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HOMAGE TO A GREAT POPE AND TO HIS MARIAN DEVOTION: PAUL VI

The fifteen years of Paul VI's pontificate (elected June 21, 1963; died August 6, 1978), already appear as one of the most important periods in the history of the Church. Paul VI stands out as the Pope of a period that was of capital importance for the history of the Church and its relationship with the world. The years of his pontificate (1963 to 1978) marked the third quarter of the twentieth century: a period during which men reached and walked on the moon—providing symbol and proof of an unequalled scientific and technical progress, a period characterized also by a definite affirmation of the existence and independence of Third World countries—contributing to the growth of a world population that in 1978 reached a little over four billion inhabitants (of whom one widely-distributed billion were Christians, including about 700 million Catholics).

Although the name of John XXIII will forever remain associated with the initiative and the beginnings of Vatican Council II, it was Paul VI who presided over the most important part of the work done by this Council and over the promulgation of all its documents. Pope Paul VI guided with firmness, but also with genuine deep tolerance and mercy, the adaptations requested of the Church in response to the Council. Mass media personnel everywhere noted and recorded the importance of his travels; he was the first Pope to visit all the continents. People were impressed by his constant efforts for the establishment of true global peace, in an age of transition and a world involved in international reorganization. At his intervention at the United Nations in New York, he was the first Pope officially to address that Assembly and, through it, the whole world. Ear-

nestly, he cried out against the horrors of war, repeating several times, "*Jamais plus la guerre!*"

What significance should, then, be attributed to the Marian teachings offered by Pope Paul VI in the course of a pontificate so dedicated to meeting the most imperative needs of the Church and the whole world? Precisely the one that the Pope himself clearly indicated by his own preoccupation to put Marian devotion in its rightful perspective. He justly gave Mary her rightful place in the life of the Church, showing that Marian devotion is, first of all, truly "ecclesial."¹ A rapid survey of his teachings proves at once how faithful this Pope was in his insistence on the conciliar documents. Frequently, he referred to Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*; the union of the mystery of Mary with the mystery of Christ and the Church appears as the leitmotif of his official Marian teachings. Repeatedly, he developed, reaffirmed, and explained it; it became for him a pastoral and catechetical principle. This pastoral importance of Marian devotion is evidenced in another aspect of the Pope's teaching. Paul VI did not seek to formulate synthetical presentations like those of Pius XII. Rather, in keeping with his predecessors, he constantly preached Christian doctrine to the pilgrims, the various audiences, who gathered in the Vatican or at Castelgandolfo. He transformed his travels into a continuous teaching. Like his predecessors, he used the liturgical year to explain the mystery of salvation, the mystery of Jesus and of the Church. Always with great care, Pope Paul pointed out the place God had given to Mary in His plan of salvation. Because of his pastoral concern, Paul VI followed closely the life of the Church in daily events and thus preached the presence of Mary among us who

¹ T. Koehler, *Paul VI et la dévotion Mariale en Eglise*, in *Cah M*, No. 117 (1979) 107-122. *Marian Library Studies* began the chronological listing of Paul VI's Marian teachings in *MLS* 2 (1970) 75-85; the last part will be published in a coming issue. G. M. Besutti in his *Bibliografia Mariana, 1958-1966* (Nos. D79-D139) and *Bibliografia Mariana, 1967-1972* (Nos. C25-C79) gives listings with references to the texts published in *Marianum*.

are the Church today.

In his Marian teachings, Paul VI appears to have been especially preoccupied with solid traditional doctrine—a doctrine inspiring both great love and veneration to the Mother of God who is our Mother as well as a type of devotion totally integrated with Christian spirituality. Are we then to conclude that in his Marian doctrine there is nothing creative? In reality, Paul VI was a model for all pastors. The Christian pastorate is a difficult and delicate apostolic work, involving both what is traditional and modern. Pope Paul VI combined a complete respect for Tradition with decisive and creative research regarding the adaptations needed today.

The chief characteristics of the Marian teaching of Paul VI can be analyzed by examining his principal texts in chronological order and by regrouping the others. Immediately, one is struck by the extreme variety of ways in which the Pope expressed his own devotion and that of the Church. Such texts stand out in the encyclicals, in the apostolic exhortations, in the official addresses and homilies, as well as in his more familiar speeches to the pilgrims, to the crowds that came for the Sunday Angelus, and to other similar gatherings. These teachings of Paul VI reflect his love and predilection for the "Madonna." But they also express—especially the more official utterances—his overwhelming preoccupation to *promote an authentic and valuable Marian devotion*, one founded on sound doctrine and affirming the true place of Mary in the very life of the Church. For Paul VI, Marian devotion is *ecclesial*, that is, *practiced and lived out in the Church*.

Does this mean that the Pope interpreted the Marian teachings of Vatican II as *ecclesio-typical*, rather than *Christo-typical*? Paul VI followed the orientation given in *Lumen Gentium* (Ch. 8); he saw no opposition, only mutual accord, between these two aspects of Marian doctrine: Mary seen as the person nearest to Christ and also as the one nearest to us. Later, some opposition did arise between those who saw Mary as Archetype of the

Church or as Woman of Faith. As we will see, for Pope Paul, Mary was our Archetype precisely as our Model of Faith.

I. *The Pope of "Lumen Gentium": Mary's Unique Place in the Mystery of Jesus and the Church*

From the time of the promulgation of the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (Nov. 21, 1964), the last chapter of this text (Ch. 8) was dear to Paul VI; it was the greatest conciliar document consecrated to Marian devotion,² expressing the traditional love of the Church for the Mother of God. The title of this famous chapter is typical of the purpose of the conciliar Fathers as well as of the Marian preaching characteristic of Paul VI: "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church." The convictions of the Pope were apparent already at the end of the second session of Vatican II when, in his closing address (Dec. 4, 1963), he alluded to the vote concerning the inclusion of the schema on Mary in the Constitution on the Church. This vote (Oct. 29, 1963)—for the first time—split the assembly into two camps: 1,114 voices in favor of the insertion, and 1,074 against it. The Pope thus gave his guidelines for another session:

We hope that this Council will give the very best solution to our problem about the schema of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that the assembly in unanimous consent and with greatest devotion will acknowledge the eminent place proper to the Mother of God in the Holy Church—in that Church which is the principal matter of this Council. We say that, after Christ, her place is the most prominent in the Church, yet closest to us; so that we may honor her with the name "Mother of the Church": to her glory and our benefit.^{2a}

At the close of the third session, in which he promulgated the

² *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 8: *AAS* 57 (1965) 58-85. Cf. also *PSp* 10 (1965) 359-400.

^{2a} Paul VI, Closing address of the 2nd session of Vatican II: *AAS* 56 (1964) 37. Cf. also *PSp* 9 (1964) 221-229.

Constitution of the Church, the Pope emphasized the hope that the entire world would arrive to understand better the true nature of the Church, and that the faithful would come to contemplate "a true image of the Church, Spouse of Christ, and see the beauty of their Mother and teacher."³ He dedicated the conclusion of this address to "the most Blessed Virgin Mary, . . . protectress of this Council, a witness of our labors, a most loving counselor." Thus, Paul VI pointed out the significance of the last chapter of the Constitution on the Church: the "crowning point" of the Constitution, a realization of "the aims of this Council, since it is striving to show the true visage of the Holy Church." In Mary, given to us by God, we contemplate the most perfect type of the Church. Therefore, "when we look upon the Church, we must contemplate with loving spirit the marvels worked by God in His Holy Mother. Knowledge of true Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary will always be an effective aid to proper understanding of the mystery of Christ and the Church." We can see in this guideline the application of a traditional principle for pastoral and catechetical work: we know the Church better when we know Mary better, and we know Mary better when we have a better knowledge of the Church.

The Pope then took advantage of this solemn occasion to proclaim Mary *Mother of the Church*, that is, of the whole Christian people, both faithful and pastors, who call her their most loving Mother: "We decree from now on, the whole Christian people should use this sweetest of names to pay greater honor to the Mother of God and to offer her their supplications." Paul VI knew that this title, which first appeared in certain medieval Latin texts,⁴ was not acceptable to some ecumenists who feared

³ Paul VI, Closing address of the 3rd session of Vatican II: *AAS* 56 (1964) 1007-1018. Cf. also *PSp* 10 (1964) 131-141

⁴ Berengaudus, in *Apoc.*, *PL* 17, 876D: first mention of the title, in connection with "*filia Ecclesiae*": (in *Apoc.* 12) *Possumus per mulierum in hoc loco et beatam Mariam intelligere, eo quod ipsa Mater sit Ecclesiae, quia*

unfavorable reactions from some non-Catholics.⁵ He then ex-

eum peperit qui caput est Ecclesiae: et filia sit Ecclesiae. . . quia maximum membrum est Ecclesiae. . . Cf. also the study on the title "*Mater Ecclesiae*" by T. Koehler in *EtdM* 11 (1953) 133-157.

⁵ In *Cab M* 109 (1977) 214-226, Fr. Besutti studied the title *Mother of the Church* in relation to Vatican II. This title was dear to John XXIII. In the conciliar drafts, we find this name in the title heading the first editions of the Marian schema (those of May, June, July 1961): "Mary, Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church." The fourth draft was entitled: "Mary, Mother of the Mystical Body." The fifth one was "Mary, Mother of the Head and Mother of the Members of the Mystical Body." From March 5-10, 1962, the theological commission already foresaw the insertion of a chapter on Mary into the schema on the Church. Nevertheless, a Marian draft was given to the Fathers on Oct. 12, 1962, with the title "Mary, Mother of Mankind," and in the prologue it was stated that Mary is called not only a *member of the Church* but also *its Mother*. On April 22, 1963, John XXIII changed the title to "The Blessed Virgin Mary; Mother of the Church." The change was accepted but not unanimously. After the death of John XXIII, when Paul VI reopened the Council (Sept. 23, 1963), the tendency to incorporate the Marian schema into the Constitution on the Church was favored by the majority. The title *Mother of the Church* became important also. Paul VI summed up all these aspirations at the close of the 2nd session (Dec. 4, 1963). During the inter-session, after 5 drafts, the commission arrived (Feb. 25, 1964) at a text of 7 pages that did not contain the title *Mother of the Church* (nor that of *Mediatrix*). In June, the name of *Mediatrix* was reintroduced; the title *Mother of the Church* was not made explicit, although the text suggested it. At the 3rd session, the Marian schema was entitled: "The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Mystery of Christ and of the Church." In the discussion (Sept. 16-18, 1964), the title *Mother of the Church* was recalled, without becoming a dominant question; out of the 33 bishops who participated orally, only one was against it. Furthermore, there were 57 written interventions, the majority being in favor of the title; the opposition was based on the ecumenical problem that it raised. The commission in charge of drawing up a new text gathered many observations favoring the title *Mother of the Church*. Besutti summarizes them thus: 159 Fathers requested the name *Mother of the Church* be mentioned in the title of the Marian text; 123 requested that the title "The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Mystery of Christ and of the Church" be kept, without adding the phrase *Mother of the Church*. On Oct. 29, 1964, the text was approved with its present title; yet 21 Fathers still requested that the name *Mother of the Church* be taken up again. With the last vote on Nov. 21, 1964, the text bearing the present title was approved: 215 *placet* and 5 *non placet*. Yet the title *Mother of the Church* reflected a latent desire of the Council.

plained that this title was based on the Divine Maternity of Mary, and summarized the current doctrine on her spiritual maternity:

Just as the Divine Maternity is the cause of Mary's singular relationship with Christ and the reason for her involvement in Christ's work for the salvation of mankind, so too the Divine Maternity is the source of those relationships that exist between Mary and the Church. [Here the Pope followed an argument stressed by Berengaudus and also by Pius XII]. Mary is the Mother of Christ, who, as soon as He assumed human nature in her virginal womb, united His Mystical Body, the Church, to Himself as its Head.

Paul VI concluded: "And so Mary, as the Mother of Christ, must be regarded as the Mother of all the faithful and their pastors, that is, the Church." Therefore, he underscored the very important lesson of the conciliar text: Mary is both the privileged Mother of God and the most perfect example for the people of God, especially by her faith. He stressed the pastoral aspect of this teaching:

Mary is still close to us. Like us, she is a daughter of Adam and hence our sister too. . . . In this mortal life, she showed herself the perfect image of a disciple of Christ. She was the mirror of all virtues and she took the beatitudes that were preached by Christ Jesus and reproduced them to the full in her own life. As a result, the universal Church, in developing the many aspects of its life and works, finds the definitive model for perfect imitation of Christ in the Virgin Mother of God.

Finally, the Pope concluded that Chapter 8, devoted to Mary, had provided a climax to the promulgation of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, "a kind of fastigium," and thus an invitation to placing greater confidence in the Blessed Virgin Mary. He led by example, ending his address with petitions to Mary and commending "the whole human race to thy Immaculate Heart, O Virgin Mother of God." Borrowing from the Marian conclu-

sion of the liturgical *Prayer of the Hours*, Pope Paul closed with the words of the *Salve Regina*: "O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary."

In these final petitions, it is possible to note how the Pope envisioned the mission of the Council towards the whole world; explaining its consonance with the teachings of Pius XII, he spoke about "the very world which our predecessor, Pius XII, not without heavenly inspiration, solemnly consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary." This consecration elucidates the intention of Paul VI in commending all mankind to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. To commemorate Pius XII's consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Pope Paul VI, in the name of the Council and for the promotion of peace, also announced the sending of a Golden Rose to Fatima.⁶

II. From "*Lumen Gentium*" to "*Signum Magnum*": Scripture, Tradition, Devotion

In 1967, for the Golden Jubilee of the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima (1917), the Pope made a pilgrimage there on the anniversary of the first apparition, May 13th. Previously, on May 3rd, in the Vatican basilica, he had revealed the motive behind his trip: a pilgrimage for peace.⁷ In his homily (May 13th) at the Shrine of Fatima, he explained the significance of his visit:⁸ the fiftieth anniversary of the apparitions, the fifteenth anniversary of the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by Pius XII;⁹ the launching of the postconciliar Church, full of new life: one, holy, catholic and apostolic; the

⁶ The golden rose was sent to Fatima, May 13, 1965. Cf. *Nesta hora*, Radio-message to Portugal, *AAS* 57 (1965) 532-533.

⁷ Address to general audience: *AAS* 59 (1967) 502-505.

⁸ Homily, *OssR* (May 14, 1967).

⁹ Cf. Pius XII, Radio-message to Portugal, Oct. 13, 1962: *AAS* 34 (1942) 318-319 and Prayer in the Vatican basilica, Dec. 8, 1942: *AAS* 34 (1942) 345.

promotion of peace throughout the world. The Pope urged all people everywhere to oppose all forms of violence.

For this occasion, he wrote the Apostolic Exhortation, *Signum Magnum*, to the Bishops,¹⁰ to extend the Council's Marian teachings and to clarify some of its declarations. The image of Mary, he felt, had been renewed by the return to Scripture now better understood, to a patristic and medieval tradition now better known, as well as, to an active development of a truer devotion. In *Signum Magnum*, Pope Paul VI not only discussed this renewal, but also introduced traditional teachings which were not explicitly included in the conciliar text. For example, in *Signum Magnum* he follows the lead of the Council in the interpretation of Mt. 12:50 (Cf. *Lum. Gen.*, Ch. 8, No. 58), one of the Gospel texts which is sometimes misquoted as being anti-Marian. This verse is the reply of Jesus to those who had told him that his mother and his brothers were standing outside wanting to speak to him. Jesus replied: "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers? Here are my mother, my brothers: whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother and sister and mother." Paul VI goes on to explain that the best way to imitate Christ is to imitate Mary; he views Mt. 12:50 in a positive light, acknowledging Mary as the most perfect disciple of Christ:

For this holy Virgin, who always adapted herself to God's will, was the first to merit the words of praise that Christ spoke to his followers: "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother, my sister, my mother."

There were two other biblical texts for which the Pope favored interpretations not given in the conciliar document. The first words of *Signum Magnum* recall the liturgical application of Apocalypse 12 to Mary; the Council had not mentioned this reference among the biblical bases of Marian devotion. The

¹⁰ Paul VI, *Signum Magnum*, May 13, 1967: *AAS* 59 (1967) 465-475; translation given in *PSP* 12 (1967) 278-286.

Pope cautiously affirmed the possibility of a Marian interpretation of the text:

A "great sign" appeared in the sky, according to St. John the apostle; it was "a woman clothed with the sun." Not without reason, the sacred liturgy of the Catholic Church interprets this sign as a figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary who, by the grace of Christ the Redeemer, is the mother of all humankind.

Apocalypse 12, moreover, is linked in this exhortation to the spiritual maternity of Mary. Another biblical text, one quoted in *Lumen Gentium* (Ch. 8, No. 58), receives an even more explicit interpretation. The Council wrote: "Finally, she was given by the same Jesus Christ dying on the Cross, as a mother to His disciple, with these words: 'Woman, behold thy Son' (Jn. 19:26-27)." *Signum Magnum* refers to this Johannine text in the same context as *Lumen Gentium*, Ch. 8: the participation of Mary in Jesus' sacrifice for our redemption. Pope Paul concludes, therefore, that Jesus, through his declaration to the beloved disciple, assigned his mother to all of us as our Mother:

She participated in her Son's sacrifice for our redemption in such intimate fashion that He designated her the mother not only of John the Apostle but also—it seems legitimate to say this—of the human race which he in some way represented.

Signum Magnum marked a new step in the pastoral teaching of Paul VI. He did not purport to present the entire doctrine of Mary's role in our salvation and her relationship with the Church; rather his intention was to explain the title *Mater Ecclesiae* as source of our filial devotion, as described by the Council. He probably wanted to offset some criticism raised by this title, but he noted only two contradictory apprehensions: the fear that the liturgical reform would threaten Marian devotion and the fear that Marian doctrine might obscure that worship strictly due only to God.

For Paul VI, the title, "Mother of the Church," helps us renew our devotion. Why? Because this title indicates the presence of the maternal Mary among the people of God: she is "mother of pastors and of the faithful." At the beginning of *Signum Magnum*, the Pope vividly recalls the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus where, in 431, the Bishops of the Orient and of the Occident pronounced Mary, *Theotokos*, Mother of God. And she was present to the Church of Ephesus: "Oh! how great was the maternal pleasure of the Virgin Mary, in a moment so glorious for the history of the Church, when she looked to pastors and faithful from her heavenly throne!" Pope Paul in his exhortation explains Mary's maternal presence as lasting throughout the history of the Church. From all the evangelical and traditional documents, he writes, "it is obvious that the spiritual maternity of Mary transcends the limits of space and time. It belongs to the universal history of the Church to which Mary was constantly present by her mission and her help as Mother." Alluding to the name "Marian Era" given to his time, Paul VI insisted that such a term does not denigrate Mary's presence in other centuries:

Indeed, all the ages of the Church have enjoyed the maternal presence of the Mother of God; for she is always united by an indissoluble bond to the mystery of the Mystical Body, whose head is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and for all centuries."

Mary's presence is at once intercessory and attractive: the radiant splendor of the "perfect figure of the Church," "an easier and more attractive way" to imitate Jesus himself. Paul VI is "sure that our Heavenly Queen and very loving Mother will never fail to be present to each of her children" (*singulis filiis suis*).

III. *A Doctrinal Devotion: Integral to the Christian Creed*

Paul VI did not bequeath us encyclicals as theological as those

of Pius XII on the Queenship of Mary or on the dogma of the Assumption. Instead, he left us a theological declaration unique in doctrinal and pastoral value: a solemn profession of faith, proclaimed in the name of the Church. On June 30, 1968, he closed the "Year of Faith" with a "Credo"¹¹ that he intended to be "complete and explicit enough to respond in a fitting way to the need for light felt by so many faithful souls and by all those, in the world, no matter what spiritual family they belong to, who are in search of the truth." This expression of faith reveals the depth of soul of Paul VI, his vital and loving faith in Christ, the Son of the Living God. For example, reviewing his pontificate on the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, only a few days before his death, the Pope alluded, as successor of Saint Peter, to the profession of faith of the chief of the apostles at Caesarea Philippi. Paul VI's "Creed" interests us by its integration of truths revealed in a simple, almost catechetical, order, expressing not a series of truths but *faith in the plan of salvation*—faith in Divine Love, as revealed to us in its salvific action, in Jesus Christ. Paul VI expresses the faith of the whole Church, beginning with the act of faith in the *Creator-God* who makes himself known to us, as *Father, Son, Spirit*, in order to share his Eternal Life with us. The *Son of God* reveals to us the God of love and of mercy. "He was incarnate by the action of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary"; consequently, after Christ, we believe in the *Spirit*, Holy and Sanctifying, and

... We believe "that Mary is the mother—remaining ever-Virgin—of the Incarnate Word, God and Savior Jesus Christ, and that, because of her singular election, she is, in consideration of the merits of her son, redeemed in a more sublime manner" (*Lum. Gen.*, No. 53), "preserved immune from any stain of original sin" (*Ineffabilis Deus*), and "by the gift of an extraordinary grace, far surpasses all other created beings" (*Lum. Gen.*, No. 53).

¹¹ Marian declarations: *AAS* 60 (1968) 437, 444; translation of the profession of faith given in *PSP* 13 (1968) 276-282.

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Joined by a close and indissoluble bond to the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption (*Lum. Gen.*, Nos. 53, 58, 61), the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Immaculate, was taken up, at the end of her earthly life, body and soul into heavenly glory (*Munificentissimus Deus*), and then, glorified like her Son who is risen from the dead, she received in anticipation the state of all the just; we believe that the most Holy Mother of God, New Eve, Mother of the Church, yet enacts in heaven her maternal role of care for Christ's members, cooperating in the birth and growth of divine life in the soul of each of the redeemed.¹²

Original sin is the cause of our Salvation History and, in Jesus Christ, salvation awaits everyone through *baptism*. Thus, all the baptized form the *Church*, and Paul VI details extensively this mysterious union of visible society and spiritual communion. The "Creed" of Paul VI concludes with an expression of faith in eternal life and in the Communion of Saints:

... the multitude of those gathered around Jesus and Mary in paradise ... the Church of heaven, where they see in eternal beatitude God as He is, and where they also are associated, in different degrees,

¹² ... Credimus Beatam Mariam, quae semper Virgo permansit, Matrem fuisse Verbi Incarnati, Dei et Salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi (*Conc. Ephes., D-Sch*, 251-252), eamque, ob singularem suam electionem, intuitu meritum Filii sui sublimiore modo redemptam (*Lum. Gen.*, No. 53), ab omni originalis culpa labe praeservatam immunem fuisse (*Ineffabilis Deus, Acta*, pars I, vol. I, p. 616), atque eximae gratiae dono omnibus allis creaturis longe antecellere (*Lum. Gen.*, No. 53).

Arcto et indissolubili vinculo mysterio Incarnationis et Redemptionis coniuncta (*Lum. Gen.*, Nos. 53, 58, 61), Beatissima Virgo Maria, Immaculata, expleto terrestri vitae cursu corpore et anima ad caelestem gloriam est assumpta (*Munificentissimus Deus*, in *AAS* 42 (1950) 770) et Filio suo qui resurrexit a mortuis, similis reddita, sortem omnium iustorum in antecessum accepit; credimus Sanctissimam Dei Genitricem, novam Haevam, Matrem Ecclesiae (*Lum. Gen.*, Nos. 53, 56, 61, 63; Paulus VI, *Alloc. in conclusione III Sessionis Concilii Vat. II*, *AAS* 56 (1964) 1016; *Sig. Mag.*, *AAS* 59 (1967) 465, 467), coelitus nunc materno pergere circa Christi membra munere jungi, quoad gignendam augendamque vitam divinam in singulis hominum redemptorum animis opem confert (*Lum. Gen.*, No. 62; *Sig. Mag.*, *AAS* 59 (1967) 468).

with the holy angels in the divine reign exercised by Christ in glory; for they intercede for us and help our weakness by their brotherly care.

This profession of faith emphasized some tenets which had recently been under attack. Therefore, for Christology and Mariology, Paul VI solemnly affirmed the faith of the Church in both the divinity and the humanity of Christ, as well as in the perpetual virginity of Mary. He also proclaimed faith in the Redemption and in the role given to Mary in the Mission of Christ.

IV. "*Marialis Cultus*": The Value of Marian Devotion

On May 29, 1968, Paul VI explained to an audience of pilgrims and visitors "the broad perspectives" which the Council had opened for a true Marian devotion. His homily on that occasion¹³ was actually a preparation to *Marialis Cultus*. First of all, the Pope noted that, for the Council, Mary had not been "a solitary figure" on an empty horizon. Her unique being is defined and clarified by "her divine and mysterious relationships" with the Holy Trinity, relationships which do not belong to the calling of any other woman in history. These particular relationships verify for us the *Trinitarian* value of Marian devotion. Privileged Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and Sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, she helps us enter into the Presence of God. She is no obstacle to true worship; for Mary, in her Trinitarian relationships, remains our sister. She is "accessible." This explains, perhaps,

...the practical priority which Marian devotion often assumes in the religious life of many of the faithful: for them, it is an *instinctive comfort* to stay with Mary rather than to move further ahead; she is a stopping point, integral to our history and corresponding better to the possibilities of our human and religious experience.

¹³ Paul VI, *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, VI (1968) 799-802.

And, in this very spiritual experience, as the Pope specifically pointed out, Mary herself—through and after our sojourn with her—“draws us into a transcendent flight towards God: let us remember the *Magnificat*.” Mary’s presence enables us to contemplate the One God in Three Persons.

Pope Paul explained the Christological value of Marian devotion in a similar way. No one is more or better united with Jesus than Mary, his mother, associated with him in all his mysteries. No one loved Christ more deeply than his mother. Therefore, Mary, through our union with her, guides us in our encounter and life with the Lord Jesus. Reflecting on Mary’s love for Jesus, the Pope described the “pneumatological” and the “ecclesial” values of Marian devotion. Mary’s love for Jesus became the font of her charity for us; the Holy Spirit was in her “the vivifying and loving principle of her divine maternity that associated her to the Passion of her Son and at Pentecost overflowed in her heart and widened it so much that he made her spiritual Mother of the newborn Church.” Paul VI stated further that Mary became “Mother of the Church through all centuries, this Church to which we belong.” In concluding his address, he also distinguished between sacramental power and the order of grace and charity. Mary receives the title *Mother of the Church* “not in the sacramental order, as cause of grace, but in the order of the diffusing communion of charity and grace (proper to the Mystical Body).”

These comments of Pope Paul VI on the “perspectives” of the Council introduce us to his purpose for publishing his Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus* (February 2, 1974). Conscious of the liturgical renewal, he also wanted to demonstrate how that renewal prepared for and enhanced the place of Mary in both liturgy and personal prayer.¹⁴ By this document he showed how

¹⁴ The Pope wanted a renewal in keeping with Tradition: no “modernism” and no “immobilism.” Cf. Wolfgang Beinert, “Alla luce della sua mariologia” in *OssR* (June 24, 1978) 3. Cf. also the presentation of his Exhortation by John Cardinal Carberry, “*Marialis Cultus*: A Priestly Treasure” in *HPR* 88 (May, 1978) 7-13.

the various forms of Marian devotion are *integral parts of the worship, the prayer life of the Church.*

There is only one Christian worship, offered to God, through Christ, in the Spirit (*Mar. Cult.*, No. 25) by a Church united with Christ and following the divine plan of salvation (Cf. *Mar. Cult.*, Introduction). The place God reserved for Mary in his divine design has likewise inspired the Church to place Mary in a privileged position in Christian worship. Mary's participation in the worship offered to God is *Trinitarian, Christological, Pneumatological, and Ecclesial* (*Mar. Cult.*, 2nd part). These qualities point to the deep significance of Marian devotion to Christian worship: each act of devotion towards Mary tends to unite us to the Triune God—in Christ, by the Spirit, as the Church.

Furthermore, this integration into the doctrine and the life of the Church requires a continuous return to Revelation: the *Bible* and the Liturgy formed by *Tradition*. It also demands careful attention to the present needs of the Church; the document thus emphasizes the necessity of *ecumenism* and of openness to scientific studies of mankind (anthropological orientation). In regard to this last point, in *Marialis Cultus* Paul VI reminds us that our concept of Mary ought to respect the discoveries of our modern sciences and the cultural changes which are now projecting a new image of woman. The Pope proposed the Blessed Virgin in various aspects of her life as an example for the contemporary age. At the International Congress of Rome (May 16, 1975), he concluded his address with this invocation:

Because today women are making great progress in social life, nothing is more useful, nothing can more attract our minds than taking as an example the image of this Virgin and Mother who, resplendent in the light of the Holy Spirit, gathers—as it were—and expresses in some way through her beauty all true human values.¹⁵

¹⁵ *OssR* (May 18, 1975). Address translated in *PSp* 20 (1975) 199-203.

V. *The Teachings of a Pastor: To the Pilgrims Visiting Rome*

His preaching to pilgrims during the fifteen years of his pontificate shows how Paul VI strove to be a pastor attentive to the hopes, the needs, and the sufferings, not of Christians only, but of all peoples. He was attentive to current events in order to discern their meaning in the plan of salvation, and thus to proclaim the Good News in the twentieth century, that "*aggiornamento*" desired by John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council. In this pastoral mission—an ecclesial one, since it involved the very life of the Church in the world of today—the Marian teachings of Paul VI are harmoniously and totally integrated in his message to the world: they comprise neither a superfluous appendix nor an artificial insertion. Rather, his teachings form an essential element of the Church's message which he proclaimed to the world of his day.

We must recall what Paul VI wrote in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelization in the Modern World*, regarding his own task:

Thus, by the will of Christ, the successor of Peter is charged with the pre-eminent ministry of teaching revealed truth . . . the absolute, supreme and universal power that Christ entrusts to his Vicar for the pastoral government of his Church is especially evident when the Pope exerts it in the action of *preaching and having others preach* the Good News of salvation.¹⁶

We should note the importance that Paul VI gave to his preaching; this emphasis is evident in the immense efforts he made to preach the Gospel during the audiences which were granted to pilgrims. Such pastoral effort has been a noteworthy aspect of the lives of recent popes—a papal mission meriting study, enlightening for all those responsible for pilgrimages throughout Christendom. These popes knew themselves to be "responsi-

¹⁶ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No. 67, Oct. 8, 1975: *AAS* 68 (1976) 5-76; translation appears in *PSp* 21 (1976) 4-51.

ble” for the pilgrims who flocked to Rome; such crowds created the most diverse horizons for evangelization. Paul VI was very conscious of his duties as Head of the Church of Christ; he was, therefore, conscious of the importance of his Marian teaching, his aim to be *the most faithful preacher of the mystery of Mary* in the mystery of Christ and of his Church. To the two aspects of this preaching which have already been mentioned—fidelity to Tradition (especially as it is formulated in Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*) and constant alertness to the meaning of events as interpreted by Christian conscience—Paul VI added the dimension of prophetic creativity so necessary for a time of rapid social, political, and cultural changes, for a period when the more exact sciences show that even mathematical precision testifies to a humble or realistic acceptance of the “unknown probabilities” of the universe still accompanying the mystery which continues to surround humanity and the human person. As a pastor, conscious of the “maternal” and ever-active presence of Mary in the Church and desirous of restoring her to the faithful so that they might pray to, honor and love their Mother, Pope Paul always encouraged such prayer, their recitation of the Rosary. At a time when events often dramatically revealed the needs of humanity and of the Church, he stressed, above all, the need for peace in Viet-Nam, in the Middle East, in Lebanon, and in the whole world; this can be verified through a chronological listing of addresses made during his pontificate or through a year-by-year analysis of his teaching.

Marialis Cultus analyzes, soberly and with precision, the Marian riches of the liturgical year and recommends two devotions: the Angelus and the Rosary. The preaching of Paul VI exemplifies the directives contained in this Exhortation. From Advent (the time of the preparation for the feast of Christmas) until the following November (end of the liturgical year, with the feast of All Saints and the announcement of the Parousia concluding the celebration of the central mystery of the primitive Kerygma—the passion-death-resurrection of the

Lord), the Pope continually preached the "Good News" of the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary to save us. A month-by-month examination of Paul VI's homilies to pilgrims at Rome illustrates how well he himself implemented the pastoral program suggested in his *Marialis Cultus*.

December

Two feasts are constantly commented on: the Immaculate Conception and the Nativity of the Savior. The solemnity of December 8th may have been the Marian feast closest to the heart of Paul VI. Along with the eucharistic celebration and the Angelus, the Pope also made the traditional pilgrimage to the Spanish plaza to honor the statue of the Immaculate Virgin there and his annual visit to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major. From 1966 on, he insisted on a theme he especially treasured: Mary as the type or figure of Christian spiritual aesthetics (Homily to Religious Women: 1966); Mary as the type of the primal human being conceived by God (Homily: 1967), Mary's beauty as a model for the Church (Homily: 1968). He recognized the Immaculate Virgin as the revelation of our primitive beauty, the vision of humanity pure and intact, that is, the union of flesh and spirit resplendent in its divine resemblance (Angelus: 1969). The brilliance hidden in that humility spoken of in the Gospel is transparent in the Immaculate Woman, blessed among all women by her participation in the mystery of the Incarnation (Homily: 1976). Pope Paul emphasized in this latter text the importance of this mystery in the work of the redemptive Incarnation. The Immaculate Conception teaches a lesson, at once religious and human, to members of a humanity degraded by sin. In need of redemption, we contemplate in Mary the true and total beauty of the human creature (Angelus: 1970).

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception has more than a temporal relationship with Advent, that time of preparation for the feast of the Infant-God: Christmas. Advent is the best litur-

gical season for the Marian cult. Mary is the way that leads us to the humanity of Christ; she is *Christophoros*, bearer of Christ (Dec. 12, 1966). The Church shares the expectancy of Mary, and the Virgin intercedes for us, leads us to her Son (Dec. 18, 1969). On his visit to Sydney, Australia, when speaking to handicapped children, the Pope called to mind the life of the Infant-Jesus: "Every child should remember that Jesus was a child. . . . Like the other children of Nazareth, he wanted to be taught by his mother, the Virgin Mary; he also wanted to learn a profession from Saint Joseph" (Dec. 2, 1970).

Paul VI, in his annual Christmas radio-messages, called the world's attention to the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. This ineffable meeting between God and man took place in Mary (Dec. 31, 1965). Christ intervened in our history through the virginal maternity of Mary (Dec. 20, 1968). In 1971, the Pope emphasized the historical reality of the birth of Christ. He recalled the scene of Bethlehem, relying on the account of Saint Luke (Address to the Diplomatic Corps: Christmas, 1971); Christ, he declared, is neither a dream nor a myth. Furthermore, what happened when Mary gave birth to Christ happens as the Church, our Mother, begets Christ for a new society where "there is no place for him. . ." (Radio-message: Christmas, 1971).

January

During the Christmas season, on the newly-restored feast of January 1st, the Solemnity of the Mother of God, the Pope spoke of Mary, celebrating the Divine Maternity instead of the Circumcision. He preached the place of Mary in the mystery of the Epiphany, as well as her role in the Holy Family. In the first January of his pontificate, he went on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land; on January 5th, in Nazareth, he recalled the life of the Virgin, a veritable school of holiness. Furthermore, he recognized other connotations of the Marian feast of January 1st, as he celebrated a Day of Prayer for World Peace on that day

which coincides with the traditional exchange of good wishes for the New Year. The Solemnity of the Mother of God is like "the conclusion and the crowning of the Christmas mystery"; the "liturgical first fruits" of the year; "a promise. a task to accomplish: to carry with us every day of the year, the thought, the devotion, the love for the blessed Virgin, as a mirror, a model of human and Christian virtues"; for Mary accompanies us during our difficult pilgrimage, a "mother with a big heart" (Homily: 1976). "The Church, the whole Church must live its spiritual maternity according to the example of Mary" (Homily: 1978).

February

The Feast of the Presentation on February 2nd is also the occasion of the presentation of candles to the Pope. His homilies and addresses for this day were predominantly explanations of the Marian cult. This feast is based on a Gospel incident and shows that the Marian cult is biblical. The fundamental truths of the Economy of Salvation are expressed in Mary (1966). A cult is due to Mary for her unique place in our salvation. She gives us the "sense of the Church" by her intimacy with Jesus (1969); the Light comes to us from the hands of Mary (1975).

On February 11, 1976, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes was celebrated in Saint Peter's in Rome, with a Mass concelebrated by twenty-eight bishops and two hundred priests, and with a torchlight procession and pontifical benediction. Previously, on another feast (Dec. 8, 1975), the Pope finished his homily in several languages, saying in French that at Lourdes "the Virgin confirmed, so to speak, the solemn proclamation of her Immaculate Conception by the magisterium of the Church." This was an invitation for the Christians of today never to separate love of the Virgin from love for the Church.

March

The Feast of Saint Joseph on March 19th, like the feasts of

Christmas and of the Holy Family, invites us to unite devotion to Mary to that of Joseph: "The Church wants not only the holy and immaculate Mother of Jesus to be close to Christ, but also Joseph, his special protector . . ." (March 19, 1969). The solemnity of the *Annunciation of the Lord*, March 25th, was for the Pope "a joint feast of the Christ and the Virgin" (*Mar. Cult.*, No. 6).

Paschal Season

Paul VI called Mary the "reflection of the light of the glory of the resurrected Christ" (*Regina Coeli*: April 17, 1977).

Pentecost

The importance of the text from Acts 1:14 was often cited by the Pope: ". . . with Mary, the Mother of Jesus" (Radio-message at Pontmain for the Centenary: Pentecost, 1971).

May

Paul VI referred to May as the month of Mary, the month of devotion to Mary (May 8, 1966). He understood the educational value of the Rosary (May 5, 1968). He recalled the Marian formation he had received in the month of Mary during his own childhood (May 4, 1969):

Lights, hymns, prayers and flowers gave a joyful expression to the devotion to Mary so holy who appears to us as the queen of spring: that of nature, that of souls. Why not recall with simplicity, like an evangelical return to childhood, this association of the cult of the Virgin to the flowering of life? . . . It is still worthwhile to meditate on Mary as . . . the unique and typical figure of beauty, of innocence, of new life . . . the most perfect reflection of Christ, and, therefore, of fullness of grace that fills our spirit with exuberant admiration and victorious experience.

In a letter to the rectors of Marian shrines (May 1, 1971),
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol31/iss1/10

the Pope asked them to encourage the faithful to practice the devotion, the cult of Mary. On May 1st, the faithful celebrate the feast of Saint Joseph the Worker, "the husband of blessed Mary ever virgin and the patron of the universal Church" (1969).

August

The Solemnity of the Assumption, August 15th, was celebrated at the parish in Castelgandolfo. Paul VI recalled the teachings of the Council (1966). In her *Magnificat*, Mary indicates to us the humble way to heaven (1967). In her glory, she is the type of the Church (1968). He saw August as a month for vacation, for contact with God; Mary calls us to this in her Assumption (Aug. 10, 1969). The anticipated resurrection of Mary is a pledge of our own resurrection and reunion in the eternal mystical Body, the secret of all creation. (1969). Mary, model of fullness and beatitude, announces our destiny in glory and reveals the strength of grace on earth (Angelus: 1970). The liturgy celebrates the glorified Mary, in contrast to our state of suffering and hopes (Homily: 1970). The glorified Mary is the symbol of the dignity of the human person; she must triumph over the widespread eroticism of current times (Aug. 16, 1970).

On the 25th anniversary of the definition of the Assumption, Rome venerated the icon "Salus Populi Romani." The Pope preached Mary as the model and hope of a new humanity (1975). Mary is unique in her greatness and her humility. In our life marred by sin, we receive a pledge of new life, of resurrection; Mary enjoyed it at once. She invites us to model our life on her perfection, to share her beauty—her reflection of the Spirit in sensible form. She calls us to share her purity, which is, of course, spurned by contemporary immorality: "May Mary make us participate in her triumph, by the eschatological discipline of souls yearning to be Christian" (1977).

October

This is the month of the Rosary, and Paul VI prayed to Mary for the Council and for the world as he marked the first anniversary of the Council and the opening of a second session (Oct. 11, 1963). He reviewed the basis of Marian devotion (Oct. 7, 1964), and in his encyclical, *Christi Matri* (Sept. 15, 1966), recalled that October had long been the Month of the Rosary, a time of prayer for peace. The Apostolic Exhortation, *Recurrens October Mensis* (Oct. 7, 1969), requested that we become souls of peace following the example of Mary, living in association with Jesus and his redemptive life. We must again take up the rosary for peace (Oct. 8, 1969); the rosary is a contemplative Christological prayer, and we must see Christ with the eyes of Mary. The rosary "is a popular prayer that we address filially to Mary . . . it is an invisible television . . ." (Oct. 3, 1976).

This brief chronological survey has shown the Marian teachings of Paul VI, given on important occasions in the liturgical calendar. Many of his own formulas were retained, for much pastoral significance lies in the titles he gave to Mary. On the other hand, these texts are not properly understood outside of the liturgical context in which he used them, but they are clearly understood when viewed within the cult rendered to God by the Church, the People of God, among whom Mary is the most eminent member: the type and model, the mother.

VI. *The "Via Pulchritudinis"*

In the Marian teachings of Paul VI, we find a very original insistence on *the beauty of Mary*: a prophetic insight into Marian doctrine and its pastoral significance, an emphasis which emerged more each year and was particularly evident in his preachings on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. He summarized such thoughts in his Address to the International Mariological Congress in Rome, on May 16, 1975. His inspired leadership resulted from a new approach, an insight

previously neglected both in theological research and pastoral care: *the way of beauty*. He reminded the theologians that besides the *via veritatis*, they ought also to consider in their Mariology the *via pulchritudinis*:

There is another way, accessible to everyone, even to those of little education: a way which we call *the way of beauty*. It is a way in which we are led by the mysterious, admirable and very beautiful doctrine of *Mary and the Holy Spirit* which will be the topic of this Marian Congress. Indeed, Mary is "all beautiful" (*tota pulchra est!*): She is "the spotless mirror." She offers the supreme and absolute ideal of perfection to which artists of all times have endeavored to give expression; she is the "Woman clothed with the Sun" (Apoc 12, 1) in whom the purest rays of human beauty merge with those of heavenly beauty which are of an higher order, but can still be perceived. Why is this so? Because Mary is "full of grace," that is—we may say—because she is full of the Holy Spirit whose supernatural light shines in her with incomparable splendor. In fact, we have great need to look at Mary and to steady our gaze on her spotless beauty. For our eyes are often diverted, almost blinded, by the images of deceptive beauty proffered by this world. On the contrary, contemplating the supreme beauty of Mary, what noble feelings we experience, what strong yearnings for purity and what many attractions to embrace a committed way of life which could actually renew us interiorly!¹⁷

Paul VI became a truly creative guide by suggesting this novel orientation for Marian studies. Such directives did not imply that the *via pulchritudinis* would lead away from the *via veritatis*. Rather, the two approaches are complementary modes of theological research. Furthermore, the Pope issued, from out of his intuition regarding the *via pulchritudinis*, pastoral guidelines which the Fathers of the Church exemplified by cogently yoking beauty and truth when explaining the creation of mankind: each human person created as an image of God and elevated by divine grace to the life of God.

¹⁷ See note 15 above.

Paul VI said that in Mary “the purest rays of human beauty merge with those of heavenly beauty”—rays which, though “of a higher order, can nevertheless be perceived.” The Pope, in answer to his own rhetorical question, “How is this so?” responded: 1) because Mary is “full of grace . . . full of the Holy Spirit,” and 2) because we need only to look at “her spotless beauty” to avoid entrapment “by the images of deceptive beauty” prevalent in a sinful world. Consequently, the French Mariological Society dedicated its investigations to probing the possibilities inherent in the *via pulchritudinis*. Its members began to analyze the images of Mary provided in the Bible, in Tradition, and in the iconography of both the Orient and the Occident. They recognized that, to give to the people of God truer images of Mary, it is necessary to examine closely both the successes and the failures of theology, of devotional literature, and religious art. For example, it became clear that in past ages, the Eastern icons, the basilicas and the cathedrals all exhibited a *via pulchritudinis* consonant with the *via veritatis*. Such research gave concrete expression to the general program delineated earlier by Paul VI in an address he delivered to members of the Central Pontifical Commission for Sacred Art on December 17, 1969:

We confidently encourage you to reunite gracefully modern art and religious life, especially through the liturgy or divine cult, in ways which will help restore to art its two most important and characteristic values: beauty (sensible beauty which pleases the eye, which is perceived in the integrity, the balance, and the purity of the artistic representation [cf. S. Th. I, 39,8]) and something indefinable but full of life—the spirit, the lyricism of the artist, reflected in his work. This union of art and cult will enable the Church, the Spouse of Christ, to express herself once again in a loving and beloved manner.

VII. *The Intercessory Function of Mary*

As has been already pointed out, Paul VI faithfully practiced *the prayer to Mary*. From the first speeches of his Pontificate to

his final *Angelus* (written, but never delivered), we recognize his constant prayer to obtain Mary's help, especially for world peace (She is Queen of Peace). In addition, we note his continual appeal to all the People of God to offer prayer to Mary, especially through the Rosary. He knew the various criticisms made of such prayer to Mary, and, therefore, explained prayer to Mary and to the Saints as an act of communion with them for a deeper union with Christ, with God. For example, discussing the Rosary (Oct. 8, 1969),¹⁸ he remarked that the appeal, "for intercession, mediation, or in mundane terms . . . for recommendation," exists as an "almost spontaneous" fact in "the soul of the Church and in the psychology of the Christian people." It is clear that Jesus is the only Mediator:

. . . but we also know that the Economy of Salvation involves human cooperation—at once *dispositive and ministerial*, according to Saint Thomas (St. Th. III, 26, 1)—which admits of a preparation, an introduction to the Fountain of Grace, an intervention which does not cause but facilitates—in a truly astonishing way—the communication of that charity, that communion, that solidarity, which characterizes the divine plan of our salvation.

The Rosary, he held, does not reduce our prayer and intercession to a kind of "instrumentalization." In truth, he saw it as a prayer of petition founded on and merging with the contemplation of Jesus' mysteries—a meditation made in dialogue, in union with Mary. Thus, prayer to Mary is an act of "Communion with the Saints," as was declared in the *Profession of Faith* proclaimed by Paul VI at the end of the Year of Faith (June 30, 1969). Accordingly, he reminded us to return to the focus of our liturgy, the Eucharistic Prayer, with its commemoration of Mary and the Saints. There we acknowledge that, "In union

¹⁸ For October 1969, Paul VI wrote the Apostolic Exhortation, *Recurrens Mensis October* (Translation appears in *PSP* 14 (1969-70) 247-251). His address to a general audience of Oct. 8, 1969, is a kind of comment; a short citation is given in *PSP* (*Ibid.*, 251).

with the whole Church, we honor Mary, the ever-virgin Mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God, we honor Joseph, her husband, the apostles and martyrs . . ." (First Eucharistic Prayer).

Conclusion

In Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*, the Fathers of Vatican II presented us with a biblical image of Mary. This same image also characterizes the text of *Marialis Cultus* and, similarly, we find this image as a pervasive Marian teaching in the pontifical documents of Paul VI. We might summarize it in the expression: *Mary, the Poor One of Yahweh, Who Believed in His Word*. The Joint Pastoral of the American Bishops, issued on November 21, 1973 (the ninth anniversary of *Lumen Gentium*), bears a title clearly reminiscent of the conciliar teachings and particularly consonant with Paul VI's thought—*Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith*. When Pope Paul used Scripture to explain the place of Mary in the history of Salvation, he envisioned Mary as the type, the model, of a Church *faithful* and *poor*. Both words receive their full biblical meaning in Mary's faith, her total dedication to the will of God, as well as in the faith of all those declared blessed by Jesus in the first of his beatitudes: *Blessed are the poor in Spirit* (Mt. 5:3).

This spirit of faith and poverty is especially manifest in Mary's inspired song: the *Magnificat*. Thus, Paul VI concluded his address to the pilgrims of Our Lady of Bonaria (Sardinia)¹⁰ with the assertion that Marian devotion certainly was no threat to "our religious sense, our vision of life and our moral energy" by any false notions of weakness or infantility. On the contrary, he stated,

... when we come close to her, the poetess and prophetess of our Redemption, we hear from her pure lips the strongest and most innovative hymn ever uttered: the *Magnificat*. She is the one who

¹⁰ *Questo è il momento*, April 24, 1970: *AAS* 62 (1970) 295-301; translation appears in *PSP* 15 (1970) 92-99.

reveals the transforming design of the Christian Economy: those historical and social consequences that, even today, draw their origin and power from Christianity. *God, she sings, has scattered the proud in their conceit: He has put down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly* (Lk. 1:51-52).

The *Magnificat* inspired many other utterances of Pope Paul VI. For example, in his Apostolic Exhortation on *Christian Joy*, published during the Holy Year (May 20, 1975),²⁰ he described the joy of Mary, exemplar of God's poor and model of the Church, in these terms:

More than any other creature, Mary understood that God works marvels, that his Name is holy, that He manifests his mercy, exalts the lowly, faithfully keeps his promises. Mary's life, in its visible aspect, was quite ordinary, but she meditated on the signs of God, even the smallest, and pondered them in her heart. Nor was she exempt from suffering, even from the beginning. She stood, as Mother of Sorrows, at the foot of the Cross, intimately united with the sacrifice of the Innocent Servant. Yet her soul was wide open to the joy of the Resurrection, and she was assumed, body and soul, into heavenly glory. She was redeemed, the first of all human creatures—Immaculate from her very conception, the incomparable dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, the pure abode of the Redeemer of mankind. She is also the beloved Daughter of God and Mother of all, in Christ. She is the only perfect type of the Church, both on earth and in glory.²¹

To close this discussion of Paul VI's Marian teachings, we should note the constant references that he made to Jesus Christ. From among the numerous texts in which he expressed the Christological basis of Marian devotion, we again select one from the address he gave at the Shrine of Our Lady of Bonaria (1970).²² The Pope began by alluding to obstacles hindering

²⁰ *AAS* 67 (1975) 289-322; translation appears in *PSp* 20 (1975) 4-28.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 304-305.

²² See note 19 above.

Marian devotion today; next he reviewed the true motives for such a devotion: Mary's union with Christ; Mary, the way to Christ. He began his presentation by singling out the problem which for him was most fundamental to his apostolic work:

The first reason is this: what is the question that absorbs all religious thinking today, all theological studies, and that torments modern man whether he knows it or not? It is the question of Christ. Who he is, how he came among us, what his mission is, his doctrine, his divine nature, his human nature, his insertion into humanity, his relation to, and his role in, human destiny. Christ dominates the thought, the history, the concept of man; he dominates the capital question of the salvation of man. And how did Christ come among us? Did he come of himself? Did he come without any human relationships, without any cooperation on the part of mankind? Can he be known, understood, contemplated by abstracting from those real, historical and existential relationships which are necessarily implied by his entrance into the world? It is clear that he cannot. The mystery of Christ is inserted into the divine design of our human collaboration. He came among us by way of human generation. He chose to have a mother: he chose to become incarnate through the vital cooperation of a woman, of the Woman blessed among all other women.

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