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John Radano

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## TOWARD THE GREAT JUBILEE 2000: MARY AND THE SEARCH FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

*John A. Radano\**

The theme of this year's program of the Mariological Society is taken from the recent encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* of Pope John Paul II, and specifically from one of five points which he cites therein as "the areas in need of fuller study before a true consensus of faith can be achieved,"<sup>1</sup> namely: "The Virgin Mary, as Mother of God and Icon of the Church, the spiritual Mother who intercedes for Christ's disciples and for all humanity."<sup>2</sup> The focus is Mary and Christian unity in relationship to the millennial documents of Pope John Paul II. I have been asked to give an overview of the ecumenical and Marian dimensions of the preparation program for the third millennium, and also some ecumenical perspectives on the theme.

This presentation is divided into two parts. In *Part I*, there is a brief overview of the ecumenical and Marian dimensions of the preparations leading up to the year 2000, being organized for the Catholic Church as inspired by *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*.<sup>3</sup> *Part II* is a survey of developments in regard to Mary in three contexts in which, according to Chapter 2 of *Ut Unum Sint*, ecumenical progress has been made as we approach the year 2000. These approaches are the multilateral

\*Msgr. John A. Radano (Archdiocese of Newark, NJ) is head of the Western Section of the Pontifical Council for Promotion of Christian Unity and editor of its publication, *Information Service*.

<sup>1</sup>Encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint* of the Holy Father John Paul II, on commitment to ecumenism (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), no. 79.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Lay Faithful on Preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994; hereafter: TMA).

dialogue "Faith and Order"; the mutual recognition by Orthodox and Catholic churches that they are sister churches; and the recent common Christological declarations between the Catholic church and the Oriental Orthodox churches.

## **I. Ecumenical and Marian Dimensions of Preparations for the Year 2000**

In his apostolic letter of 1994, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, the pope illustrates the extent to which this coming Great Jubilee has been a part of his vision even since his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979). He has suggested often that the time leading up to it be lived as a "new Advent."<sup>4</sup> "In fact," he says, "preparing for the Year 2000 has become as it were a hermeneutical key of my Pontificate."<sup>5</sup>

In *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, the pope looks at the coming Great Jubilee in a broad historical perspective—with openness to impulses of Divine Providence;<sup>6</sup> with a sense of gratitude and responsibility at all that has happened since the birth of Christ, especially between the years 1000 and 2000; and, in a particular way, with the eyes of faith "searching out whatever bears witness . . . to God's intervention in human affairs."<sup>7</sup>

From this perspective the Second Vatican Council has a special place as "a providential event, whereby the Church began the more immediate preparation for the Jubilee of the Second Millennium."<sup>8</sup> According to *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, the best preparation for the new millennium "therefore can only

<sup>4</sup>TMA, no. 23. Also, in his recent annual letter to Priests for Holy Thursday, 1997, the Pope reminded us of the way his earlier encyclicals are also millennial documents. He recalled that the immediate preparation for the Third Millennium outlined in TMA should be dedicated to the Holy Trinity. It would conclude the Second Millennium "with a great song of praise to the Holy Trinity." In this light he called to mind the trilogy *Redemptoris Hominum*, *Dominum et Vivificantem* and *Dives in Misericordia*, and exhorted the priests to "meditate on these once again during these three years" (Letter of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II to Priests for Holy Thursday, 1997 [Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997], no. 6).

<sup>5</sup>TMA, no. 23.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. TMA, no. 17.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>TMA, no. 18.

be expressed in a renewed commitment to apply, as faithfully as possible, the teachings of Vatican II to the life of every individual and of the whole Church."<sup>9</sup> The encyclical refers both to Mary and to ecumenism. In regard to Mary, it sees the Holy Years celebrated in the latter part of this century as part of the stream of preparation for the year 2000; the Marian year (1987-88) was especially an anticipation of the Great Jubilee, a significant step in the preparation for it, which contained "much of what will find fuller expression in the Year 2000."<sup>10</sup> It "took place only shortly before the events of 1989."<sup>11</sup> The encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, published on that occasion, drew attention to the Vatican Council's teaching on Mary.<sup>12</sup> And in preparing for the Holy Year 2000, according to *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, the Blessed Virgin will be as it were "'indirectly' present in the whole preparatory phase" for the Great Jubilee (no. 43) and contemplated in each of the last three years of the twentieth century.

Ecumenism, often described by John Paul II as a pastoral priority,<sup>13</sup> is a major concern of *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* and is seen in a sweeping historical and theological perspective, because "in the course of the thousand years now drawing to a close, even more than in the first millennium, ecclesial communion has been painfully wounded" and "such wounds openly contradict the will of Christ and are a cause of scandal to the world."<sup>14</sup> Thus the approaching end of the second millennium demands of us an examination of conscience and fitting ecumenical initiatives so that "we can celebrate the Great Jubilee, if not completely united, at least much closer to overcoming the divisions of the second millennium."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup>TMA, no. 20.

<sup>10</sup>TMA, no. 26.

<sup>11</sup>TMA, no. 27.

<sup>12</sup>The encyclical was in large measure a commentary on Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*.

<sup>13</sup>E.g., "Address to the Cardinals and the Roman Curia (June 28, 1985)," AAS 77, 4 (1985): 1151 (referred to in *Ut Unum Sint*, no. 99).

<sup>14</sup>TMA, no. 34.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

In order to implement the preparations called for by *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, and to provide materials to assist the local churches throughout the world, the Holy See has set up a "Central Committee for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000" whose President is Cardinal Roger Etchegaray (also President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace). The Central Committee is accompanied by a number of other commissions established to implement specific themes referred to in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*. Among these is an Ecumenical Commission (with 11 Catholic members and 6 invited fraternal delegates—representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Methodist Council), as well as a Theological Commission.

The Central Committee has published "Preparing for the Year 2000 . . . the Vatican's Official Commentary on How to Prepare for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000."<sup>16</sup> It unfolds the views of *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* in essays under three headings: (1) Biblical-historical, (2) Theological, and (3) Pastoral. Reference is made within some of the essays to both Mary and ecumenism.

Concerning Mary, the official commentary, under its theological section, includes an essay entitled "Mary: The Perennial Model for the Church's Action," highlighting the role of Mary in each of the final three preparatory years. It presents Mary (in light of *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*) as "a continuing presence in the way towards the year 2000." It sets the spirit for the place of Mary envisioned in these preparation plans. This period of three years, it states,

will unfold under the insignia of Marian devotion, and the Church, contemplating her icon, the Holy Virgin, will find in her the perfect model of the three theological virtues. In fact as the Council declared: "The Mother

<sup>16</sup>*Preparing for the Year 2000: Pope John Paul II on How to Prepare for the Next Thousand Years—The Third Millennium—of Christianity: The Complete Text of John Paul II's Apostolic Letter Tertio Millennio Adveniente (As the Third Millennium Draws Near) and The Vatican's Official Commentary on How to Prepare for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000* (New Hope, KY: Urbi et Orbi Communications, 1996).

of God is the figure of the Church . . . in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ," and "in the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle" (LG, nos. 63, 65).<sup>17</sup>

Other chapters in the commentary, while focusing on other themes, also refer briefly to Mary as a model of faith put into practice, as the perfect disciple of Christ, and (citing *Lumen Gentium*, no. 65) as Model of the Church.<sup>18</sup>

For the first year of preparation (1997), the Theological-Historical Commission of the Central Committee has published a catechetical text entitled *Jesus Christ, Word of the Father: The Saviour of the World*,<sup>19</sup> providing catechetical materials in ten chapters. The tenth, entitled "Mary, the Mother of Jesus," includes some of the appropriate themes for 1997: Mary, Maternal presence in History; Favored Daughter of the Father; Mother, Disciple and Associate of the Son; Shrine of the Holy Spirit; Model and Teacher of Holiness; Marian Spirituality and Entrustment to Mary.

Furthermore, in the Official Commentary, a broader perspective is added by Cardinal Francis Arinze, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. In his essay, which stresses the need to overcome divisions and religious indifference, he refers to Mary in an interreligious context, including her in his considerations. "Mary can and does," he says,

have a key role today in helping humanity to overcome divisions and religious indifference. She is a prominent daughter of Zion. She is the Mother of Christians. She is honored by Muslims as a Virgin always holy and obedient to God. Even among religions that do not know her expressly, like Hinduism, Buddhism and some Traditional Religions, there is an unconscious seeking of her and of her motherly and mediatory role

<sup>17</sup>Antonio Miralles, "Mary: The Perennial Model of the Church's Activity," in *Preparing for the Year 2000*, 165.

<sup>18</sup>Rino Fisichella, "The Jubilee Year: Sign of Faith That Never Grows Tired of Seeking," in *Preparing for the Year 2000*, 149; Georges Cottier, "The Church before Conversion: The Most Significant Fruit of the Holy Year," in *Preparing for the Year 2000*, 153.

<sup>19</sup>*Jesus Christ, Word of the Father: The Saviour of the World* (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1997).

with the Divine Omnipotence and Transcendence. . . . Christians should not forget that the Virgin Mary is honored by some believers and that she will help make inter-religious contacts fruitful.<sup>20</sup>

Concerning ecumenism, the Official Commentary includes in its pastoral section a chapter entitled "The Jubilee: A Commitment to the Search for Unity,"<sup>21</sup> by Cardinal Edward Cassidy, President of Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. He highlights significant ecumenical developments, including some mentioned in *Ut Unum Sint* which "are bringing Christians ever closer together." For example, recent Popes have been able to sign with Patriarchs of Oriental Orthodox Churches common declarations of faith in Jesus Christ—one person in two natures. These declarations have substantially clarified a divergence that has lasted for 1500 years. Christians, though still divided, are approaching the new millennium closer to one another than they had been before.

Cardinal Cassidy refers to ecumenical contacts related to the Year 2000, such as the Joint Working Group between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches which has created a sub-committee to foster ecumenical cooperation. Specifically, he mentions the preparation of materials for the annual Week of Prayer for Unity that might be helpful in planning ecumenical celebrations for the year 2000, studying the possibility of a reciprocal recognition of Baptism and reflecting more deeply on baptismal ecclesiology, and also working to make it possible for all Christians in the new millennium to celebrate Easter together as a sign of hope and unity.<sup>22</sup>

In February 1996, the first meeting of the Central Committee for the Great Jubilee took place in Rome, with representatives present from the National (Ad hoc) Committees for the Year 2000 of episcopal conferences throughout the world. Fraternal delegates from other Christian communities were there as well. The purpose of the meeting (in light of TMA) was to

<sup>20</sup>Cardinal Francis Arinze, "The Holy Year: A Call to Overcome Divisions and In-difference," in *Preparing for the Year 2000*, 246.

<sup>21</sup>Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, "The Jubilee: Undertaking the Search for Unity," in *Preparing for the Year 2000*, 229-35.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 232.

share perspectives of planning being done by the Central Committee, and then to ask what steps have been taken by local churches in preparation for the year 2000 and what requests or suggestions they might have in order to give more substance to what has been outlined in *Tertio Millennio Adventiente*.<sup>23</sup> In his welcoming address, Cardinal Etchegeyay cited both ecumenical and Marian themes. Fraternal delegates were there, he said, because according to the Pope's wishes (TMA, no. 16), "it is not sufficient to invite the other Churches and communities to join established projects, but with respect for their own programs we wish to involve them in planning our own preparations."<sup>24</sup> He ended by entrusting this work to Mary, who will be for Christians on the way to the Great Jubilee "the Star which safely guides their steps to the Lord (TMA, no. 59)."<sup>25</sup>

Concerning Mary, in some Reports from National Committees of different countries prepared for that meeting (excerpts of which were published in *Tertium Millennium*), projects of a Marian character were outlined. Here are some examples. Angola-São Tomé included in plans for 1996 "A Marian celebration in the capital, Luanda";<sup>26</sup> Dominican Republic planned a 1996-1997 "Week of Mariology with Marian Congress."<sup>27</sup> The Spanish bishops proposed that those not able to travel on pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem may nevertheless obtain the spiritual benefits and indulgence of the Jubilee . . . at the diocesan Cathedral or at particular shrines, "at least on some feasts of the Lord or of the Mother of God marked on the universal calendar."<sup>28</sup> In Slovakia, a ten-year plan (begun in 1990) has as its theme for the final year: "Advent with Mary the Mother of God and Mother of the Church."<sup>29</sup> In Scotland, during the years leading to 1999, people will be called together in Advent, Lent and Pentecost, over three consecutive

<sup>23</sup>"Welcoming Address by Cardinal Etchegeyay," *Tertium Millennium* (Vatican City: Central Committee for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, June-September, 1996), 13.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>26</sup>"Angola-São Tomé," in *Tertium Millennium*, 16 (hereafter TM.).

<sup>27</sup>"Dominican Republic," TM, 28.

<sup>28</sup>"Spain," TM, 49.

<sup>29</sup>"Slovakia," TM, 58.



evenings at each of these times. "On the third evening, in a Marian prospect, they will be invited to make a personal commitment to work to bring about the change that needs to take place to make life reflect the Gospel values more clearly."<sup>30</sup>

Concerning ecumenism, at the Central Committee meeting, Dr. Joe Hale, Secretary General of the World Methodist Council, speaking on behalf of the fraternal delegates and the ecumenical working group, addressed the Holy Father. Referring to the proposal in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* that there might be a common celebration by Christians for the new millennium, he indicated that there was interest, although there are problems—which, however, could be overcome. Such a meeting should be carefully defined and commonly agreed, and all churches should be informed early enough to ensure the widest possible participation. It was noted that the Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, in 1986, was carefully planned and was "one of the most significant ecumenical events in the century."<sup>31</sup> "If such a meeting occurred in Bethlehem where the Word was made flesh, "it would draw all Christians together, not only to face our failures and our sins, but also to ask the One who was born Prince of Peace and Saviour of the world to lead us into the new Millennium in repentance and forgiveness."<sup>32</sup> He did not directly suggest, however, that the Holy Father should call this meeting. Others at the meeting also referred to Assisi 1986 as an event that looked toward the Year 2000.

Thus, just as some aspects of the Marian Year 1987-88 can be seen as an important step in preparing for the Great Jubilee, so also the Assisi event of 1986 is seen by some as a prototype that could be helpful also for an ecumenical approach to these preparations. Shared prayer of Christians, before and during the Great Jubilee 2000, is important in itself, and it should not be seen as a threat by others.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup>"Scotland," TM, 60.

<sup>31</sup>"Special: A Meeting of the Central Committee with Representatives of the Local Churches: Ecumenical Group," TM, 67.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Eleuterio F. Fortino, "Assisi Ten Years On: The Shared Prayer of Christians," TM, 95.

The Ecumenical Commission of the Central Committee has sent a "Letter to National Committees" (dated October 6, 1996), based on discussions with the Central Committee and with representatives of Bishops' Conferences, and taking into account many elements emerging from contacts with other churches and the fraternal delegates who took part in the February meeting. It provided suggestions for implementing the first year of preparations (1997), that focuses on Christ. Though not referring directly to Mary, it pointed to areas that could be useful for developing a Marian aspect in ecumenical meetings in preparation for the Jubilee and for seeking common agreements. For example, "a basic element is common veneration of the Scriptures."<sup>34</sup> It suggests, as a "practical initiative," that where there is no Bible reading agenda it would be possible to come to an agreement with other Christians present in the area for a cycle of readings for every day of the year, to be followed personally or in Bible-reading groups (etc.)<sup>35</sup> These, of course, could include various texts about Mary.

The preparations for the year 2000, then, intend to foster ecumenical engagement and reflection on Mary. However, these are two parallel preparations, and they await the creative planning of people at various levels to foster ecumenical celebrations which will include an awareness of Mary.

## II. Some Ecumenical Developments in Regard to Mary as We Prepare for the Year 2000

I refer now to three of the ecumenical contexts *Ut Unum Sint* mentions as fruits of the ecumenical movement. In the spirit of the encyclical, these can be seen as achievements on which we can build and from which we can draw strength as we seek the unity of Christians in the third millennium. I add here a Marian aspect of each of these contexts (not alluded to in the encyclical itself).

<sup>34</sup>"Letter from the Ecumenical Commission of the Central Committee of the Great Jubilee," Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican City *Information Service* [= *IS*] 93 (1996): 150.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

### ***A. Mary in International Multilateral Dialogue: Faith and Order***

The aspects of the study of the Virgin Mary in international bilateral dialogues have been analyzed elsewhere,<sup>36</sup> and therefore I will not discuss them here. In fact, however, there has not yet been a full systematic study of Mary in international bilaterals.

In *Ut Unum Sint* (USS), the Pope, as he had done many times in the past,<sup>37</sup> speaks very positively of the steady work of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches (WCC) (e.g., *UUS*, no. 78, n. 129). Roman Catholic theologians were invited to join the Commission after 1968. Their presence with Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant theologians makes it the most widely representative ecumenical body of theologians.

There are a few brief references to Mary in some documents of the earlier Faith and Order movement, mostly in the context of a discussion on the Communion of Saints.<sup>38</sup> However, two

<sup>36</sup>See, e.g., Stanislaw Celestyn Napiorkowski, O.F.M. Conv., "Mariologie et Œcuménisme après le Concile Vatican II," *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, 42 (1992): 215-36.

<sup>37</sup>See John A. Radano, "The Catholic Church and BEM 1980-1989," *Mid-Stream* (April 1991): 140-46. "Pope John Paul II's Reflections on the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order," *Mid-Stream* (October 1994): 463-70.

<sup>38</sup>Illustrating the "comparative method" used at that time, the Second World Conference on Faith and Order (1937) discussed "the Communion of Saints" and explained the different positions held. "For the Orthodox and certain other Churches and individual believers," it says, "it means fellowship not only with living and departed Christians but also with the holy angels, and, in a very special sense, with the Blessed Virgin Mary." "These last hold that the mother of our Lord, designated as 'Theotokos' (God-bearer), the ever Virgin, should be venerated as the highest of all saints and angels, and of all creation." ("Edinburgh: Second World Conference on Faith and Order, August 3-18, 1937." Final Report, IV: "The Communion of Saints," nos. 50-62, in *A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement, 1927-1963*, edited by Lukas Vischer (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1963), 50-52. (Cited here, p. 50 and n. 2.) The Third World Conference on Faith and Order, at Lund (1952), makes a brief reference to Mary in Chapter 4—also in a discussion of the Communion of Saints, but here, in reference to worship. Some venerate the saints, it states, by celebrating their feasts and in some cases seeking their intercession. For many who venerate the saints, "the Blessed Virgin Mary has a unique place." Nonetheless, "the status of the

recent studies of Faith and Order—"Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community" (published in the volume *Church and World* in 1990)<sup>39</sup> and the "Apostolic Faith Study" (focusing on an ecumenical explication of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and published in *Confessing the One Faith*, 1991)<sup>40</sup>—both refer briefly to Mary. But the discussion moves beyond reflection on the Communion of Saints.

One of seven chapters in *Church and World* concerns "Discipleship and Community." As the chapter begins, "Mary the Mother of the Lord" is presented as "an *important example* for all who seek to understand the full dimensions of life in Christian Community." Indeed, she is the only example given. Six reasons are developed from Scripture:

- Mary *receives the Word of God and responds directly from her faith*. . . .
- Mary *shares with Elisabeth* the good news of the wonderful work of God on behalf of his people and *praises God* for all he has done for her and for all the poor and lonely. . . .
- Mary *meditates on the meaning of Jesus' birth*, and *suffers danger and exile* for his sake, and *strives to understand him* as he grows to maturity. . . .
- Mary *struggles*, with the rest of Jesus' immediate family, to understand the full implications of his way of self-giving service and to learn the basis of a true relationship with the Christ. . . .

Blessed Virgin in Christian worship is a matter on which there is deep divergence," because for others such usages are "contrary to their understanding of the whole of Christian faith, and they neither know nor desire any intercessor other than their Saviour." But the context necessary for discussion of these issues, according to the Report, is that "of the doctrine of grace and of the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit." (*Third World Conference on Faith and Order held at Lund, August 15-28, 1952*, edited by Oliver S. Tomkins [London: SCM Press LTD, 1953], Part One: The Report to the Churches, IV: "Ways of Worship," 43-44.)

<sup>39</sup>*Church and World: The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), Faith and Order Paper No. 151.

<sup>40</sup>*Confessing the One Faith: An Ecumenical Explication of the Apostolic Faith as it is Confessed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381)* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), Faith and Order Paper No. 153.

- Mary is lost to sight among the men and women following her son until she re-emerges to stand under the cross and to follow the body to the tomb. . . .
- Finally, Mary is among the disciples, women and men, in the upper room before Pentecost who “with one accord devoted themselves to prayer,” and waited for the “promise of the Father.” With them she is filled with the Holy Spirit and so is called into new community. . . .<sup>41</sup>

*Confessing the One Faith* (1991) is described in *Ut Unum Sint* (no. 17, n. 28) as one of the “principal documents” of Faith and Order. In reflections on the credal statement, “by the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man,” its explication comments briefly on Mary as *Theotokos*, as a disciple, as a figure of and example for the Church, and on her virginity. It states clearly that “all Christians share in the confession affirmed by the Council of Ephesus (431) that *Mary* is ‘Theotokos,’ the Mother of him who is also God through the creative work of the Spirit of God.”<sup>42</sup> Like *Church and World*, it asserts that “Mary is also the disciple who hears the word of God, responds to it and keeps it.” It refers to “her obedience to God and her utter dependence on the Holy Spirit.” But here Mary is described as the “*example par excellence of our discipleship*.” Since the first centuries, she has been seen as representing the daughter of Sion, waiting for the accomplishment of the messianic promises and of the coming Kingdom.”<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, “in her complete reliance on God, her active response of faith and her expectation of the kingdom, Mary has been seen *as a figure (typos) of and an example for the Church*.” Like Mary, the Church cannot exist on its own; it can only rely on God; it is the vigilant servant waiting for the return of the Master.”<sup>44</sup>

More controversial is the question of the virginity of Mary. The explication is able to say only, as a commonly held view,

<sup>41</sup>*Church and World*, 64.

<sup>42</sup>*Confessing the One Faith*, no. 122, p. 53.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.* (emphasis added).

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, no. 123 (emphasis added).

that in affirming the virginity of Mary "the Creed expresses the belief that the Father of her son at his temporal birth is the same as the one whose Son he is from all eternity, 'eternally begotten of the Father'."<sup>45</sup> There follows a *Commentary* which explains briefly the different sides of an issue on which there is disagreement.<sup>46</sup> After this commentary, a brief sentence shows Mary's cooperation in salvation history: "When the Creed *brings together* the phrases 'by the Holy Spirit' and 'from the Virgin Mary,' it is confessing that Jesus Christ is both God and man." Finally, there is no mention of Mary's intercession.

It is interesting to compare what is said in these reports, with the Marian aspects for the three last years leading to the Great Jubilee 2000 as outlined in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, which have an ecumenical dimension. In the latter, Mary's Motherhood and also her characteristics as disciple are especially emphasized. This suggests that in organizing ecumenical celebrations focusing on Christ (1997), the Holy Spirit (1998), and the Father (1999), an ecumenical reflection on Mary could be included, despite the differences noted above. To give one example, in the context of reflection on Jesus Christ in 1997, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (no. 43) states:

The Blessed Virgin . . . will be contemplated . . . especially in the mystery of her Divine Motherhood. . . . Mary . . . is proposed to all believers as the *model of faith* which is put into practice.

Compare this with the following statement from *Church and World* (p. 64):

Mary, the mother of the Lord, is an important example for all who seek to understand the full dimensions of life in Christian community.

—Mary receives the Word of God and responds directly from her faith. . . .

and with *Confessing the One Faith* (no. 122):

All Christians share in the confession . . . that *Mary* is "Theotokos," the mother of him who is already God . . . But Mary is also the disciple who

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., no. 124.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., no. 124, pp. 53-54.

hears the word of God, responds to it and keeps it. . . . Mary is the example par excellence of our discipleship.

Similar comparisons could be made for Marian aspects in 1998 and 1999.

**B. "Sister Churches": Mary in Renewed Eastern Orthodox-Roman Catholic Relations**

In *Ut Unum Sint* (nos. 55–58), the Holy Father cites as an important sign of ecumenical progress the continuing rediscovery by Orthodox and Catholic Churches of each other as "Sister Churches," which they began to acknowledge at the time of the Second Vatican Council. The designation "Sister Churches" signifies a mutual recognition between the two churches that they share common apostolic origins and succession, communion in faith and hope, have a common sacramental structure and the same hierarchical priesthood.<sup>47</sup> First used by Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople about the Church of Rome in 1963,<sup>48</sup> Pope Paul VI used it in an official sense in his letter "Anno Ineunte" to Patriarch Athenagoras I in 1967.<sup>49</sup> *Ut Unum Sint* cites this letter:

For centuries we lived this life of 'Sister Churches' and together held Ecumenical Councils which guarded the deposit of faith against all corruption. And now, after a long period of division and mutual misunderstanding, the

<sup>47</sup>Cf. Frans Bouwen, "Churches, Sister," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. by Nicholas Lossky et al. (Geneva: WCC Publications, and Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1991), 186–87. See "Uniatism, Method of Union of the Past and the Present Search for Full Communion," (nos. 13 and 14) "Statement of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church: Seventh Plenary Session, Balamand (Lebanon), June 17–24, 1993," *IS* 83 (1993): 97.

<sup>48</sup>"Letter of Metropolitan Maximos to Pope Paul VI, conveying the congratulations of the Patriarch on his election to the See of Rome" (9 September 1963) and "Telegram from Patriarch Athenagoras to Pope Paul VI conveying good wishes for the feast of Easter" (27 March 1964), in *Towards the Healing of Schism: The Sees of Rome and Constantinople: Public statements and correspondence between the Holy See and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, 1958–1984*, ed. and trans. by E. J. Stormon, S.J.; Ecumenical Documents III (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 51–52 and 71 respectively. (Hereafter: Stormon).

<sup>49</sup>"The Brief Anno Ineunte . . ." (25 July 1967), in Stormon, p. 161–63.

Lord is enabling us to discover ourselves as 'Sister Churches' once more, in spite of the obstacles which were once raised between us. (no. 57)

Decisive for this renewed relationship was the historic meeting between Paul VI and Athenagoras I in Jerusalem on January 5, 1964, the first between a Bishop of Rome and an Ecumenical Patriarch in centuries. While the Blessed Virgin Mary has not been the subject of Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, many references made to her since then, on the occasion of important Orthodox-Catholic contacts as this renewed relationship deepened, illustrate that Mary has been present in this process. As part of their rediscovery of one another, the sister churches have expressed their deep shared devotion to Mary. The popes and patriarchs have indicated their belief that Mary's intercession has fostered their new rapprochement.

A few months after the Jerusalem meeting,<sup>50</sup> Pope Paul VI in a message on October 29, 1964, to the third Pan-Orthodox Conference at Rhodes, called upon Mary's intercession. It was precisely the day on which the Second Vatican Council voted for a revised version of Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*, which spoke of Mary's motherly affection for the Church.<sup>51</sup> This was reflected in Pope Paul's message which also showed Mary as a link between Orthodox and Catholics:

May the Holy Mother of God, who is our Mother and yours, whom we honor and to whom we pray with a like fervor, intercede in her kindness, so that we may grow continually in the love of her Son, our one Lord and Saviour.<sup>52</sup>

The grateful response of Metropolitan Meliton, President of the Pan-Orthodox Conference, also invoked Mary's intercession in support of Orthodox-Catholic unity, asking that "the Lord . . . will through the intercession of his most holy Mother

<sup>50</sup>The addresses and correspondence related to the Jerusalem meeting show no references to Mary. See Stormon (Documents 36-56), pp. 54-67.

<sup>51</sup>Gérard Philips, "History of the Constitution" (*Lumen Gentium*), in *Commentary on Documents of Vatican II*, ed. by Herbert Vorgrimler (5 vols.; New York: Herder and Herder, 1967-69), 1:135.

<sup>52</sup>"Message from Pope Paul VI to the Third Pan-Orthodox Conference of Rhodes" (29 October 1964), in Stormon (Doc. 76), p. 80.



give comfort and strength both to you and to us, so that we may enjoy the blessing of brotherhood in Christ. . . ."<sup>53</sup>

On December 7, 1965, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras signed a Common Declaration expressing their decision to remove from memory and from the midst of the Church the excommunications of 1054.<sup>54</sup> It addressed many centuries of separation, and called Orthodox and Catholics to move now, toward reestablishing full communion between them. In his personal response to the declaration, Athenagoras asked God's blessing through the intercession of Mary and the saints: "May he, through the intercession of our all-blessed Lady, Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary," and of Peter and Andrew and all the saints, "grant peace to his Church and guard it for all ages."<sup>55</sup>

In 1967, there were reciprocal visits between Pope and Patriarch. Pope Paul VI's visit to Patriarch Athenagoras on July 25, 1967, was the occasion on which the Pope presented to the Patriarch the Brief, *Anno Ineunte*, mentioned above, expressing the Catholic Church's acknowledgment of the sister-church relationship. Both were present at prayer services at the Phanar, the Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and also at the Latin Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. Each service included beautiful prayers of intercession to Mary.<sup>56</sup>

Patriarch Athenagoras visited Rome, on October 26-28, 1967. The liturgical celebration at St. Peter's Basilica on October 26th, welcoming the Patriarch, included a prayer by the Pope which spoke of enjoying the protection of Mary:

<sup>53</sup>"Telegram from Metropolitan Meliton to Pope Paul VI, thanking him for his message" (5 November 1964), in Stormon (Doc. 77), p. 81.

<sup>54</sup>Stormon (Doc. 127), pp. 126-28.

<sup>55</sup>"Patriarchal 'Tome' by means of which Patriarch Athenagoras and his Synod remove from memory and from the midst of the Church the anathemas of 1054" (7 December 1965), in Stormon (Doc. 129), p. 131.

<sup>56</sup>"The Prayer Service of Reception of Pope Paul VI at the Ecumenical Patriarchate" (25 July 1967), in Stormon (Doc. 174), p. 484. Cf. "Innografia Mariana," in *Testi Mariani del Primo Millennio*, ed. by Georges Gharib et al. (4 vols.; Roma: Città Nuova Editrice, 1988), vol. 1: *Padri e altri autori greci*, 925. For the service at the Latin Cathedral (25 July 1967), see Stormon (Doc. 177), pp. 487-93, esp. 492.

All of us indeed who are united in the same proclamation of the Gospel and the same baptism, and are sharers in the same sacraments and gifts of the Spirit and together enjoy the protection of Mary, the most holy Mother of God and ever-virgin, . . . feel deep distress that for centuries we have gone our separate ways. . . .<sup>57</sup>

Even more attention to Mary than that shown by Paul VI and Athanasagoras is found in the exchange of visits between their successors, Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Dimitrios I, in 1979 and 1987. John Paul II's first important ecumenical visit, as mentioned in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (no. 24), was held November, 29-30, 1979, to Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I at the Phanar. It was during this encounter that Pope and Patriarch announced together the beginning of the international theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church and made public the list of members.<sup>58</sup> Both in announcing beforehand the visit which would take him to Ankara, Istanbul and Ephesus, and speaking about it afterwards, the Pope referred to the proclamation by the Council of Ephesus of the Virgin Mary as *Theotokos*, Mother of God.<sup>59</sup>

On November 29th, the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I welcomed the Pope to the Phanar, making reference to Mary: "Most Holy Brother, we give glory to God as we welcome you today to this city of the Mother of God, and within it to the Church of her Son, our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."<sup>60</sup> Responding, John Paul II recalled that "the fundamental dogmas of Christian faith, of the Trinity and of the Incarnate Word of God born of the Virgin Mary, were defined by

<sup>57</sup>"Liturgical Celebration at St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, for Reception of Patriarch Athenagoras I" (26 October 1967), in Stormon (Doc. 191), p. 503.

<sup>58</sup>"Joint Declaration by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Dimitrios I" (30 November 1979), in Stormon (Doc. 404), pp. 367-68; lists of members, in Stormon (Docs. 405-06), pp. 368-72.

<sup>59</sup>"Address by Pope John Paul II, preceding the Sunday Angelus, announcing his visit to Turkey" (18 November 1979), in Stormon (Doc. 397), p. 355.

<sup>60</sup>"Welcoming address by Patriarch Dimitrios I to Pope John Paul II in the Patriarchal Church of St. George at the Phanar" (29 November 1979), in Stormon (Doc. 400), p. 357.

the Ecumenical Councils which were held in this or in neighboring cities (cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 14).<sup>61</sup>

Twice after his return to Rome the Pope spoke with joy of that visit, which manifests again the Marian link between East and West. At the Angelus on Sunday, December 2nd, for example, he spoke of the great heritage of the Churches of the East from which the Church of the West has drawn, including, "especially in the matter of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, to whom 'the Eastern Christians pay high tribute in beautiful hymns of praise'."<sup>62</sup> On December 10th, at his public audience, he drew important lessons concerning devotion to Mary as the common heritage to East and West, by describing the gift that he had given the Ecumenical Patriarch.

The gift . . . was an icon of the Mother of God, she with whom I became familiar at Jasna Gora and Czestochowa from my earliest youth. In making this gift, I was guided not only by reasons of a personal nature, but above all by the special eloquence of history. The Icon of the Bright Mountain, Jasna Gora, contains the symptomatic features which speak to the soul of the Christian whether of the East or the West. It also comes from that land in which the meeting of those two great traditions of the Church took place, in the whole course of her history. My country . . . received Christianity from Rome and at the same time also the great heritage of Latin culture, but Constantinople, too, became the source of Christianity and of culture, in their Eastern form, for many Slav peoples and nations.<sup>63</sup>

The most attention to Mary during these visits thus far came in the visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I to Rome, December 3-7, 1987. This encounter brought with it some significant symbolic gestures which helped support the theological dialogue and which could foster closer relations between

<sup>61</sup>"Reply by Pope John Paul II to Patriarch Dimitrios I" (29 November 1979), in Stormon (Doc. 401), pp. 358-59.

<sup>62</sup>"Address by Pope John Paul II before the recitation of the Sunday midday Angelus" (2 December 1979), in Stormon (Doc. 409), p. 374.

<sup>63</sup>"Address by Pope John Paul II, in his public audience, on his journey to Turkey" (10 December 1979), in Stormon (Doc. 410), pp. 377-78.

the sister churches. One gesture was the recitation by Pope and Patriarch together of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in the original Greek (therefore without the *filioque*), at the Mass at which Pope John Paul II presided in St. Peter's Basilica on Sunday, December 6th. Another was the Pope's appeal in his homily at the same Mass, repeated years later in *Ut Unum Sint*, that as a step toward facing the ecumenical problem of the primacy, pastors and theologians of both churches would seek together the forms in which the ministry of the Bishop of Rome "may accomplish a service of love recognized by all concerned."

Before the Patriarch arrived, Pope John Paul II (at the Angelus on November 29th) noted how important it was that this visit was taking place in the Marian Year, and recalled "the fervent devotion with which the Eastern Churches, and especially that of Constantinople, honour the Holy Mother of God."<sup>64</sup> Expressing faith that Mary "is certainly following our steps towards one another," the Pope entrusted this moment to Mary, praying for her help in continuing rapprochement with the Orthodox: "Together with you I ask Mary Most Holy for the strength to progress in the pilgrimage of faith, of which she is the most perfect example, so that, Catholics and Orthodox together, we may arrive at the unity willed by the Lord (cf. *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 30)."<sup>65</sup>

During his visit, besides meetings with the Pope and Curia officials, the Patriarch encountered others and visited important Christian sites in Rome. He did not fail to speak of Mary and ask her intercession for the unity of Christians.<sup>66</sup> But the

<sup>64</sup>"Pope's Statement at the 'Angelus,' November 29, 1986," *IS* 66 (1988): 6.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup>In his greeting at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Wall, the Patriarch called upon Mary, but also upon patronal saints of East and West, for assistance in the struggle for unity. He expressed confidence that the Apostles Peter and Paul and Andrew, St. Benedict from the West, St. Basil the Great from the East, and all the saints, "and, at their head, the Most Holy Mother of God . . . intercede, we are certain, for the union of all" ("Visit to St. Paul's Basilica, December 4, 1987," *IS* 66 [1988]: 13). In meeting the Orthodox Community in Rome on December 6th, his prayer expressed the sharing of spiritual gifts between the two sister churches. He asked God's blessing on them "through the intercession of the All Holy One, 'Salus Populi Romani,' and through the

Central Marian event during the visit was the Vesper service on December 5th, 1987, at the Basilica of St. Mary Major. The service itself had significant Marian features,<sup>67</sup> including, for example, an Orthodox Marian hymn addressing Mary as "invincible protectress of Christians, invincible mediatrix with the Creator, . . . Mother of God," and, calling for her intercession and help, expressing the belief that she "always protects those who venerate her."<sup>68</sup>

Mary was featured in both homilies, especially in that of the Patriarch. The Pope's was an Advent homily which reflected on Mary in the context of her role in salvation history.<sup>69</sup> He presented Mary as a model of spirituality for individuals and for the Church.<sup>70</sup> And as a "handmaid of the Lord," Mary can be seen also as a model for the Church: "The Church, the handmaid of God for his glory and the handmaid of people for their salvation, receives and proclaims the great hope, tirelessly offering her own sufferings and poverty to her Lord, whose 'power is made perfect in weakness' (2 Cor. 12:9)." And out of these virtues the Pope draws a lesson for Christian unity between, the sister churches:

So if in the course of the centuries certain divergencies—at times very serious—between Christians of the East and of the West have weakened the witness of the one Church of Christ, today repentance and the desire for union fill their hearts. Today we have new proof that God has mercy on

appeals of the brother saints and apostles Peter and Andrew and through all those who suffered martyrdom for the Christian faith in this historic land" ("Patriarch's Meeting with the Orthodox Community of Rome, December 6, 1987," *IS 66* [1988]: 17).

<sup>67</sup>Found in *IS 66* (1988), Appendix 1, pp. 36–41.

<sup>68</sup>"O invincibile protettrice dei Cristiani, inconcussa mediatrice presso il Creatore . . . O madre di Dio . . . tu che ognora proteggi quanti ti venerano."

<sup>69</sup>"The Pope's Homily," *IS 66* (1988): 20. "We sing the praises of the one who presented herself as the 'handmaid of the Lord' (Lk. 1:38) . . . the Virgin Mary, who received the Messiah with faith, who gave him to the world, who accompanied him faithfully to the foot of the Cross, . . . who prayed with the Apostles in preparation for the descent of the Spirit and the birth of the Church, understood how great is the hope to which God calls us (cf. Eph. 1:18)."

<sup>70</sup>Ibid. "Mary's posture," the Pope says, "of waiting, so full of hope, led her to the liberating discovery of poverty as the attitude of spirit proper to anyone who wishes to be disposed to receive him [Christ]. . . ."

us and hears the prayers of those who continually intercede for the unity of all Christians in his Church. The Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church have been granted the grace of once again recognizing one another as sister churches and of journeying towards full communion.<sup>71</sup>

Patriarch Dimitrios spoke strongly of the common Marian heritage shared by the two sister churches, but also of the need for dialogue on Mariology. His homily included important aspects illustrating that their common devotion to Mary helps Orthodox and Catholics on the way to unity and is part of the heritage binding them together as "Sister Churches."<sup>72</sup> And the fact, he said, that this Church, St. Mary Major, "is dedicated to the honour and memory of the all holy Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary" is significant for many reasons, most especially because,

... of all the entire Christian world our two sister Churches have maintained throughout the centuries unextinguished the flame of devotion to the most venerated person of the all holy Mother of God, dedicating to her the finest and most inspired artistic works of song, architecture and painting, turning to her sweetest figure the hearts' desires and the hopes of the devout people of every epoch.<sup>73</sup>

Mary, he said, is a common bond between our churches despite certain difficulties such as "unilateral actions of a dogmatic nature":

Truly the all holy Mother of God dominates in the consciousness of the faithful of both our Churches like a common bond and common tradition, despite the fact that at times certain unilateral actions of a dogmatic nature concerned with her venerable person tended to differentiate this common tradition of our two ancient Churches . . . in times of reciprocal estrangement . . .

Nonetheless, the common dogmatic and theological heritage developed about the venerable person of the all holy Mother of God can once again construct an axis of unity and reunion of the separate parts. The person

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>"The Patriarch's Homily," *IS* 66 (1988): 20.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

of the all holy Mother of God occupies a central and principal position in the faith of our Churches.<sup>74</sup>

Dimitrios then continued to praise Mary and her role in salvation history, but always in connection with Christ, and without Mary taking the place of Christ, speaking of her as the all holy Mother of God, this "gateway to heaven" and the "space of the uncontainable" through which the eternal plan of God the Father for the salvation of the world in his only begotten Son is realized—the ever Virgin Mary whose free consent was given in obedience to God so that the "sacrament of the Incarnation of the Word [is] the fruit of the free consent of a human being," "the one who is truly full of grace," the "most beautiful flower of sanctity and obedience to the divine will," the "antidote to the disobedience of the first Eve," the human being "who is closest to the Lord, able to intercede unceasingly for the world, the hope and protection of all of us."<sup>75</sup>

The Patriarch then spoke of Mary with a reference to the Eucharist, and the profound reason why she is also mother of us all:

Truly the all holy one constitutes the most manifest proof that in the body of the Church the divine and the human are fully united, thus becoming the 'body of Christ.' The body of the divine Eucharist, in which the sacrament of the Church is principally and in a mode par excellence realized, has its roots in the union of the divine and human nature, which took place for the first time in the person of the all holy one. This renders the all holy Mother of God not only the mother of the Lord, but of us all as well.<sup>76</sup>

The Patriarch concluded with a proposal, "in a more official manner," for dialogue on Mariology, suggesting perspectives which the dialogue should consider:

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 20–21.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>76</sup>The Patriarch then drew an implication of this ecclesiological insight to contemporary debate about women, that "the recognition and the extension of the highest position of honour of the all holy one in the life and faith of the Church also undoubtedly entails the recognition and the attribution of the honour and dignity owed to women from the anthropological point of view, in that she is also the full image of God equal to man" (ibid.).

Mariology should occupy a central position in the theological dialogue between our Churches, not only examined from a Christological point of view, but also anthropological, and especially ecclesiological, for the full reestablishment of our ecclesial communion.<sup>77</sup>

On December 6th, the Patriarch Dimitrios participated in the Mass of the Second Sunday of Advent celebrated by Pope John Paul II.<sup>78</sup> Both the Pope and the Patriarch gave homilies. Both stressed strongly the importance of Mary's intercession for the developing rapprochement of the two churches. The Patriarch remarked that God's grace has been the primary reason for this rapprochement, but, it has also been aided by "the exceptional intercession of the most holy Mother Mary, Mother of God, and the fervent supplication of the saints."<sup>79</sup> Alluding to the Marian Year, he emphasized again that we also give witness to:

. . . the intercession of the most holy Mother of God, for whom the reverence and devotion of the East and West is equally unlimited, and for whom Your Holiness has so happily determined that the current year should be a year of particular honour and devotion to her, as the cooperator in our growth and salvation in Christ, as well as the other element of the intercession of all the saints.<sup>80</sup>

"We entrust," he said, "the common cause of the unity in Christ of our Churches to the Lord's grace, to the holy protection of the Mother of God and to the intercession . . . of God's chosen ones."<sup>81</sup>

In his homily,<sup>82</sup> the Pope implored for the two of them and for their churches, the grace of humility, often depicted in the *Deisis* of icons and frescoes of basilicas in East and West. "In these *Deisis*," he said,

we also see the Mother of the Redeemer with the same attitude of humility, and she too points to her Son and her Lord, repeating unceasingly:

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>The liturgy is found in *IS* 66 (1988): 42-51.

<sup>79</sup>"The Homilies during the Mass. The Patriarch's Homily," *IS* 66 (1988): 23.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>"The Pope's Homily," *IS* 66 (1988): 24-26.



"Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5). Last evening in the Basilica of St. Mary Major, built in honour of the divine maternity of the Virgin, we were able to pray together to her. In this Eucharistic Celebration, I ask her to intercede before her divine Son . . . May Christ, through the intercession of his most holy and immaculate Mother, preserve us in peace and hope.<sup>83</sup>

After the Eucharistic liturgy, the Pope and the Patriarch went to the Loggia of Blessing of St. Peter's Basilica to greet the people and for the recitation of the Angelus. The Pope spoke of an important Orthodox Marian sanctuary on Mount Athos, known as "the Virgin's Garden," which has an icon, *Axion Estin*, also called "the Merciful Virgin," the most venerated image of the Greek Orthodox world.<sup>84</sup> He cited a hymn honoring Mary, associated with the icon.<sup>85</sup> The Patriarch in turn confessed that he and the Pope stood there together "under the Protection of the All Holy Mother of God and Ever Virgin Mary,"<sup>86</sup> and called upon all to "ask her intercession in this moment, that the day of our full and complete union in the one faith and common celebration of the sacraments of the Church will come soon."<sup>87</sup>

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>84</sup>"The Angelus, December 6, 1987: The Pope's Address," *IS* 66 (1988): 27.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.: "It is truly just to proclaim you blessed, O Deipara, who are most blessed, all pure, and Mother of Our God. We glorify you, who are more honourable than the cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the seraphim, You who are truly the Mother of God."

<sup>86</sup>"The Patriarch's Address," *IS* 66 (1988): 27.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 28. The Pope spoke several times afterwards about the visit of Dimitrios. In his annual Christmas address to the Roman Curia on December 22, 1987, the Pope recalled Dimitrios' emphasis on our common Marian heritage: "how our two sister Churches had maintained through the centuries the unquenchable flame of devotion to the All-Holy Mother of God," agreeing with Dimitrios' view that "the common dogmatic and theological patrimony that has developed concerning the venerable person of the All Holy Mother of God constitutes a bond of unity and reunion of separated parties," and indicating that the Patriarch had suggested that the theme of Mariology should emphasize a central position in the theological dialogue between our churches in the effort towards finding the complete reestablishment of our ecclesial communion. The Pope expressed the view that this statement reflects directly the orientation of the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*. See "Recalling the Significance of the Visit," *IS* 66 (1988): 31-32.

The most recent personal encounter between a pope and an ecumenical patriarch came during the visit to Rome of Dimitrios' successor, His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I, June 27-30, 1995. It came after the momentous changes in Eastern Europe which led to significant tensions between Orthodox and Catholics, requiring the international dialogue to redirect its attention (in 1990) from the directly ecclesiological direction it had set for itself, in order to give careful attention to relations between the two in light of the renewed emergence in the Ukraine and elsewhere of Eastern Catholic churches which had been suppressed by communism. Each made public reference to Mary on one occasion.<sup>88</sup>

But a new development, and an important sign of unity mentioned at the beginning of *Ut Unum Sint* (no. 1), was Patriarch Bartholomew's writing of the meditations for the Way of the Cross led by Pope John Paul II in the Colosseum of Rome on Good Friday in 1994. Here, the leaders of these sister churches gave prayerful witness to the Cross, together before the world. The meditations which accompanied the Pope as he carried the cross for the fourteen stations included Marian references (tenth, twelfth and fourteenth stations). The entrance prayer at the beginning included this verse: "May the

<sup>88</sup>Patriarch Bartholomew I, during his visit to the French Seminary in Rome, concluded his address with a prayer for God's preservation of the seminary and protection of those who served it, and the students, "enabling them to leave this place as worthy labourers for his vineyard thanks to the intercession of our very Sacred Mother of God, of Peter protocoryphaeus, of Paul Apostle of the Nations, Andrew the first-called, and of all those who through the ages have been pleasing to God" ("Patriarch's Address at the French Seminary, June 28, 1995," *IS* 90 [1995]: 117). On June 29th, both Pope and Patriarch went to the Balcony of Blessings of St. Peter's Basilica for the Angelus. The Pope spoke of "Mary, Mother of God and of the Church" who shared with the Apostles "the hour of hardship," remaining faithful beneath the Cross, "and the hour of communion" at Pentecost, welcoming the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room with the Apostles, "sealing by her presence the birth of the Church." The Pope then prayed to Mary for the Patriarch and himself, that Christians of East and West would advance toward unity and fidelity to the Gospel, and to renew the miracles of the early Christian communities in the time leading up to the year 2000, "so that contemporary humanity will believe in Christ, the one Saviour of the world" ("The Angelus, Pope John Paul II's Address," *IS* 90 [1995]: 123).

Mother of God lead us to your mysteries, to the mystery of Love in the most Blessed Trinity.”<sup>89</sup> The meditation for the tenth station, entitled “Jesus is Crucified,” included delicate references to the Virginity of Mary.<sup>90</sup> For the twelfth station, “Jesus on the Cross, the Mother and the Disciple,” the meditation includes verses honoring Mary as Mother of God, Mother of all men, Mother of all faithfulness, of all tenderness.<sup>91</sup> And three prayers of petition to Jesus follow the meditation, each calling for the intercession of Mary, Mother of God.<sup>92</sup> And the meditation for the fourteenth station, “Jesus is laid in the Tomb,” includes a phrase relating Mary and Eve, inspired by the Byzantine liturgy: “The Mother of God dries the tears of Eve.”<sup>93</sup>

At the end of the ceremony the Pope’s exhortation corresponded to the Patriarch’s meditations. “Let us,” he said, “entrust ourselves, the whole Church and all humanity to this Mother who stands beneath the Cross and embraces us all like children. In her love, we, like John feel the strength of this unity, this communion of the Church and of Christianity and we give thanks to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for Christ’s Cross.”<sup>94</sup>

To summarize, since the time of the Second Vatican Council, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics have gradually rediscovered one another as sister churches, a designation that

<sup>89</sup>“The Via Crucis: Common Witness of Pope and Patriarch, Good Friday, 1994,” *IS* 86 (1994): 114.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 120: “He is pierced by a lance, the Son of the Virgin,” and “On this day he, the only one really alive—‘I am the resurrection and the life’ (Jn 11:25)—who was born without tearing of the Virgin knows a tearing beyond all human capacity.”

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 122: “Mary, Mother of God: she had said yes to the angel, undoing in a supreme way the tragedy of our freedom. She had given birth in the serene transparency of her body. Now a dagger pierces her heart.” “Woman . . . here is a son who is also in your Son. You take into your care by adoption, Mother of all men, . . .” “And John welcomes her into his home . . . May she also be in our homes. Mother of all faithfulness, of all tenderness.”

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.* One of these: “Jesus, son of heaven by your Father, son of earth by your Mother, make us sons of earth and heaven through the prayers of the Mother of God.”

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, 123: “The Vigil of Easter, Everything is silent, but in hope the last Adam holds out his hand to the first Adam; the Mother of God dries the tears of Eve.”

<sup>94</sup>“Pope John Paul II’s Reflections at the End of the Ceremony,” *IS* 86 (1994): 124.

defined the full communion they shared in the first millennium, which was lost during the second. In this progressive re-discovery of the "almost complete" communion they share even now,<sup>95</sup> despite serious tensions continuing, Mary has been present. While dialogue on Mariology is surely necessary, recent popes and ecumenical patriarchs have been able to speak of the common Marian heritage these sister churches share and have each maintained throughout the centuries—as Patriarch Dimitrios said, like a "common bond and common tradition." Recent popes and patriarchs have honored Mary together, praised her with many titles, invoked her intercession in one another's presence, indicated their belief that Mary's intercession has helped foster the reconciliation taking place, and have asked her help and protection in their common quest for full communion, as we move toward the third millennium.

### *C. Mary and the Recent Christological Agreements.*

In *Ut Unum Sint*, Pope John Paul II recalls that following the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church has, in different ways, "restored fraternal relations with the Ancient Churches of the East which rejected the dogmatic formulations of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon" (no. 62). And, precisely in relation to Christology, "we have been able to join the Patriarchs of some of these Churches in declaring our common faith in Jesus Christ, true God and true man" (no. 62). These agreements—made by Paul VI and John Paul II with the Coptic Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox Churches, and the Assyrian Church of the East—signal a new relationship with them after 1500 years.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup>"Letter of Pope Paul VI to Patriarch Athanagoras on the development of relations between the two Churches" (8 February 1971), in Stormon (Doc. 285), p. 232.

<sup>96</sup>These common declarations, starting in the 1970s, were prepared by studies done in the 1960s under the auspices of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches and also by the informal dialogues between the Oriental Orthodox and Catholics sponsored by the Pro Oriente foundation in Vienna. Each, however, was specifically negotiated between the two churches. Cf. *The Vienna Dialogue*. Five Pro Oriente Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy. Summaries of the Papers. Booklet 2 (Vienna: Pro Oriente, 1991), 7, Foreword by the editors. Cf. Mesrob K. Krikorian (p. 10) for Faith and Order meetings.

In fact, only in the common declarations between Pope Paul VI and the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch and between Pope John Paul II and the Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East are there explicit references to Mary. While reference to Mary is implicit whenever the Incarnation or the human nature of Christ is mentioned, we refer here only to explicit references to Mary, and other than that in the Nicene Creed. Addresses of popes and patriarchs given when the declarations were signed sometimes provide additional statements on Mary which give a fuller picture.

### **Coptic Orthodox-Roman Catholic Statements**

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, of the Coptic Orthodox Church, visited Pope Paul VI (May 4-10, 1973) on the occasion of the commemoration of the sixteenth centenary of the death of St. Athanasius of the See of Alexandria, who defended the Nicene faith.<sup>97</sup> At their first private meeting on May 5th, Pope Shenouda referred to Mary when he invited Pope Paul VI to visit Egypt, so that he could see "our land once blessed by the flight of our Lord and our Lady into Egypt and recently by the apparitions of St. Mary at Zeitoun."<sup>98</sup>

Further references to Mary came as the two described their common faith. Pope Shenouda cited the many points of agreement between these two churches "in the principles of Faith," including "we believe in . . . the intercession of the Virgin Mary."<sup>99</sup> Responding, Paul VI traced the common faith of his and Shenouda's predecessors, of the reception and support given to St. Athanasius in Rome by Pope Julius I. And "a half century later," said Paul VI, "the Churches of Alexandria and Rome, in the person of their bishops Cyril and Celestine, were to serve once more as beacons of light when belief in the God-Man, Jesus Christ, was obscured by those who refused to

<sup>97</sup>His Holiness Amba Shenouda III is Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark. For documentation on this visit, see *IS*, 76 (1991/1), special issue: "The Roman Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church, Documents (1973-1988)," pp. 2-10.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, 2: "Patriarch Shenouda III's Address to Pope Paul VI, May 5th, 1973."

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, 5: "Address of Patriarch Shenouda III, May 6, 1973."

render to the holy Mother of God her glorious title of 'Theotokos.'"<sup>100</sup>

The Common Declaration of Paul VI and Shenouda III, which states aspects of Christian faith and life shared between the two, as well as a common Christological statement,<sup>101</sup> includes two explicit references to Mary, references of confession and of veneration:

We venerate the Virgin Mary, Mother of the True Light, and we confess that she is ever Virgin, the God-bearer. She intercedes for us, and, as the Theotokos, excels in her dignity all angelic hosts.<sup>102</sup>

The Declaration ends with a paragraph calling for a just solution to the crisis that was then developing (1973) in the Middle East, and "especially in that land which was hallowed by the preaching, death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and by the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we venerate together as the Theotokos."<sup>103</sup>

But Pope Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III set up a dialogue<sup>104</sup> which cited theological differences which must be studied, including "dogmas concerning the Holy Spirit, the blessed Virgin, life after death, sacraments and rites," among other things.<sup>105</sup>

### **Syrian Orthodox-Roman Catholic Statements**

In 1971, His Holiness Mar Ignatius Yacoub III, Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, visited Pope Paul

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 6: "Response of Pope Paul VI to Patriarch Shenouda III, May 6th, 1973."

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 9: Made, it is said, in accordance with "our apostolic traditions . . . and in conformity with the early three ecumenical councils" ("Common Declaration Signed by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Shenouda III, May 10th, 1973").

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 10. Years later, Pope Shenouda described the significance of the Declaration in a letter to Pope John Paul, saying that it "recorded for the first time in history after fifteen centuries of complete isolation and separation, points of agreement between the two Apostolic Churches" (Letter of Patriarch Shenouda III to Pope John Paul II, June 16th, 1979).

<sup>104</sup>"Common Declaration . . ." (see n. 101 above).

<sup>105</sup>"Second Meeting of the International Joint Commission between the Catholic Church and the Coptic-Orthodox Church, October 27th-31st, 1975, Common Report: Procedures for our Work," *IS* 76 (1991): 19.

VI,<sup>106</sup> but neither their joint Christological statement nor their addresses made explicit reference to Mary. The common Marian heritage of these churches began to appear in subsequent encounters. When Patriarch Mar Ignatius Yacoub III visited Pope John Paul II in 1980,<sup>107</sup> they reiterated the common declaration made in 1971.<sup>108</sup> Public references to Mary during the visit came at the General Audience, to which the Pope invited the Patriarch. When introducing the Patriarch, the Pope prayed: "May the Holy Mother of God, Theotokos, and the ancient Christian martyrs of Rome and Antioch, whom we venerate together, help us with their intercession so that we can reach the full ecclesial communion for which we long."<sup>109</sup> The Patriarch in turn spoke in Syriac, making the point: "We have now spoken to you in our own language, which is Syriac, the language of our Saviour Jesus Christ, of his Mother and his apostles."<sup>110</sup>

Several years later, Ignatius Yacoub's successor, Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas visited Pope John Paul II, June 20-23, 1984.<sup>111</sup> The two signed a joint declaration. Both mentioned Mary in their addresses. Pope John Paul II's reference was basically a reiteration of what the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed says of Mary.<sup>112</sup> The Patriarch, however, spoke of devotion to Mary as a common bond:

Our two Churches are closely linked by many common bonds. There is the bond of St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles; we profess the same faith

<sup>106</sup>Speeches and Common Declaration, found in "Syrian Orthodox Church," *IS* 16 (1972): 3-5.

<sup>107</sup>"Visit of H. H. Mar Ignatius Yacoub III, Syrian-Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, May 13-16, 1980," *IS* 44 (1980): 92-95.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup>"Visit of His Holiness Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, to His Holiness Pope John Paul II and the Church of Rome, June 20-23, 1984," *IS* 55 (1984): 59-63.

<sup>112</sup>"Address of Pope John Paul II, " *IS* 55 (1984): 60: "To give practical expression to this desire with which the Holy Spirit has filled us, we are able on this occasion to make together a joint declaration of our common faith in Christ, the Son of God who through the Holy Spirit was made man by taking flesh of the Virgin Mary."

declared in the Nicene Creed; we cherish a closeness to the early Church; we are bound by our mutual recognition of ministry and sacraments, and in a special way, by a deep devotion to Mary, *Talatat Aloho, Theotokos*.<sup>113</sup>

### Armenian Apostolic Church-Catholic Church

The most important Christological statement between the Catholic Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church was made during the visit to Rome (December 10-14, 1996) of His Holiness Karekin I from Etchmiadzin, the Patriarch-Catholicos of all Armenians. This visit was followed in January 23-26, 1997, by the visit to Rome of His Holiness, Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, another independent Catholicosate of the One Armenian Apostolic Church. The joint Christological statement made by Karekin I and John Paul II was affirmed again in the common declaration of Aram I and the same Pope.

Predecessors of both had come to Rome previously and issued common statements with the Pope. Neither then,<sup>114</sup> nor in encounters of the Pope and Catholicos Karekin, does one find explicit references to Mary.<sup>115</sup> The only Mariological reference found in any of the public discourses during the visit of Aram I came at the end of the Pope's address on the occasion of the signing of the common declaration. The Pope, fostering cooperation in cultural matters, encouraged specifically the translation of the extensive writings of the Armenian tradition into other languages, observing that "Mariological texts have already been translated, and I warmly hope that this invaluable work will extend to other fields of spiritual expression proper to the Armenian soul."<sup>116</sup> He concluded the address, saying: "In

<sup>113</sup>"Address of H. H. Mar Ignatius I Iwas," *IS* 55 (1984): 61.

<sup>114</sup>See "Visit to Rome of His Holiness Vasken I, Supreme Catholicos of All the Armenians (May 8-12, 1970)," *IS* 11 (1970): 3-10. For previous visits of the Catholicos of the House of Cilicia, see "Visite à Rome du Catholicos Arménien de Cilicie Khoran I (8-11 mai 1967)," *IS, Ed. Française* 3 (1967): 4-6; "The Visit of His Holiness Catholicos Karekin II Sarkissian, April 15-19, 1983," *IS* 51 (1983): 37-41.

<sup>115</sup>"Common Declaration of John Paul II and Catholicos Karekin I, December 13, 1996," *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, December 18-25, 1996, p. 2.

<sup>116</sup>"Holy Father to Catholicos of Cilicia (January 25, 1997)," *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, February 5, 1997, p. 7.



communion with the All-Holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, I pray with you to our great God and Saviour to bless our meeting and make it fruitful for his glory and for the coming of his Kingdom."<sup>117</sup>

### Assyrian Church of the East-Catholic Church

In *Ut Unum Sint*, Pope John Paul II speaks of his great joy in signing a common Christological declaration, in November 1994, with His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East: "Taking into account the different theological formulations, we were able to profess together the true faith in Christ" (no. 62). Divisions, in the fifth century, between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Church in the West and the East were rooted in the formulations of the Council of Chalcedon (451). But the isolation of the Assyrian Church of the East from the rest of Christianity is traced back to the Council of Ephesus (431)<sup>118</sup> which proclaimed the legitimacy of venerating Mary as *Theotokos*, Mother of God.

In this declaration, the Pope and Patriarch state that a new day has dawned, that "They can indeed, from now on, proclaim together before the world their common faith in the mystery of the Incarnation."<sup>119</sup> Sections of the common declaration mention Mary:

The Word of God, second Person of the Holy Trinity, became incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit in assuming from the holy Virgin Mary a body animated by a rational soul, with which he was indissolubly united from the moment of his conception.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>"Common Christological Declaration between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, November 11, 1994," *IS* 88 (1995): 1-6. See "Background of the Historic Declaration" (p. 1).

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 2: As "heirs and guardians of the faith received from the Apostles as formulated by our common Fathers in the Nicene Creed," they confess in the declaration that "Our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man, perfect in his divinity and perfect in His humanity. . . . His divinity and his humanity are united in one person, without confusion or change, without division or separation. In him has been preserved the difference of the natures of divinity and humanity, with all their properties, faculties and operations . . . the divinity and humanity are united in the person of the same and unique Son of God and Lord Jesus Christ" ("Common Christological Declaration").

... the same God, the Word, begotten of his Father before all worlds without beginning according to his divinity, was born of a mother without a father in the last times according to his humanity. The humanity to which the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth always was that of the Son of God himself. That is the reason why the Assyrian Church of the East is praying the Virgin Mary as "the Mother of Christ our God and Saviour." In the light of this same faith, the Catholic tradition addresses the Virgin Mary as "the Mother of God" and also as "the Mother of Christ." We both recognize the legitimacy and rightness of these expressions of the same faith and we both respect the preference of each Church in her liturgical life and piety.<sup>120</sup>

The common declaration notes that the divisions of the past were due in large part to misunderstandings. But now "we experience ourselves united in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God who became man."<sup>121</sup>

At the Angelus on November 13th, Pope John Paul II expressed his personal gratitude for the common Christological declaration and his conviction about Mary's role in this: that "certainly it was not without Mary's motherly aid that we were able to arrive at this moment" which prepares the eventual full communion between these two churches, by clearing away a misunderstanding that lasted over 1,500 years.<sup>122</sup> He gave a brief explanation about the Council of Ephesus' use of the term *Theotokos*: "In teaching that it was legitimate to venerate Mary as the 'Theotokos,' Mother of God, the Council held at Ephesus in 431 wanted to underscore the Church's deep conviction that 'Christ's humanity has no other subject than the divine person of the Son of God who assumed it and made it his own, from his conception' in Mary's womb (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 466)." He indicated that deep dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East "made it possible to overcome the misunderstanding that occurred at the time of that Council, and today we share the joy of recognizing that, over and above different theological emphases, our faith in

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>"Angelus, November 13, 1994," *IS* 88 (1985): 6. Further citations from this Angelus statement are from this same source.

Christ, true God and true man, is one, and equally great is our love for Mary, his most holy Mother."<sup>123</sup> Differences remain and the meeting of the international dialogue between the two Churches (1997) will include discussion of the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.<sup>124</sup>

In summary, after fifteen-hundred years, Oriental Orthodox and Roman Catholics have found language to express a common faith in Jesus Christ, true God and true man. And in doing so, they have begun to praise Mary together, to express common convictions about "the intercession of the Virgin Mary" (Coptic Orthodox Pope Shenouda III, May 6, 1973) and that "we are bound . . . in a special way by a deep devotion to Mary . . . Theotokos" (Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, June 1984), and, "in communion with the All-Holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary," to pray for God's blessing on their common meeting (Pope John Paul II's address to Catholicos Aram I). Once again, Mary has been present as the Catholic and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, long estranged from one another, find themselves together on a new pilgrimage toward full communion.

### **III. Conclusion**

In its preparations for the Great Jubilee, Mary is present as the Catholic Church honors the Redeemer while praising the Trinity. In recent ecumenical developments, Faith and Order has shown again that Christians, despite serious differences about Mary, can speak of her together as the Mother of God, the disciple par excellence, to whom all pilgrims in faith can look as a model as they seek to enter more deeply into the life of Christ. Leaders of the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, acknowledging each other as sister churches, have found once more the ability to praise Mary in one another's presence and to call for her intercession in seeking the unity that her Son Jesus Christ, the Saviour, desires. Oriental Orthodox and Catholics, in finding the ability, after 1500

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>"Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, October 10-12, 1996," *IS* 93 (1996): 164.

years, to articulate together their common faith in Christ, true God and man, have reminded one another also of their deep common devotion to Mary, the Mother of God.

In these final years of the second millennium, we can therefore witness to some important positive developments and look with hope to the new age which is about to begin. The encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* urges fuller study of "the Virgin Mary, as Mother of God and Icon of the Church, the spiritual Mother who intercedes for Christ's disciples and for all humanity," as one necessary project before a true consensus of faith can be achieved. There is already some solid ground to build on.