before the *Collectio*, students of Mariology concerned with Mary's presence and cooperation in the Paschal Mystery found themselves in a rather embarrassing situation when they turned their attention to the study of Marian devotion as expressed in the Church's post Vatican II liturgy. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had clearly enunciated a fundamental principle in describing the liturgical year:

¹*Collectio Missarum de Beata Maria Virgine, editio typica*, 2 vols. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987). An ICEL translation of twelve Mass formularies was published for *ad interim* use in *Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (New York: Catholic Book, 1988). The complete text is in preparation.

²For a presentation of the *Collectio* and its place in the development of postconciliar mariological thought and practice, see: Thomas A. Thompson, S.M., "The Virgin Mary in the Liturgy: 1963-1988," *Marian Studies* 40 (1989): 77-104, especially 96-103; Manlio Sodi, S.D.B., *Con Maria verso Cristo: Messe della beata Vergine Maria* (Milan: Edizioni Paoline, 1990), 13-30; and Silvano M. Maggiani, O.S.M., "Lo sviluppo della pietà a santa Maria: Dalla 'Sacrosanctum Concilium' alla 'Collectio Missarum de Beata Maria Virgine,'" *Rivista Liturgica* 75 (1988): 9-32.

In celebrating this annual cycle of the mysteries of Christ, Holy Church honors the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, with a special love. She is inseparably linked with her son's saving work. In her the Church admires and exalts the most excellent fruit of redemption, and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be.³

The "whole mystery of Christ" was to be opened to the faithful so that they might lay hold of the Lord's powers and merits and be filled with saving grace.⁴ The way in which Mary was to be seen in the context of the mystery of Christ was described in the later Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. *Lumen gentium* reaffirmed the devotion expressed, especially in the liturgy,⁵ to the mother whose union with her son was "manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death"⁶ and whose union with the disciples of her son continued until she was "exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son."⁷

The liturgical books, however, seemed to tell a different story. While the presence of Mary in the Advent-Christmas cycle was obvious⁸ and her memory was guaranteed during that season of the year through particular feasts and the Sat-

³Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 103, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Northport, N.Y.: Costello Publishing Co., 1975), 1-40. All conciliar documents will be cited from the Flannery edition. (Hereafter *Sacrosanctum Concilium* will be cited as *SC*.)

⁴*SC*, no. 102.

⁵Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, no. 67 (hereafter cited as *LG*).

⁶*LG*, no. 57.

⁷*LG*, no. 59.

⁸See John Allyn Melloh, S.M., "Mary in the Mysteries of Christ from Advent to the Baptism of the Lord: Liturgical References," *Marian Studies* 41 (1990): 49-95, and Frederick M. Jelly, O.P., "Mary in the Mysteries of Christ from Advent to the Baptism of the Lord: Contemporary Theological Reflections," *Marian Studies* 41 (1990): 96-124.

urday memorial, references to the woman most closely united to the redemptive mission of Christ during the celebration of the Lent-Easter cycle were minimal at best.⁹ Paul VI affirmed that "[the General Calendar] makes it possible in a more organic and closely-knit fashion to include the commemoration of Christ's Mother in the annual cycle of the mysteries of her Son."¹⁰ He found it comforting

... that the postconciliar renewal has, as was previously desired by the liturgical movement, properly considered the Blessed Virgin in the mystery of Christ, and, in harmony with tradition, has recognized the singular place that belongs to her in Christian worship as the holy Mother of God and the worthy Associate of the Redeemer.¹¹

But *Marialis cultus* passes over the central mystery of the li-

⁹While Jesús Castellano Cervera, O.C.D., agrees that "the genius and tradition of the Roman liturgy have never given a great deal of space to the Blessed Virgin in the celebration of the Paschal Mystery," he affirms that the liturgy has never completely marginated her. He cites: in the Liturgy of the Hours, the second reading of the Office of Readings for Holy Thursday and the use of the *Regina coeli*; from the Roman Missal, the hymns *Pange lingua gloriosi Corporis mysterium* (Holy Thursday) and *Pange lingua gloriosi proelium certaminis* (Good Friday), the Passion narrative of St. John on Good Friday and the references to Mary in the Litany of the Saints and the Profession of Faith during the Easter Vigil. See his article "Vergine Maria (beata)" in *Nuovo dizionario di liturgia*, Domenico Sartore and Achille M. Triacca, eds. (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1983), 1567-1568. For a complete list of references in the Liturgy of the Hours, see Martha Garcia, O.P., "Mary in the Liturgy of the Hours," *Marian Studies* 40 (1989): 120-121. The Roman Missal does also include one Mass formula for the memorial of the Blessed Virgin during Easter time. For a historical summary of Marian formularies in the Missal, see Alceste Catella, "La 'Collectio Missarum de Beata Maria Virgine': Analisi della eucologia," *Rivista Liturgica* 75 (1988): 82-90.

¹⁰Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation for the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary *Marialis cultus* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1974), no. 2 (hereafter cited as *MC*).

¹¹*MC*, no. 15

turgical year—the death and resurrection of Jesus—in silence.¹²

With the introduction of the Masses for Lent and Easter that are found in the *Collectio Missarum*, not only do scholars now have material with which to work, but the faith community also has at its disposition liturgical formularies that give expression to the authentic devotion which was, perhaps, too often relegated to the area of “popular religion.”¹³ Rather than serving as an indictment of a previous fault, the wealth of material now available attests to the Church’s ability and desire to incorporate into its life of prayer the fruit of contemporary theological reflection on the sources of our faith as well as the lived experience of God’s people.¹⁴ Though the actual use of these new Lent and Easter formularies in liturgical celebration presents some pastoral challenges, it is nonetheless true that the *Collectio* provides needed indications of how Marian devotion can be harmonized with these two central seasons of the Church year. Just as importantly, the *Collectio* is instructive in that it represents a process which “is not one of inserting the Virgin Mary in liturgy, but of broadening our concept and enabling us to see her in the fullness of the mysteries.”¹⁵ What the theologians have come to understand and affirm in the years since Vatican II, that Mary’s participation in the Paschal Mystery is fundamental to a fuller apprecia-

¹²See, however, the description of the commemoration of Our Lady of Sorrows (15 September) in no. 7: “a fitting occasion for reliving a decisive moment in the history of salvation and for venerating, together with the Son ‘lifted up on the Cross, his suffering Mother.’”

¹³See Castellano, “Vergine Maria,” 1568.

¹⁴See Sodi, *Con Maria*, 27-31. Also Angelo Petti, O.F.M.Cap., “La memoria liturgica di Santa Maria: Sulla nuova ‘Collectio missarum de beata Maria Vergine,’” *Asprenas* 36 (1989): 233-244.

¹⁵Thompson, “The Virgin Mary,” 100.

tion of her role in the life and worship of the Church,¹⁶ has now found prayerful expression in this supplement to the Roman Missal.

This paper is limited to an examination of the *Collectio Missarum* and will not treat of the few Marian references already found in the Missal and Liturgy of the Hours for the seasons of Lent and Easter. It is further limited to the prayer texts found in the first volume (Sacramentary) of the *Collectio*. Others have been asked to prepare reflections on biblical references and contemporary theology; I will, therefore, not directly address the content of the important Introduction to the *Collectio* or the Lectionary. A thorough study of any Mass formulary certainly demands attention to the proper readings (when they exist) and can only be enriched by reference to the introductions prepared with such care by the editors of our postconciliar liturgical books. Given the program of this Mariological Convention, the integration of all these elements must be left to the participants and/or readers.

We are therefore concerned with nine Mass formularies (five for the season of Lent and four for Easter time). Obviously, each one cannot be studied in detail.¹⁷ In fact, because of time constraints I will describe only three formularies. Mindful of the Mariological Society's intention to offer assistance to homilists and teachers, I will first present an overview of the content of the individual formularies of-

¹⁶Two recent examples: Ignacio M. Calabuig Adan, O.S.M., "Il culto alla beata Vergine: fondamenti teologici e collocazione nell'ambito del culto cristiano," in *Aspetti della presenza di Maria nella Chiesa in cammino verso il duemila* (Rome and Bologna: Edizioni Marianum and Edizioni Dehoniane, 1989), 185-314, especially his working hypothesis formulated on p. 292. Achille M. Triacca, S.D.B., "Esemplarità della presenza di Maria SS. nella celebrazione del mistero di Cristo," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 102 (1988): 406-435, especially pp. 418 and 422.

¹⁷An example of such studies is: J. Michael Joncas, "The 'Visitation' Formulary in the *Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary*: An Exercise in Liturgical Exegesis," *Worship* 64 (1990): 242-259.

ferred for each season,¹⁸ followed by an assessment of the themes presented for the season as such. In conclusion, I will present some pastoral reflections that seem pertinent to the use of the *Collectio* and the devotion to Mary in the context of the Lent and Easter seasons.¹⁹

LENTEN SEASON

The *Collectio Missarum* presents a brief introduction to the formularies for the individual liturgical seasons. The Lenten journey of the faithful is one of listening to the word of God, prayer, penance, baptismal conversion and following Christ on the way of the cross. Mary is to be presented as the model of disciples attentive to the word of God and intent on following Christ to the cross. At the cross she is the "New Eve" or "New Woman": companion of Christ and mother of his followers. Five formularies are offered. The first (no. 10) presents Mary as Disciple of the Lord. The other four focus on Mary at the cross where she is honored for her personal participation in her son's suffering and death (nos. 11 and 12, both entitled The Blessed Virgin Mary at the Foot of the Cross), her relationship to the disciples (no. 13, The Commending of the Blessed Virgin Mary) and her

¹⁸"Especially with regard to the feasts of Our Lady, attention to both the biblical passages and the euchological texts is more necessary than ever [in the preparation of the homily], since very often the formularies reflect the best and the most recent contemporary postconciliar theology, and always within a practical and ecclesial perspective." Danilo M. Sartor, O.S.M., "Le feste della Madonna: riflessioni e suggerimenti per la loro celebrazione," *Notitiae* 24 (1988): 342 (my translation).

¹⁹In the course of this study I will follow, to the extent possible, the *ad interim* study translation of the ICEL. Two formularies of interest here (11. The Blessed Virgin Mary at the Foot of the Cross [I] and 18. The Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles) were included in the 1988 American edition of the *Collectio*. The published texts will be used for these two formularies. Keeping in mind the orientation toward homilists in particular, the advantages of using the translation seem to outweigh the disadvantages. When helpful for understanding the text, reference will be made to the official text.

presence in the Church as Mother of Reconciliation (no. 14, The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Reconciliation).

10. Holy Mary, Disciple of the Lord

This is a new formulary and is, in many ways, one of the more original texts among those offered for the Lenten season. By relating Mary to the Church's Lenten journey through the category of "discipleship" the *Collectio* avoids immediately the risk of devotionism. The focus of the prayer text is the word of God that gives life, and Mary is an example to the Church in her openness to that word and in her willingness to put it into practice.

The introduction to the Mass cites Paul VI:

[Mary] is held up as an example to the faithful rather for the way in which, in her own particular life, she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God (cf. Luke 1:38), because she heard the word of God and acted on it and because charity and a spirit of service were the driving force of her actions. She is worthy of imitation because she was the first and the most perfect of Christ's disciples.²⁰

While Paul VI's use of the title "disciple" was new in official documents, Mary's acceptance of the word and her consequent service to her son and the Christian community are basic to the thought of *Lumen gentium*. If Mary became the Mother of Jesus through consenting to the word of God,²¹ in the public life of Jesus, her openness to the same word motivated her continuing journey:

In the course of her Son's preaching she received the words whereby, in extolling a kingdom beyond the concerns and ties of flesh and blood, he declared blessed those who heard and kept the word of God (cf. Mk. 3:35; par. Lk. 11:27-28) as she was faithfully doing (cf. Lk. 2:19, 51). Thus the Blessed Virgin

²⁰MC, no. 35.

²¹LG, no. 56.

advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross. . . .²²

This is the example presented in this Mass to the faith community on its Lenten journey.

The Mass recognizes the unique relationship of Mary to Jesus. She is the mother of the Son of God (Prayer Over the Gifts) whom she received into her womb (Preface), but she became the disciple of this incarnate Word and, in this, she is declared to be even more blessed (Preface). The introduction credits St. Augustine with this insight: "It is a greater thing for her to be a disciple of Christ than to be his mother; she is more blessed in being a disciple of Christ than in being the mother of Christ."²³ In receiving the Word, she dedicated herself totally to the person and work of her son,²⁴ and in this fidelity to the Word which is Life she is the example of disciples (Opening Prayer). The transposition of terms "Son" and "incarnate Word" in the Preface make it clear that while Mary's maternal role is unique, her wholehearted devotion to the Word born of her womb is an example for all who would be disciples of her son. Devotion to her son meant an eager searching for the will of the Father and willingness to carry that out with fidelity (Preface). Listening to her son, she came to understand the Father's will, and she would journey to the cross—and beyond.

The Entrance Antiphon declares Mary blessed ("highly favored" in the ICEL text) for being the mother of the divine Word, but blessed, too, because she kept the word in her heart and became the disciple of the same divine Word. The Lucan references are obvious and important. If Mary's discipleship is intimately tied to her maternity, there is nothing passive or automatic about it. Her discipleship began with the Word incarnate in her womb but developed

²²LG, no. 58.

²³St. Augustine, *Sermo* 25, 7: PL 38, 937.

²⁴LG, no. 56.

through her willingness to keep and treasure that word (see the first suggested Gospel text). A document from the Servants of Mary describes the personal commitment:

The double mention of Mary's reflective silence (see Luke 2:19 and 51) has been the object of diligent study by contemporary exegetes and of loving attention by spiritual men and women of all times. These texts offer profound insights into the interior life of the Blessed Virgin. In her silence, she appears as the woman of wisdom who, in light of the Paschal event, remembers and keep before her, interprets and compares, the words and facts of the birth and infancy of her son, questions herself about the meaning of obscure phrases overshadowed by the cross (see Luke 2:34-35 and 48-50) and accepts the silences of God with her own adoring silence.²⁵

But Mary is not alone in this need for prayerful reflection. The Communion Antiphon is taken from Luke 11:28: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it" (see also the parallel passage from Matthew suggested as a Gospel). The Servites continue their reflection:

The value of the Blessed Virgin's reflective attitude as a model in the Church's task of penetrating the Word has been well expressed: "the mute Mother of the silent Word . . . prefigured that long ceaseless effort of memory and intense rumination which constitutes the heart of the Church's tradition."²⁶

²⁵208th General Chapter of the Order of Servants of Mary, *Do Whatever He Tells You: Reflections and Proposals for Promoting Marian Devotion* (Rome: General Curia OSM, 1983), no. 58, p. 67. This document is often useful in interpreting the original texts found in the *Collectio*. It was prepared by a committee of professors of the Marianum Faculty, Rome, but the primary responsibility was entrusted to Ignacio M. Calabuig Adan, O.S.M. Father Calabuig was later the chair of the *coetus* responsible for the compilation of the *Collectio*. For the history of the *Collectio* and the work of the *coetus*, see Sodi, *Con Maria*, 14-27.

²⁶208th General Chapter OSM, *Do Whatever He Tells You*, no. 59, p. 67. See also *MC*, no. 17: "... it was faith with which she, who played a part in the Incarnation and was a unique witness to it, thinking back on the events of the infancy of Christ, meditated upon these events in her heart

More blessed as disciple than Mother, Mary is a true example to those who desire to be disciples of the incarnate Word. They, too, seek to be open to the saving word so that it might bear fruit in daily living (Opening Prayer). The "words of life" to which Mary was faithful become the "word of salvation" that speaks to or resonates within the daily lives of men and women (Opening Prayer) who recognize that true grace and wisdom are beyond their human strength (Prayer Over the Gifts). The saving word comes only from Christ through the power of the Spirit. Looking to Mary's example, the community prays for the grace to be disciples of Christ, manifesting the same eagerness and fidelity (lost in the ICEL text) of Mary (Prayer After Communion). The will of God is to be found in the words of Christ, and grace and wisdom come from union with him in Eucharist.

This Mass formulary is a welcome addition to the Church's liturgical celebration of Mary's role in the life and ministry of her son. In focusing on her eager and faithful pursuit of God's will, we move beyond the privilege of the divine maternity to a celebration of her life-long dedication. As handmaid of the Lord, she was totally devoted to her son²⁷ and in this she is a realistic model for other disciples. Mary is the first and perfect disciple. A community journeying toward the celebration of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus recognizes in her discipleship the path for its Lenten experience: a more diligent listening to the word of God.²⁸

It should be noted, however, that this formulary presents the relationship of the worshipping community to Mary in primarily individualistic terms. Mary is an example to be im-

(see Luke 2:19 and 51). The Church also acts in this way, especially in the liturgy, when with faith she listens, accepts, proclaims and venerates the word of God, distributes it to the faithful as the bread of life and in the light of that word examines the signs of the times and interprets and lives the events of history."

²⁷LG, no. 56.

²⁸SC, no. 109.

itated in the life of each individual disciple. Each must come to an understanding of God's will through knowledge of Christ and his teaching. And each must be eager and faithful, as was Mary, if he or she is to bear the cross and stand by it in faithful witness. Discipleship is certainly an individual commitment, but the Church itself, as community of disciples, seeks the same openness to God's will, union with Christ, and fidelity in carrying out the instruction received from him. The Church's life is one of discipleship that demands attention to the example of Mary:

The Church indeed contemplating [Mary's] hidden sanctity, imitating her charity and faithfully fulfilling the Father's will, by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother.²⁹

Seeking after the glory of Christ, the Church becomes more like her lofty type, and continually progresses in faith, hope and charity, seeking and doing the will of God in all things. The Church, therefore, in her apostolic work too, rightly looks to her. . . .³⁰

A community faithfully doing the will of God—and blessed because of it—is the only environment in which individuals will come to share a vision that encompasses the lofty type represented in Mary. If Mary was blessed in her maternity and her discipleship, so, too, is the Church itself. It is the Church that first treasures the word of life which becomes grace and wisdom for individuals. One wonders if this could not have found expression in the community's Lenten prayer.

11. The Blessed Virgin Mary at the Foot of the Cross (I)

The *Collectio* offers four formularies focused on Mary's presence at the cross of her son, each highlighting an aspect of the event which might be relevant to the life of the

²⁹LG, no. 64.

³⁰LG, no. 65.

worshipping community. The first two bear the same title and both come from the proper of the Order of Servants of Mary. Both look to Mary's personal participation in the passion of her son and the significance of her presence for the life of the Church and individual Christians.

Formulary 11 (except for the Preface) comes from the Servite feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Foot of the Cross which the Order celebrates on Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent (before Palm Sunday). The *Collectio* notes that as the Church journeys toward Jerusalem, it meditates more frequently on the events of the passion. Almost spontaneously, the Christian people also give more attention to Mary's "compassion," and it seems right that a volume such as the *Collectio* would provide texts for continuing meditation and celebration of her presence on Calvary.

Mary's presence at the cross is real. In accord with the Father's will she stands at the cross, in her agony (Opening Prayer), sharing Jesus' sufferings (Prayer After Communion). As her son dies, she endures the intensity of his suffering and is associated with his sacrifice.³¹ But hers is not passive resignation; at the altar of the cross, she is the *generosa Virgo* who serves human redemption (Prayer Over the Gifts)³² and she manifests the fidelity that marked her entire pilgrimage of faith (Preface). *Lumen gentium* had described her: "[The Blessed Virgin] associated herself with [her Son's] sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this victim which was born of her."³³

The new preface provided in the *Collectio* elevates Mary's participation far above one particular moment in history. This faithful woman standing at the cross stands at the center of salvation history: in her person she fulfills the pro-

³¹See *LG*, no. 58.

³²The 1988 published text has jumbled the concepts. The introduction refers to the *redemptionis administratrix* (translation: "handmaid of the Redeemer"); the prayer . . . *redemptionis* . . . *cuius generosa Virgo, in ara crucis exstitit administratrix* has become ". . . as we recall the compassion of Mary, your faithful handmaid, who stood by the altar of the cross."

³³*LG*, no. 58.

phetic images of the past (*antiquas figuras*), understood as enlightening the significance of the cross, and at the same time represents a new pattern of life (*nova documenta vitae*) that is shaped or determined by the cross event.³⁴ The old has been fulfilled in the new Eve and the new Zion, mother-city of all peoples, who gathers her scattered children, but something new has begun in a Church that will remain faithful in the midst of persecution and peril.

On the cross, life has been restored to a world in bondage to death. As a woman was present in the beginning, so is a woman present at redemption. The introduction to the formulary cites Genesis 3:15, John 19:26 and Revelation 12:1, as sources for the Eve image, and notes also *Lumen gentium's* presentation of patristic thought:

As St. Irenaeus says, "[Mary] being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race." Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert with him in their preaching: "the knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith." Comparing Mary with Eve, they call her "Mother of the living," and frequently claim: "death through Eve, life through Mary."³⁵

Mary is seen, too, as Mother Zion, citing Psalm 87:7. This image demonstrates the *Collectio's* appreciation of contemporary biblical scholarship.³⁶ As Christ is lifted up (John 11:52) in death, the scattered children of Zion are gathered to their mother-city in a new faith community. But images of old lead, through Mary, to enduring images that inspire

³⁴The ICEL translation, "enrich the world with her own witness of living faith," has certainly failed to capture, if nothing else, the structural unity of the Preface: *antiquas* (=Eve, Mother Zion)—*nova* (=Church).

³⁵*LG*, no. 56.

³⁶A recent popular presentation of the Mother Zion theme is found in George T. Montague, S.M., *Our Father, Our Mother: Mary and the Faces of God. Biblical and Pastoral Reflections* (Steubenville: Franciscan University Press, 1990), 113-136.

the fidelity of the new faith community. Virgin Eve and Mother Zion are present at the cross in the Virgin Mother of Jesus, and the Church contemplates the eminent and singular exemplar of its own life as virgin and mother:

The Church indeed contemplating [Mary's] hidden sanctity, imitating her charity and faithfully fulfilling the Father's will, by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By preaching and baptism she brings forth sons, who are conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of God, to a new and immortal life. She herself is a virgin, who keeps in its entirety and purity the faith she pledged to her spouse. Imitating the mother of her Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she keeps intact faith, firm hope and sincere charity.³⁷

The Preface sees in Mary also the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ that maintains faith with her Spouse in the midst of peril and persecution, a type of passion and cross. In *Marialis cultus*, Paul VI describes the "Virgin presenting offerings" as a model of the Church in worship and speaks of the Bride of Christ in relation to the sacrifice of the cross:

[The] union of the Mother and the Son in the work of redemption reaches its climax on Calvary, where Christ "offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God" (Hebrews 9:14) and where Mary stood by the Cross (see John 19:25). . . . To perpetuate down the centuries the Sacrifice of the Cross, the divine Saviour instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of his death and Resurrection, and entrusted it to his Spouse the Church, which . . . calls the faithful together to celebrate the Passover of the Lord until he comes again. This the Church does in union with the saints in heaven and in particular with the Blessed Virgin, whose burning charity and unshakeable faith she imitates.³⁸

The Church does not just pray in imitation of Mary, it will

³⁷*LG*, no. 64.

³⁸*MC*, no. 20.

also share in the sufferings of the cross. In the mysterious plan of God, Christians fill out the passion of Christ in their sufferings (Communion Antiphon and Opening Prayer). For Paul, all is borne for the sake of Christ's body, the Church. The Christian community at prayer realizes, too, that any human suffering in the members of Christ is worthy of loving participation: imitating the Blessed Virgin, it prays for the grace to bring love and comfort to all who are in distress (Opening Prayer).³⁹ The realities of life demand an imitation of Mary that directly touches the lives of men and women who suffer. The fidelity and love of the Bride must be real and personal, as was the active participation of Mary in the passion of her Son. Such concern and compassion will serve to build up in unity the new people gathered by the cross of Christ.

In the Prayer After Communion, the community broadens its vision and prays for all nations. The Spirit merited by Christ in his priestly sacrifice, and poured out upon the Church, must be given to all nations if they are to be drawn to the cross of Christ—and the woman who stands near it.⁴⁰

Do Whatever He Tells You, from the Servite Order that is responsible for this formulary, summarizes many of its themes and its spirituality:

Others [founders and foundresses of religious congregations] proposed to concentrate on living their lives in terms of the event of the Hour of the Paschal Mystery—the event of pain and glory, of death and life—in which important prophecies seem to find fulfillment in Mary: the prophecy of the Woman

³⁹The Servite Constitutions inspired this text: "In our commitment of service, the figure of Mary at the foot of the cross shall be our model. Since the Son of Man is still being crucified in his brothers and sisters, we, Servants of his mother, wish to be with her at the foot of those countless crosses in order to bring comfort and redemptive cooperation." *Rule of Saint Augustine and Constitutions of the Order of Friar Servants of Mary* (Chicago: Servite Provincialate, 1988), art. 319.

⁴⁰The translation has made *quem . . . Christus . . . promeruit* refer to *universas gentes* rather than to *Paracletus Spiritus*.

(see Genesis 3:15) who, as she stood by the tree of life, was to be called to work with the new Man for the salvation of the human race, and the prophecies relating to the Daughter of Zion, mother of all peoples (see Zephaniah 3:14; Zechariah 2:14 and 9:9; Psalm 87:5-7). Mary personifies the Daughter of Zion, standing by the side of Christ who draws all peoples to himself as he is uplifted on the Cross (see John 12:32), and gathers together in the Church (see John 10:16) "all the children of God who are scattered abroad" (John 11:52). In that Hour, the necessary condition for becoming a true disciple of Christ is fulfilled also for Mary: to follow him even to the Cross (see Luke 9:23). By contemplating the mystery of Calvary, these founders and foundresses discovered the means of exhorting their sons and daughters to be present as Mary was at the crosses of their brothers and sisters in whom the passion of Christ is extended.⁴¹

As rich as this formulary is, at least two questions arise with regard to its content. First, should there not be some specific mention made of the Resurrection as the necessary fulfillment of all that is said of the passion and death. Secondly, the image of the new Eve is problematic, at least in our American society that is so sensitive to the use or abuse of feminine images. Words have impact upon those who hear them and the "new Eve" leads many to questions about the "old Eve" and the use that has been made of that image in the Christian tradition. With all due respect to the patristic tradition and *Lumen gentium*, this image in a Mass formulary may be more divisive than enlightening or inspirational.⁴²

Some traditional forms of devotion to the Sorrowful Mother, or Mary at the Cross, have at times been criticized. Certainly, at particular times and places there have been

⁴¹208th General Chapter OSM, *Do Whatever He Tells You*, no. 34, pp. 41-42.

⁴²The most recent reference I have seen to the "new Eve-old Eve" question is in Shawn Madigan, S.S.J., "Do Marian Festivals Image 'That Which the Church Hopes to Be?'" *Worship* 65 (1991): 195.

exaggerations such as Paul VI described as "sterile and ephemeral sentimentality, so alien to the spirit of the Gospel that demands persevering and practical action."⁴³ This formulary clearly demonstrates that looking to Mary at the cross is a "fitting occasion for reliving a decisive moment in the history of salvation."⁴⁴ Drawing upon Scripture and tradition, the texts present a dynamic vision of both Mary and the Church: a commitment to Christ and to his suffering members joined to a universal vision of Redemption. The judicious use of these texts in the Lenten journey of the faithful can surely contribute to a personal and communal deepening not only of Marian devotion but also of an awareness of the social dimension of penance and conversion.⁴⁵

EASTER SEASON

The *Collectio's* introduction to the Easter Season states that during the fifty days of Easter the liturgy commemorates Mary filled with joy at the Resurrection of her son and awaiting in prayer the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. During this season the Church looks to her also as a model for the Church's maternity, expressed in Christian initiation, and for its commitment to missionary activity and evangelization. Four formularies are presented. The first (no. 15, The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Resurrection of the Lord) recalls the joy of Mary while the third (no. 17, Our Lady of the Cenacle) focuses on her presence among the disciples before Pentecost. Number 16 (Holy Mary, Fountain of Light and Life) relates the Blessed Virgin to the celebration of the Easter sacraments, and the final formulary (no. 18, The Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles) describes her as inspiration and model for the evangelizing Church.

⁴³MC, no. 38. For a brief description of what has been said and a very helpful reinterpretation, see Louis J. Cameli, "Mary, Mother of Sorrows: the Mystery of Comfort and Hope," *Chicago Studies* 27 (1988): 3-15.

⁴⁴MC, no. 7.

⁴⁵SC, no. 110.

18. *The Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles*

The final formulary for the Easter Season moves beyond the Cenacle to the Church's mission to the world. Mary is honored as Queen of Apostles—the mother of Jesus who prayed with the apostolic community is here presented as inspiration for all those who follow in the footsteps of the Spirit-filled apostles in the proclamation of the Gospel. On the fiftieth day of Easter the Church celebrates the descent of the Spirit, the fulfillment of the Paschal Mystery, and the beginning of the Church's life and work of evangelization. During the Easter Season, as it prepares for the celebration of Pentecost, the Eucharistic assembly looks to the mother of Jesus, present for the new outpouring of the Spirit that had already overshadowed her at the Annunciation.

In 1975, Pope Paul VI spoke of Mary on Pentecost in the context of evangelization:

On the morning of Pentecost she presided in prayer at the beginning of evangelization under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. May she shine forth as the star of that constantly renewed evangelization which the Church, in obedience to the command of the Lord, must promote and accomplish. . . .⁴⁶

This "star of evangelization" has long been honored by groups within the Church as Queen of Apostles (the introduction mentions the Pallotines, the PIME missionaries, and the family of congregations founded by Don Alberione). This formulary, except for the Preface, comes from the Pallotines.

If Queen of Apostles is a traditional title, so, too, are the prayers of the formulary borrowed for the *Collectio*. Mary is described as being at prayer with the disciples/apostles in the Cenacle when they receive the Holy Spirit (Entrance Antiphon and Opening Prayer) and she is called Queen of Apostles (Prayer After Communion). Through her interces-

⁴⁶Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World *Evangelii nuntiandi*, no. 82, in *Vatican Council II: More Postconciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Vatican Collection, vol. 2; Northport, N.Y.: Costello Publishing Co., 1982), 757.

sion, the Church prays that it be faithful in serving the divine majesty and in bringing glory to God's name through word and action (Opening Prayer). The community prays that the Church increase in number (spread throughout the world) and show forth a harvest of holiness and virtue (Prayer Over the Gifts). Finally, after Communion, the request is to continue on the way of salvation by doing the will of God and serving others. One could easily remove the Marian references and have a respectable Mass formulary for evangelization or for missionaries.

It is the new Preface that characterizes this formulary and demonstrates an innovative approach to a traditional theme. More than simply a witness or participant in the event of Pentecost, Mary is here proclaimed as Queen of Apostles because of her own "work of evangelization." The Spirit poured out so dramatically in the Acts account was already active in the life of the Blessed Virgin. The Vatican Council touched upon Mary's relation to the Spirit when speaking of the Church and its mission:

... we see the apostles before the day of Pentecost, "persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14), and we also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation.⁴⁷

... Christ sent the Holy Spirit from the Father to exercise inwardly his saving influence, and to promote the spread of the Church. Without doubt, the Holy Spirit was at work in the world before Christ was glorified. On the day of Pentecost, however, he came down on the disciples that he might remain with them forever ... The "acts of the apostles" began with Pentecost, just as Christ was conceived in the Virgin Mary with the coming of the Holy Spirit and was moved to begin his ministry by the descent of the same Holy Spirit, who came down upon him while he was praying.⁴⁸

⁴⁷LG, no. 59.

⁴⁸Vatican II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 4.

If the "acts of the apostles" began with Pentecost, what "acts of Mary" flowed from her experience of the Spirit's power? In the words of the Preface, "she was the first to proclaim Christ, even before the Apostles." Specifically, at the Visitation Mary, led by the Spirit, brought Christ to John, for his sanctification and joy. Only later would Peter and the others, moved by the same Spirit, announce the Gospel to the nations for their salvation and life.

The Communion Antiphon, referring to Luke 11:27, proclaims: "Blessed is the womb of the Virgin Mary which bore the Son of the eternal Father." But Mary had been declared "blessed" much earlier by Elizabeth: "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:42). The leap backwards from Pentecost to the Visitation is explained in *Do Whatever He Tells You*:

It has often been pointed out that the same evangelist, Luke, wrote the *Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus* (the first two chapters of the third gospel) which is a fundamental document on the Word made flesh and also the *Gospel of the Infancy of the Church* (Acts of the Apostles) which is a precise description of the spreading of the Word (see Acts 6:7): from Jerusalem, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth. It seems that Luke saw an important parallelism between the events of the Annunciation-Visitation (third gospel) and those of Pentecost and the spreading of the Word (Book of Acts): the Word-Spirit first received in private (by Mary in the house in Nazareth and by the apostolic community in the "upstairs room" of a house in Jerusalem) must be proclaimed, by the power of the Spirit, well beyond domestic walls: to all generations without limits of time or space.

For her part, Mary—upon whom the Holy Spirit, the power of the Most High (see Luke 1:35), had descended—felt the need to proclaim the "great things" the Almighty had done for her; she left the house in Nazareth and went into the hill country to a town of Judah (see Luke 1:39). On the day of Pentecost, the apostles upon whom the "power from on high" (Luke 24:49) had descended and who were "filled with the Holy Spirit" began to speak in foreign tongues (Acts 2:4) to "devout Jews of every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5); they left their seclu-

sion and strengthened by the Spirit announced openly the work of salvation accomplished by God in the death and resurrection of Christ (see Acts 1:14-39; 4:31).⁴⁹

Mary was the first person to evangelize.⁵⁰ But because she was guided by the same Spirit and proclaimed the incarnate Word whom she bore in her womb, her message and mission are intimately bound to those of the later apostles and the Church throughout the ages.

Mary and the Church are at the service of the Word. For both, "the works of God are to be made known with due honour (Tobit 12:11). But here again, the Virgin Mother Mary preceded the Virgin Mother Church: the faith, openness to the Spirit, gratitude, courage and concerned solicitude of the first will be examples for the latter, committed until the end of time to making known to all nations "God's manifold wisdom . . . in accord with his age-old purpose, carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10-11).⁵¹

The Queen of Apostles—in the Cenacle and in the evangelizing Church—is active still in the lives of those involved in the proclamation of the Word. She inspires, cherishes and sustains them by her prayer (Preface). The woman who reached out to Elizabeth with sincere concern is certainly to be trusted in her concern for those who follow her path in evangelization: "By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her son, who still journey on earth surrounded

⁴⁹208th General Chapter OSM, *Do Whatever He Tells You*, no. 48, pp. 55-56.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, no. 45, p. 52.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, no. 48, p. 56. See also, no. 34, p. 40, in reference to the founders and foundresses of religious congregations: "Others were attracted by the salvific content of the episode of the Visitation in which Mary, the new ark of the New Covenant, brought the Saviour to John and proclaimed the great things that God had done for her and for Israel. Accordingly, these founders and foundresses desired to make themselves Christ-bearers to all peoples and through their lives extend the song of thanksgiving and liberation."

by dangers and difficulties. . . ."⁵² She who followed her son throughout his ministry and stood by his cross is surely present in the Church which "urged on by the Spirit of Christ, must walk the road Christ himself walked, a way of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice even to death. . . ."⁵³

The value of this Mass formulary ultimately rests, however, on the new Preface text and its inclusion of the Visitation event in prayer concerning the evangelizing role of the Church. If that imagery is valid, then we have a text which can only enrich the community's prayer and self-reflection. The same Visitation image, however, leads to one question regarding this formulary: Why is the Gospel that of Mary at the cross (John 19:25-27)? One can only hazard a guess that the editors intended to include the personal bond that exists between the mother of Jesus and his disciples/apostles. In light of the antiphons and prayers, especially the Preface, the choice seems forced and unnecessary. Much more logical and much more effective would have been the gospel of the Visitation itself.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In concluding this presentation of the sacramentary formularies for the Lent and Easter Seasons that are found in the *Collectio Missarum B.V.M.*, I would like to offer a few personal reflections on the content of these particular formularies, their use or misuse, and a challenge to pastoral practice that seems to me to arise from the promulgation of this "supplement" to the Roman Missal.

With regard to content, even a casual reading of the *Collectio* convinces a reader that we now have at our disposition a wealth of previously unavailable material for reflection, study and prayer. Forty-six complete formularies have

⁵²*LG*, no. 62.

⁵³*Ad gentes*, no. 5.

been carefully selected and edited, or composed, to offer the universal Church the benefit of Marian devotion as expressed in local churches and religious congregations. Structured according to the cycles of the liturgical year, the composite offers valuable insights into how the memory of Mary can be creatively included in the life of the faith-community. But in evaluating such a resource it seems important to keep in mind that while it is not meant to be a complete theological treatise (no liturgical book can be that) it does give expression to the Church's doctrine and devotion.⁵⁴ Each formulary offers a glimpse, more or less successfully presented, of the Church's Marian devotion, and, taken together, the formularies of a particular season can present a wider perspective for the celebration of Mary through the presentation of individual themes. The introductions provided for the seasons and individual Masses are especially important for this understanding.

For the seasons of Lent and Easter, on the whole it seems that the *Collectio* has been successful in this regard. With only two explicit Gospel references to draw upon, the editors have brought together elements of tradition, popular devotion and contemporary scholarship in such a way as to offer what for many may be surprising insights which can only be a service to the community at prayer. Themes of the season (discipleship, reconciliation, initiation, evangelization) are presented in a Marian context that can stimulate reflection by all who participate in the liturgy. In most cases, the link between the seasonal and Marian dimensions is rooted securely in recent statements of the magisterium. The results are more often than not refreshing and enlightening.

A question arises, however, with regard to the overall content of the formularies, at least for Lent and Easter. The texts of the Sacramentary tend to gravitate about two poles: Mary, image or exemplar of the Church and the internal spiritual life of the individuals participating in the liturgy. The prefaces, in particular, are often eloquent in their de-

⁵⁴See Sodi, *Con Maria*, 28.

scriptions of the Church and its "lofty type."⁵⁵ Image builds on image, and the effect can be powerful. The other prayers are humbler in their content and speak of the needs of individuals who seek inspiration, wisdom, comfort, courage, and so forth. Certainly, these are also necessary components of a community's prayer together. But only with difficulty does one find prayer texts that move beyond the theological image or personal need and relate the mystery being celebrated to the realities outside the walls of sacred space. Especially, for these two seasons, what seems to be lacking is the external and social dimension of conversion⁵⁶ and life in the Spirit. Opportunities were there in the topics chosen for individual formularies (e.g., Mary at the Cross, the Commending of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Reconciliation, Queen of Apostles), but what comes across is a tone of rather individualistic piety.

The Central Committee for the Celebration of the Marian Year published a circular letter, on 21 November 1987, that spoke directly to Marian devotion and the option for the poor; this type of reflection might have contributed an added (and necessary?) dimension to at least these two parts of the *Collectio*.

Lent, a time favorable for salvation, a sacramental sign of conversion and the community's baptismal and penitential journey, is also a special time to remember "the alien, the orphan and the widow." The Church's tradition is unanimous in stressing the very dynamic and close bonds that exist among listening to the Word, liturgical celebration, fasting and works of charity. For this reason, Mary standing at the cross becomes for every Christian who journeys toward the joy of Easter an image that evokes an active and real presence near the countless crosses of others.

Easter time concludes with Pentecost, the time of the Church's mission and the time for a complete appreciation of the redemption from which springs the Church's intense life of charity. The

⁵⁵LG, no. 65.

⁵⁶See SC, no. 110.

proclamation of salvation is irrevocably tied to care for the poor and the needy. The Virgin of Pentecost stands at the center of the Church and is a welcome stimulus to Christians strong in the Spirit to enter personally into every type of suffering.

The commitment to active charity finds in the contemplation of Mary an inspiration and an example to follow. The Mother of Jesus invites us to reconsider both our spiritual and corporal works of mercy. In the visitation to Elizabeth, at the wedding feast of Cana, at the foot of the Cross, and in the Cenacle, Mary is never distant from the needy, but rather she opens her heart to them and offers them what she has first received from God.⁵⁷

If this external, social dimension is not highly developed in the sacramentary texts, it will be the responsibility of the presider and/or homilist to make the homily, intercessions, and so on reflect not only theological precision and trust in Mary's intercessory role,⁵⁸ but also the conviction that: "In her life the Virgin has been a model of that motherly love with which all who join in the Church's apostolic mission for the regeneration of mankind should be animated."⁵⁹

There is a problem, though. The *Collectio* is difficult to use if a community follows the directives of the liturgical calendar; for Lent and Easter it is almost always prohibited. The *Collectio* was originally intended for use in Marian shrines, and in other situations only on specific occasions (e.g., Saturdays during the year). Shrines are few and pilgrimages rare, at least in the United States. Celebration of Saturday memorials in accord with current law excludes the use of many of the formularies (Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter/Pentecost). What do we do with beautiful prayers that cannot be used?

Some would simply pray for a change in the norms, and

⁵⁷Central Committee for the Celebration of the Marian Year, "Terza lettera circolare," *Marianum* 49 (1987): 30-31. See also the entire third section (especially nos. 72-102, pages 77-103) of 208th General Chapter OSM, *Do Whatever He Tells You*.

⁵⁸See LG, no. 62.

⁵⁹LG, no. 65.

some flexibility could be envisioned that would respect the integrity of the liturgical year and safeguard against the danger of an exaggerated devotionism. But prayer takes time, and Rome is difficult to move. Certainly, individual communities will find themselves at times in situations where pastoral need would allow the selection of one of these formularies rather than that of the day, but those times should be few. Even then, however, the impact of the *Collectio* would be limited to a very small group of faithful participating in the daily Eucharist.

I would suggest that for many, if not most, ministers of Word and sacrament the *Collectio*, even when used as frequently as possible, is best approached as a rich and stimulating resource that may serve to enhance non-Eucharistic celebrations and perhaps challenge many of us to examine the place Mary has, not just in our theology, but in our pastoral practice. In religious communities and parishes where practices of traditional Marian devotion are already in use, the *Collectio* offers a variety of themes and prayer texts that could reduce the monotony and repetitiveness of the prayers (and even the homily or reflection) and expand the horizon of the good people for whom this devotion is so important. With quality prayers and carefully selected readings, the *Collectio* begs to be adapted for the non-Eucharistic moments of prayer for particular groups.

The possibilities are limited only by the vision of the leaders of any faith-community. This is perhaps the challenge presented by the *Collectio*. Principles for sound Marian devotion have been given to us not only in the Introduction to this volume but also in other authoritative texts.⁶⁰ Are our parishes and religious communities willing to examine seriously the rhythm of their communal prayer and liturgy and ask if "the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed

⁶⁰*Marialis cultus* is obvious. Not as well known, perhaps, is a document from the Congregation for Divine Worship: "Orientamenti e proposte per la celebrazione dell'Anno Mariano"; see *Marianum* 48 (1986): 483-586.

Virgin is generously fostered"? The very existence of the *Collectio* shows that much more can be done and is possible.

In a similar way, those involved in the ministry of education might seriously consider whether the wealth of material available in the *Collectio* does not invite a re-examination of course content. Surely catechetical instruction can be enlightened through the prudent use of Mary as model and example in ways that, perhaps, our catechists had not imagined. In the course of theological studies, the formularies could illustrate or enrich any number of subjects. Again, the question is one of vision rather than material.

With regard to the Lent and Easter seasons, the *Collectio* makes clear that there are many aspects of Mary's participation in the Paschal Mystery that may fruitfully be presented to the Christian community. The celebration of "Marian Masses" may not be possible, but the *Collectio* does focus attention on the lack of beneficial reference to Mary in normal pastoral practice. I would only repeat two suggestions already made by my own religious community, one suggesting something new in the celebration of the Triduum, the other cautioning prudence in dealing with the tradition of May devotions.

The first is that in the Roman liturgy of the Easter Triduum explicit reference be made in a discreet and prudent way to one of its intrinsic elements: the participation of the mother in the passion of her son. . . .

The second proposal is that the particular character of the Fifty Days of Easter be maintained. In the liturgical ordering of the days that fall between the two outpourings of the Spirit (see John 20:19-23 and Acts 2:1-12), this is the time of the Paraclete. . . . During Easter Time, Marian devotion must not even indirectly serve as an occasion to distract the attention of the faithful from these saving mysteries. It must, if anything, demonstrate the power of Christ's Resurrection and the gift of the Spirit that are operative in Mary.⁶¹

⁶¹208th General Chapter OSM, *Do Whatever He Tells You*, no. 56, pp. 65-66. It should be noted that the Servite Proper already includes an approved commemoration of Mary in the context of the Liturgy of the Pas-

Whatever use our local communities and churches make of the *Collectio*, in whatever season and in whatever way, the final goal is to provide "an opportunity for growing in divine grace, and this is the ultimate aim of all pastoral activity."⁶² As laity, religious and clergy, ministers and teachers, we seek to lead others along our own path of discipleship toward the glory of the Risen Lord. On that journey we look to the "sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God."⁶³ In Eucharist and in devotion, in teaching and preaching, we look for ways to present to others the victory of God's grace in the woman who "shows forth the victory of hope over anguish, of fellowship over solitude, of peace over anxiety, of joy and beauty over boredom and disgust, of eternal visions over earthly ones, of life over death."⁶⁴

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sion and the Easter Vigil. See *Proprium Missarum Ordinis Servorum Mariae*, I (Rome: Curia Generalis OSM, 1972), 28-32. With this precedent, it would seem that others could develop similar texts; see Castellano Cervera, "Vergine Maria," 1568.

⁶²MC, no. 57.

⁶³LG, no. 68.

⁶⁴MC, no. 57.