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# Observations on Fr. Jelly's Paper

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## OBSERVATIONS ON FR. JELLY'S PAPER

Thanks to Fr. Jelly for a very enlightening and well organized paper. We look forward to the full text in *Marian Studies*. The highlights of the paper seem to me to be the following:

1. The general thrust of the whole paper clearly brings out that Mary's intercession (as indeed that of the saints) must be seen in the perspective of the communion of saints, where Mary holds a position designated by God Himself.
2. From an ecumenical point of view there are definite objections made by other Christians which call for clarification concerning Catholic Marian devotion. These objections spring from the Protestant reformers' principle of *Sola Scriptura*, *Solus Deus*, *Sola Gratia*. I believe that Fr. Jelly's paper addresses itself squarely to this issue by reviewing recent magisterial teaching and the revised liturgy.

Although not so explicitly as our times seem to require, nevertheless, the actual practice of Marian devotion in the great Marian saints, such as for instance Don Bosco, clearly gives to Mary a subordinate and secondary role in relation to the mediation of Christ. The same applies, with due qualifications, to Mary's role as sanctifier in relation to the Holy Spirit. In Don Bosco, for instance, Mary's subordinate and secondary role in our sanctification is given prominence; which is certainly not to be seen as opposed to—but altogether subordinate to—the role of the Holy Spirit Sanctifier. Blessed Maximilian Kolbe, in his writings on Mary, brings this out very explicitly, and perhaps it is to his writings that we should go for a further explication of this aspect of Marian devotion.

Less explicitly, we find something of the same trend in the case of the Salesian Father Beltrami whose cause for beatification has been introduced, and whose Marian formula was

*con-in-per-Maria*, i.e., "with, and in, and through Mary" in the sense of the "mediated immediacy" to Christ that Fr. Jelly spoke of. In line with current developments, something of this comes out in the talks of the contemporary Mariologist, Fr. Bertetto, S.D.B.

3. The meaning of Mary's intercession is her spiritual motherhood of redeemed humanity throughout salvation history.

4. Mary's spiritual motherhood has two aspects—her unique and intimate association with Christ's own salvific work and the continuation of her motherly care for mankind in heaven. *From a pastoral point* it seems to me that in relation to the continuation of Mary's motherly care for mankind, Mary's *presence* must be stressed independently of any theological explanation that may be given to that *presence*. Thus, in the case of Don Bosco and the devotion to Mary Help of Christians which he promoted, it is the *presence* of Mary at crucial moments in the history of the Church that is paramount. The same holds true as regards the history of Don Bosco's Salesian Society. The fourth successor of Don Bosco, Fr. Peter Ricaldone, who wrote a treatise on devotion to Mary as Help of Christians, made the point that, of all the scriptural phrases which might characterize the origin and spread of the Salesian work throughout the world, the most appropriate would be words taken from St. John's account of Cana: "*And the Mother of Jesus was there.*" No doubt these words concerning the "*presence*" of Mary have a vast application in the history of the Church itself and of the various Marian Congregations within the Church.

5. Although this is not explicit in the paper, I would suggest that in regard to Mary's intercession, there is a primacy of concern for the *spiritual* welfare of us all.

6. Mary's role is altogether distinct from Christ's priestly role as One Mediator and the sacramental mediation of the Church and of the Holy Spirit.

*Observations on Fr. Jelly's Paper*

7. In the new approach there is an emphasis on being like Mary and with Mary, yet maintaining a direct, immediate relationship to God.

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