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THE NEXUS BETWEEN MARY'S CO-REDEMPTIVE ROLE AND HER OTHER PREROGATIVES

It is not the purpose of this paper to outline in any detail the arguments upon which the Co-redemption of our Blessed Lady rests,¹ nor is it our purpose to disprove the arguments advanced against it.² On the other hand, we do not intend here to defend the many prerogatives of soul and body with which God adorned His Mother and ours. We are concerned at the present moment with the *relationship* between the doctrine of the Co-redemption and the many and singular prerogatives with which God prepared Mary for her mission among men. That Mary actually took part in our Redemption and that her soul and body were adorned with unique pre-

¹ An abundance of literature has appeared on the subject of the Co-redemption in recent years. Outstanding in this field are the contributions of Father Juniper Carol, O.F.M., which have been published in many theological periodicals here and abroad. Of these we might single out for special mention those which have appeared in *Marianum* on such important aspects of the question as *De fundamento proximo Co-redemptionis Marianae*, vol. 1, 1939, p. 173 ff; *Utrum B. Virginis Co-redemptio sit in S. Scriptura formaliter revelata*, *ibid.*, p. 283 ff; *De Sanctorum Patrum doctrina circa B. Virginis Corredemptionem*, vol. 2, 1940, p. 256 ff; *Testimonia saeculi XVIII de Beata Virgine Co-redemptrice*, vol. 9, 1947, p. 37 ff; (N. B.: Father Carol treated the testimony of the 17th century writers in an article entitled: *Our Lady's Part in the Redemption according to 17th Century Writers in Franciscan Studies*, vol. 24, 1943, pp. 3-20, 143-158); *Romanorum Pontificorum doctrina de Beata Virgine Corredemptrice*, in *Marianum*, vol. 9, 1947, p. 161 ff; *Episcoporum doctrina de Beata Virgine Corredemptrice*, vol. 10, 1948, p. 211 ff. N. B.: Father Carol gives an exhaustive bibliography on the aspect treated in the footnotes to each article.

² An excellent summary and refutation of the arguments advanced against the Co-redemption may be found in Father Gabriel Roschini's *Mariologia*, vol. 2 (I), Romae, 1947, p. 382 ff. Cf. also Father Carol's *The Problem of Our Lady's Co-redemption* in *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, vol. 123, July, 1950, p. 32 ff.

rogatives we here accept as truths establishable beyond shadow of doubt. The key-word in our title is *nexus*.

By the term Co-redemption in the title of this paper we do not mean that Mary is the Co-redemptrix of the human race merely in the sense in which this term may be predicated of all who pray and suffer for sinners and, thereby, bring to them the graces merited by Christ through His life and death. This form of Co-redemption is known as *subjective* Co-redemption or Co-redemption *in actu secundo*. It is called subjective because it is concerned with the application of the merits of Christ to the individual *subject* or soul; it is referred to as Co-redemption *in actu secundo* because it presupposes that the graces necessary for salvation have already been merited and that the individual has already been redeemed in cause or *in actu primo*. There is no one who glories in the name "Catholic" and yet denies this form of co-operation in our Redemption to the Blessed Mother of God.

It is in the sense of objective, causal, Co-redemption or Co-redemption *in actu primo* that we use the term here. By this is meant that Mary took part in the very act by which Christ redeemed us. Such a title is rightfully hers, for not only did Mary allow the whole plan of God's Redemption to take place by her free consent to become the Mother of the Redeemer,³ but in a very proximate manner she co-redeemed us by freely forfeiting her maternal rights over her Son, by co-offering H'm in death to atone for the sin of Adam and for the sins of the whole world, and by uniting her sufferings with those of her Son for this purpose.⁴ Thus did Mary co-operate

³ The question of Mary's free consent to become the Mother of God and the part it played in the Redemption has been treated exhaustively in the work entitled: *Deiparae Virginis Mariae consensus Corredemptionis ac Mediationis fundamentum*, Matriti, 1942, by Joseph M. Bover, S.J.

⁴ "Ex hac autem Mariam inter et Christum communione dolorum ac voluntatis 'promeruit' illa, 'ut reparatrix perditī orbis dignissime fieret,' atque ideo universorum munerum dispensatrix, quae nobis Iesus nece et sanguine

with Christ in the very act of liberating the world from the slavery of Satan and merit for herself the title of the New Eve.

To cite but briefly one of the many Papal documents in which this doctrine is contained, the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* teaches this truth unequivocally. In it we read that Christ redeemed us not alone but with Mary; Mary triumphed over Satan through her Son and "crushed his head with her immaculate foot."⁵ Hers was a secondary role, indeed, yet it was a real co-operation in liberating the world from the bondage of sin.

True, we cannot point to anything essential which Mary added to the redemptive work of Christ. Had Mary taken no active part in crushing the head of the malignant serpent and had her merits not been added to those of her Son, the work of the Redemption would still have been accepted by God and would, none the less, have superabundantly atoned for the sins of the world. Yet, we must not fall into the egregious

comparavit. . . . Quoniam universis sanctitate praestat coniunctioneque cum Christo atque a Christo ascita in humanae salutis opus, *de congruo*, ut aiunt, promeret nobis, quae Christus *de condigno* promeruit, estque princeps largiendarum gratiarum ministra." (From the encyclical *Ad diem illum* of Pope Pius X, 1904; *D. B.* 1978a).

⁵ Thus, Pope Pius IX says in the Apostolic Letter *Ineffabilis Deus*: "Quapropter (Patres Ecclesiaeque Scriptores) enarrantes verba, quibus Deus praeparata renovandis mortalibus suae pietatis remedia inter ipsa mundi primordia praeununtians et deceptoris serpentis retudit audaciam, et nostri generis spem mirifice erexit inquit, 'Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, semen tuum et semen illius,' docuere, divino hoc oraculo clare aperteque praemonstratum fuisse misericordem humani generis Redemptorem, scilicet Unigenitum Dei Filium Christum Jesum, ac designatam beatissimam Eius matrem Virginem Mariam, ac simul ipsissimas utriusque contra diabolum inimicitias insigniter expressas. Quocirca sicut Christus Dei hominumque mediator humana assumpta natura delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti, illius cruci triumphator affixit, sic sanctissima Virgo arcissimo et indissolubili vinculo cum Eo conjuncta, una cum Illo et per Illum sempiternas contra venenosum serpentem inimicitias exercens ac de ipso plenissime triumphans, illius caput immaculato pede contrivit." In *Acta Pii IX*, vol. 1, p. 607.

error of basing our theology of the Redemption upon what *would* have happened if God had decided to redeem the human race in another manner. We must analyze and accept the Redemption as it actually took place. In the present economy Mary could have refused to allow the Redeemer to enter the world, for her *fiat* was free.⁶ Once given, however, her consent set God's plan in operation and she became in actuality the Woman foretold in the Protoevangelium who, with her Seed, would crush the head of the serpent and, by her merits, would congruously satisfy the demands of the same Divine Justice which exacted condign satisfaction of her Son.⁷ Truly, then, *the total effect*, man's Redemption, depended on *the total principle*: Mary, in and through Christ.⁸

II

The question of the nexus between Mary's Co-redemption and her other prerogatives is intimately bound up with the problem of the fundamental or primary principle of Mariology. In recent years this latter problem has occupied the attention of theologians throughout the world.⁹ Conscious of the importance of a systematic presentation of Mariology, the establishment of a fundamental principle—that office or prerogative which is the primary reason why God adorned Mary with so many and such singular privileges—is the cause of no little concern among them. Once established, this office or

⁶ Cf. Bover, *op. cit.*, p. 228 ff.

⁷ Cf. L. Di Fonzo, O.F.M.Conv., *B. Virgo "de congruo, ut aiunt. promeret nobis quae Christus de condigno promeruit,"* in *Marianum*, vol. 1, 1939, 418 ff. An ample bibliography on the question of the part Mary's merit played in our salvation may be found on p. 240.

⁸ Cf. Father Juniper Carol, O.F.M., *Utrum B. Virginis Corredemptio sit in S. Scriptura formaliter revelata*, in *Marianum*, vol. 1, 1939, p. 320.

⁹ Witness the imposing array of articles and books on the question listed by Father Gabriel Roschini, *Mariologia*, ed. 2, vol. 1, Romae, 1947, p. 323. A number of interesting articles on this question may be found in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 3, Madrid, 1944.

prerogative becomes the basis of the science of Mariology in that it will be the cause in which the conclusions of the discipline are contained. It is the fundamental principle in any science which gives order, coherence and, therefore, unity to the study.

That Mariology is a science all theologians with but few negligible exceptions agree.¹⁰ It is, quite evidently, an organic system of truths logically deduced from one or more principles revealed to us by God. Mariology is not, however, a species of the generic science of theology, but an integral part of the whole discipline, for it differs from the other parts of theology only in its immediate material object. The formal object of Mariology—that object whereby one science is specifically differentiated from another—is the same as that of the other parts of theology, namely, revelation either formal or virtual.

Although we find a practical unanimity of opinion among modern theologians as to the scientific character of Mariology, apparently there is a great deal of disagreement among them on the fundamental principle or principles from which the various conclusions of the science derive. Apart from the few who ascribe to it no fundamental principle either because they are convinced that Mariology is not a science in its own right,¹¹ or because of an inane fear of over-systematization,¹²

¹⁰ Father Angel Luis, C.S.S.R., in his article *Principio fundamental o primario ¿Cómo enunciarlo si se da ese único principio?*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 3, 1944, p. 188, cites C. Zimara as the only theologian who holds the possibility of Mariology lacking a fundamental principle in *Divus Thomas*, Friburgi, vol. 15, p. 113 ff. Of this teaching Father Luis says: *cantat extra chorum*. Father Roschini cites one other theologian, namely, J. F. Bonnefoy, O.F.M., who teaches in his article *La primauté absolue et universelle de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ et de la Très-Sainte Vierge* in *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Etudes Mariales*, 1939, p. 88 ff., that Mariology cannot have principles of its own since it is but an integral part of the science of theology and takes its principles from the latter discipline. Cf. Roschini, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

¹¹ For example, J. F. Bonnefoy, *loc. cit.*

¹² For example, C. Zimara, *loc. cit.*

the opinions of modern theologians on the question have very conveniently been reduced by Father Gabriel Roschini to the following headings:

1. The Divine Maternity; ¹³
2. The Divine Maternity adequately considered; ¹⁴
3. Mary, the New Eve; ¹⁵
4. The Sponsal Maternity; ¹⁶
5. The Divine Maternity considered concretely or historically; ¹⁷
6. The Soteriological or Co-redemptive Maternity; ¹⁸
7. Mary, the Mother of God and the Mother of men; ¹⁹
8. Mary, the Mother of God and the *Socia* of Christ in the work of Redemption; ²⁰
9. To the above galaxy of opinion Father Roschini adds his own, namely, The Universal Maternity of Mary.²¹

Analyzing this variety of teaching on the fundamental principle of Mariology we find among all of them, with the exception of the first and the third, that the difference is verbal rather than real. In each instance we see an attempt to express, in a simple or composite manner, the notions of the Divine Maternity with relation to God and the Spiritual Maternity with relation to men. The first opinion, namely, the

¹³ J. M. Hervé, *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, vol. 2, Westminster, 1943, p. 599.

¹⁴ Gagnebet, *Questions Mariales in Angelicum*, vol. 22, 1945, p. 164 ff.

¹⁵ L. Billot, *De Verbo Incarnato*, Romae, 1927, d. 7, p. 386.

¹⁶ M. J. Scheeben, *Handbuch der Katholischen Dogmatik*, vol. 3, Freiburg B., 1882, pp. 433-629.

¹⁷ J. Bover, *Síntesis orgánica de la Mariología en función de la asociación de María a la obra redentora de Jesucristo*, Madrid, 1929.

¹⁸ L. Lercher, *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, vol. 3, Heidelbergae, 1945, p. 279.

¹⁹ J. B. Terrien, *La Mère de Dieu et la Mère des hommes*, Paris, 1900.

²⁰ C. Dillenschneider, *La Mariologie de S. Alphonse de Liguori*, Fribourg (Suisse) 1934, pp. 56-61.

²¹ G. Roschini, *Mariologia*, ed. 2, vol. 1, p. 337.

Divine Maternity, does not fulfill the requirements of a *fundamental* principle of Mariology, for the Spiritual Maternity of Mary with relation to men is not *necessarily* included in this concept. God could have chosen one woman to be His Mother and another to be His *Socia* in the work of the Redemption. On the other hand, the concept of Mary as the New Eve does not seem to fulfill the requirements of a fundamental principle of Mariology either for, strictly speaking, the idea of the New Eve does not *necessarily* include the Divine Maternity within its connotation.

If, however, the fundamental principle of Mariology is twofold or, simple with a composite connotation, it seems that it should be stated in a manner to include the idea of Co-redemption rather than the Spiritual Maternity. We are looking for a *fundamental* principle, one because of which, the conclusions of our discipline are true. The Spiritual Maternity of Mary with relation to men is a consequence of the Co-redemption and not vice versa. It is only because Mary begot us spiritually by co-redeeming us that she merited for herself the title of our Spiritual Mother and not the other way around.

In the earlier edition of his Mariology, Father Roschini held to this teaching. *Mary is the Mother of God and the Socia of the Redeemer*, he then taught to be the fundamental principle.²² In his endeavor to simplify his principle, this illustrious Mariologist changed his view and taught in his later edition that the primary principle of Mariology is the *Universal Maternity of Mary*.²³ This universality of her Maternity includes, of course, the Divine Maternity with relation to Christ and the Spiritual Maternity with relation to men. From these two flow all of Mary's prerogatives in the sense that God conferred them upon her either as a preparation for this office of Universal Maternity or as a result of it. It seems, however,

²² Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 336-337.

²³ Cf. *supra*, footnote 21.

that this change of view was unfortunate. For, as a result of this opinion, Father Roschini says: "The Universal Mediation and also the Universal Queenship are two *consectaria* of the universal maternity."²⁴ Is it not, rather, that the universal Queenship and the Spiritual Maternity—which is part of the Universal Maternity—are two *consectaria* of the Universal Mediation?

It is the teaching of St. Thomas that God prepares those whom He chooses for a definite office in any economy of salvation with graces and prerogatives of soul and body to make the elect fit instruments in His hands.²⁵ Now Mary was chosen to fulfill a twofold office in the present economy: she was chosen to co-operate with God in the sublime act of bringing the Savior into the world, and she was chosen to co-operate with her Son in the work of the salvation of the human race. Of these two offices, which was the basic reason why God conferred upon her so many and such singular prerogatives? Which prerogatives were conferred upon her that she might be a fit Tabernacle for the Son of God? Which prerogatives were necessary that she might be a fit instrument in God's Hands for co-redeeming the human race? Were all these privileges conferred upon her that she might fulfill both offices?

The correct answers to the above questions give us the fundamental principle or principles of Mariology. The material object of Mariology is generally considered to be: Mary, under the aspect of the various offices God chose her to fulfill, the prerogatives with which He prepared her for these offices, and the relationship set up as a result of them between Mary and God, Mary and Christ *qua homo*, Mary and men. The office or offices which are the reasons for these various prerogatives and relationships are the foundations upon which we build our study and which, therefore, confer coherence on the entire

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 337.

²⁵ *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 27, a. 5.

discipline. We will now consider each of these two offices singly in relation to Mary's prerogatives and then attempt to determine which, if either, should be considered *fundamental* to the science-of Mariology.

III.

The Divine Maternity and Mary's Prerogatives

Eminently conscious of the ineffable dignity that is Mary's in having been chosen to become the Mother of God, many theologians regard the Divine Maternity as the reason why God adorned His Mother with such singular privileges. And not without reason. For it would be far more difficult to prove that God did not adorn His Mother with this or that privilege than to prove that He did.

That it was most fitting for God to adorn His Mother *because she was His Mother*, is a teaching that has been accepted by theologians of every era. This principle has received a variety of form through the course of the centuries. Notable among them is the one attributed to Scotus and the one of St. Alphonsus Liguori. According to Scotus, the answer to any question involving the possession of this or that privilege by the Mother of God can be settled on the principle, "*Potuit, decuit, ergo fecit.*"²⁶ The famous axiom of St. Alphonsus is as follows: ". . . when an opinion tends in any way to honor the most Blessed Virgin, when it has some foundation and is not repugnant to the faith, nor to the decrees of the Church, nor to truth, the refusal to hold it, or to oppose it because the

²⁶ According to Father Angel Luis, *op. cit.*, p. 190, this famous axiom was not formulated by Scotus but by a disciple of his, namely, F. Mayron, in *III Sent.*, d. III, q. 2. The words of Scotus which are the basis for this interpretation of his thought are: "*Deus potuit facere quod ipsa numquam fuisset in peccato originali. . . . Si auctoritati Ecclesiae, vel auctoritati Scripturae non repugnet, videtur probabile quod est excellentius attribuere Mariae.*" (*Op. Oxon.*, III Sent., d. 3, q. 1, n. 4.)

reverse may be true, shows little devotion to the Mother of God."²⁷

Now, apart from the Divine Maternity itself, the greatest personal prerogative conferred upon Mary was, without doubt, the ineffable degree of sanctifying grace infused into her soul at the first moment of her Immaculate Conception. It is *certain* theological teaching that this first influx of grace was greater than the grace possessed by any individual angel or man at the first moment of his sanctification;²⁸ that this first influx of grace was greater than the consummated grace of any individual angel or man is the *common teaching* of theologians;²⁹ and that it was greater than the consummated grace of all angels and men considered collectively is a *solidly probable* opinion.³⁰

Since we are speaking of the *nexus* between the Divine Maternity and Mary's other prerogatives, the question naturally arises concerning the nature of this *nexus* or relationship between them.

Father John M. de Ripalda, S.J., was the first to raise the following question: "Whether the dignity of the Divine Maternity alone, apart from habitual grace, could sanctify the person (possessing it) and render her actions meritorious of eternal life?"³¹ His answer was in the affirmative and, although we find a few theologians agreeing with his response, it seems that this opinion must be rejected. For, according to the

²⁷ *Glories of Mary* (ed. Grimm, 1931), p. 158.

²⁸ Theologians base this teaching on the fittingness of God loving His Mother more at the first moment of her conception than any other creature.

²⁹ For the same reason given in footnote 28.

³⁰ This opinion is based on the fact that Mary's degree of grace was conferred upon her to make her a *fit* member of the Hypostatic Order through making her a *fit* Mother of God. Now, the consummated grace of all the saints and the grace of all the Angels collectively considered would not make the one possessing it a *fit* Mother of God and a *fit* member of the Hypostatic Order.

³¹ *De ente supernaturali*, disp. 79. Cf. Roschini, *Mariologia*, vol. 2, p. 189.

teaching of the Council of Trent, the only form which formally sanctifies—by making the subject in which it inheres *deiformis*—is sanctifying grace.³² And, for this reason, many theologians reject the opinion that the Hypostatic Union (*Gratia Unionis*) sanctified the soul of Christ except by *demanding* the presence of sanctifying grace.³³

It is by far the more common teaching of theologians that the Divine Maternity sanctified the soul of Mary not *formaliter*—by conferring upon her the formal effects of holiness—but *exigitive*, in that this ineffable dignity demanded the presence of grace in her soul. In the first place, by virtue of the Divine Maternity, Mary was related to Christ with the relationship of consanguinity so that, juridically, she became a member of the Divine Family through her admission into the Hypostatic Order with a *right*, therefore, to a share in the possessions of that Family, namely, a communication in the Divine Nature through sanctifying grace. From this arose, likewise, the right to the friendship of God since this latter flows necessarily from the possession of sanctifying grace in the soul. In the second place, the Divine Maternity is a supernatural maternity, and, therefore, it conferred upon Mary a strict right to the supernatural love of the Verbum, her son.³⁴ And, since God's love is not affective—drawn to the goodness that exists in created objects—but effective, when He loves someone in the supernatural order His love confers supernatural goodness upon its object. This supernatural goodness is sanctifying grace.

Now, if we are to establish the proper *nexus* between the Divine Maternity and Mary's unspeakable holiness, we must bear in mind that this necessary (*exigitive*) connection between the Divine Maternity and sanctifying grace in the soul

³² D. B. 822.

³³ Cf. J. M. Hervé, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

³⁴ Cf. Roschini, *ibid.*, p. 194.

of Mary did not begin until the moment of the Incarnation. It was only at that moment that her relationship of consanguinity to the God-Man actually came into existence and only from that moment was Mary actually a member of the Divine Family. Strictly speaking, therefore, we cannot say that Mary had a right to grace, based on the Divine Maternity, *until the moment of the Incarnation*. Consequently, there was no necessary, causal connection (in the sense of *exigitive*) between the Divine Maternity and the Immaculate Conception. There was a relation of *fitness* between them only.

Analyzing the various singular prerogatives of Mary with relation to the Divine Maternity we find that there are only two other privileges which flow *necessarily* from the fact that Mary was the Mother of God. The first of these was absolute immunity from mortal sin and the second was the degree of grace to which Mary had a *right* from the moment of the Incarnation in her womb. As Mother of God, our Blessed Lady had a right *at all times* to the love of the Verbum and this right brings with it the absolute inability to commit mortal sin; ³⁵ and, as the Mother of God, Mary had a right from the first moment of the Incarnation to a greater degree of grace than that possessed by any other angel or saint *from that moment*. The latter is based on the law of filial piety whereby Mary had a right to be loved more by the Verbum, her Son, than any other creature.

Apart from these three prerogatives, namely, that Mary had a right to the state of grace at the moment of the Incarnation and a right never to lose that grace, and that this grace should be greater in degree than that possessed by any other saint or angel, we cannot point to any of Mary's other singu-

³⁵ Mary was not, of course, impeccable *ab intrinseco* as are the Angels and the Saints now enjoying the Beatific Vision. The impeccability of the latter arises from their inability to see evil in God; Mary's impeccability from the moment of the Incarnation, at least, arises *ab extrinseco* from her relationship of Maternity to the Verbum.

lar prerogatives and find a necessary (*exigitive*) connection between them and the fact that she was the Mother of God.

Strictly speaking, Mary could have been chosen to be the Mother of God and yet have come into the world with the stain of original sin on her soul. Her preservative Redemption through the great privilege of her Immaculate Conception was, if we consider the Divine Maternity only, not necessary but fitting. Similarly, because Mary was the Mother of God, it was fitting, but in no way absolutely necessary, that she receive at the moment of her Immaculate Conception a degree of grace more intense than the consummated grace of all angels and saints considered collectively. Again, based on the Divine Maternity, it was fitting that our Blessed Lady receive, at the moment of her Immaculate Conception, *per se* infused knowledge of the supernatural order that she might be able thus to place meritorious acts from that moment and, thereby, increase her degree of grace to the greatest possible intensity while on earth that her eternal glory might be the greatest possible short of Christ's. For this reason, too, it is a solidly probable opinion and one in no way opposed to faith or reason that her contemplation and meritorious activity continued uninterruptedly during sleep. Finally, many theologians teach *as probable* that our Blessed Mother received in a transient manner the gift of the Beatific Vision while on earth, for we must not deny that God granted to His Mother what He probably granted to others.³⁶

Although the dignity of the Divine Maternity did not confer upon our Lady a strict right to perpetual virginity it

³⁶ Because Mary was *in statu viae* she could not enjoy the Beatific Vision in a permanent manner. It is probable that the Beatific Vision was conferred upon her while on earth *per modum actus transeuntis* for, since the time of St. Thomas (cf. II-II, q. 173, a. 3), theologians commonly admit that such a privilege was granted to Moses and to St. Paul and what was probably granted to another should be held as granted to the Mother of God with the same probability if it is in no way opposed to the teaching of Faith or reason.

was most fitting that God preserve in His Mother this most cherished possession. Nor is it possible to picture her sacred body, so miraculously preserved in its virginal integrity, subject to the stings of concupiscence and to the corruption of the grave.

Finally, God's plan for the Redemption of man called for the sacrifice of His Divine Son, the New Adam, to undo the evil of the Old, and for the co-operation of a New Eve whose obedience would atone for the disobedience of the Old. But who could picture to himself God choosing a woman for this sublime office of co-operating with His Son in the work of the Redemption and yet see that choice fall on any but His own Blessed Mother? Thus, it was most fitting that Mary be chosen the Co-redemptrix of fallen man that she might also be, by force of right, the Dispensatrix of All Grace necessary for their salvation, their Queen, and their Mother. *Potuit, deuit, ergo fecit.*

Thus it is that the great dignity of the Divine Maternity has a claim to be called a fundamental principle of Mariology. The nexus, however, between it and most of the prerogatives of soul and body possessed by Mary is not one of necessity but of fittingness only. Yet, this fact, far from being a reason for our thinking less of the Divine Maternity, should serve to increase our estimation of its greatness. For, though God was in no way obligated to confer so many and such singular prerogatives upon His Mother, yet, *because she was His Mother*, it was fitting and He did.

IV.

The Co-redemption and Mary's Prerogatives

The Protoevangelium (*Gen. 3:15*) clearly predicts Mary's absolute enmity with Satan and her complete triumph over him symbolized by the crushing of the serpent's head.³⁷ And

³⁷ The completeness of the victory of Mary over the Serpent is also sym-

because she will be victorious *with* and *through* Christ,³⁸ her victory will be identical with His: most complete and absolute in every way. Consequently, we see in the prediction of the absolute character of this enmity and the completeness of the victory that neither Christ nor Mary can ever have anything in common with the enemy and, certainly, that the enemy, Satan, will never gain even the slightest partial victory over either of them.

In choosing Mary as the woman foretold in the Proto-evangelium who would crush the serpent with her immaculate foot, God destined her for the sublime office of Co-redemptrix of the human race. By that very fact God obligated Himself to confer upon her the prerogatives necessary to fulfill this office. These prerogatives would have to be of such a nature that by them Mary would be completely free from the dominion of Satan; and she would have to be given the ability to merit *de congruo* the Redemption of the human race since this office essentially pertains to her victory over the enemy. Consequently, between these prerogatives of Mary and the Co-redemption there is a nexus not of fitness only but of absolute necessity.

In offering Himself on the cross "as a redemption for all,"³⁹ Christ became the Mediator between God and men.⁴⁰ For, by His death, He perfected the work which He came to do, namely, the re-establishment of the union between God and men. The very nature of the Redemption demanded mediation, for the salvation of man essentially consisted in his being *re-united* to God through sanctifying grace lost to him

bolized in the Serpent's groveling in the dust at her feet. This was a common figure in the ancient Orient to express the utter humiliation of a vanquished foe. Cf. *Isaias*, 49, 23 and *Micheas*, 7, 17 for other instances of this figure of speech.

³⁸ Cf. footnote 5.

³⁹ *I Tim.* 2, 6.

⁴⁰ Council of Trent, s. 5, c. 3. *D. B.* 790.

by the sin of his first parents. And one who unites two dis-silent parties is a 'go-between,' a mediator.

The nature of a mediator demands that he be distinct and, as far as possible 'distant from' the parties to be reunited.⁴¹ Nor must he gain anything personally from the mediation. Christ fulfilled these two conditions to perfection through the very nature of the Incarnation. He was distinct and 'distant from God' through His humanity and from man through His Divinity.⁴² And He gained nothing for Himself *through the work of mediation* since He possessed the fullness of grace and the Beatific Vision in His human soul from the first moment of the Incarnation.

Now Mary and Christ did not constitute two Redeemers each acting independently of the other but, as one total principle, they worked out the total effect together—the Redemption of the human race.⁴³ Thus, then, as Christ was the Redeemer and Mary the Co-redeemer so, too, was Christ the Mediator and Mary the Co-mediator.

Due to her office of Co-mediator of the human race, therefore, Mary had to be segregated from the sinners that she might be a *go-between* as was Christ and, for this reason, the Co-redemption demanded in Mary the great prerogative of the Immaculate Conception. For, had Mary not been so miraculously conceived she would not have been a 'third part' nor would she have accomplished her mediatorial work between God and men which demanded first and foremost a *complete* and *perfect* victory over Satan. And, further, had Mary not been so miraculously conceived she never would

⁴¹ St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 26, a. 2, c.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Thus, Pope Pius IX says: "... sic sanctissima Virgo, arcissimo et indissolubili vinculo cum Eo conjuncta, una cum Illo et per Illum sempiternas contra venenosum serpentem inimicitias exercens ac de ipso plenissime triumphans, illius caput immaculato pede contrivit." Cf. footnote 5.

have been saved since a mediator does not enjoy the fruits of his own mediation.

For the very same reason Mary had to be preserved from the slightest taint of personal sin. That Mary did possess both of these great prerogatives is, of course, *de fide*: her Immaculate Conception has been defined in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, and the fact that Mary never committed the slightest venial sin is *de fide* from the Ordinary and Universal Magisterium of the Church, as we read in the decrees of the Council of Trent.⁴⁴

This prerogative of absolute *impeccantia* is, of course, distinct from impeccability. That Mary also possessed the prerogative of *impeccability ab extrinseco*, at least from the time she conceived the Son of God in her womb, is the more common teaching of theologians.⁴⁵ This is based on her perpetual right to the love of her Son, as we have seen.⁴⁶ It seems, however, that the note of *certain* theological teaching, at least, should be attached to the fact that Mary was impeccable from the first moment of her Immaculate Conception due to the Co-redemption. For, taking into account the nature of the enemy, a fit instrument in God's hands for gaining a complete and perfect victory over Satan would, it seems, demand the prerogative of *not being able to be conquered in the slightest degree*.

Further, Mary's association with Christ, the Mediator, in the work of the Redemption demanded that she be free from the *fruits* of sin as well as from sin itself. For Christ's work was accomplished through everlasting enmities with Satan *to a full and complete victory*.

With regard to the relationship between Mary's association with Christ in His triumph over Satan and the two major fruits of sin, namely, concupiscence and death, we have the follow-

⁴⁴ D. B. 833.

⁴⁵ Cf. footnote 35.

⁴⁶ Cf. *supra*, p. 139-140.

ing teaching of 113 Fathers of the Vatican Council in their petition to the Holy See requesting the definition of Mary's bodily Assumption into Heaven: "Since, according to the Apostolic teaching set down in *Rom.* V-VIII, *I Cor.* XV, 24, 26, 54, 57, *Hebr.* II, 14, 15, and in other places, that triumph which Christ gained over Satan, the old Serpent, is composed of a threefold victory over sin and the fruits of sin, concupiscence and death, which are integral parts of that triumph and, since in *Gen.* III, 15, the Mother of God is shown to be singularly associated with her Son in this triumph, we do not doubt, in view of the unanimous testimony of the Holy Fathers, that the Blessed Virgin was foretold in the above mentioned oracle as glorious by reason of that threefold victory."⁴⁷ The petition then points out that Mary's victory over sin was shown in her Immaculate Conception, her victory over concupiscence was shown in her Virginal Maternity, and her victory over death by her accelerated resurrection in the likeness of her Divine Son. And that our Blessed Mother actually possessed these three prerogatives is, of course, *de fide*.

Immediately following the Protoevangelium we read in the Book of Genesis the special malediction which God spoke to Eve and to all women in Eve because of her disobedience: "To the woman He said, 'I will make great your distress in child-bearing' in pain you shall bring forth children; For your husband shall be your longing, though he have dominion over you.'"⁴⁸ Thus woman, through Eve, became subject to the pains of childbirth and to the dominion and subjection of her husband with regard to their sexual life. And this dominion of her husband would result in a multiplicity of conceptions—a good *in se*, yet a physical evil for the woman.

Again, due to Mary's complete victory over Satan through

⁴⁷ Cf. *Acta et decreta sacrorum conciliorum recentiorum. Collectio Lacensis*, vol. 7, Friburgi Brisgoviae, p. 869 f.

⁴⁸ *Gen.* 3, 17 ff.

which she co-redeemed the human race, God *had* to free her from this malediction for, caused by Satan, it belongs to his dominion over mankind. And it is *de fide* that God did through Mary's perpetual virginity. Through her singular prerogative of the Virginal Birth (*virginitas in partu*) Mary was freed from the labors and pains of childbirth; through her virginity *ante and post partum* she was freed from sexual subjection to her husband and from the multiplicity of conceptions. Thus, the Virginity of our Blessed Mother was, on the basis of the Co-redemption, not merely fitting but absolutely necessary.

Mary was, therefore, completely segregated from sinners. God effected this segregation in her through the Immaculate Conception, through her freedom from the slightest taint of personal sin, through her impeccability, through her freedom from concupiscence, through her *ante, in and post partum* virginity, and through her anticipated resurrection from the grave and bodily Assumption into Heaven. Truly, Mary was a *Go-between*, a Co-mediatrix between God and men.

Now, in the present supernatural economy, one must either be in the state of sin or the state of grace. For this reason, Mary's Immaculate Conception was not merely a negative but a positive prerogative. Her freedom from the guilt of original sin had to be effected through the infusion of grace into her soul at the first moment of conception. The Co-redemption, therefore, demanded the first influx of grace with which her soul was adorned in its creation.

As Co-redemptrix, Mary was associated with Christ in such a manner that they formed a *one total principle* for the accomplishing of the *one total effect*, the Redemption of the human race. The mediatorial office of Christ, through which He redeemed the human race from the bondage of sin, demanded, *ex natura rei*, that satisfaction be given to the Father for the sin of Adam and for the sins of all men and that, at the same time, He merit that the graces lost to man be, once again,

conferred upon him. That our Divine Redeemer did both satisfy the Divine Justice and merit for us 'every spiritual blessing in heavenly places' ⁴⁹ is evident from Scripture and Tradition as interpreted by the official teaching of the Church.⁵⁰ And that this satisfaction was in strict justice and His merit *de condigno* is clear from His ability to place acts of infinite value.

Now, because Mary was perfectly associated with Christ in the work of the Redemption, she merited *de congruo* what Christ merited *de condigno* and this, primarily, from the communion of sorrows which existed between herself and Christ, as Pope Pius X teaches.⁵¹ From this St. Alphonsus argues that Mary had to possess a greater degree of grace from the first moment of her conception than any other saint for whom she was to merit. "If Mary," he says, "as the already destined Mother of our common Redeemer, received from the beginning the office of mediatrix of all men and, consequently, even of the saints, it was also requisite even from the beginning that she should have a degree of grace exceeding that of all the saints for whom she was to intercede. . . . If, by means of Mary, all men were to render themselves dear to God, necessarily Mary was more holy and more dear to Him than all men together. Otherwise, how could she have interceded for all others?" ⁵²

Analyzing this argument of Saint Alphonsus it seems that

⁴⁹ *Eph.* 1, 3.

⁵⁰ Cf. Council of Trent, *D. B.* 790, 797, 799, 820.

⁵¹ *Ad diem illum*, *D. B.* 1978a: "Ex hac autem Mariam inter et Christum communione dolorum ac voluntatis, promeruit illa ut reparatrix perditis orbis dignissime fieret. . . . Pro ea . . . dolorum atque aerumnarum cum Filio communione, hoc Virgini augustae datum est, ut sit totius orbis potentissima apud Unigenitum Filium suum mediatrix et conciliatrix. . . . Quoniam universis sanctitate praestat conjunctioneque cum Christo, atque a Christo ascita in humanae salutis opus, de congruo, ut aiunt, promeret nobis quae Christus de condigno promeruit."

⁵² *Op. cit.*, p. 327.

we can draw an argument of *fitness only* from the Co-redemption to support the fact that Mary possessed a greater degree of grace *from the first moment of her conception* than the consummated grace of all men for whom she was to mediate considered collectively. For Mary did not *exercise* her office of Co-redemptrix until the Incarnation. Only from that moment did there exist "the communion of sorrows . . . between herself and Christ" since Christ, the Redeemer, did not come into existence until that moment. Consequently, though it was necessary that Mary possess a greater degree of grace than the consummated grace of all men from the moment she began to exercise her office of Mediatrix, it was *only fitting* that, as the *designated* Co-redemptrix, she should be more dear to God and, therefore, possess a greater degree of grace than all men for whom she was to merit.

Finally, by force of Mary's association with Christ in the acquisition of grace, she merited for herself a strict right to the titles of Queen of All Men and Dispensatrix of All Grace. Although some theologians do not consider this argument apodictical in that Mary's activity in dispensing grace as well as her office as Co-redemptrix *in actu primo* ultimately depends upon the Will of God, Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius X, to name but two, have seen an intimate, causal connection between these offices.⁵³

On the basis, therefore, of a causal connection between the Co-redemption and Mary's other prerogatives, it appears that

⁵³ Leo XIII, *Octobri mense*, D. B. 1940a: "Ex quo (consensu Virginis in Incarnationem) non minus vere proprieque affirmare licet, nihil prorsus de permagno illo omnis gratiae thesauro quem attulit Dominus, siquidem gratia et veritas per Jesum Christum facta est, nihil nobis, nisi per Mariam, sic Deo volente, impertiri: ut, quo modo ad summum Patrem, nisi per Filium, nemo potest accedere, ita fere, nisi per Matrem, accedere nemo possit ad Jesum." And from the *Ad diem illum* of Pope Pius X, D. B. 1978a: "Ex hac autem Mariam inter et Christum communione dolorum ac voluntatis, promeruit illa ut reparatrix perditis orbis dignissime fieret, *atque ideo* universorum munerum dispensatrix, quae nobis Jesus nece et sanguine comparavit." (Italics mine.)

the office of Co-redemptrix has a claim to be considered the fundamental principle of Mariology. It is, quite evidently, a cause or principle in which the various prerogatives and offices—which compose the material object of the science—are contained. For, remove any of Mary's singular prerogatives and she would cease to be the Co-redemptrix of the human race.

V.

The Divine Maternity and the Co-redemption

We have omitted the Divine Maternity from our examination of the relationship between the Co-redemption and Mary's other prerogatives since the precise relationship between these two offices is the answer to the problem of a prime or fundamental principle of Mariology.

Father Santiago Alameda, O.S.B., in an article entitled: *El primer principio mariológico según los Padres*,⁵⁴ holds the opinion that, in the teaching of the Fathers, the prime principle of Mariology is the Co-redemption: the Divine Maternity was a consequent of the office of the Second Eve, the means whereby the mission of the new Eve was actualized in that Mary restored to us the principle of grace lost through the first Eve. To support this view, Father Alameda quotes rather generously from the teaching of the Fathers beginning with St. Justin in the Apostolic Age.

True, the Fathers of the Church taught, at least implicitly, the doctrine of the Co-redemption through their comparison of Mary with Eve. Yet, we must agree with Father Roschini in his criticism of Father Alameda, namely, that in claiming that the Fathers taught the Co-redemption as the reason for all of Mary's other prerogatives, he sees in the teaching of the Fathers something which they do not assert.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ In *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 3, p. 167 ff.

⁵⁵ *Op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 334, 335.

It is our opinion that Revelation does not give us, either explicitly or implicitly, one *simple*, fundamental principle of Mariology: Mary appears in the Gospels fulfilling *both* the office of God's Mother and the Co-redemptrix of the human race; the Fathers of the Church did not treat the question *ex professo*. However, this should not prevent us in our science, our development of Mariology, from putting forth a fundamental, simple principle which will give *scientific* order and coherence to the entire discipline.

Abstractly speaking, the offices of the Divine Maternity and the Co-redemption are distinct. The one does not necessarily include the other within the connotation of its concept. God could have chosen one woman to be His Mother and another to be His Associate in the work of the Redemption. In this hypothesis God would be obligated to confer upon the Co-redemptrix all the prerogatives and offices which we have been considering and He would be obligated not to confer some of them upon His Mother. Among those to which His Mother would have no right are the Co-redemption itself, the Spiritual Maternity, the office of Dispensatrix of All Grace, the Universal Queenship. For these latter would belong to the Co-redemptrix by title of merit.

In order, therefore, that God's Mother might possess all the prerogatives of the Co-redemptrix and lest another be more embellished than she, we can easily picture Him decreeing that the office of Co-redemptrix and the Divine Maternity be united in the same Woman. The Divine Maternity, quite obviously, would be the ultimate reason why *this Woman*, Mary, possessed so many and such singular prerogatives. Yet, *the cause of the prerogatives* is not the Divine Maternity but the Co-redemption.

Our present text-book treatment of Mariology offers much confusion to the mind of the student. Each proposition gives as the basic reason for its truth an argument of fitness. We

read, for example, that "it is fitting that Mary should have been conceived immaculate, assumed into Heaven, etc., because she was the Mother of God." In many cases we find relegated to a scholion or the very undignified fine print the relationship between the prerogative in question and the Co-redemption.

Would it not be better to show first the relationship between a definite prerogative and the Co-redemption since, in every case except those in which the Divine Maternity adds an accidental qualification to the prerogative,⁵⁶ there is a relationship of causality between it and the Co-redemption? This might be done in the following manner: The Co-redemption demanded, for example, the singular privilege of the Immaculate Conception since the Co-redemptrix had to be completely segregated from sinners and had to be completely victorious over Satan. The Divine Maternity, however, demanded that this privilege be *Mary's* since the Divine Maternity demanded, out of fitness, that Mary be the Co-redemptrix.

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⁵⁶ For example, from the Co-redemption we can argue that our Blessed Mother had to have more grace than any individual for whom she was to mediate considered *individually*. However, from the Divine Maternity we can argue, as theologians have, that she possessed more grace than all *collectively* considered.