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### Memory and Mission: A Theological Reflection on Mary in the Paschal Mysteries

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## MEMORY AND MISSION: A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON MARY IN THE PASCHAL MYSTERIES

According to the First Vatican Council it is the proper task of theologians to inquire about the connection of the mysteries with one another and with our ultimate end.<sup>1</sup> There ought to be no Christology without the doctrine of the Trinity, no divorce between theology and holiness, and no opposition between Mary and Peter. And as far as Eastern liturgical practice goes, the Church senses that the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection are so intimately related that according to a tradition going back to Tertullian our Lord died on the very same day he was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin.<sup>2</sup> It would therefore appear that one of the major tasks of this theological reflection is to connect: to connect the Temple Presentation with Golgotha and the Upper Room, the Annunciation with

<sup>1</sup>"... e mysteriorum ipsorum nexu inter se et cum fine hominis ultimo" (De rationis parte in excolenda veritate supernaturali), in: Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (1958), 1796.

<sup>2</sup>The theological reflection here presented owes much to Hans Urs von Balthasar and his interpreter John Saward in *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1990, 186 pp.). Saward's masterly and delightful rendering of some of Balthasar's most arduous explorations in theology will greatly contribute to the reception of his work in the Anglo-Saxon world. The author of the following pages, himself a student of Balthasar, has been literally "informed," both by the thoughts of the master and the language of the interpreter, up to a point where the clear distinction between "mine" and "thine" becomes difficult. However, the use made of some of Balthasar's concepts and figures of speech remains personal and is proper to the context chosen by the author. For the present context, see Saward, *loc. cit.*, p. xv.

Pentecost, Cana with Calvary, and, above all, to connect Mary with her Son and with the Church.

# I. THE UNIDIMENSIONAL FIGURE OF MARY

Simple as this may seem, interweaving the mysteries and interconnecting the persons acting therein does not come easily and naturally to some of today's theology, to marian theology in particular. Although the heat of recent christological debate and controversy has since abated, we still vividly remember what little room it had to spare for Mary.<sup>3</sup> Only recently did Kaspar Walter, in a self-critical passage of his letter to a confrère about the Virgin Birth, confess: "Had I ever to rewrite a Christology, most certainly would I devote to Mariology not only a lengthy footnote but a special chapter."<sup>4</sup> However, the intensification of the christological focus in contemporary theology is not about to give way to a reassessment of Mary's role in the mystery of Christ. In much of contemporary theological thinking the decisive interaction between God and humanity is localized in Christ, rather than in Mary's Yes, and Jesus, rather than Mary, takes on the role as the prototype of the redeemed.

"As a result," concludes Elizabeth Johnson, "attribution is now being made to Jesus of what was formerly given to Mary and her role in redemption, particularly the giving of a

<sup>3</sup>Concerning Mary's place in recent christological works, see James T. O'Connor, "Modern Christologies and Mary's Place Therein," *Marian Studies* 32 (1981): 51-75; A. Amato, "Rassegna delle principali Cristologie contemporanee nelle loro indicazioni mariologiche: il mondo cattolico," in *Il Salvatore e la Vergine-Madre. Atti del 30° Simposio Mariologico Internazionale 1980* (Rome, 1981), 9-112; Theodore Koehler "Qui est Marie-Théotokos, dans la doctrine christologique et ses difficultés actuelles?" *Etudes mariales* 38 (1981): 11-36; J.-M. Alonso, "Maternidad divina y cristologías recientes," *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 30, 1 (1980): 7-68; Jean Galot, "Marie dans la nouvelle théologie hollandaise," *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, loc. cit., 69-83.

<sup>4</sup>*Communio* (German version) 6 (1987): 535 (translation by the author).

free human response to God's will."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, it has become increasingly difficult to locate Mary in the context of contemporary ecclesiology, in part because she has been eclipsed by the figure of the "People of God," but largely because ecclesiology still restlessly oscillates between a democratic-institutional and a pneumatic-individualistic model.<sup>6</sup> It has not yet overcome institutional criticism as formulated by such diametrically opposed sociologists as Habermas and Luhmann, and it painfully labors over the just and rightful assimilation of the Holy Spirit into its structural concept. As a consequence, Mary either remains an *ou-topos* (a non-entity) for both these theological disciplines or she is promoted to a free-floating and uni-dimensional entity whose task it is to symbolize a variety of Christian values for both individuals and communities. Where this happens Mariology will have failed to communicate much of the fruit of its labor over the past thirty years, amassed through exegetical and historical studies as well as in theological reflection.

Further, should Christology and ecclesiology successfully ignore the contribution of Mariology on the role and place of Mary in salvation history, then we might rightfully conclude that a serious credibility gap has developed between the various theological domains. Worse still, we might infer that in fact the theological reception of Chapter VIII of *Lu-*

<sup>5</sup>E. A. Johnson, "Mary and Contemporary Christology," *Eglise et Théologie* 15 (1984): 178.

<sup>6</sup>This situation is highlighted among others in Medard Kehl, *Kirche als Institution* (Frankfurt: Knecht, 1976), esp. 19-67; D. L. Carmody and J. T. Carmody, *Bonded in Christ's Love: An Introduction to Ecclesiology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 196 ff.; see also, for the assessment of contemporary ecclesiology, W. Löser, "Ekklesiologie," in *Lexikon der katholischen Dogmatik*, ed. W. Beinert (Freiburg: Herder, 1987), 116-117. In a different context, see A. Antón, "L'ecclesiologia del dopo-concilio. Acquisizioni e problemi," in *La teologia. Aspetti innovatori e loro incidenza sulla ecclesiologia e sulla mariologia* (Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Teologi dogmatici della Congregazione Salesiana, Roma 3-7 gennaio 1988), ed. D. Valentini (Rome, 1989), 173 ss.

*men Gentium* has not yet occurred. Ultimately, it may point to an even more momentous deficit, to a lack of unity and complementarity between Christology and ecclesiology themselves. For since it is irrefutable that we can grasp the historical reality of Christ only through the early Church's confessions of faith, "we cannot wrench Christ loose from the Church, nor can we dismantle the Church to get to Christ."<sup>7</sup>

Some of the more prominent contemporary images of Mary are indeed built on isolated marian thinking and truncated sources. Greeley's "Mary Myth"<sup>8</sup> may be regarded as passé, Cox's "Archetypal Expression of Religious Reality"<sup>9</sup> may be nothing more than a piece of unusual memorabilia brought home from an exotic trip, and Warner's cathartic anamnesis of Mary<sup>10</sup> may be the repressed nightmare of many a mariologist, but they nonetheless all share and exploit what they ultimately combat. They all—to some degree—cut Mary loose from the original memory which gave birth to her image and still constitutes the genetic code of her tradition. In doing so, they radicalize psychological or

<sup>7</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Truth Is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 11.

<sup>8</sup>Andrew Greeley's *The Mary Myth: On the Femininity of God* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977) has a seismographic importance. It registers the possible convergence of various strands in contemporary religious sentiment: new dimensions in "God-talk," the growing importance of feminist theology, the impact of Jungian psychology and comparative studies on spirituality, and the "return to Mary." Since much of mariology is the result of studies into the history of devotion to Mary, the "epochal significance" of this book should not be lightly dismissed.

<sup>9</sup>Harvey Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit: The Use and Misuse of People's Religion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), esp. 169-196, advocates a near religious fundamentalism epitomized in Mary: "Mary allows us to plumb again, in ourselves and in our cultural unconscious . . ." (183). Mary is "myth par excellence."

<sup>10</sup>Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Knopf, 1976). Here, Mary is "the instrument of a dynamic argument from the Catholic Church about the structure of society, presented as a God-given code. The argument changes, according to contingencies" (338).

cultural experience or make Mary into a devious and multifaceted instrument of ecclesiastical domination. She advances to "Religious Archetype," "Feminine Dimension of God" or "Unattainable Ideal," and thereby loses not only her historical dimension and existential density but also her place in the "Christological Constellation"<sup>11</sup> which is at the heart of the Church, and only there.

Contemporary mainstream theologizing strongly upholds the religious intuition of the "immeasurable dignity of victims" and develops praxis-oriented strategies based on hermeneutical prerequisites dealing with categories such as memory, narrative and solidarity<sup>12</sup> to remedy victimization in the realm of social and anthropological justice.<sup>13</sup> We do not question their appropriateness and practical functioning in a comprehensively conceived theology of Mary, but have some doubts about the possibility of restructuring Mariology as a whole within the epistemological horizon of praxis-oriented theology.<sup>14</sup> To declare Mary a poor woman, member of her people, outsider, and both victim of violence and

<sup>11</sup>An expression coined by Hans Urs von Balthasar to designate Jesus' relation not only to the Father and the Holy Spirit, but also his place within a constellation of fellow human beings, of which the Baptist, Mary and the Twelve are the theologically most significant ones. See, e.g., Balthasar's *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church* (trans. A. Emery; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 136-145.

<sup>12</sup>These categories are commonly, although not always explicitly, used in praxis-oriented theology, critical theory and most versions of liberation theology. See for background, e.g., Johannes B. Metz, *Faith in History and Society* (trans. Davis Smith; New York: Seabury Press, 1980); Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (trans. Robert Barr; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983); Rebecca Chopp, *The Praxis of Suffering: An Interpretation of Liberation and Political Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1986); and *The Crisis of Religious Language* (Concilium, vol. 85), J. B. Metz and J. P. Jossua, eds. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1973).

<sup>13</sup>If, traditionally, social justice is the object of liberation theology, so "anthropological justice" represents the focus of feminist theology.

<sup>14</sup>Allusion is made to Elizabeth A. Johnson's inspiring reconstructivist project for marian theology; see her "Reconstructing a Theology of Mary," in *Mary, Woman of Nazareth: Biblical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. Doris Donnelly (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 69-92.

prophet of justice seems to be a legitimate enough answer to the well-known question: "What would it mean for women's and oppressed people's *experience* to shape theology and religion in the future?"<sup>15</sup> But is contemporary experience a solid enough foundation to adequately represent *memory* which is not only the memory of concrete suffering, injustice and violence in *favelas* and women's covens, but, first of all and foundationally, the *memoria passionis, mortis, et resurrectionis Jesu Christi*? Likewise, the category of *solidarity* has credibility only if it is truly universal, and that means the solidarity of all in history as well as in geography. Again, the truly *narrative* approach to the Gospel message would seem to involve the recounting and sharing not only of the whole story but also the different ways of self-involvement of their authors in the various related traditions. We may read the story of Mary in the spirit of the Magnificat, but it would amount to an act of brutal reductionism if we were to make her the prisoner of her own song.

In short, there exists a certain danger, only thirty years after the Second Vatican Council, that marian theology in some of its most vocal and visible expressions falls victim to isolationism and reductionism. The development we are talking about seems to take on a twofold expression: on the one hand Mary is refurbished as a quasi-metaphysical category to explain and visualize abstract realities such as the nature of God and religion; on the other hand the Mary-Image is put to good use as an ideological type, both incentive and justification of specific practical interests. In both instances we are dealing with a strong unilateral symbolization of her image and the reduction of her paradoxical and theologically complex reality into a unidimensional scheme. This situation is by no means new; it simply reproduces, with new ciphers and within a changed cultural context, the quasi-metaphysical type of a certain privilege-mariology and the ideological type of certain feminine role models of the past.

<sup>15</sup>Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, eds., *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), 6.

## II. THE LITURGICAL AND BIBLICAL ANTIDOTES

Conversely, the theology of Mary as it is contained in the liturgical framework of the Paschal Cycle seems to offer a powerful antidote against the leveling off and the dismembering of her multifaceted figure. It is not my aim to re-examine what others have done before me. However, I would like to offer some general observations on both liturgy and Scripture in order to bring into better focus the theological intent of this presentation.

D. M. Sartor, who examined Mary's presence in the Liturgy of the Paschal Cycle (Missal and the Book of Hours),<sup>16</sup> deplores the scarce number of references to the Mother and Companion of Christ. However, he says, provided one uses a magnifying lens, it should not be difficult to reach the conclusion: "Comunque qualcosa c'è"<sup>17</sup>—even if it seems to be too little.

He highlights the twofold significance of the Annunciation feast: it is, simultaneously, centered on the Incarnation and totally projected forward towards the Redemption. In the liturgy of the word on Good Friday, Mary's place at the foot of the Cross exemplifies the indissoluble union in the work of Redemption between Mother and Son, from the moment of the virginal conception of Christ to the instant of his death on the Cross.<sup>18</sup> Christ dies on the Cross; his Mother partakes not only in his suffering but also in the motivation and significance Christ intended to give to his violent

<sup>16</sup>Danilo M. Sartor, *Le Feste della Madonna. Note storiche e liturgiche per una celebrazione partecipata* (Bologna: Edizione Dehoniane, 1988, ©1987), 29-35; see also Manuel Garrido Boñano, O.S.B., "Ejemplaridad de la Virgen Maria en las recientes Misas Marianas," *Cistercium* 175 (1988): 465-483, and Matías Augé, "Algunas impresiones sobre las nuevas 'misas marianas,'" *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 38, 3-4 (1988): 376-380.

<sup>17</sup>Sartor, *Le Feste*, 34. The scarce treatment of Mary's place in the liturgy of the Paschal Cycle may be due in part, according to Sartor, to the only recently initiated theological reflection on Mary's role within the Paschal Mysteries, "una vera scoperta del secolo!" in Sartor's words (30).

<sup>18</sup>*Lumen Gentium* (hereafter LG), 57.



death. In a similar way, the liturgy in the Common of the Virgin during the Easter period gives room to Mary's role in the nascent Church: she educates the community's faith in the resurrected Christ and implores the coming of the Spirit for them.<sup>19</sup>

The Liturgy of the Hours during Lent and the Paschal Triduum remembers Mary in the intercessions of Lauds (Saturday) and Vespers (Tuesday and Friday) of the second and fourth weeks, as well as in Lauds (Saturday) and Vespers (Sunday) of the first, third and fifth weeks, stressing thereby the themes of affliction and consolation, pain and joy, sin, forgiveness and salvation. Marian accents found in the texts for the Easter period evidence Mary's role in the new life that flows from the resurrected Christ and in her solidarity with the disciples.

In turn, the *Collectio Missarum* compensates for the lack of cohesive information about Mary in the liturgy of Lent and Easter. Mary, the disciple of the Lord and hearer of the Word, opens the faith-journey toward Easter and the Resurrection; she plays a similar role as the Mother of Reconciliation and leads the faithful, as the one present at the foot of the Cross, even more deeply into the core of the salvation mysteries. The Masses of the Easter cycle present Mary in the Lord's Resurrection and at the Cenacle in expectation of the Spirit. Of special theological significance are the masses which stress the rapport between Mary and the sacraments of Christian initiation and her intimate link with the apostolic Church (Queen of Apostles).<sup>20</sup>

It is interesting to note that the feast of the Presentation of Our Lord (February 2) already anticipates the sorrowful mysteries of our salvation, as recalled in several instances by *Marialis Cultus* which stresses the union between Mary and the Suffering Servant of Yahweh;<sup>21</sup> her character as "Vir-

<sup>19</sup>LG 59.

<sup>20</sup>Sartor, *Le Feste*, 29 ff.

<sup>21</sup>*Marialis Cultus* (hereafter MC), 7.

go offerens," pondering the continuity of Christ's fundamental offering of himself to the Father for our salvation;<sup>22</sup> and the link between Simeon's prophecy and the mystery of Calvary. Finally, *Marialis Cultus* offers an analysis recalling the traditional union of Mary's Heart with the will of Jesus, victim and priest.<sup>23</sup>

### 1. The Liturgical Antidote

More important still than the specific accents about Mary's presence in the liturgy of the Paschal Cycle is the very significance of liturgy itself for the theological understanding of Mary and her place in the *memoria Christi*. For liturgy is religious ritual and, as such, bridges the time-and-space gap between the worshippers and the object/subject of their worship. It remembers past actions and their authors, not only for the sake of knowledge and the purpose of imitation, but primarily to encounter them as persons in the present. "They (liturgical rituals) are behavioral ways of knowing and encountering persons in order to remember them and to become involved with them."<sup>24</sup> Ritualized memory becomes the focal point of time and eternity, theology (knowledge *about* God) and spirituality (knowledge *of* God), action and contemplation. Christian ritual memory is a sure cure against unilateral symbolization, since its primary importance remains the proclamation of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. We know that Christian ritual developed very early, by the last third of the first century taking shape as a new and genuine ritual memory and prompting the composition of the Gospels.<sup>25</sup> But, contrary to Roland Barthes, it does not transform history into nature. If

<sup>22</sup>MC 20.

<sup>23</sup>Th. Koehler, "Pour le présenter au temple (Lc 2, 22)," in *Virgo Fidelis: Miscellanea di studi mariani in onore di Don Domenico Bertetto, S.D.B.*, ed. F. Bergamelli and Mario Cimosà (Rome: CLV—Edizioni liturgiche, 1988), 520.

<sup>24</sup>Walter T. Brennan, *The Sacred Memory of Mary* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 78.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 79.

it is true that in myth things lose the memory that they were created in history by human beings, this does not, or should not, affect Christian ritual memory.<sup>26</sup> From the very beginnings of Christian tradition, the central memory of our salvation and its personal constellation (Christ and the main "actors" around him) were constantly retrieved in an ongoing and living dialogue as well as reactualized through the bond of love in the Eucharist and through Diakonia. The *Christi memoria* becomes history within history, but, above all, personal presence in the present. If, therefore, the *memoria passionis, mortis et resurrectionis Jesu Christi* is and remains central to the very self-understanding and identity of Christian existence, then it should come as no surprise that theological reflection about Mary is entirely dependent on and oriented toward it.

## 2. The Biblical Antidote

Mary's presence and progressive emergence in the New Testament texts seem to confirm this. In the missionary teachings in Acts, there is no reference to her or the infant Jesus. Mary enters the collective memory as *the* woman in Galatians;<sup>27</sup> she is progressively identified, though in a passing way, as Mary, the mother of Jesus in Mark<sup>28</sup> and is given a marginal role in Matthew's infancy episode.<sup>29</sup> The later and more elaborate memories of the faith communities of Luke and John situate Mary at the main articulation of the unfolding Christ Mysteries, as their prayerful recipient and at the same time as an actor with a specific role in the sacred drama. The Lukan account of Mary is predominantly geared toward the portrait of her person and the story of her vocation, whereas John stresses more forcefully Mary's role within the context of the *memoria passionis, mortis et resurrectionis*. Both insist, but John more than Luke, on the univer-

<sup>26</sup>Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, 335.

<sup>27</sup>Gal. 4,4.

<sup>28</sup>Mk. 3,31f.; 6,3.

<sup>29</sup>Mt. 1-2; 12,46-50.

sal character of Mary's person and, therefore, on her function as a role model and active agent in the building up of the faith of the first Christian communities. And it is not because Mary is an archetypal figure for all times<sup>30</sup> that she should be deprived of her roots in the historical event that led to her theological meaning. The absence of biographical details does not strip Mary of her theological authenticity; rather, this lack contributes *e contrario* to a more intense focus on the specific points of identification with her as the universal model from early times until now. The question has been raised whether it be advisable or not to postulate Mary's role in the economy of redemption, based on "the highly symbolic nature of the Johannine crucifixion texts."<sup>31</sup> It would seem that the clean-cut clustering of history=reality and symbol=myth inevitably leads to an artificial dichotomy between fact and meaning. Pure factuality is no less than a mirage that dissolves forever in the individual or collective valuative perception of persons, events and deeds. However symbolic the Johannine text may be, and all other Gospel texts to various degrees, they still reflect the two dimensions of Christian memory, namely (1) the knowledge of the economy of redemption and (2) its translation of the living experience. This leads us to the conclusion that, once again, the causal nexus between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* has to be readily reaffirmed if we are not to erode, through unilateral symbolization or theological empiricism, the very foundations of theological and mariological reflection.

It seems, therefore, indispensable that a contemporary theological reflection about Mary should be grounded in the reflection of the Church about herself, about her origins and her tradition. In this sense, the Lenten/Paschal Cycle presents a happy continuation of the Advent and Christmas Cycle and, at the same time, stands out in dialectical tension with and against it. Advent and Christmas are a time of intimacy and interiority, a time of hidden growth, wordless ten-

<sup>30</sup>Lk. 1,48.

<sup>31</sup>Johnson, "Mary and Contemporary Christology," 179.

derness and of a poor-but-steady light in the darkness. Lent and Easter, on the other hand, explicate and exteriorize. They write history instead of composing poetry. They take the worshipper into the world of the adult, where white robes and clean hands do not prevail. The Paschal Cycle reflects on the showdown between God's freedom and that of humanity and its dramatic outcome. The two liturgical seasons complement each other like contemplation and action, like vision and journey, like spectator and actor; they also "oppose" each other like a center of attraction and a sign of contradiction. And, as far as Mary is concerned, they—to use images coined by Jacques Maritain—are like the "Mother of Beauty" and the "Mother of Suffering."<sup>32</sup>

### III. MARY'S MEMORY IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT CHURCH-MEMORY

#### 1. A Comprehensive Memory (*Lumen Gentium*)

In a sense it could be said that chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium* constitutes the charter of the Lent and Easter season. Its main thrust is salvation history, where Mary is pictured in her function within the plan of salvation. The union of Mother and Son in the work of redemption is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death.<sup>33</sup> It is described as a continuum of mutuality and tension, where Mary commits herself "whole-heartedly and impeded by no sin to God's saving will. She devoted herself totally, as a handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of redemption, by the grace of Almighty God."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup>See P. Viotto, "Maria nella vita di Raïssa e Jacques Maritain," *Humanitas*, n. s. 43,3 (June 1988): 359.

<sup>33</sup>LG 57.

<sup>34</sup>LG 56: "... pleno corde et nullo retardata peccato, complectens, semiptsam ut Domini ancillam personae et operi Filii sui totaliter devovit, sub Ipso et cum Ipso, omnipotentis Dei gratia, mysterio redemptionis inserviens."

Alongside her commitment to her Son's person and work, Mary advances on her own pilgrimage of faith which, in fact, is never totally her own. It is nonetheless her *personal* journey in faith as religious personality and, thus, subject to personal experience in faith, a faith shaped by lack of understanding, by faithful commitment, by freely given consent and total disappropriation. In short, Mary's religious personality is strengthened and evolves in growing assimilation into the ways and concerns of her Son.

A third dimension brought forth in *Lumen Gentium* by the specific perspective of Lent and Easter concerns Mary's immediate link to the Church and the faithful. Thanks to her cooperation through obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the restorative work of her Son, she "is a mother to us in the order of grace."<sup>35</sup> Faithful to its complementary ecclesio-typical and christo-typical approach, the Council describes this maternal bond as both efficient and exemplary: Mary is Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix.<sup>36</sup> Her intimate relationship with the Son and her unique graces make her "a type of the Church . . . in the order of faith, charity, and perfect union with Christ."<sup>37</sup>

These three dimensions—(1) Mary's active involvement in the salvific events, (2) her faith-journey toward the accomplished religious personality, and (3) her role as model and exemplar of the Church—seem to reflect the Council document's threefold systemic unity on behalf of the Mother of God. At the same time, these three dimensions bring into focus the three main marian features of the Lent and Easter Cycle; for it is during this liturgical season that Mary's dramatic role in salvation history unfolds, that she is constituted as a genuine religious personality and that she actualizes

<sup>35</sup>LG 61: "Quam ob causam mater nobis in ordine gratiae exstitit."

<sup>36</sup>LG 62: "Propterea B. Virgo in Ecclesia titulis Advocatae, Auxiliatricis, Adjutricis, Mediatrix invocatur."

<sup>37</sup>LG 63: "Deipara est Ecclesiae typus, ut iam docebat S. Ambrosius, in ordine scilicet fidei, caritatis et perfectae cum Christo unionis" (S. Ambrosius, *Expos. Lc II*, 7: PL 15, 1555).

the Church's identity as *Urbild* and *Vorbild*, as exemplar (archetype) and model, thus becoming her intact and dynamic core. However, it is only in an analytical approach to the reality of Mary that the three aspects can be separated. They are all linked together in the key constitutive event of the Annunciation and rooted in the same supernatural "Existential"<sup>38</sup> we designate by the expression *Kecharitomenae*, which is also Mary's new and definitive name.<sup>39</sup>

## 2. The Living Memory (*Marialis Cultus*)

The Council's theology of Mary is based primarily on the biblical narrative of her relation to Christ and his Church, whereas *Marialis Cultus* uses more personalist language to rekindle and deepen the memory of Mary. This observation confirms once again the composite nature of *memoria* as both knowledge and presence. Even though they differ in their point of departure, in their finality *Lumen Gentium* and *Marialis Cultus* are significantly the same: they both attempt to retrieve the living memory of Mary. *Lumen Gentium* puts a special emphasis on the contents of that *memoria* and the knowledge thereof, whereas *Marialis Cultus* concentrates on the *memoria* itself, that is, on how it is represented and preserved in Mary and how it can be reached in and through her.

The ultimate goal is not her person, but the glory of God and our conformity with his will.<sup>40</sup> And it is in this perspective of Mary as the "most excellent exemplar of the Church" in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ that she is remembered as *the* Virgin, stressing thereby her total dedication to God in Christ through the Spirit. She is

<sup>38</sup>The term "Existential" is used in the Heideggerian sense of fundamental existential disposition (*Sein und Zeit*, chap. 12). It should not be assimilated in this context to Rahner's sometimes debated concept of "supernatural existential."

<sup>39</sup>See A. Serra, "Bibbia," in *Nuovo Dizionario di Mariologia*, ed. S. De Fiores and S. Meo (2d ed.; Milan: Edizioni Paoline, 1986), 246: "oseremmo dire, il nome proprio di Maria"; *Redemptoris Mater* (hereafter RM), 8.

<sup>40</sup>MC 39.

the attentive Virgin—listening to, pondering, scrutinizing, accepting and proclaiming the *Eu-angelion*; she is the Virgin in prayer, right up to the last description of her life (Pentecost); as Virgin and Mother, she is type and exemplar of the fruitfulness of the Virgin Church. She is the “Virgin presenting offerings,” serving Christ’s mission of reconciliation of us all with God (from the Presentation to Calvary).<sup>41</sup> As Virgin, she exemplifies “worship that consists in making one’s life an offering to God.”<sup>42</sup> Likewise, in her capacity as Virgin and Mother, she is associated in the work of redemption which reaches its climax on Calvary.<sup>43</sup> In Mary, the Virgin, everything is relative to Christ and dependent upon him; what is given to Mary is referred to the Lord.

That is why in Mary the Church proclaims the Paschal Mystery: she (and every one of the saints) has suffered with Christ and is glorified with him.<sup>44</sup> In Mary the Church not only communicates with the foundational *memoria* of her own existence, but she also attains in Mary a deeper understanding of herself. Although both are the Mother of Christ, “neither brings forth the whole [body] independently of the other.”<sup>45</sup>

Yet, not only is the Church’s identity reflected in Mary, but also her mission becomes manifest, articulated in *Mari-alis Cultus* as an extension of Mary’s concern, shown, for example, in her active love in Nazareth, Ain-Karim, Cana and Calvary. Each one of these salvific episodes has vast ecclesial importance in the present, not only for the knowledge of truth but also for the Church’s concern for people in lowly circumstances, for commitment to peace and social harmony and the sharing of all of humanity in the salvation brought about by Christ. In the document’s set of four guidelines,<sup>46</sup> the *memoria Mariae* as archetypal rendering of

<sup>41</sup>MC 17-20.

<sup>42</sup>MC 21.

<sup>43</sup>MC 20, 22.

<sup>44</sup>MC 25.

<sup>45</sup>MC 28.

<sup>46</sup>MC 29 ff.



the Church's own existential recollection of the *memoria passionis, mortis et resurrectionis Jesu Christi* is once again designated by its principal roots, Bible and liturgy; simultaneously, these guidelines point out that Mary's *memoria* has ecumenical dimensions and is the property of all the believers. The same *memoria* is also to be read within anthropological categories, which means that, although perceived as the New Woman and perfect Christian, Mary remains fully human—*creature*, and “perfect model of the disciple of the Lord” only as such. Fully human and fully disciple, she also is a woman of strength, of loving and responsible self-assertiveness, dedicated to the strengthening of the community's faith.<sup>47</sup>

The document sums up its existential approach to the memory of Mary by pointing out the two marian prayers which best serve its comprehensive (noetic and existential) retrieval: the Angelus and the Rosary.<sup>48</sup> Unlike *Lumen Gentium*, which maps out for us the “systemic structures” of Mary's memory, *Marialis Cultus* articulates its marian meditation as her (the Church's) own memory, not only as a lesser mirror-image of Mary, but also as the living memory through which she communicates in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. It also stresses the fact that Mary can ultimately be reached only through the memory of the Church, in which she lives on as the Virgin *par excellence*, i.e., the person totally dedicated to God.

### 3. The Dynamic Memory (*Redemptoris Mater*)

The primary intent of *Redemptoris Mater* is very similar to that of *Marialis Cultus*: the Church has to learn anew from Mary how to be “authentic Church,”<sup>49</sup> but not so much in turning back to the past as in looking forward to the future. The concrete future of this Church is at stake, and it takes a special presence to assist the people of God on its journey.

<sup>47</sup>MC 35-37.

<sup>48</sup>MC 41, 42ff.

<sup>49</sup>RM 49, 47, 43, 37.

Although intended to prepare an Advent spirituality, the encyclical's "sacred symbol of our identity"<sup>50</sup> is the Pentecost scene; it is in its dynamism that redemption gradually evolves "between the striking at the serpent's head, and the striking at man's vulnerable heel." It comes as no surprise that the figure of Mary also reflects a special dynamism. The prominent place given in the encyclical to Mary's faith points back to Abraham, but equally points ahead to the "pilgrim journey of the Church."<sup>51</sup> This linear dynamism of Christian faith exemplified in Mary is dialectically intensified in her relationship with the Son, since she "is in contact with the truth about her Son only in faith and through faith."<sup>52</sup> The Paschal dimension of Mary's faith is clearly pinpointed: faith for Mary means suffering in the paradox of intimate closeness and undisclosed mystery, of faithful standing with the Son and his turning away from her. The culmination of this dynamic structure of Mary's faith occurs in the interpretation of Mary's standing under the Cross.<sup>53</sup> "Mary is perfectly united with Christ in his deepest self-humiliation (*kenosis*)," and "this is perhaps the deepest '*kenosis*' of *faith* in human history."<sup>54</sup> It becomes clear that faith means communion with the Cross, the offer of self-surrender and its fruitful acceptance into the self-surrender of the redeemer. The faith of Mary at the foot of the Cross expresses her unity of will with the person and work of her Son under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Mary brings Abraham's faith to completion,<sup>55</sup> as she says herself in the Magnificat.<sup>56</sup> Her obedience in utter contradiction unties the

<sup>50</sup>Expression of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger in his Introduction to *Mary, God's Yes to Man: Pope John Paul II Encyclical Letter "Mother of the Redeemer"* (commentary by Hans Urs von Balthasar; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 39, and exemplified in RM 26, 33, 49.

<sup>51</sup>RM 15, 25, 27.

<sup>52</sup>RM 17.

<sup>53</sup>RM 19.

<sup>54</sup>RM 18.

<sup>55</sup>RM 26.

<sup>56</sup>RM 36.

knot of Eve's disobedience,<sup>57</sup> just as the "woman clothed with the Sun" will bring forth in faith the eschatological Messiah.<sup>58</sup> Thus, Mary's faith, which received its proper configuration in the Annunciation and its ultimate fruitfulness under the Cross and at Pentecost, spans the whole of salvation history.<sup>59</sup>

The Church on its faith-journey into the future looks to Mary as a precursor and the unique model and exemplar of Christian faith. Yet Mary's faith is more than a private attitude which regulates her personal relationship to God. It is the faith of Virgin *and* Mother and therefore, in its fruitfulness, it is also communicative and mediative. That is to say that the Church on its eschatological journey refers to Mary not only as model and ideal of faith, but also as mediative presence. This maternal mediation of Mary belongs to the heart of the marian characteristics of the Paschal Mystery. At the very center of the Paschal Mystery, at the foot of the Cross, Mary is given as mother to all humanity; her motherhood receives a new dimension, the consequence of her unwavering love coming to perfection.<sup>60</sup> And the Pope concludes that the "Marian dimension in the life of Christ's disciples . . . , of every Christian," is thus manifested:<sup>61</sup> a special personal relationship is established "between the disciple—any disciple—and Mary, the admission of Mary into the innermost regions of one's mental and spiritual life, the entry into her reality as woman and mother."<sup>62</sup>

Mary is also the link between the power of the Spirit at Nazareth and the birth of the Church on Pentecost.<sup>63</sup> Her motherhood is of a permanent nature, ultimately, because it is a spiritual motherhood, as shown, for example, in the two "rejection" scenes in Luke 8, 20 and 11, 28. And it is of

<sup>57</sup>RM 19.

<sup>58</sup>RM 24, 52.

<sup>59</sup>RM 38.

<sup>60</sup>RM 23.

<sup>61</sup>RM 45.

<sup>62</sup>Ratzinger, in his Introduction to *Mary, God's Yes to Man*, 36.

<sup>63</sup>RM 24.

particular significance for the importance attributed to Mary's maternal mediation that the Pope proposes the scene of Pentecost as "the unique sacred symbol of our time . . . a sign of hope for this our era."<sup>64</sup> It should be remembered that this same hope is revealed in the sign of the woman, in which God's ultimate favor is revealed to humanity as a constant reminder and living *memoria*.<sup>65</sup> Being the woman at Cana and the woman at the foot of the Cross, standing as symbol of promise and fulfillment at two cardinal articulations of salvation history, Mary thus becomes our guide in history.

#### 4. A Feminine Memory (*Mulieris Dignitatem*)

The sign of the woman or the feminine line of the paschal mysteries is again highlighted in *Mulieris Dignitatem*. Mary is that woman who is "present in the central salvific event," "the key event in the history of salvation: the Lord's Paschal Mystery."<sup>66</sup> She is actively present in the event of the Annunciation, the "point of God's [definitive] self-revelation to humanity . . . [which is] salvific in character,"<sup>67</sup> and takes "her place within Christ's messianic service,"<sup>68</sup> where to serve means to reign, as demonstrated in "the Servant of the Lord himself."<sup>69</sup>

She is herself "the first of the redeemed in salvation history" and, as "a new creation" (= full of grace), the beginning of the new and definitive covenant;<sup>70</sup> assuming in herself the "mystery of woman" whose beginning is Eve, she "is 'the new beginning' of the dignity and vocation of women,"<sup>71</sup> the nature and dignity of feminine humanity.<sup>72</sup> In her, both

<sup>64</sup>RM 33.

<sup>65</sup>RM 11.

<sup>66</sup>*Mulieris Dignitatem* (hereafter MD), 3.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>MD 5.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>MD 11.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

"virginity and motherhood co-exist . . . they do not mutually exclude each other or place limits on each other";<sup>73</sup> in her also "the link that exists between the woman's motherhood<sup>74</sup> and the Paschal mystery" becomes apparent when, in sorrow at the foot of the Cross, she "shares in the amazing mystery of her Son's 'self-emptying.'"<sup>75</sup> The contemplation of the sorrowful mother<sup>76</sup> prompts solidarity with "all the suffering women in the world, suffering either physically or morally,"<sup>77</sup> but it is also steeped in the certitude, rooted in the fullness of the Paschal mystery, that sorrows will be changed to joy.<sup>78</sup>

Mary is the first woman in whom the new awareness of eschatological hope materializes in virginity, but her relationship to Christ, unlike that of consecrated virgins and the Church, is not exemplified with bridal or spousal language. Likewise, no special attention is given to her spiritual motherhood, whereas in virgins it designates the gift of oneself to the spouse.<sup>79</sup> The intimate correlation between Mary and the Church is reconfirmed in the words of *Lumen Gentium*. Mary is the key to the Church's self-understanding, but to some extent the key to the understanding of history too: "Is not the Bible trying to tell us," says John Paul II, "that it is precisely in the 'Woman'—Eve-Mary—that history witnesses a dramatic struggle for every human being, the struggle for his or her fundamental 'yes' or 'no' to God and God's eternal plan for humanity?"<sup>80</sup> And finally, "this 'prophetic' character of women in their femininity finds its highest expression in the Virgin Mother of God" who emphasizes, in the order of love, the most intimate linking with the Holy Spirit.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>73</sup>MD 17.

<sup>74</sup>Jn 16,21.

<sup>75</sup>MD 19.

<sup>76</sup>Lk 2,35.

<sup>77</sup>MD 19.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>MD 21.

<sup>80</sup>MD 30.

<sup>81</sup>MD 29.

In short, *Mulieris Dignitatem* presents contemporary women with the wealth and light of the Church's own feminine nature and understanding thereof, and it attempts to point out the onto-theological rootedness of sociological feminine categories. Mary's role is articulated primarily in the Annunciation scene, where she, a woman and simultaneously "new creation," receives the definitive self-revelation of God to humanity. The various aspects of the Paschal Mystery are not explicated in detail; however, Mary's presence in the center of the salvific event is clearly stated.

#### IV. MARY'S MEMORY IN PATTERNS OF RECENT THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Contemporary Church documents about Mary carry a wealth of theological reflection centered on Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*. Maybe their most decisive contribution to contemporary marian thinking consists in the reactivation and reactualization of its ecclesial memory, specifically the marian memory of the Church in both its traditional expressions of knowledge and their significance. *Lumen Gentium* and *Mulieris Dignitatem* reflect the more noetic concretization of that *memoria*, whereas *Marialis Cultus* and *Redemptoris Mater* highlight and integrate its existential dimension. Throughout the documents three viewpoints of Mary's existence are presented: (1) her living memory as an integral part of the Church's memory, (2) her dramatic existence with Christ, and (3) her personal story as faith-journey. The trinitarian accentuation is intended, although not always implemented and developed. As to the specific role of Mary in salvation, a certain hesitation can be noted: the instrumental character of her participation, although not denied, seems to lack a certain precision.

As would be expected, the theological reflections offered by these documents reflect much of recent and contemporary mariology. However, contemplating recent magisterial mariology as a whole, we conclude that it presents much

more cohesion and connection than mariology at large. In recent and contemporary mariology, three major currents have been identified: the christotypical, ecclesiotypical and anthropological orientations.

### 1. Christological Patterns

The christological tradition is the most classical of the three and was carved into the rock of scholastic categories and terminology. But in spite of its inevitable "fixism," the christological orientation presents a high degree of relationality between the Lord and his Mother. Relationality is the theological context in which Mary's motherhood, her role as associate, spiritual mother, mediatrix and coredeptrix originated. Mary's *Personalcharakter* is intimately related to her "Spousal Motherhood" (Scheeben);<sup>82</sup> Terrien's "Universal Motherhood" leads to Mary as the mother of all human beings and thus founds her spiritual maternity;<sup>83</sup> in the connection of *Mater* and *Socia* (Feckes)<sup>84</sup> lies Mary's vocation as the "Motherly Associate of the Redeemer"; Roschini's "Universal Maternity" allows for Mary's spiritual maternity;<sup>85</sup> Dillenschneider's "Messianic Motherhood," integrating the ecclesiological perspective, characterizes Mary not only as the "Holy and Eschatological Icon of the Church," but also as

<sup>82</sup>M. J. Scheeben, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. VI: *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*. Fünftes Buch: Erlösungslehre, 1. Halbband (2d ed., Freiburg, 1954). The following rudimentary survey is indebted to Jan Radkiewicz's *Auf der Suche nach einem mariologischen Grundprinzip. Eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung über die letzten hundert Jahre* (Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 1990).

<sup>83</sup>J. B. Terrien, *La mère de Dieu et la mère des hommes d'après les pères et la théologie* (4 vols.; Paris, 1900-1902), I/1, x; see P. M. Lustrissimi, "Il principio fondamentale di Mariologia," *Marianum* 21 (1959): 255.

<sup>84</sup>C. Feckes, *Die bräuliche Gottesmutter. Aus dem Handbuch der Dogmatik herausgehoben, auch für weitere Kreise bearbeitet von C. Feckes* (2d ed.; Essen, 1951), 209-213; idem, "Das Fundamentalprinzip der Mariologie. Ein Beitrag zu ihrem Aufbau," in *Scientia Sacra* (Köln, 1935): 252-276.

<sup>85</sup>G. M. Roschini, *Mariologia I* (2d ed. rev.; Rome, 1947), 323-337; *Mariologia II/1* (2nd ed. rev.; Rome, 1947), 141-227.

the spiritual mother of the faithful;<sup>86</sup> G. de Broglie, finally, presents Mary as the mother of the "Redeemer-God" (*Dieu-Rédempteur*) and "New Eve."<sup>87</sup> She cooperates in the restoration of humanity and is viewed in a perspective of suffering; as "Mother of the Christian community" she plays the role of mediator and mother of grace.

## 2. Ecclesiological Patterns

It is true that in general the various christological projects present a threefold flaw: (1) they lack the historical dimension, (2) they overlook Mary's individuality and (3) they fail to consider her role as member of the Church. The ecclesiotypical tendency counterbalances some of the christological shortcomings, but it also replaces the christological concept of relation with that of representation. The ecclesiotypical point of view rests on solid patristic foundations and uses typological methodology. What derives from this approach is the mirror-effect: the Church reads and explicates itself in Mary and vice versa. Mary explains the Church's relationship with Christ; in her the Church is Bride, Virgin and Mother; conversely, Mary's membership in the Church is re-established. Also, the soteriological aspects are discussed and attributed to the Church more immediately. Przywara's "Interior/inner Form of the Church" explains and interprets Christ's *connubium* with the Church;<sup>88</sup> Semmelroth's "Arche-type of the Church" stresses the receptive participation of

<sup>86</sup>Cl. Dillenschneider, *Le mystère de la corédemption mariale. Théories nouvelles. Exposé, appréciation critique, synthèse constructive* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1951), 313f.; idem, *Le principe premier d'une théologie mariale organique. Orientations* (Paris: Alsatia, 1956).

<sup>87</sup>G. de Broglie, "Le 'principe fondamental' de la théologie mariale," in *Maria VI*, ed. H. du Manoir (Paris: Beauchesne, 1961), 297-366, esp. 324.

<sup>88</sup>E. Przywara, "Mutter aller Lebendigen," in *Ringel der Gegenwart. Gesammelte Aufsätze 1922-1927*, Bd. 1 (Augsburg, 1929), 536; idem, "Corpus Christi Mysticum. Eine Bilanz (1940)," in idem, *Katholische Krise* (Düsseldorf, 1967), 147; idem, *Crucis mysterium* (Paderborn, 1939), 323 ("Die ganze Schöpfung . . . atmet sie [Maria] als innere Form, aber kein Wort spricht von ihr"); idem, *Was ist Gott?* (Nürnberg: Eine Summula, 1947).



the Church in salvation;<sup>89</sup> Congar's "Type of the Church" underlines the close connection between Christ, Church and Mary, the motherliness of the Church (maternal element), and the holiness of Mary and the Church;<sup>90</sup> de Lubac sees in Mary the "Pre-figuration of the Church," which he describes as Virgin, Bride and Mother, and to whom he ascribes the title of universal motherhood;<sup>91</sup> Ratzinger, finally, pictures Mary as the "personal concretization" of the Church, the true Daughter of Zion, the personalized beginning of the New Covenant.<sup>92</sup> There exists, thus, in the ecclesiotypical perception of mariology a mediate understanding of Mary, a certain tendency to freeze Mary into a typological category, and a refocusing of Mary's role in the Paschal Mystery of the Church.

### 3. Anthropological Patterns

The anthropological (theological) perspective on Mary is more difficult to ascertain in a univocal manner. Different strands of theological reflection converge in this current: the viewpoint of salvation history, that is, the linear concept of salvation (event, process); furthermore, the soteriological elements (Mary as redeemed creature) or aspects pertaining to the theology of grace (Mary fully graced); and, more recently, Mary engaged in a process of social and anthropological liberation. They span a wide variety of Mary's images, from Romano Guardini's "Ideal of Faith,"<sup>93</sup> to Rahner's "Fully

<sup>89</sup>O. Semmelroth, *Urbild der Kirche. Organischer Aufbau des Mariengeheimnisses* (Würzburg, 1950).

<sup>90</sup>Y. Congar, *Le Christ, Marie et l'Eglise* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), 20-26; idem, "Marie et l'Eglise dans la pensée patristique," in *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 38 (1954): 3-38, esp. 38.

<sup>91</sup>H. de Lubac, *Méditation sur l'Eglise* (Paris: Aubier, 1953), 273 ff.

<sup>92</sup>J. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum. Vorlesungen über das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis* (München, 1968), 222-230; idem, *Die Tochter Zion. Betrachtungen über den Marienglauben der Kirche* (Einsiedeln, 1978), 15-27.

<sup>93</sup>R. Guardini, *Der Rosenkranz unserer Lieben Frau* (Würzburg, 1940), 35-36.

and Perfectly Redeemed Person,"<sup>94</sup> Müller's "Fully and Perfectly Graced One"<sup>95</sup> and "Personal Summit of the Faithful,"<sup>96</sup> Schillebeeckx's quasi-replica of Rahner's "Perfectly and Fully Redeemed Person,"<sup>97</sup> Volk's "Model of Faith,"<sup>98</sup> Boff's "Eschatological Anticipation of the Feminine,"<sup>99</sup> and Gebara/Bingemer's re-reading "from the needs of our age."<sup>100</sup> These different currents come closest to what might be called a marian identity, in other words, a theological reflection on the person of Mary either from the point of view of herself (her faith), the soteriological effects on her personality, the exemplary character of her redeemed person for the other faithful, or the rapport between concrete needs and her personality profile. What seems to be less prominent is her ecclesial dimension, the active relation with

<sup>94</sup>K. Rahner, "Das 'neue Dogma.' Zur Definition der Himmelfahrt der hl. Jungfrau und Gottesmutter," *Wort und Wahrheit* 5 (1950): 814; idem, "Le principe fondamental," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 42 (1954): 481-522, esp. 480, 492 and 499; idem, *Maria, Mutter des Herrn. Theologische Betrachtungen* (Freiburg, 1956), 96-97.

<sup>95</sup>A. Müller, "Um die Grundlagen der Mariologie," *Divus Thomas* 29 (1951): 385; idem, "Ein mariologisches Fundamentalprinzip?" *Mysterium salutis* III/2 (1969): 414-415.

<sup>96</sup>As far as the more recent reflection about *personale Spitze* is concerned, see idem, *Glaubensrede über die Mutter Jesu. Versuch einer Mariologie in heutiger Perspektive* (Mainz, 1980), 73 ff.

<sup>97</sup>E. Schillebeeckx, "Mutua correlatio inter redemptionem objectivam eamque subjectivam B. M. Virginis in ordine ad ejus Maternitatem erga Christum et nos ut principium fundamentale Mariologiae," in *Virgo Immaculata* IX (Acta Congr. Mariologici-Mariani 1954, 18 vols.) (Rome, 1957), 321 (. . . "perfecte et penitus redempta").

<sup>98</sup>H. Volk, "Mater credentium," *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 73 (1964): 1-27 (see similar approach in F. Braun, *La mère des fidèles. Essai de théologie johannique* [Tournai 1953]). The same perspective is later adopted by J. Auer.

<sup>99</sup>L. Boff, *The Maternal Face of God* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 18, and esp. chap. 5: "The Feminine: A Theological Meditation," pp. 93-103.

<sup>100</sup>Ivone Gebara and Maria Clara Bingemer, *Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor* (trans. Ph. Berryman; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), xi and xii, as well as chap. I ("Toward a New Anthropological Perspective," pp. 1-19) and chap. II ("Hermeneutics for a Marian Theology," pp. 20-31).

Christ, and, in general, the emphasis given her active participation in his redemptive work.

#### 4. Identity, Relation, Representation

However sketchy and generalizing, the three perspectives present valuable and complementary information about Mary. In more than one of the examples mentioned all of these perspectives are present, although emphasizing one of several facets. Furthermore, these perspectives represent three of the most important structural elements for constructing marian theology: identity (Mary's person), relation (her rapport with Christ) and representation (her rapport with the Church). Focusing on the Paschal Mystery explicitly, we would like to attempt a theological integration of the three perspectives mentioned.

### V. THE MARIAN ASPECTS OF THE PASCHAL MYSTERIES

Taking a closer look at the paschal liturgical cycle to better understand its theological unity and connectedness, we discover that the mysteries of our redemption meet in Mary. We do not say that they converge in her as their focal point; yet she connects and facilitates their understanding and articulates their ultimate significance. At the outset, and in the very heart of the Incarnation, stands Mary who says "let it be done unto me." She consents at Calvary to the sacrifice the Son offers for the whole world. Her undivided assent to Christ's whole mission becomes the genetic code of the Church's own self-understanding and mission. There are, thus, three major marian articulations that punctuate the theological contents of the Lenten and Easter mysteries. There are also two major marian trajectories spanning Annunciation and Calvary, Calvary and Pentecost. Each of these contains a series of theologically significant elements which highlight and link their respective terms/poles (Annunciation-Calvary; Calvary-Pentecost). To facilitate theological reflection and interpretation, we would like to list these elements here in an order which reflects the continuum of salvation history.

### 1. The Epochal Event

The Annunciation is the epochal event in Mary's life and therefore the absolute point of reference of any mariology in general and reflection on the Easter mystery in particular. It represents the moment of wholehearted and "whole-personed" human consent to Incarnation. An expression of total faith, Mary's unrestricted consent anticipates Easter and Pentecost. Her Yes is virginal, which means that she looks to God alone for fruitfulness and new life, and, as virginal, it is also fully representative of Israel. Mary's Yes is feminine and, thus, a two-sided mystery of response and common fruitfulness. The relationship between Mary and Joseph should have its place here, in their common response and fruitfulness for the incipient kingdom.

### 2. Sharing Communion

The Visitation is the first practical consequence of the Annunciation: a mystery of sharing communion and, most important, of publicizing and evangelizing. It connects intimacy with God and service to others; it binds vocation and mission into one call. It also proclaims the inversion of earthly values and circumstances, the beginning of a new order of reality, the revolution of love and liberation in the name of love.

### 3. The Dialectic of Love and Suffering

At the Presentation, this revolution of love takes on the meaning of suffering, rejection and resistance. More and more is demanded of Mary's understanding; her faith is increasingly stretched, but at the same time steeped ever more solidly in pondering and self-giving. The dialectic between the revolution of love and sacrifice, contemplation and action, faith and reason is set in motion.

### 4. Transformative Rejection

The so-called scenes of rejection or "turnings away" are of paramount importance for the theological understanding of Mary's faith-journey and role in salvation. She is called to

follow Jesus in the dark and into the night. Conformity to her Son's will and mission is lived in the prayer of faith (Lk. 2,50), without insistence on knowing. Her mystery, a human mystery, parallels to a certain degree that of her Son. By distancing himself from his mother he transforms her faith, the faith of Israel, based on hope against hope, to the "crucified faith of the Church" (Balthasar).

#### 5. Mother and "Woman"

Cana is an even clearer sign of Mary's theological significance. The mother is no longer only mother, but also associate, helpmate in Christ's work. And as the helpmate she is the woman, the bride/spouse and Church. The hour of the Cross has not yet come, but it is anticipated. In fact it is actively anticipated by the helpmate-mother: "Do whatever he tells you." "Perhaps nowhere is Mary's whole cast of mind more present than in this saying."<sup>101</sup> Mary's awareness of the needs of the poor is real and active awareness.

#### 6. "Quintessence of the Church"

Mary's *fiat* at the foot of the Cross is the archetypal *fiat* for all the faithful of the Church. In letting his suffering happen, she lets it happen to her. Also she gives her Son back to the Father in the Holy Spirit. Mary stands at the foot of the Cross already redeemed through the Cross. That is why at the Cross she becomes, in the words of Balthasar, "bride, the quintessence of the Church."<sup>102</sup> As the helpmate of the New Adam she gives her spiritual consent and receives the gift of his redemptive grace in lieu of the Church and for her. Mary's eucharistic role attains here its most perfect expression. Mary, who perfectly received her Son in her heart and body, now receives him as the Immaculate Church, in faith and love always.

<sup>101</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mary for Today* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 63.

<sup>102</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar and Adrienne von Speyr, *Au coeur du mystère rédempteur* (Chambray: Éditions C.L.D., 1980), 62 ("L'Épouse, la quintessence de l'Église").

### 7. The Original Ecclesial Community

Mary and John represent the first ecclesial community founded by the crucified Redeemer himself. By becoming the mother of John Mary is also the mother of all Christians and Mother of the Church. If John stands for the earthly Church, so she represents the heavenly Church, i.e., the Church perfected in advance. John takes her into his life as the inner form of his *memoria Christi*.

### 8. Permanent Ecclesial Memory

Although not a part of the Easter cycle, Pentecost nonetheless should be situated within the marian logic and dynamic emanating from the Cross. It concretizes, in a historical and social perspective, what is initiated at the foot of the Cross. Given to John, Mary's mission as mother shifts from her Son to the Church. She is entrusted to that Church in order to be its immaculate core of faith, hope and love. In the Spirit-enlightened Church of Pentecost she not only intuitively grasps the content of her experience in the Paschal Mystery, but also entrusts the Church with her own memory.

## VI. THE MARIAN CONFIGURATION OF THE PASCHAL MYSTERIES

One of the major difficulties in marian theology is to locate and pinpoint the complex system of relations, connections and interdependencies between the person of Mary and her "mariological constellation." The tension between the christological and ecclesiological approach, the long and sad story of the fundamental principle, and also contemporary marian reductionism and isolationism show the necessity for an adequate "system of coordinates" to better read the story of Mary's person and role and their manifold ramifications.

I would like to offer on this behalf some reflections in the double perspective of the *methodology* offered by *Marialis Cultus* and the *theological contents* of the Paschal Mystery. Mary of Nazareth has her particular place in salvation history within the contexts of trinitarian theology, ecclesiology,

soteriology and anthropology. I would like to develop these contexts regarding their interconnectedness and meaning for a comprehensive approach to Mary in the Paschal Mystery.

### 1. Mary within Ecclesial Memory

For any contemplation of Mary in a Paschal perspective the ecclesial dimension should come first. Ecclesial consciousness and reality are founded in the *memoria Domini* in which Mary is contained. It is therefore impossible to even approach Mary without retrieving, studying, and celebrating this *memoria* as something that carries the ultimate justification of our hope, faith and love. In this ecclesial *memoria*, Mary holds the role of a *theological* person, which means she signifies and explicates, for and through the Church, her own (the Church's) relationship with *Christus Caput* and his message of liberation and salvific action. At the same time, she is the very representation of the Church, her *Ur-* (archetype) and *Vorbild* (model). Thus Mary helps the Church to live and contemplate her dynamic relationship with Christ and, simultaneously, to come to an ever greater understanding of herself. The Church's memory of Mary is complex and, in more than one way, paradoxical. It is rooted in sketchy historical remembrance and its meaning/significance for the *memoria Domini*. There exists a dialectical relationship between the foundational memory of Mary (first communities) and the traditional memory of her through the centuries up to the present. Although this tension will hardly ever be solved and molded into one great and universal tradition, it should nevertheless be constantly measured against its ultimate source of credibility, in order to at least approach a credible response to the ever lingering question: Does the *memoria Mariae* convey, explicate and actualize the *memoria Domini* or not? Finally, the Church's memory of Mary represents a combination of *doxa* and *praxis*, that is, reflection and knowledge (theology), liturgy and devotion (spirituality)—warranting, thus, the existential dimension of Mary's image based on fact and meaning.

## 2. The Trinitarian Reference of Mary's *Memoria*

The indispensable ecclesial approach to Mary would ultimately be meaningless if it were not grounded in the more comprehensive context of trinitarian theology. There is no sense in cultivating the memory of a dead or non-existent God. That is why only trinitarian economy, the manifestation of God's self-giving, lends credibility and justifies the Paschal character of the ecclesial *memoria*. Consequently, the significance of Mary as a theological person stands and falls with her relationship with the persons of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

### *Aesthetic Figure*

In this perspective, the phenomenologically first and soteriologically constitutive relation of Mary as theological person is her relationship with the Spirit. At the beginning, as well as at the end of the Paschal Cycle, he is the *dynamis ypsistou*. He constitutes Mary in the fullness of grace; in him she bears her new name *Kecharitomenae*; in his power she becomes fruitful and bears fruit. He is her lifeline during her journey in faith and in her role as educator and disciple of her Son. At Pentecost, he constitutes Mary's memory as both knowledge (pondering) and meaning (light of the Spirit) and inserts both, the person and her memory, into the heart of the Church. In the Spirit, Mary has her true self-identity, which sustains and guides her as the genuine theological person. Mary, in her relationship to the Spirit, is the true *aesthetic figure*, because, under the influence and the power of the Spirit, she appears as the *vas spirituale*, the transparent figure of the Father's gratuitous and perfecting love (Immaculate Conception, Assumption), herself an expression of gratitude (Magnificat) and gracious giving of self (Cana, Calvary, Pentecost), so that the *doxa theou* will shine in and through her.

### *Dramatic Figure*

Mary has her "self-identity" in the Spirit, but she is not to keep it to herself. The truly aesthetic personality participates in the *bonum diffusivum sui*. Thus, Mary the aesthetic figure serves a purpose, and only in serving that purpose is she



the aesthetic figure. Mary's self-identity is shaped by Christ into the personality of his disciple and associate; he molds her, as the Spirit predicted through Simeon (Presentation). She is left unknowing when Christ leaves her for his Father's House; she accepts the growing distance Jesus puts between himself and her; she does not seem to revolt against his preference of Disciple over Mother; she goes along when she is changed from Mother to Woman and from Woman to Church, in her final self-abandoning at the foot of the Cross. Christ shapes Mary into the *dramatic figure* she is. Not only does the dramatic characteristic convey the idea of action and commitment, it also underlines the relationship between "director" and "actor" and, in the context of theological anthropology, the interaction between the infinite freedom of God and the finite freedom of the human person. When we suggest that Christ shaped Mary into a dramatic figure, we insinuate neither utter passivity nor devious manipulation; yet, there is no doubt that Christ thoroughly "exploited" Mary's initial and foundational *fiat*. Mary's *fiat*, says Balthasar, "is, by grace, the bridal womb, matrix and mater, through which the Son of God becomes man, and thus it is by this *fiat* that he also forms the truly universal Church."<sup>103</sup> And since Mary's initial *fiat* was an act of freedom, every single confirmation of her Yes has to be a fully human act, too. The trajectory of Christ's education of Mary goes from private person to public person, from the de-centering of Mary's *Sitz im Leben* to re-centering it in the mission of Christ, from de-privatization to re-socialization for the benefit of the Church—all this in the most concrete and practical of manners. In a sense, Mary's personality more and more coincides with her mission in Christ. That is why some theologians apply the expression *concretum universale* to Mary, thereby paraphrasing the appellation *universale concretum* ordinarily reserved for Christ.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup>Balthasar, *The Office of Peter*, 206-207.

<sup>104</sup>See, e.g., Balthasar, *The Office of Peter*, 196-204, esp. p. 199 (ref. to A. Müller).

### *Kenotic Figure*

The relationship between Mary and the Father, within the context of the Paschal Mystery, is entirely determined by the finality of Christ's salvific mission. The core of that mission is one of radical obedience intended to bring about lasting reconciliation between God and humanity. Trinitarian love, as it enters the atmosphere of theological reflection, originates with the Father, materializes in the Son through the Spirit, and culminates in the reaffirmation of the mutual love of Father and Son in the Holy Spirit through the accomplishment of the Son's redemptive and reconciling mission. This mission is kenotic, self-emptying trinitarian love actualized in the obedient Son and suffering Servant. Given Mary's dramatic personality, she becomes likewise a *kenotic figure*. Of course, we are speaking of a *kenosis* proper to a human person, where Mary does not, in spite of humiliation and suffering, carry out the *kenosis Christi* but reaches the outer limits of her kenotic attitude and disposition in the ultimate consequence of her Yes, which is radical self-oblation in the service (not the accomplishment) of the Son's mission. But precisely because of her "letting go" and being absorbed into the mission of the Son, she partakes in the obedience dimension of Christ's redemptive action, which is entirely directed to the Father. With regard to the Father, then, Mary is a kenotic figure. We do not see here any new co-redemptive contribution to the Son's work, but, rather, Mary's integration into the trinitarian love-cycle as the fully graced and thoroughly shaped human theological person. As the kenotic figure, she not only designates the ultimate love finality of redemption (represented by the Father), but the finality of herself as a theological person as well.

Mary's relationship to the persons of the Trinity is thus articulated in the aesthetic figure, the dramatic figure and the kenotic figure. All these aspects are complementary, just as self-identity, personality profile and human finality are intimately connected.

### 3. The Effectiveness of Mary's *Memoria*

At this point of our reflection we ought to return to the

ecclesiological dimension. We have pinpointed Mary as the *memoria ecclesiae* and her thorough dependence upon it. We then established, in the relationship between Mary and the Trinity, the specific characteristics of the marian dimension of the Church-*Memoria* with respect to the trinitarian foundation of that memory. The question to be raised now is: What marian implications are contained in the *pro nobis*-perspective of Christ's redemptive work? In other words, is the marian memory of the Church one that has an active and transformative impact on those who hold that memory? To raise this question within the context of the Paschal Mystery means to tackle the doctrinal problems related to coredeemption, mediation and spiritual maternity.

We know that since the Council these issues, if they were not altogether ignored, have been treated with kid gloves (for good reasons: reaction against pre-conciliar hypertrophic privilege-mariology and post-conciliar ecumenical considerations). The discussion about the coredemptrix ceased some time ago, and the term has largely been dropped from mariological vocabulary, except maybe for a very recent contribution where the author thinks that the title stands "for important truths concerning both Mary and all Christians."<sup>105</sup> Because Mary personifies in herself the being of the Church, "she also exhibits in an exemplary way the redemptive role that belongs to the whole Church."<sup>106</sup> A second context in which the term and the reality seem to have some bearing is the incarnation and Mary's role as the *Theotokos*. This irenic interpretation of the title "coredemptrix" stresses—to say the least—Mary's active role in the present situation of the Church.

In the difficult context of ecumenical dialogue, the same questions are dealt with in a slightly different way. *Dialogue VIII* (between Lutherans and Catholics) states that "Catholics today do not commonly speak of Mary's heavenly 'mediation,' if they use the term at all, except to express her inter-

<sup>105</sup>John Macquarrie, *Mary for All Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 114.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, 113.

cessory role with her Son. Understood in this way, the heavenly mediation of Mary differs only in degree from . . . the intercession and invocation of Saints."<sup>107</sup> Lutherans particularly object "to the practice of extolling the mercy of Mary."<sup>108</sup> Again, on the part of the Catholics it is said: "While noting that Mary is invoked *in* the Church as mediatrix, Vatican II chose deliberately to use this formula rather than assert that she is so invoked *by* the Church."<sup>109</sup> However, the sentence of article 62 of *Lumen Gentium* preceding the one referred to here reads as follows: "By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son," a clear reference to the active part played by Mary on behalf of the Church.<sup>110</sup> Yet reserve and hesitation about the nature of Mary's role are engrained in the theological texture of the Council itself: Mary's role with respect to the Church is presented both as efficient and exemplary.<sup>111</sup> The same latent uneasiness and cautious reopening of the dossier on mediation is expressed by Cardinal Ratzinger on behalf of *Redemptoris Mater*, when he remarks that the encyclical does not extend the Council's teaching, but that "it deepens the Council's premises and thus gives them more substance for study and devotion."<sup>112</sup>

In fact, "mediation" has been the object of several recent mariological gatherings and studies.<sup>113</sup> The encyclical letter

<sup>107</sup>*Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue*, VIII: *The One Mediator, Mary and the Saints* (in progress), no. 99 (from a photocopy).

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, no. 85.

<sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*, no. 84; LG 62 ("Propterea B. Virgo in Ecclesia titulis . . . , Mediatrix invocatur").

<sup>110</sup>LG 62 ("materna sua caritate de fratribus Filii sui . . . curat").

<sup>111</sup>R. Laurentin, "Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*," in *Mary in Faith and Life in the New Age of the Church: Marian Seminar 1980, Kenya (Nairobi) and Zambia* (Monze, Ndola) (sponsored by the International Marian Research Institute, Dayton, Ohio; Ndola, Zambia: Franciscan Mission Press, 1983), 141.

<sup>112</sup>Ratzinger, in his Introduction to *Mary, God's Yes to Man*, 31.

<sup>113</sup>See *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 39, 2 (1989) which is entirely devoted to "La mediación maternal de Maria"; see B. Sesboué for a critical evaluation ("Sortir des équivoques et des malentendus," *Actualités Religieuses dans le monde*, 46 [15 June 1987]: 20); for positive treatment, see B. Billet,

*Redemptoris Mater* describes Mary's mediation as closely linked with maternity and presents it as part of the Church's *memoria*.<sup>114</sup> The new accent and development articulate Mary's mediation as a "maternal presence," active and exemplary.<sup>115</sup> The foundation of Mary's mediation is her motherhood;<sup>116</sup> Cana is read as the first announcement of her maternal mediation fully oriented toward Christ. At the Cross, the theological reflection detects an ascending and a descending mediation: it is ascending in the cooperation of the New Eve through faith and love; it becomes descending where Christ solemnly confirms her maternal mission to the whole of humanity. The Cenacle episode stresses Mary's intercessory mediation,<sup>117</sup> and after the Assumption her "mediation-intercession" is not interrupted. She continues to obtain for us the gifts of eternal salvation;<sup>118</sup> in particular she contributes to create unity between the heavenly and the earthly Church.<sup>119</sup> Mary's mediation is also that of compassion and mercy.<sup>120</sup> It is important to note that Mary's mediation is exercised in and through the Spirit.<sup>121</sup>

Mediation is a special form of presence, even projecting the idea of identification with somebody. At the same time the intermediary position held by the mediator suggests a conciliatory role. Further study into Mary's "mediation"

"Médiation et présence maternelle de Marie selon l'Esprit dans l'encyclique 'Redemptoris Mater,'" in *Mater Fidei et Fidelium: Collected Essays to Honor Théodore Koehler on His 80th Birthday*, ed. J. G. Roten, *Marian Library Studies* n.s. 17-23 (1991): 733-744.

<sup>114</sup>RM 40 ("Mary . . . could not but pour out upon the Church, from the very beginning, her maternal self-giving").

<sup>115</sup>See Th. Koehler, "Mary, Mother of the Church and her Maternal Mediation," *Social Justice Review* 79,5-6 (May-June 1988): 78-81, where (on p. 80) he points out that "the expression *maternal mediation* of Mary was used for the first time, in Pius XII's Apostolic Letter *Per Christi Matrem*, May 15, 1947" (AAS 40 [1948]: 536).

<sup>116</sup>RM 39.

<sup>117</sup>RM 24.

<sup>118</sup>RM 40.

<sup>119</sup>RM 41.

<sup>120</sup>RM 40-41.

<sup>121</sup>RM 38, 47.

could possibly gain from (1) exploring the typical feminine dimension in mediation; (2) highlighting the constant presence and active role of the Spirit, and (3) re-affirming the radically christological configuration of Mary's role in her maternal presence and mediation. The last-mentioned criterion not only refocuses Christ's role as sole mediator, but also reaffirms the dramatic-kenotic character of Mary's role in redemption: Mary is fruitful in total dependence only, and yet she has in effect become fruitful in Christ. The insistence on the pneumatic dimension points to the real source of the *active* mediation of Mary. Mary's memory of the Church is activated for its members only in and through the Spirit; this seems to be the proper *locus theologicus* for the re-assessment of spiritual maternity.<sup>122</sup> Finally, the feminine mode of Mary's "mediation" refers to the dyadic feminine structure by which both receptivity and active presence, response and fruitfulness, are connected with the fundamental feminine expressions of virginity and motherhood.

#### 4. The Anthropological Density of Mary's *Memoria*

It is only at this point of our theological reflection that the anthropological dimension should come into focus. It should serve both as reinsurance and reassurance. The anthropological aspect cautions against transforming Mary into a quasi-divine hypostasis, ties her solidly in with human and historical reality and constitutes her as role model for human persons. Furthermore, the Church's reading of Mary's memory, in order to be practical and effective on the spiritual plane, has to produce, to a certain extent at least, the mirror effect of the reader's own anthropological constitution. In this sense, Paul VI called Mary the mirror of contemporary humanity's expectations.<sup>123</sup> Since the very early

<sup>122</sup>Th. Koehler, "Mary's Spiritual Maternity after the Second Vatican Council," *Marian Studies* 23 (1972): 53.

<sup>123</sup>MC 37; Paul VI made a special mention of this passage in his remarks to Mrs. Helvi Sipilä, secretary general for the 1975 UN International Women's Year, on the occasion of a private audience on November 6, 1974. See *Origins* 4,22 (Nov. 21, 1974): 344.

times of the Church, she was understood to be our sister in faith.<sup>124</sup> Mary shares human destiny in Adam but also in Abraham; thus she is "ours" biologically as well as spiritually. Finally, according to Augustine, she is sister because she fulfilled God's will under the guidance of the Spirit. Conversely, the Church treasures the *memoria* of Mary as the advocate, the Queen and Mother of Mercy. The two strands of traditional memory are interwoven and reflect the typically paradoxical character of Mary's anthropological configuration.

They are both rooted in her religious or theological personality, for if Mary is of any interest to the Church, then it is as the *human* exemplar and realization of the divine-human relationship. We do not deny the unique character of that relationship: there is only one Christ and one Paschal Mystery just as there is only one Jewish girl called Mary of Nazareth. Yet in spite of the uniqueness of this historical interaction and event, their relationship (and what it entails) constitutes the foundational and definitive mode of the God-human relationship. It is based and entirely dependent, especially in the Paschal perspective, on the relationship of two freedoms: that of God and that of Mary. In becoming historical (evolving in time) it also becomes typical, and in becoming typical it simultaneously draws the believer into its actuality, understood as a living memory.

The key feature in marian theological anthropology (and limited always to the Annunciation-Pentecost trajectory) is Mary's constitution into a theological person. Only in the God-Man is there identity between the "sublime actor and the role he has to play."<sup>125</sup> St. Thomas describes this identity as the identity of *processio* (within the Godhead) and *missio* (the sending of the Son to mankind).<sup>126</sup> There is then in

<sup>124</sup>See, e.g., St. Augustine, *De sancta virginitate* V, 5, PL 40: 399; S. Pintor, *Maria sorella nella fede* (Bologna: Ed. Dehoniane, 1979).

<sup>125</sup>See Th. Haecker, *Was ist der Mensch?* (2d ed.; Leipzig: Hegner, 1934), 128 f.

<sup>126</sup>St. Thomas of Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I<sup>a</sup> q 43, a 1-8.

Christ no duality of "being" and "seeming" (theory and praxis, intent and realization). The identity of person and mission, however, is no unverifiable abstraction. It is actualized in the humanity of Christ, who is the "Suffering Servant" come to do the will of the Father. In the context of identity between person and mission lies the key to Mary's theological person. The Yes of the Servant of the Lord is and becomes her true "inner form," that which closes more and more the gap between her person and her mission (from the Annunciation to Pentecost), so that more and more she becomes (1) the embodiment of Christ's mission and (2) the personal universalization of her mission. Thus she is actively present in all of salvation history in her Son's mission. It goes without saying that the "tragic breach between person and role in mission"<sup>127</sup> can be closed only by the Spirit, who is most interior to the "I" and at the same time the ultimately "socializing" power in salvation history. The Paschal Mystery, therefore, shapes and perfects Mary's theological personality through the dramatic schooling of her Son, in the light and under the guidance of the Spirit and within the kenotic trajectory of the economy of redemption. Yet, as we said for Christ, Mary's theological personality is no abstraction; it is embodied in Mary of Nazareth whom the "Marian Memoria" of the Church calls "Daughter of Zion" *because* she is in the first place a Jewish girl, whom we call "New Eve" *because* she is a real woman and mother, and whom we call "Servant of the Lord" *because* she is first and foremost a concrete believer.

## VII. THEMATIC CONCENTRATION AND CONCRETIZATIONS

After concentrating on the core marian message of the Paschal Mystery, its tightly knit fabric of ecclesial, trinitarian, soteriological and anthropological *memoria*, we would now like to untie and unfold the marian system of coordinates in

<sup>127</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*. I. *Prolegomena* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 646.



order to concentrate on and concretize some of its thematic aspects. The Church's memory of Mary, once established in its unity and connectedness, needs to be explicated and highlighted in its many facets. In this sense, the following reflections are an exercise in practical theology. No *memoria* can be concretely actualized and treasured as a whole; memory and attention are selective without being exclusive. Hence, the facets here presented stand for some of the salient traits contemporary theological consciousness may retrieve from the global "Marian Memoria." Many of them are immediately related to Mary's faith and its exemplary character; others stress specific aspects of her connectedness with Christ's economy of redemption.

### 1. The Healing Relationship

The earliest Christians saw in Jesus the Isaian suffering Servant. This "culminating model" of the First Testament undergirds and pervades the Passion, Death and Resurrection Theology of the four Gospels. Jesus' suffering is for the benefit of others, the economy of redemption grounded on vicarious suffering and understood concretely as directed to each one of us. Jesus' call to his disciples materializes in a vocation of service. Mary is presented as the "model Servant of God for others." She is, at the same time, the woman of the new creation. "Mary's 'Yes' in the Lukan Gospel shows Christians how to say 'yes' to the new covenant planned from all eternity, but her 'Yes' also enabled Jesus' 'Yes' to the Father's will in sending His Son as Servant."<sup>128</sup>

Hence, the Mother of suffering and sorrow is also the mother of compassion, concern and, to some degree, healing. Compassion is a source of life, said Father Koehler a long time ago;<sup>129</sup> what he meant was Mary's presence, ac-

<sup>128</sup>W. T. Brennan, "Mary the Servant of God and the New Creation," in *Mater Fidei et Fidelium: Collected Essays to Honor Théodore Koehler on His 80th Birthday*, ed. J. G. Roten, *Marian Library Studies* n.s. 17-23 (1991): 749.

<sup>129</sup>Th. Koehler, "Maternité Spirituelle de Marie," in *Maria I*, ed. H. du Manoir (Paris: Beauchesne, 1949), 584-585.

ceptance and assent to God's redemptive will at the foot of the Cross. It seems important to articulate in Mary's faith-journey the complementarity of sorrow and compassion, of suffering and healing. It is not difficult to trace Mary's experience of suffering during the Annunciation-Pentecost trajectory of her life. The call to radical change in the Annunciation; the cost of following that call: uprootedness, flight and exile, even, especially, the disconcerting reactions of her own son; and finally, the experience of his Passion and Death—these, and many other facets of her life, illustrate in vivid colors the promise of Simeon come true. Theologically speaking, they are an integral part of her kenotic vocation, and thus at the service and disposal of the "Suffering Servant" himself. Simultaneously, and *because* they are rooted in Christ's servant mission, Mary's suffering and sorrows take on a highly practical and existential meaning. Mary's suffering, because it is shaped in the mystery of suffering service, is essentially other-directed and becomes fruitful for others.

There are at least three dimensions of her fruitful suffering that can be pointed out:

(1) Her presence—to her Son, to John, to the incipient Church community—is a ministerial presence of listening, understanding, loving, accepting, accompanying. Mary's answer to suffering allows suffering people to be known, understood, accepted and loved. "In suffering and sorrow, what presses us most sharply is not pain (an organic response) but a sense of disconnection. Presence . . . secures connections which are in place and re-establishes them when they dissolve."<sup>130</sup>

<sup>130</sup>See the insightful treatment of this theme by Louis J. Cameli, "Mary, Mother of Sorrows: The Mystery of Comfort and Hope," *Chicago Studies* 27,1 (1988): 3-15, here p. 13. The renewed interest in the *misericordia* topic is documented in such publications as A. Amato (et al.), *La Madre della misericordia* (Rome: Editrice Rogate, 1987) and Johannes Stöhr, "Maria als Mutter der Barmherzigkeit. Perspektiven zur Geschichte der Theologie und Frömmigkeit," in *Christsein und marianische Spiritualität*, ed. Heinrich Petri (Regensburg: Verlag F. Pustet, 1984), 105-143.

(2) Mary's suffering matures into her ability to affirm, to give hope a practical expression in reality. As *Marialis Cultus* puts it: "... Mary of Nazareth, while completely submissive to the will of God, was far from being a timidly submissive woman. . . ." <sup>131</sup> There is no value in suffering as such and no sense in accepting passively its consequences. The Magnificat and Cana are beautiful examples of how the experience of suffering strengthens Mary's resolve to struggle against suffering in order to overcome it. Even if ultimately her struggling has meaning only in the "Suffering Servant" and his answer to her plea, Mary's "affirmative action" would seem to be a key element in any comprehensive concept of liberation theology.

(3) The most important dimension of Mary's suffering is surrender. She lets go (*Gelassenheit*) <sup>132</sup> both of her suffering and herself. It is in this kind of suffering that Mary's attitude attains a truly *freeing* quality. Because she surrenders into God, she reconciles her will with that of God and partakes in his fruitfulness.

Mary's suffering is thus intimately related to what we call the healing relationship. John Paul II, during his most recent visit to the United States, stressed this intimate connection when he said: "Let us learn the virtue of compassion from Her whose heart was pierced with a sword at the foot of the Cross." <sup>133</sup> Mary's maternal mediation is one of compassion, and compassion is one of the important attitudes in a healing relationship. This age of ours looks beaten and broken, wounded and helpless. Much of our apostolate and ministry should therefore be done in the name of healing relationships, of reconciliation and restoration: restoration of

<sup>131</sup>MC 37.

<sup>132</sup>Based on the concept of Ignatian indifference, Balthasar expounds on three variations of "letting go" by applying them to Mary, at least partially. See his "Drei Formen der Gelassenheit," *Geist und Leben* 54,4 (1981): 270-275.

<sup>133</sup>Pope John Paul II, in his homily during the Mass he celebrated Sept. 15, 1987, at the Los Angeles Coliseum. See: *Origins* 17, 17 (Oct. 8, 1987): 301-302.

dignity, restoration of integrity and trust, restoration of wholeness—moral, intellectual and spiritual.

## 2. The Social Dimensions

The different marian passages marking the Annunciation-Pentecost segment of salvation history illustrate the essentially social character and expression of faith. Mary appears constantly in a social environment; her faith-journey is punctuated with encounters and relationships, her faith experience shaped through continuous interaction with other persons. Think of the angel in the Annunciation scene, the Magnificat experience in the company of Elizabeth, the different types of interaction at Cana, the socially embarrassing rejection events, the hidden life with Joseph, the unique relationship with John, the manifestation of solidarity at the Cenacle, and, flowing from Mary's constitutive and archetypal role in the Church, the complementarity with Peter.

However, there is above all the forming and transforming influence her own Son has in the constitution of her theological personality. She, who is his mother and educator, becomes his disciple, to be educated into his own ways and according to the requirements of his own mission. This process which shapes Mary into the woman of the Cross and the mother figure of the pentecostal Church is unsparing and merciless; it stands under the sign of the sword prophesied by Simeon. Her faith, fashioned by the hand of the Son, is stripped of light and consolation and made open and ready to transform the Mother of God into the mother of the faithful. But there is also the dialectical encounter between her and the Angel—ultimately the encounter between infinite and finite freedom—to ascertain that all the rules of the grammar of assent be scrupulously followed. There is the reflective sharing of the Annunciation event in the company of another blessed woman and the extension of this Magnificat-experience to the whole of concrete historical humanity, specifically the dispossessed. Cana stands for practical faith in the face of doubt and despair; it is also the practical confirmation of the Magnificat charter.

The theological significance of the marriage between Mary and Joseph needs to be further explored. Joseph shares in the virginal fruitfulness of his wife, bringing to completion marriage and its significance in the first testament. Pointing backward, their marriage redefines fecundity in the tradition of Abraham, who "gave God all the glory and understood his fruitfulness as 'a resurrection from the dead,' and thus allowed God to take over."<sup>134</sup> The fullness of time, and therefore the beginning of the new and definitive life and the new ways to share and pass it on, speaks in and through Joseph and Mary both to married people and celibates in the Church of God. Contemplating the relationship of Mary and John we look forward and no longer backward. Together (as Mother and son) they symbolize as Church the transcendence of life understood as the succession of generations and the alternation of birth and death. According to Balthasar, "human fruitfulness has here finally raised itself above the sphere of sexuality, but not in the direction of hostility toward the body and 'spiritualization': instead it is in the direction of a Church whose core is formed by the eucharistic link between Christ and his 'bride' and 'wife.'"<sup>135</sup>

The Synoptics do not relate Mary's presence at the Cross, and she does not stand out from the people gathered to receive the Holy Spirit. Her solidarity is so real that it almost turns into inconspicuousness. To be the "inner form" of the Church (*Przywara*) Mary has to disappear into the Church; her presence can be real and all-pervasive only if it succeeds in being empathic. Finally, both Peter and Mary are in a sense co-extensive with the Church, Mary in her motherliness and Peter as representative of the Church in his person. Yet Mary precedes Peter with her Yes, and the form of her faith serves as the model of all being and acting of the Church: "For both these reasons the Petrine universality is subject to the formative influence of the Marian, but not vice versa."<sup>136</sup>

<sup>134</sup>Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 52.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>136</sup>Balthasar, *The Office of Peter*, 206.

The numerous relationships mentioned here attest to the different aspects of the social dimension of faith: its dialogical and communicative character, but also its facets of solidarity and fruitfulness. Yet, there is an even more fundamental pattern in Mary's faith, typical for the Paschal Cycle. Mary's evolution in faith is contained within the parameter of "de-privatization" and "resocialization." Mary's *fiat* is more than the joyous confirmation of a surprising encounter with the envoy of God. It marks the beginning of a personal faith-development which takes her ever further away from herself on to a mission which is not hers, but which she wholeheartedly accepts in faith. This de-privatization for the sake of her Son's mission is not limited to the realm of action, for it touches the very core of her personality. It is as if since Calvary Mary's personality were assimilated and universalized in and through the Church. Her personality is not annihilated but acquires in the mission of her Son the "personality" (as creature) of that mission. That is why we can say that Mary's whole faith-experience is an expropriated experience for the benefit of all and, progressively, "every shade of personal intimacy is taken from her, to be increasingly applied to the good of the Church and of Christians."<sup>137</sup>

Since faith has necessarily a social dimension, this in turn signifies that the authentic Christian faith-experience is ecclesial because it is marian. It must therefore be affirmed that a genuine *sentire cum Maria* cannot be separated from an honest *sentire cum Ecclesia*. The appropriation and acceptance of Mary's religious sensitivity gradually transforms the Christian into the *anima ecclesiastica*.

### 3. The Feminine Line

Already *Marialis Cultus* and, especially, *Redemptoris Mater* and *Mulieris Dignitatem* bring to the fore the strong feminine accentuation of the economy of redemption. The

<sup>137</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, I. *Seeing the Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 341.

"Sign of the Woman" becomes the essential "sign of the times."<sup>138</sup> She is again a "sign of the times" in *Mulieris Dignitatem's* attempt to establish a "perichoresis" between Woman-Mary-Church, an attempt which results in a deeper understanding of each one of them in the light and mirror of the other two. More specifically, Mary is viewed as the link between Woman and Church, since in her mediation between the two the strongly feminine character of the Church is re-affirmed. On the other hand, the self-understanding and identity of woman receives its ultimate dignity and grandeur from the *memoria* of the Church about itself. In a certain sense it could be said that the theological anthropology undergirding *Mulieris Dignitatem*, because it is theological, has very definite feminine characteristics. One of the key sentences regarding feminine self-understanding says: "Woman can only find herself by giving love to others."<sup>139</sup> Yet this statement, characterizing the ethical dimension of a woman's vocation, is applicable to man also, since it is based on the ontological affirmation about the human person as such that "man cannot fully find himself [meaning man and woman] except through a sincere gift of self."<sup>140</sup>

Gift of self is at the core of the Paschal Mystery and has the twofold meaning of God "emptying himself" in his Son, the "Suffering Servant," and Mary-Church reciprocating the "gift of self" in a creaturely mode. Thus, what we call the feminine line of salvation is not in the first place based on the *feminine* significance of these two modalities ("gift of self" in God and gift of self in the human person), but on the fact (historical dimension) that it was concretized in this woman Mary. Moreover, the feminine line of salvation further signifies that in the *memoria Domini*, constituted by the first communities and developed by the Church tradition, the creative aspect of the "gift of self" in the Paschal Mystery has been viewed and cultivated as a feminine mys-

<sup>138</sup>Ratzinger, in his introduction to *Mary, God's Yes to Man*, 30.

<sup>139</sup>MD 30.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid.

tery, insofar as it refers to the anthropological constitution of the human person as such.

This also means (almost ironically, we should say) that if it were true that the *memoria Domini* was constituted primarily by men, they did not shy away from shaping the very essence of their belief into a deeply feminine configuration. Their religious semantics, rooted in the first testament, were factually confirmed in Mary, and most certainly also reflected the understanding they had of their own role in the unfolding Paschal Mystery. And so the Paschal Mystery became a "feminine" mystery, where Mary holds the threefold role of being the concrete woman, the sign of femininity and motherliness, and, at the same time, of transcending both in a spiritual commitment which encompasses, in a fundamental human mode, both masculinity and femininity. Eve, the "Daughter of Zion," and the "Woman" in John—to mention only some aspects of the "feminine" mystery—are constitutive elements of the Church's memory, but only because the *real woman Mary* corroborates and ultimately constitutes their credibility through her attitude and action as human person and woman.

It seems to me that we could draw four major conclusions from the feminine mystery of salvation:

(1) Ultimately only a woman is able to *concretize*, in the biological and human sense of that word. Thus the incarnational foundation of Christianity is intimately and decisively linked to the feminine. Mary's Yes is the archetypal Christian pledge to the *present*, to the world and to culture. Without the feminine concretizing, Christianity degenerates to the mysterious path inward, the flight from self and reality, the absolute dialogical reality or to promethean activism and self-projection.

(2) In the concrete woman, Mary signifies both the personal/individual character of God's salvific action and the *limitative* manner in which it is received. The economy of redemption and salvation history is directed to the whole human race, but it originates in one human being as personal reality as well as personal commitment and mission.



Yet this happened in a typically human, limitative way. Mary is woman (happens to be woman!) and acquiesced to God's plan as a woman, and so, to a certain degree, in an exclusive and limited way. Since the human person can only be represented as woman or man, the individual and personal realization of salvation will always lack human completion and thus postulates complementarity and conveys interdependence of both.

(3) Because of the so called *dyadic*<sup>141</sup> structure of woman, the *social dimension* of the Paschal Mystery is warranted and assured. Man is a simple principle (word, seed); woman represents a twofold principle: she is, in the process of generating life, both response and common fruit. Again, this reality is exemplified in Mary who says Yes and gives birth to Jesus, who accepts the dramatic logic of passion and death only to become with John the archetypal cell of the Church. In both instances the gift of self, which is no longer only the gift of self, materializes in the gift to others. The social dimension of Incarnation-Salvation is an integral part of the personal "realization" of salvation and is typified as such in the encompassing feminine reality of Mary.

(4) A fourth consequence lies in the meaning of Mary's simultaneous virginity and motherhood. The mysterious personal uniqueness of this simultaneity in Mary takes on a significant meaning for the self-understanding of the Church as Mother and Virgin: it articulates the simultaneity and interdependence of total dedication to God (virginity) and fruitfulness (motherhood) in the gift of self. Again, the feminine characteristics of virginity and motherhood reflect the basic religious behavioral patterns to receive and pass on the Paschal Mystery. Finally, all of these four conclusions also stress the truly *prophetic* character of the feminine line of salvation history.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>141</sup>Woman is considered as "double principle," meaning response (to man) and common fruit (with him). Balthasar explains this in *Theodramatik* II/2 (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1978), 261-263.

<sup>142</sup>MD 29.

Many other facets of the "sign of the woman" could be pointed out. It would be rewarding, for example, to compare Mary's relationships with women and those with men during the Paschal Cycle. Her relation with men seems to be essentially goal-oriented (family, human needs, the redemptive work, the constitution of the archetypal ecclesial community), whereas the rare encounters with fellow women (Elizabeth, perhaps the women under the cross) reflect a more personal and reflective mood, where sharing, solidarity and support seem to dominate. As the woman Mary, she has a concretely connecting, facilitating and reconciling function (Cana, Pentecost, Petrine principle)—she points out the deeper meaning of things (Magnificat, pondering, Cana). Finally, as *that* woman Mary, she assures continuity and represents fidelity in the mission of her Son.

There remains the delicate problem of whether and how Mary can be model for contemporary women. Mary's exemplarity should not be stretched and overloaded, the result of which would be the devaluation of her impact. On the other hand, her character as an exemplar should not be ideologically exploited. In short, Mary has a threefold message for women: (1) she represents feminine dignity at its highest degree due to her place in salvation history; (2) she serves as the ultimate model of what a theological personality means, in which sense she serves as exemplar of both women and men; and (3) she gives her maternal mediation to women as well.

#### 4. The Faith Imprint

##### *The Basic Structure of Religious Personality*

The Annunciation-Easter-Pentecost cycle of Mary's life articulates the basic structure of religious personality, and, since Mary is the first disciple of Christ and simultaneously our mother in faith, the structure of her religious personality takes on the character and meaning of the Rahnerian "Existential" for the constitution and development of our own religious personality.

Based on the foundational premise of God's free divine self-giving, religious personality is constituted in the Annunciation Event which signifies free acceptance as a "lasting readiness to accept the Transcendent."<sup>143</sup> This implies the readiness to accept that which is experienced in one's concrete life situation as God's will and the lasting faith in the ultimate yet mysterious benevolence of the incarnate transcendent God.

The fundamental attitude of acceptance unfolds and is further articulated in what Van Kaam calls self-actualizing surrender, fidelity and creative care.<sup>144</sup> (1) It is of paramount importance to understand that Mary's education through her Son in the various rejection scenes and in her implication in his redemptive ministry (Cana and Cross) is both self-surrender and self-actualization. This is based on the fundamental anthropological principle undergirding *Mulieris Dignitatem* according to which self-realization can only be achieved "through a sincere gift of self."<sup>145</sup> Growth in maturity implies the kenotic experience, the readiness to change gradually or to be changed into the constant participation in the dynamically developing presence of the Transcendent in us. Thus, the religious mode gradually takes over and eventually becomes the dominant mode in one's existential project.

(2) As in Mary's existence, the initial Yes will have to grow into a permanent *Fiat*-structure which corresponds to the attitude of fidelity. Without this "all-pervading attitude of unconditional loyalty the religious mode of life is psychologically impossible."<sup>146</sup> True religious commitment, because

<sup>143</sup>See Adrian van Kaam on the "lasting readiness" and the unifying "surrenders" to the transcendent in "Dynamics of Spiritual Self-direction," *Spiritual Life* 21,4 (1975): 261-282.

<sup>144</sup>For more specific information on self-actualizing surrender, fidelity and creative care, see A. van Kaam's early and foundational book *Religion and Personality* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), esp. 139-141.

<sup>145</sup>MD 7, citing *Gaudium et Spes*, 24.

<sup>146</sup>Van Kaam, *Religion and Personality*, 140.

it is my acceptance of God's project for me, needs continuity and duration. It has to become my personal life story. Fidelity expresses the readiness for every and any effort and sacrifice necessary to preserve the original commitment.

(3) And again, as in Mary's attitude at Cana, under the Cross and at Pentecost, the total acceptance of the Divine necessarily promotes and assures the attitude of creative care. The gift of oneself leads to the gift for others, patterned ultimately on the very self-emptying of Christ himself and reactualized in the human mode by Mary's being given to John and to the whole Church. Consequently, creative care is not the pelagian backlash of the initial *fiat*, but an integral part of the original commitment, and its creative dimension is as much a part of God's initiative as the result of our own involvement. According to Van Kaam the attitude of creative care is "the readiness to care for the reality in which the Transcendent is revealed within the world of the religious person."<sup>147</sup> The de-centering of oneself and re-centering in somebody else, the de-privatizing of one's life in order to be re-socialized within the parameter of a God-received mission, bring the true meaning of "creative care" into focus. Ultimately, true creative care is the powerful vehicle of Incarnation because, in its fundamental gesture, there is the need to pass on and to let go.

#### *The Foundational Faith-Experience of the Church*

The time of the Church coincides with the history of all the legitimate experiences of Christ and his message. Although legitimate, they do not exist without tension, opposition, occasional ruptures and the continual need for reconciliation. Among the most prominent of these we find the experience and tradition of James: the need for law, history and culture, the becoming of the Church in a given space and at a set time. We see the charismatic experience of Paul: the Church and its faith tradition closely linked to individual vocation and personal commitment, Church as ex-

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., 141.

pression of freedom in grace and constant renewal in the Spirit. There is the Petrine tradition, too: faith experience within the setting of gubernatorial structures, a Church to identify the masses, the institution to assure a visible faith presence and the organization to prevent generosity and care from tiring out too soon. Yet, there is no life without love; there is no faith-tradition without the faith-experience of John: we are to remain in Christ's love, remain and endure both with and against the world, remain and endure in the narrow space between passion and resurrection.<sup>148</sup>

All these traditions in the experience of Christ's legacy to his followers complement each other; they deepen and enrich one another, because they are grounded in an even more fundamental faith-experience, the marian faith-experience. Between Annunciation and Pentecost Mary stamped the foundational faith-experience of the Church. Mary is the primitive cell of the Church, on which the incarnate word can be imprinted without resistance. She is the encompassing motherliness of the Church within which truth no longer disunites and charity no longer segregates. In all this she is blessed because her existence is filled to the brim with hearing the word of God and keeping it. Her womanly "experience begins with the *tactus*, sensing by touching, and then unfolds from it only to return to it, to the point of developing a spiritual perception and sense of touch for all that pertains to her Son."<sup>149</sup> And in this, in her journey to the ultimate maturity of faith experience, the very ground rule of all and any Church tradition is founded and established.

### *The Dynamics of Faith-Experience*

Contemplating Mary's faith, we are able to detect three different and complementary dynamic principles which helped to shape her faith.

<sup>148</sup>Concerning these various archetypal faith experiences and the corresponding ecclesial traditions they initiated, see, e.g., Balthasar, *The Office of Peter*, 308-331.

<sup>149</sup>Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord . . . I: Seeing the Form*, 362.

Mary's faith is first of all that of Israel, nurtured by generations of believers in the spirit and in the tradition of Abraham. Its typical structure is also Mary's initial faith-configuration. This faith-tradition was perceived by Mary as a stream of life that literally passed through her, permeating and pervading her. But tradition is not an impersonal stream of life that devours its own children. In the contact with Mary the faith of Israel takes on some of her own characteristics, e.g., through her rendering of the Hannah-Song in the Magnificat. The faith-tradition she was exposed to became a powerful agent in the shaping of her own specific faith-profile.

But there is also the more immediate exposure to God's direct call at the Annunciation. It implies rupture with tradition and a new and different personalization of the God-human relationship, without, however, destroying her faith-memory patterned according to the received model. Thanks to her full Yes and her wholehearted self-giving, Mary becomes the clean and pure tablet on which the Father is able, through the Spirit, to engrave the totality of his Word. In the process, a new faith-memory is constituted. This second stage is radically different, but it nonetheless builds on the first.

From this point on, Mary's faith is contoured essentially by the ongoing process of the incarnation, guided by the Spirit and articulated in her Son. What marks Mary's faith are the persons and events representing the progressive realization of Christ's coming into history. Her faith becomes more and more outdirected, i.e., generous giving and growth in that giving.

Hence, the particular structure and dynamics of Mary's faith seem to consist in (1) a concrete and formative faith-context (tradition), (2) the constitution of a personally actualized faith-memory (personal experience of the God-relationship), and (3) the ongoing incarnational thrust perceived in the unfolding of God's salvific intent in the here and now. All of these elements are concentrated in the Annunciation but are gradually explicated in Mary's life and

mission. And it is the incarnational thrust that makes Mary's faith progressively develop into the Church's faith. Although constantly under the influence of the Holy Spirit, it is nonetheless enriched with Mary's own typical faith-memory.

Since Mary is the faith-memory of the Church, a similar dynamic occurs in the development of the individual Christian's faith. The Christian considers himself as part of the source that flows in the stream of tradition and as part of the stream that carries the source. But he is aware of the utmost importance of his personal history in the shaping of his faith-profile. Finally, he knows that faith can be alive and fruitful if it enters ever deeper into history as the proper *locus incarnationis*. Only under these conditions will the past, present and future be present in the very structure of our faith. True Christian *memoria* is also *spes*, and since the divine presence embraces all dimensions of time, our faith-memory is also our testament for the present and for the future.

## 5. Marian Paradigms of Modernity

### *The Rediscovery of the "Second Naïveté"*<sup>150</sup>

Whoever reflects on the journey of Mary will notice the tremendous discrepancy between the epochal significance of her person and mission and the overall, less than extraordinary, almost banal personal history and lifestyle, the plain social and cultural setting of her historical figure. And since Mary's *memoria* is primarily and essentially the Church's *memoria* about Mary we have to conclude that the first communities (and subsequent centuries) were able to read

<sup>150</sup>"Second naïveté" is the attempt to retrieve and resonate with the original meaning of reality; yet, as Ricoeur reminds us, "it is by interpreting that we can hear again." It takes into consideration the indispensable contribution of hermeneutics to attain the second immediacy—after the precritical form of immediate belief—of the deeper or original meaning of things. In short: "This second naïveté aims to be the postcritical equivalent of the precritical hierophany" (Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1967], 352).

the deeper meaning of things, always in the light and in view of a better reading and assimilation of the salvific memory of Christ. They were gifted deconstructionists, able to disassemble factual reality in order to discover the second dimension of reality, which can be grasped only by people capable of the "second naïveté," as Ricoeur calls it. In applying "second naïveté" (wonderment that transcends the apparent reality of things), they pinpointed the truly sacramental character of Mary's life-episodes.

But what historically led to the discovery of Mary's *memoria*—we call it "second naïveté"—was something abundantly practiced by Mary herself: "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk. 2,19). She practiced *symbolleîn*, which meant that she compared and hence considered things from all possible angles. She was continually involved in mysteries the sense of which was not open to her, although she knew that she was to conceive a Son, not by man but by the Holy Spirit. Mary's pondering helped her to relate the overpowering messages she received to the inconspicuousness of her experience, until the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost confirmed much of her pondering and put it in perspective, as he shaped it into a coherent *memoria*. And it is this memory that the first communities retrieved from among the inconspicuousness and ordinariness of Mary's life.

Hence, "second naïveté" means that reality as a whole has sacramental character for the faith-trained eye. It also signifies that human experience is an important locus of God's self-revelation. On the other hand, Mary's own "second naïveté," her pondering, may be of precious help to desentimentalize our personal religious culture. Sentimentalism, according to Ann Douglas,<sup>151</sup> is a heresy of distraction from life's deeper mysteries, of privatization, of titillation

<sup>151</sup>Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 254. For a spiritual/theological interpretation of Douglas' study of 19th-century Victorian society see Matthew Fox, "On Desentimentalizing Spirituality," *Spirituality Today* 30, 1 (1978): 64-76.



and generous self-indulgence. De-sentimentalizing theology, for example, could mean attempting to close the gap between theology and spirituality which often reflects schizophrenia within the religious personality itself. The unfortunate consequences can easily be pinpointed: horizontalism versus verticalism, positivism versus fundamentalism, integrism versus progressism.

### *The Need for Epochal Significance*

It is apparent that the Annunciation-Easter-Pentecost sequence has epochal significance. What it means is a quantum leap in the understanding of life and destiny, as well as human self-understanding. Yet, the epochal significance of the *memoria Domini* and its marian dimension has to be retrieved for each age and every generation anew. Unless we succeed in pointing out its actuality for this period in history, there will be, at least in our consciousness, no epochal significance.

Related to our topic, there are at least three titles of Mary, ancient and rich in content, which possess a high symbolic density and therefore have the ability to span time and cultures. They also represent the cornerstones of the Second Vatican Council's discourse on Mary and woman. Last and most important, they illustrate Mary's role in the history of salvation. We are referring to these three titles: "New Eve," "Daughter of Zion" and "Servant of the Lord."<sup>152</sup> They have epochal significance because they exemplify three of the most important dimensions of human existence: life, history and the just rapport between God and humanity.

(1) The "New Eve" image is among the earliest images of Mary in tradition; it is possibly implied in the scriptural

<sup>152</sup>It is with these figures that C. Romeo articulates the various aspects of Mary's feminine profile in *Lumen Gentium*, Chap. VIII. See C. Romeo, "Promozione del femminile nella funzione storico-salvifica e nei privilegi di Maria alla luce del Cap. VIII della Costituzione Dogmatica 'Lumen Gentium' e dell'Esortazione Apostolica 'Marialis Cultus'" (Doctoral dissertation, Marianum, Rome, 1986), 105-134.

readings of the woman at Cana, on Calvary and in Revelation. It focuses in a particular way on the Annunciation, contrasting obedience and disobedience. But most especially it opposes the mother of the living, Eva, with Mary-Church as the new mother of the living. "Life through Mary," as opposed to Death through Eve,<sup>153</sup> rests on her, because in the manner of a New Eve she placed her faith "not in the serpent of old but in God's messenger without waivering in doubt."<sup>154</sup> It would seem that this powerful image of the Church's *memoria* about Mary could have epochal significance in offering profound insights into life's deeper meaning, value and various expressions. That is not to say that Mary, for example, should be politicized as the "green Madonna"; her significance is to illustrate and explicate the fundamental values of life upon which all and any healthy political program ought to be based.

(2) I would like to propose the figure of the "Daughter of Zion" as a powerful symbol to illustrate the Church's self-understanding as the great pilgrim in history. "After a long period of waiting the times are fulfilled in her, the Daughter of Zion," says the Second Vatican Council, "and the new plan of salvation is established, when the Son of God has taken human nature from her, that he might in the mysteries of his flesh free man from sin."<sup>155</sup> She is a figure of liberation and freedom; she stands for hope, is identified with the *anawim* ("the little remnant"), gathers the people around her and embodies indestructible faith in the messianic promise. She is again the woman at Cana and on Calvary. In her the Church possesses the certitude (of faith) to be carrier of salvation. This conviction of hope is based on the image of the "exalted Daughter of Zion" who, by bridging the Old and the New Covenant, represents the symbiosis of expectation and fulfillment.

<sup>153</sup>LG 56.

<sup>154</sup>LG 63.

<sup>155</sup>LG 55.

(3) "The Servant of the Lord" is the image which best expresses the right correspondence between God and human beings. Based on the Old Testament meaning of the term "servant," Servant of the Lord exemplifies a love-relationship in which the human person has been chosen, called and formed in the love of God, only to answer with the affection of total dedication. We are referring to a dynamic correspondence in this relationship, where love is service patterned on the mission of the Servant of God himself. Thus the just accord between God and humanity is one of encounter which blossoms into mission: the "Servant of the Lord" is both Mother and Associate. Her fundamental decision is one of acceptance of God's self-communication and not the human construction of pseudo-religious reality; it develops and evolves in self-actualizing surrender, fidelity and creative care.<sup>156</sup>

The epochal significance of the marian dimensions may be evident to the Church in her memory of the past. These dimensions need to be translated into categories of contemporary mentality and existential concern. John Macquarrie has undertaken such a task in dialectically opposing one of the key concepts of the Enlightenment with marian values. Modernity in its practical political formulation is based on the French Revolution's summary of enlightened virtues: liberty, equality, fraternity. Mary in turn represents the personification of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love.<sup>157</sup> The development and result of this study does not really import in this context. Yet it is interesting to note how much the threefold mystery of the Incarnation, the Passion and the Resurrection undergirds the revolutionary motto of political enlightenment. The Paschal Mystery is the connecting and interweaving force which makes freedom to be free-

<sup>156</sup>This terminology, typical of Van Kaam's "Formative Spirituality," could be rendered in a marian perspective with the various feminine types C. Romeo has located in MC (free woman, strong, faithful, and responsible/accountable): see Romeo's diss., pp. 135-167.

<sup>157</sup>Macquarrie, *Mary for All Christians*, 121.

dom for the pursuit of equality in view of fraternity. Enlightenment philosophy is based on dissociative reason stressing rights, privacy (individualism) and romantic socialism. Love alone can overcome disruptive and mutually exclusive values; it is grounded in the grace and strength flowing from God's crucified and glorified love. A rather forgotten Church tradition entrusts this deepest of Christian mysteries to the three Marys and their feminine care: Mary of Bethany, Mary the Mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The three Marys constitute the ecclesial acceptance of the fundamental moments of the Christ event: the Incarnation, the Passion and the Resurrection.<sup>158</sup>

#### VIII. "O LADY OF THE WAY AND OF CONNECTEDNESS"

I would like to conclude with the famous stanza from Charles Péguy's "Tapisserie de Notre Dame."<sup>159</sup>

Maîtresse de la voie et du raccordement,  
O miroir de justice et de justesse d'âme,  
Vous seule vous savez, o grande Dame  
Ce que c'est que la halte et le recueillement . . .

(O lady of the way and of connectedness,  
O mirror of justice and precision of soul,  
You alone know, O great our lady,  
What it means to remain and to ponder.)

Mary, in Péguy's understanding, is the measure of the Christian's understanding of self. Being remembered as the

<sup>158</sup>A well-known *topos* in Medieval mystery plays and in iconography, the figure of the three Marys was recently used in the above-mentioned sense by such noted authors as R. Laurentin, H. U. v. Balthasar and R. Spaemann. See for further comments J. L. Heft, "Marian Themes in the Writings of Hans Urs von Balthasar," *Marian Studies* 31 (1980): 61.

<sup>159</sup>Ch. Péguy, *Oeuvres poétiques complètes* (Paris: Pléiade, 1941), 698 (trans. by E. Leiva-Merikakis; cited in Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord . . . I. Seeing the Form*, 363).

way, Mary reflects once again her own journey and pilgrimage in faith, the shaping, structuring and perfecting of her religious personality during the *kairos* that was hers in the time span between the Annunciation and Pentecost. Péguy's *raccordement* points out that Mary's way was and is the connecting and interrelating way of her Yes, a Yes that connects Incarnation and Cross, Christ and the Church, but even more essentially ties her self inseparably to Christ as well as to the Church. She is the "mirror of justice," meaning the perfectly redeemed, the spotless mirror of the salvific event and the *memoria Christi* as it unfolds in Christ's Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection. Yet Mary is "Mirror of Justice" also in the Paschal and concrete meaning of justice promised to the poor, the dispossessed and the lowly ones. And because Mary is "mirror of justice" she also possesses the *justesse d'âme* (inappropriately rendered as "precision of soul"), the unerring sensitivity for a just and rightful relationship with God; she becomes and is the incarnate virtue of religion. Finally, the remaining, dwelling and recollecting (*halte et recueillement*) marks the remarkable counterpoint to the Faustian understanding of remaining and dwelling. Mary's remaining and dwelling is not Faust's greedy grasp for eternity in time, but the serene pondering and contemplation of redemption as the ultimate liberation from the dialectical tension between eternity and time. And thus her maternal presence stands forever for the peace and joy of the Paschal Mysteries.