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THE TEACHING OF THE MAGISTERIUM ON MARY'S SPIRITUAL MATERNITY

A highly appropriate introduction to this particular paper is had in the striking joint statement made a few years ago by the bishops of all France to their collective flocks. Responding, the prelates said, to repeated appeals of His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, that this anguished world turn with confidence to our heavenly Mother, they wished to proclaim the year 1949 as an *année mariale*, and, indeed, a Marian year dedicated to the following doctrinal program:

The central theme, proposed for our meditations and our efforts, will be the deepening of one of the most beautiful of all doctrines: the spiritual maternity of the Blessed Virgin as regards men.

Too many Christians still do not know, at least with an enlightened and practical faith, in what a profoundly true sense the Virgin Mary is their Mother since the day our Lord Jesus Christ, at the height of His redemptive sacrifice, gave us His Mother to become our own.

We ask theologians to render luminous this fundamental theme of the spiritual life, to the end that the souls of the faithful throw themselves open to the grace which the Virgin Mary will obtain for them, so as to form in them her son Jesus, and to make them live with the life of Christ.¹

Thus the French hierarchy. Their invitation to enlarge on the beautiful doctrine of Mary's spiritual maternity is, as it were, now taken up eagerly by this third annual convention of the Mariological Society of America: we, too, wish a filial share in the privileged task of honoring our common spiritual Mother, of showing that this title of hers, far from being sim-

¹ Published in *La Croix*, November 21-22, 1948, the statement is reproduced in *Marianum*, vol. 11, 1949, p. 85.

ply a pious expression of popular devotion to Mary, has a profoundly true sense, based on deep dogmatic grounds.

What is this profoundly true sense which, according to the French bishops, attaches to the term "Mary's spiritual maternity"? Without prejudice to our investigation we may sum up here, so as to have at least a provisional notion, that which the term commonly conveys to theologians. Since, in the strict or real and true sense of the word, a mother is she who engenders life, "strictly speaking, she is spiritual mother of men who has really and universally engendered them to the life of grace."² And it is thus, the theologians tell us, that we are to understand "Mary's spiritual maternity."³ As Feckes has put it:

It would be a serious error, and a contradiction of our Catholic faith, to consider this Motherhood of Mary as a poetical exaggeration or as mere symbolism. Nor would it be sufficient to believe that Mary is our Mother inasmuch as from heaven she watches over us and protects us with motherly love. Mary is in complete reality, though in mystical reality, our Mother. She is our Mother because she has begotten us to eternal life. Together with Christ she is the cause of our becoming children of God, so far as it is possible for her to be the cause. Mary is the Mother of all Christians because she co-operated in making possible and in effecting the work of redemption. So far as she

² C. Dillenschneider, C.S.S.R., *Marie au service de notre Rédemption*, Haguenau (Bas-Rhin), 1947, p. 30.

³ Cf., in this volume, W. Sebastian, O.F.M., *The Nature of Mary's Spiritual Maternity*. See also, besides the standard Mariological treatises, J. Beumer, S.J., *Maria Mutter der Christenheit*, in *Katholische Marienkunde* (ed. P. Straeter, S.J.), vol. 2, Paderborn, 1947, pp. 181-184; M. Llamera, O.P., *La Maternidad Espiritual de María*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 3, Madrid, 1944, pp. 72-78; Gregorio de Jesús Crucificado, O.C.D., *Naturaleza de la Maternidad Espiritual de María*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 7, 1948, pp. 121-144; A. Rivera, C.M.F., *La Maternidad Espiritual de María en San Lucas 1: 26-38 y en el Apocalipsis 12*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 7, 1948, pp. 57-60.

was Helpmeet of Christ in the work of salvation, so far is she our Mother in the order of grace.⁴

We are to understand, then, that it is not in some merely metaphorical sense of the word that the Blessed Virgin is our Mother, but rather in a real and proper sense, thanks to her part in our regeneration, our generation unto the life of grace. By the same token, she is our Mother in a more perfect sense of the word than if she had physically begotten us, just as the life of grace is unspeakably more perfect than our natural life. And, again by the same token, Mary's maternity in regard to men cannot be a mere adoptive one, in the human understanding of the term, since human adoption, *assumptio personae extraneae in filium cum iure ad hereditatem*, does not engender the life of the adopted child.

Thus, then, or in equivalent fashion, do theologians explain the concept of Mary's spiritual maternity. Agreement ceases, however, when theologians come to explain the manner in which Mary is our Mother in the order of grace.⁵ For they are not agreed as to the measure in which she was the Helpmeet of Christ in the work of salvation. This is the celebrated controversy as to whether or not Mary co-operated formally and proximately in the objective Redemption. Yet, if one does not accept this full thesis of the Co-redemption, it is difficult to see how the title of "our spiritual Mother" could belong to Mary in the real and proper sense of the term. As C. Dillenschneider puts it:

Mary is not in the strict sense of the word Mother of the human race unless, by her mediatorial merit, she acquired for us the life of grace *in actu primo*.⁶

⁴ Carl Feckes, *The Mystery of the Divine Motherhood*, transl. from the German, London, n. d. (copyright, 1939), p. 159.

⁵ Cf. A. Rivera, *art. cit.*, pp. 57-59.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 30.

In the study of any mystery, and therefore also of the mystery of Mary in her spiritual maternity, the theologian's first duty is to attend to the declarations of the ecclesiastical Magisterium. For, as the Encyclical *Humani generis* so recently (August 12, 1950) reminded us, these furnish the supreme arguments in theology.⁷ Moreover, the ecclesiastical Magisterium is not only the authentic interpreter of all doctrinal evolution in the Church: it is at the same time, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the principal agent of all such evolution—a spur to the further development of doctrine.⁸ To quote J. Dillensberger:

The teaching Church from time to time in its dogmatic decisions determines the definitive form of such progress. But long before this there came from the teaching Church the stimuli to new development—we experience this especially in those truths which revolve around Mary.⁹

To search out what the ecclesiastical Magisterium has had to say on the subject of Mary's spiritual maternity is the burden of the present paper. As to this Marian prerogative there has been as yet no *ex cathedra* decision of a Pope, no infallible definition by an ecumenical Council. But all know that it is not only in her solemn pronouncements but also in the exercise of her ordinary and universal teaching office that the Church sets forth things to be believed with divine and catholic faith.¹⁰

In its original form the present study undertook to examine all the relevant Popes, and representative utterances of the bishops during the last one hundred years, in order to ascer-

⁷ *A.A.S.*, 42 (1950), 567; *N.C.W.C.* transl., nn. 18, 21.

⁸ Cf. Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁹ J. Dillensberger, *Das neue Wort ueber Maria*, Salzburg, 1947, p. 10. Feckes, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-138: The Popes "have indicated the way which the theologian must follow to complete the portrait of Mary."

¹⁰ Cf. *Concilium Vaticanum*, sessio 3, cap. 3; *D.B.*, n. 1792.

tain whether the universal ordinary Magisterium teaches Mary's spiritual maternity as a matter of divine and catholic faith, and also to ascertain whatever other precious determinations or at least inspirations the Marian teachings of Popes and bishops may yield for this sublime topic. Because of limitations of space, this printed version of the original study confines itself to the papal Magisterium. An earnest of what is to be found in the doctrine of the bishops is had in the statement quoted at the outset, from the French hierarchy, and other materials will be briefly indicated later, at opportunity. Perhaps it will prove possible to reproduce these materials more fully elsewhere.

The Popes will be adduced in more or less chronological order, so as to convey some idea of the progress, quantitatively and qualitatively, of their doctrine on the spiritual maternity. Contrary to what some, perhaps, have thought, papal testimony pertinent to our subject is not restricted to the Supreme Pontiffs of the last one hundred years, beginning, say, with Pius IX.¹¹ A text of major importance comes to us from Benedict XIV in the eighteenth century, while in the interval between him and Pius IX increasingly significant materials are provided by Pius VI, Pius VII, Pius VIII, and Gregory XVI. Moreover, not a few noteworthy utterances occur in predecessors of Benedict XIV, as we learn from a doctoral dissertation of the Gregorian University, in which the author, Alois Baumann, gathers papal teaching on the spiritual maternity from the Council of Trent down to the present.¹² Baumann

¹¹ As has rightly been stressed by G. Geenen, O.P., *Les antécédents doctrinaux et historiques de la Consécration du monde au Coeur Immaculé de Marie*, in *Maria: études sur la Sainte Vierge* (ed. H. du Manoir, S.J.), vol. 1, Paris, 1949, p. 838. Cf. also J.-B. Terrien, S.J., *La Mère des hommes*, ed. 8, vol. 1, Paris, 1950, pp. 75-78.

¹² A. Baumann, *Maria Mater nostra spiritualis. Eine theologische Untersuchung ueber die geistige Mutterschaft Mariens in den Aeusserungen der Paepste vom Tridentinum bis heute*, Brixen, 1948. This work is marred by

exhibits a long series of such texts, beginning with St. Pius V in 1569. To these we can add a passage of Sixtus IV which says, a century before Pius V, equally as much as the latter and his immediate successors came to say.

For brevity's sake, our paper abstains from liturgical testimonies. Even so, the materials remain vast. For the period from Pius V down to April 9, 1947, Baumann lists and studies 228 documents and allocutions of the twenty-three Popes who expressed themselves on our subject. At that, several testimonies escaped the author's notice, not counting the more than thirty written and oral testimonies of Pope Pius XII which are subsequent to Baumann's study.

Since this paper cannot take the whole of these materials into account, we shall attend chiefly to papal documents addressed to the universal Church. But in many instances it will be advisable to supplement them with lesser documents, and with allocutions. One should not, of course, underestimate the importance of such lesser papal documents, allocutions, and the like. For one thing, they often shed light on what a Pope has said in, e.g., an Encyclical. Moreover, nowadays most papal pronouncements are given world-wide publicity and thus come to influence the faith and practice of Catholics everywhere. Finally, it should be realized that the Roman Pontiff can be exercising his ordinary power of teaching the faith even when he is not addressing the universal Church, and when in the course of such exercise he is joined by morally all the other bishops of the Church, one has a valid argument from the ordinary universal Magisterium.

One further observation. Papal utterances pertinent to our subject quite often are drawn from documents and discourses whose *ex professo* theme is not the spiritual maternity or even

many errors in dates, transcription of texts, etc. Such flaws aside, the study, which terminates with an allocution of Pius XII, April 9, 1947, is a diligent one, to which our paper is not a little indebted.

anything Mariological. No matter. For, we take it, the Popes are *eo ipso* teaching, and teaching Marian doctrines, whenever they come, in whatever context, to exhort the *Ecclesia discens* (clergy and laity alike) to honor and invoke her who is, e.g., "the most holy Mother of God, the Immaculate Virgin Mary, the most dear Mother of us all . . .," etc. Do not such papal utterances, wherever they occur, attest to Mary's divine maternity, to her virginity, her sanctity, her Immaculate Conception, to the divinity of Christ? *A pari*, they bear witness to Mary's spiritual maternity. Moreover, it would be incorrect to consider such exhortations and their implicit teachings as only incidental passages, things said *per transennam*, in documents and discourses dealing with evils afflicting the Church and human society. Is it solely the physician's diagnosis of a malady that is important—not also the remedy he prescribes?

So much for preliminaries—"Et nunc, Petre, doce nos!"¹³

The Popes Prior to Benedict XIV

Since the first text of major importance occurs with Benedict XIV in 1748, we may treat as a group the documents of earlier Pontiffs: Sixtus IV (1471-84), Pius V (1566-72), Gregory XIII (1572-85), Sixtus V (1585-90), Clement VIII (1592-1605), Paul V (1605-21), Urban VIII (1623-44), Alexander VII (1655-67), Clement IX (1667-69), Clement X (1670-76), Clement XI (1700-21), Benedict XIII (1724-30),¹⁴

So far as the present writer knows, the first papal text relating to Mary's spiritual maternity is found in a document of Sixtus IV, dated February 27, 1477.¹⁵ The document is one

¹³ Pius XII, radio-message of December 7, 1947, to the International Congress of Marian Sodality at Barcelona; *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII*, vol. 9, Roma, p. 377.

¹⁴ On these Pontiffs, except Sixtus IV, cf. Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12, 19-20, 38, 55, 60-61, 89-90.

¹⁵ A text attributed to an eighth-century Pope, Gregory II, is spurious; cf. Terrien, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 77-78.

addressed to the universal Church and is celebrated in the history of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception: the Apostolic Constitution *Cum praecelesse*.¹⁶ There the Pontiff declares:

Since she is the way of mercy, the Mother of grace, prone to compassion, the consoler of the human race, as a sedulous and tireless suppliant she (the glorious Virgin Mother of God) intercedes, with the King whom she bore, for the salvation of the faithful, who are weighed down with their sins.¹⁷

Nothing more than this is said by the later Popes down to Benedict XIV. Rather, to judge from the citations given in Baumann, they seem to have been echoing Sixtus IV.¹⁸ The expressions, "our Mother," "Mother of men," etc., have yet to make their appearance. In their stead we meet repeatedly "Mother of mercy," "Mother of grace." To be precise, the latter phrase, though employed by Sixtus IV, seems not to have been used by the post-Tridentine Popes until Gregory XIII; thereafter it is found in almost all Popes from Urban

¹⁶ Reproduced in *Pareri dell'Episcopato Cattolico . . . sulla definizione dogmatica dell'Immacolato Concepimento della Beata Vergine Maria*, Part III, vol. 7, Roma, 1852, pp. 114-115.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114: ". . . ipsa, utpote via misericordiae, mater gratiae, et pietatis amica, humani generis consolatrix, pro salute fidelium, qui delictorum onere gravantur, sedula oratrix et pervigil, ad Regem, quem genuit, intercedit. . . ."

¹⁸ See, for example, in J. Bourassé, *Summa Aurea de Laudibus B.M.V.* vol. 7, Paris, 1862: col. 107 (Sixtus V, *Dum ineffabilia*, almost the exact language of Sixtus IV, in text and context); 126 (Sixtus V, *Gloriosae et semper*, "Virginem gratiae et misericordiae Parentem"); 174 (Paul V, *Immensae bonitatis*, text and immediate context again similar to Sixtus IV); 223 (Urban VIII, *Imperscrutabilis*, again echoing Sixtus IV). Similarly, Pius V, *Salvatoris D. N. J. Christi*, March 5, 1572: "Mater misericordiae, amica pietatis, et consolatrix humani generis" etc.; cited in J. Larroca, O.P., *Acta Sanctae Sedis necnon Magistrorum et capitulorum Generalium S. O. P. Pro Societate SS. Rosarii*, vol. 2, Lugduni, 1891, p. 85. Note also "misericordiae Matrem, ac fidelis populi advocatam," in *Catechismus ex decreto Concilii Tridentini ad Parochos, Pii V, Pontificis Max. et deinde Clementis XIII iussu editus*, Taurini-Romae: Marietti, 1930, P. IV, cap. V, n. 8.

VIII on.¹⁹ It must be confessed that such titles do no more than witness in a very general way to Mary's spiritual maternity. Certainly they settle nothing definite about what would be the grounds of such a maternity. In fact, the implications of the title, "Mother of grace," have been variously interpreted.²⁰

Before we take our leave of these Pontiffs,²¹ a few remarks may lessen the reader's surprise at not finding the doctrine of the spiritual maternity more strongly represented in the predecessors of Benedict XIV. For one thing, it should be remembered that we have not adduced the liturgical evidence.²² Again, not all the documents of these earlier Popes have found their way into print. It is chiefly those of an administrative and canonical nature which are reproduced in such collections as the *Bullarium Romanum*, etc. At the very least, these earlier Popes taught Mary's spiritual maternity tacitly, in that, with their permission, bishops had long since (as one could readily prove) preached a well-developed doctrine on the subject, and had allowed it to become deeply imbedded in the minds and hearts of the faithful. The Roman Pontiffs would not have permitted this, had they not agreed. For, as supreme shepherds and teachers, charged with safeguarding purity of doctrine in faith and morals, the Popes must keep abreast of develop-

¹⁹ Thus Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 90; however, Sixtus V also used the expression, in the two documents cited in the preceding note. And Baumann is unaware of the text of Sixtus IV.

²⁰ Cf., e.g., B. Bartmann, quoted in J. Carol, O.F.M., *De Corredemptione Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Civitas Vaticana, 1950, p. 113, note 67; also, B. Bartmann, *Mater divinae gratiae*, in *Theologie und Glaube*, vol. 18, 1925, pp. 16-29.

²¹ Perhaps Alexander VIII deserves inclusion in this group. For, under him, the Holy Office (Decree of December 7, 1690) condemned the Jansenist proposition: "Laus, quae defertur Mariae ut Mariae, vana est" (*D. B.*, n. 1316), and a possible, if tenuous, connection between this condemnation and Mary's spiritual maternity is intimated by G. Geenen, *art. cit.*, in *Maria*, vol. 1, pp. 846-847; cf. also p. 870, note 153.

²² Cf., e.g., G. Geenen, *art. cit.*, p. 838, with note 63; and Terrien, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 76-80.

ments in theology and in popular piety (above all, in matters making a strong appeal to the hears of the faithful—as does the doctrine of Mary's spiritual maternity), and must arrest those which lack dogmatic basis.

Benedict XIV (1740-58)

With Benedict XIV the fact of Mary's spiritual maternity becomes clearer, and some explanation of the fact is suggested. We read in the celebrated "Golden Bull" *Gloriosae Dominae*, September 27, 1748 (confirming the Marian Sodalties):

The Catholic Church, schooled by the Holy Ghost, has always most diligently professed, not only to venerate Mary most devoutly as the Mother of the Lord and Redeemer, the Queen of heaven and of earth, but also to honor her with filial affection as the most loving Mother who was left to her with the last words of her spouse.²³

Here, then, it is clearly said that Mary is the Mother of men—at any rate, of the members of the Church. And Benedict XIV is the first Pope to touch on a basis for this motherhood, in that, with an unmistakable allusion to the words of Christ in *John* 19: 26-27, he emphasizes the proclamation of the spiritual maternity on Calvary. Needless to say, did the Johannine text apply to the spiritual maternity only by accommodation, the Pontiff could hardly have alluded to it in this fashion.

Not a few later Popes will likewise, and even more clearly than Benedict, convey to us that Mary's maternity in regard

²³ *Benedicti XIV Opera Omnia*, vol. 16, Prati, 1846, p. 428: "... Catholica Ecclesia, Sancti Spiritus magisterio edocta, eandem (Mariam), et tamquam Domini ac Redemptoris sui Parentem, Coelique ac Terrae Reginam impensis obsequiis colere, et tamquam amantissimam Matrem extrema Sponsi sui morientis voce sibi relictam, filialis pietatis affectu prosequi studiosissime semper professsa est."

to mankind is signified by some genuinely Scriptural sense of the Johannine text. At the same time those Pontiffs will give us to understand that this motherhood did not commence with or stem solely from the Saviour's words: "Woman, behold thy son . . . Behold thy mother." These words proclaimed and confirmed Mary for what she already was, truly our Mother; they did not create that relationship. Were it otherwise, Mary would be our Mother, not in any real and proper sense of the word, but only because she had been invested by Christ with the rights and duties of a mother in our regard.²⁴

Not only does the passage of Benedict XIV leave room for the interpretation found in the later Popes—it invites it. The text neither says nor requires us to understand that Mary's maternal relationship in regard to men owed its inception to Christ's words in *John* 19: 26-27. Moreover, by its close juxtaposition of the two maternities, the divine and the spiritual, the papal passage seems to imply that Mary is our Mother in a real and true sense of the word, just as she is the Mother of Christ in a real and true (though different) sense of the word.

For a final comment on this passage of *Gloriosae Dominae*, noteworthy is the learned Pope's appeal to divine Tradition in regard to Mary as our Mother: the Church, schooled by the Holy Ghost, has always professed Mary to be not only the Mother of the Redeemer but also the Mother of men. And, even independently of this, significant for the revealed character of the spiritual maternity is its mention in the same breath with an indubitable dogma, Mary's divine maternity.

Pius VI (1775-99)

The next striking contribution to our subject is made by Pius VI. Deserving of mention is his approval, in 1775, of a

²⁴ Cf. Gregorio de Jesús Crucificado, *art. cit.*, p. 132; also, R. Rábanos, C.M., *La Maternidad Espiritual de María en el Protoevangelio y San Juan*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 7, 1948, pp. 49-50.

decree of the S. Congregation of Indulgences which stated that "God willed Mary to be proposed to all the faithful as their common Mother."²⁵ Since God's will to that effect could be known only from Revelation, such language argues the revealed character of the truth that Mary is "our common Mother."

Above all, the doctrine of the spiritual maternity runs through a rare little manual of prayer discovered by Baumann in its German version (he was unable to locate the Italian original). Seemingly, the prayerbook was composed by Pius VI during his pontificate. At the very least, it was reissued during his reign and by his authority, as we learn from the preface and from the very title: "The Choicest Prayers, explained and interpreted by His Holiness, Pope Pius VI, and distributed throughout the Papal States by his command. . . ." ²⁶

There one reads: (a) "(Mary) show thyself a Mother, and I will show myself thy child"; (b) "O Mary . . . I commend myself to thee for today and for always, just as my crucified Jesus gave me, in St. John, unto thy charge under the cross"; (c) "abandon me not at death, show thyself a Mother"; (d) "while I already venerate thee as a Mother of the Most High, thou art also a universal Mother of the faithful"; ²⁷ and, especially, (e):

Thou art a universal Mother of the faithful, because thy Son dying on the Cross gave thee to us as such with the words spoken to His beloved disciple: Behold thy mother. There on Calvary didst thou, so to speak, in anguish give birth to us in a moral wise (*sittlicher Weise*) and accept us as children. So then, show thyself as a compassionate and anxious Mother of grace, enclose us in thy most loving heart.²⁸

²⁵ Cited from Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 12, with note 14.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 33, 100.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Again we meet a juxtaposition of the divine and the spiritual maternities (d), which, as we remarked of Benedict XIV, argues that Mary is our Mother in some real sense of the word, and, moreover, that this is a revealed truth, since mentioned in the same breath with an indubitable dogma, the divine maternity of Mary.

In offering some reason why the Blessed Virgin should be regarded as the Mother of the faithful, Pius VI explicitly refers (e) to *John* 19: 26-27, and declares that on that occasion the beloved disciple represented all of Mary's spiritual children. Clearly, the Johannine text is not taken in an accommodated sense. Note, however, that Christ's words are not advanced as inaugurating, or, at least, as wholly responsible for, the spiritual maternity.

Rather, Mary's pangs on Calvary were, so to speak, the anguish of childbirth, wherein we were born of her—not, as Christ, unto physical life—but in “moral wise,” i.e., spiritually, unto the supernatural life of grace (“Mother of grace”). Hence Pius VI, when he touches on the foundations of the spiritual maternity, does not base the latter wholly, if at all, on the words of Jesus to His Mother and to John. Instead, the Pope looks beyond this utterance to the whole drama of Calvary, to the Blessed Virgin's compassion with her divine Son. In *John* 19: 26-27 the spiritual maternity is proclaimed and confirmed, rather than created.

While, on the one hand, Pius VI affirms that Mary is the Mother of all the faithful (d, e), still, in the light of the foregoing, he gives us to understand that, radically, her spiritual maternity extends further, to all those whom she bore in anguish on Calvary. As to the exercise of her maternal offices, Pius VI exhibits Mary as engaging in this, by her intercession in Heaven, throughout the lifetime of her children (b), and especially at the hour of death (c).

*Pius VII (1800-23), Pius VIII (1829-30),
Gregory XVI (1831-46)*

The nineteenth century brings great increase in the number and clarity of the papal testimonies to the spiritual maternity, especially from Pius IX on. We may treat as a group three of his predecessors in this century.

Pius VII styles Mary "our most loving Parent (*Parens*)" ²⁹—noteworthy since *Parens* (like *Genetrix*) implies a genuine maternity, motherhood in the strict sense of the word. In documents of the same name Pius VIII and Gregory XVI write of Mary as "our Mother, the Mother of piety and of grace, the Mother of mercy, to whom Jesus on the Cross committed us, as He was about to die." ³⁰ Elsewhere Gregory XVI often speaks of Mary as "the most loving Mother of us all," ³¹ and on occasion he conjoins this with a reference to the divine maternity, thus mentioning the two maternities in the same breath, as in the formulation: "the Virgin Mother of God and the most loving Mother of us all." ³² These formulations of Gregory were later taken up and widely popularized by Pius IX.

In the quotation given above as common to Pius VIII and to Gregory XVI one again remarks an allusion to *John* 19: 26-27, and once more it is certain that the Johannine text is not understood in an accommodated sense. However, the

²⁹ Bull *Quod divino afflata*, January 24, 1806; in J. Bourassé, *op. cit.*, vol. 7, col. 546.

³⁰ Pius VIII, Bull *Praesentissimum sane*, March 30, 1830, and Gregory XVI, Bull, *Praesentissimum sane*, May 18, 1832; in J. Bourassé, *op. cit.*, vol. 7, col. 579, 589.

³¹ Cf., e.g., the Bull *Augusti ac venerandi*, February 26, 1836, and the Bull *Cum nobis*, July 15, 1842; quoted in Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 97. Also, see *infra*, note 36.

³² Thus, e.g., the letter to the Bishop of Acqui, *Libenti sane animo*, May 11, 1844: "Deiparam Virginem omniumque nostrum amantissimam Matrem"; in *Pareri dell'Episcopato Cattolico . . . sulla definizione dogmatica dell'Immacolato Concepimento della Beata Vergine Maria*, Part III, vol. 6, Roma, 1852, p. 639.

predecessor of these Pontiffs, Pius VII, had already gone into the grounds of the spiritual maternity much more profoundly, in this signal passage of a Bull authorizing for Sardinia the Feast of the Seven Dolours:

The Christian faithful assuredly owe it to the Blessed Virgin Mary, as children to a most dear Mother, that they . . . cherish the memory of the dire sorrows which she, especially when standing by the Cross of Jesus, bore with unparalleled and invincible fortitude and constancy, and which she offered up to the eternal Father for their salvation; and they should consider as of precept for themselves what holy Tobias bade his son concerning his mother: 'thou must be mindful what and how great perils she suffered for thee.' (*Tobias*. 4: 4).³³

For an explanation of why the Christian faithful are children of Mary, a most dear Mother, the above passage does not invoke the words from the Cross: "Woman, behold thy son . . . Behold thy mother." Rather as is confirmed by the accommodated use of *Tobias* 4: 4, with its reference to the hazards of childbearing—Pius VII appeals to Mary's sufferings, especially her compassion with Christ on Calvary, and to her (co-) offering (with Christ) of these (common) sufferings to the heavenly Father, for our salvation.³⁴ Thus there is brought out, as a basis for the spiritual maternity, the intimate relations between Jesus and Mary in the work of our Redemption. And, implicit in the passage is this, that Mary's sufferings, especially on Calvary, were, so to speak, childbirth pangs (*Tobias* 4: 4). It is readily recognized that in this deeper insight into the spiritual motherhood of Mary, Pius VII had, to an extent, been anticipated by Pius VI.

³³ Bull *Id officii*, January 9, 1801; in Bourassé, *op. cit.*, vol. 7, col. 495.

³⁴ Compassion, co-offering of common sufferings: all this is sufficiently implicit in the text; see also the subsequent context: "Dei Matri, doloribus in hac vita cum Christo miserrimis affectae."

Whose Mother is Mary, according to Pius VII, Pius VIII, and Gregory XVI? She is the "Mother of us all"—at least, of "the Christian faithful"; as Gregory teaches elsewhere, the Mother of the Church—of the Chief Shepherd and of the flock, Mother of the whole Christian people.³⁵ Indeed, radically, she is the Mother of all those for whom she suffered and offered up her sufferings on Calvary, if we bear in mind the notable passage quoted from Pius VII. As to Mary's exercise of her maternal office, it is Gregory XVI who stresses her motherly care and assistance in all the trials and tribulations of this life,³⁶

Pius IX (1846-78)

From Pius IX onward an abundance of material is at our command. It is especially in this period that papal documents of a doctrinal and pastoral nature, addressed to the universal Church, begin to multiply. The great Encyclicals of the present and previous century are a rich source for our subject.

As to Pius IX, more than two dozen testimonies of his to the spiritual maternity³⁷ solidly substantiate this Pontiff's avowal, toward the end of his reign, of a lifelong zeal for the honor of Mary, "our Mother most dear."³⁸ In Encyclicals, in the Apostolic Letter *Ineffabilis Deus*, in lesser documents and in allocutions, he styles Mary "our Mother" in a variety of ways.

³⁵ Bull *Coelestis Regina*, August 15, 1838; quoted in Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

³⁶ *Coelestis Regina*: "Maria, omnium nostrum amantissima Mater . . . in angustis rebus omnibus ac difficillimis tam placido semper vultu de coelo respicere ac singulari quodam et praecipuo suae tutelae praesidio tueri ostendit . . ."; quoted from Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 100. Note also the Bull *Benedicentes Domino*, January 27, 1832, "Matri sanctissimae . . . , quae aeternam vitam eos habituros pollicetur, qui ipsam elucidare studuerint"; in Bourassé, *op. cit.*, vol. 7, col. 587.

³⁷ Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109, lists twenty-one pertinent documents and allocutions of Pius IX. At least a half dozen more could be added.

³⁸ Thus the letter to the Archbishop of Bonn, *Qui vel a teneris*, July 16, 1875; *A.S.S.*, 9 (1876), 161.

She is the "Mother of fair love, and of knowledge, and of holy hope, Queen of the Church."³⁹ Again, "the dearest Mother of mercy and of grace."⁴⁰ Again, "the most loving Mother of us all."⁴¹ More often than not, and quite significantly, Mary's motherhood in our regard is spoken of together with, and on the same plane with her divine maternity, and with yet other revealed prerogatives of hers. Thus, the Encyclical *Ubi primum*, February 2, 1849, and several other documents, refer to "the most holy Mother of God, and the most loving Mother of us all, the Immaculate Virgin Mary."⁴² In the Encyclicals *Qui pluribus*, November 9, 1846, and *Quanta cura*, December 8, 1864, and on other occasions, the Pontiff expressed himself in these or equivalent terms: "the most holy Mother of God, the Immaculate Virgin Mary, who is the most dear Mother of us all."⁴³ Or one may quote from the Pope's allocution in the secret consistory at Gaeta, April 20, 1849: "the most holy Immaculate Virgin Mary, who is God's Mother

³⁹ Allocution at the first session of the Vatican Council, December 8, 1869; *A.S.S.*, 5 (1911 - ed. 5), 295.

⁴⁰ *Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8, 1854; in *Le Encicliche Mariane* (ed. A. Tondini), Roma, 1950, p. 56.

⁴¹ *Vehementer nos delectarunt*, April 10, 1856, letter to the Fathers of the 1st Prov. Council of New Orleans; *Collectio Lacensis*, vol. 3, col. 246, c.

⁴² *Ubi primum*, in Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 2; *Iucundissimae nobis*, December 5, 1850, letter to the Fathers of the Prov. Council of Sens, France, in *Collectio Lacensis*, vol. 4, col. 914, a; *Maximam quidem laetitiam*, August 9, 1855, letter to the Fathers of the 8th Prov. Council of Baltimore, in *Collectio Lacensis*, vol. 3, col. 165, c; *Summae certe*, July 19, 1855, letter to the Fathers of the 1st Prov. Council of Cincinnati, in *Collectio Lacensis*, vol. 3, col. 200, a; *Omni qua par*, December 10, 1857, letter to the Fathers of the 1st Prov. Council of Halifax, in *Collectio Lacensis*, vol. 3, col. 759, b.

⁴³ *Qui pluribus*, in *Codicis Iuris Canonici Fontes* (ed. P. Gasparri), vol. 2, Romae, 1928, p. 816; *Quanta cura*, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 999. Cf. also the Encyclical *Exultavit cor nostrum*, November 21, 1851, excerpt quoted in *Collectio Lacensis*, vol. 6, col. 325, a; and *Ineffabilis Deus*, in Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 56; also, the allocution, June 9, 1862, to the many bishops present at Rome for the canonization of the Japanese martyrs, in *Collectio Lacensis*, vol. 6, col. 882, c; and the consistorial allocution of December 20, 1867, in *A.S.S.*, 3 (1895 - ed. 3), 292.

and our own (*Dei Mater et nostra*), and the Mother of mercy.”⁴⁴ Observe here the use, not infrequent in papal documents, of the one word *Mater* for purposes of the divine and the spiritual maternity.

What was said of similar formulations in earlier Popes, if valid, has even greater validity here. Surely Pius IX would not have thus juxtaposed, so repeatedly, Mary's spiritual maternity with her divine maternity, if the former were not, in its own way, as real a maternity as the latter. It would be prejudicial to the true character of the divine maternity, to mention it on even terms with another maternity which is one only in an improper sense of the word.

Further, even more than similar pronouncements of earlier Popes, these formulations of Pius IX seem in themselves to assure us that Mary's motherhood in our regard is a formally revealed truth. At the very least, it is a certain deduction from Revelation. For the Pontiff would not have constantly associated a mere pious opinion, however probable, with the dogma of the divine maternity, and, on occasion, with yet other dogmas—Mary's virginity, her eminent sanctity, her Immaculate Conception (as, e.g., “the most holy Mother of God, the Immaculate Virgin Mary, who is the most dear Mother of us all”). But what is more—it is unlikely that Pius IX would have spoken in such fashion, had he deemed the spiritual maternity to be contained in Revelation only virtually, however certainly.

Of special interest in this connection is the passage of *Ubi primum*, occurring as it does in the Encyclical which directed the bishops of the universal Church to inform the Pope what was the belief of their clergy and faithful and what their own belief concerning the Immaculate Conception and the proposal to define it as a dogma of faith. The Pontiff commences the Encyclical with the declaration that he had been highly con-

⁴⁴ In *Codicis Iuris Canonici Fontes*, vol. 2, p. 837.

soled to learn of the marvelous resurgence in the Catholic world of the desire that the Holy See might one day solemnly define of her who is "the most holy Mother of God, and the most loving Mother of us all, the Immaculate Virgin Mary," that she "was conceived without original sin."⁴⁵ In this quite special context Mary's spiritual maternity stands out more than ever as an assured truth of the faith. Far from being an issue, it is completely taken for granted, like the revealed truths of Mary's divine maternity and of her virginity; and, one gathers, it is urged as a motive for defining the Immaculate Conception, that honor might thus be done to this "most loving Mother of us all." That Pius IX shared these convictions and sentiments of the faithful is obvious from his statement that he found them very consoling.⁴⁶

Incidentally, this reference of *Ubi primum* to Mary as "the most holy Mother of God, and the most loving Mother of us all" found an echo in a large proportion of the official replies of the bishops, made in accordance with the Encyclical. Quite often, the bishops made the above words of Pius IX their own, and not a few of them seemed desirous of having that very language incorporated in the actual definition of Mary's Immaculate Conception. *Ubi primum* also inspired many a pastoral letter and the like, wherein bishops again took occasion to voice their belief that Mary is the spiritual Mother of men. This world-wide episcopal avowal of the spiritual maternity is all the more notable because it is concentrated within the brief period between February 2, 1849, and the date of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1854.

⁴⁵ Text in Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

⁴⁶ In this connection we may mention the letter *Nihil certe nobis*, October 28, 1847, wherein Pius IX commended J. Perrone, S.J., for his great study on the Immaculate Conception, a work most welcome to the Pontiff because it fell in with his constant and burning desire "ut debitus erga sanctissimam Dei Genitricem omniumque nostrum amantissimam Matrem Immaculatam Virginem Mariam cultus, pietas et observantia magis in dies ubique augeatur . . ."; in J. Bourassé, *op. cit.*, vol. 7, col. 627.

The details and the documentation relative to the above-mentioned testimonies of the episcopate cannot be given here, due to the lack of space. The same reason forbids more than mere mention that other valuable testimonies deriving from some twenty-five plenary and provincial Councils, celebrated between 1849 and 1868, were also inspired by the then prospective, or by the recently accomplished, dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception. The teaching of the episcopate on Mary's spiritual maternity finds further expression in a great number of the petitions which reached the Holy See between 1869 and 1941, requesting the dogmatic definition of the corporal Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven. Though the foregoing and other materials cannot be elaborated upon here, they will be published elsewhere, if the opportunity presents itself.

To return to Pius IX, what grounds does he advance for the spiritual maternity of Mary? In two allocutions we meet the now familiar reference to *John* 19: 26-27, and again it is evident that this text bears upon our doctrine in some genuinely Scriptural sense, rather than by mere accommodation:

There on Calvary at the foot of the Cross, represented by St. John, we were placed under the protection of Mary as our Mother. The last words of the testament which Jesus pronounced . . . 'Woman, behold thy son.'⁴⁷

Jesus Christ in person made the choice, when of St. John He said to His Mother: 'Behold thy son.' We are, therefore, all sons of Mary most holy. Oh, read these words which are found in the divine testament made by Jesus Christ on Golgotha. . . . Yes, in the midst of His torments Jesus by His testament left us Mary.⁴⁸

In thus expressing himself, the Pontiff cannot have wished to teach that Mary's maternal relationship to mankind rests

⁴⁷ Allocution to Savoyard pilgrims, September 17, 1876; quoted from Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁴⁸ Allocution, October 21, 1877; quoted from Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

solely on those words of the dying Saviour—and that, therefore, she is our Mother only in an improper sense. We have already argued at length that, to Pius IX, Mary is our Mother in some real and proper sense of the word. For that matter, another allocution, in stating “but our Rachel is in Heaven and is the Mother of God and our Mother,”⁴⁹ is in the tradition of Pius VI and Pius VII, according to whom Mary bore us spiritually in the anguish of her compassion with Jesus on Calvary. As Rachel delivered her first-born joyously, so Mary when she brought forth her divine Son; as Rachel bore her second child in anguish,⁵⁰ so the second Rachel when she again came to bear—to bear us in the travail of Calvary.

In this same connection one could also appeal to those passages of *Ineffabilis Deus* which seem to support the thesis of Mary's formal and proximate co-operation in the objective Redemption.⁵¹ However, since our study of Pius IX is already overlong, we must forego treatment of this and of other aspects of the Pontiff's teaching on the spiritual maternity of Mary.

Leo XIII (1878-1903) ⁵²

Such was the conviction of Leo XIII that Mary is our Mother, such his zeal to further devotion to this heavenly Mother, that a veritable embarrassment of riches confronts us when his written and spoken references to the subject are gathered together. In our striving for brevity we must confine ourselves mainly to the ten well-known Rosary Encycli-

⁴⁹ Quoted by Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 41, without dating the allocution, from *Discorsi Pii IX*, vol. 1, p. 327.

⁵⁰ Benjamin, called by Rachel “Benoni,” i.e., “the child of my distress”; cf. *Genesis* 35: 17-18.

⁵¹ Cf., e.g., J. Carol, O.F.M., *op. cit.*, pp. 100-121, 511-514; also, D. Bertetto, S.D.B., *Maria nel Dogma Cattolico*, Torino, 1950, pp. 6-27, 404.

⁵² Cf. Baumann, *op. cit.*, *passim* (cf. “Personenregister,” p. xi); Bittremieux, *Doctrina Mariana Leonis XIII*, in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, 4 (1927), 359-383; D. Bertetto, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-275, 463-464.

cals, and to that on the Patronage of St. Joseph and of the Blessed Virgin, *Quamquam pluries*. Beside being the richest sources for our theme, these documents have the additional merit of having been addressed to the universal episcopate. They are, in the chronological order of their publication:

Supremi apostolatus, September 1, 1883 (Tondini,⁵³ pp. 65-77);

Superiore anno, August 30, 1884 (*ibid.*, pp. 87-93);

Quamquam pluries, August 15, 1889 (*ibid.*, pp. 111-121);

Octobri mense, September 22, 1891 (*ibid.*, pp. 129-151);

Magnae Dei Matris, September 8, 1892 (*ibid.*, pp. 153-171);

Laetitiae sanctae, September 8, 1893 (*ibid.*, pp. 173-189);

Iucunda semper, September 8, 1894 (*ibid.*, pp. 201-217);

Adjutricem populi, September 5, 1895 (*ibid.*, pp. 219-237);

Fidentem piumque, September 20, 1896 (*ibid.*, pp. 243-255);

Augustissimae Virginis, September 12, 1897 (*ibid.*, pp. 257-269);

Diuturni temporis, September 5, 1898 (*ibid.*, pp. 271-277).

Throughout these incomparable Encyclicals, Leo XIII tirelessly bears witness to, and enlarges our understanding of, Mary's spiritual maternity. We begin with the more general and gradually penetrate deeper into his teaching on the subject. The Pontiff tells of Mary's "maternal goodness," of her "maternal affection," of her "motherly compassion toward men," of her "maternal duties toward all."⁵⁴ She is hailed as the "Mother of mercy," "the best and most solicitous of Mothers"; as our Mother "most benevolent," "powerful and benign," "zealous," "tender," "most holy"; as our "great Queen

⁵³ *Le Encicliche Mariane* (ed. A. Tondini), Roma, 1950; hereinafter cited as: Tondini.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 114, 136, 202, 264.

and Mother," our "heavenly helper and Mother," etc., etc.⁵⁵ The extension of her maternity is indicated when Mary is called "the Mother of all Christians," "Mother of the Church," indeed, "Mother of men," to whose maternal care the "whole human race was entrusted."⁵⁶

In *Magnae Dei Matris* it is explained that Mary "is our Mother not in a human way but through Christ,"⁵⁷ while in *Adjutricem populi* there occurs—for the first time in a papal document, it seems⁵⁸—the very expression, "spiritual maternity."⁵⁹

That this maternity, though spiritual, is nonetheless a true one, and indeed one formally revealed, is, for reasons already developed when we dealt with Pius IX, intimated by Leo's frequent juxtaposition of Mary's spiritual maternity with her divine maternity, and, on occasion, with yet other revealed Marian prerogatives. Thus, the Pope declares Mary to be "the Mother of God and of men (*Dei et hominum Mater*)."⁶⁰ Again, he urges us to invoke "Mary, Christ's Mother and our own (*Matrem Christi et nostram*)."⁶¹ In these two texts one notes the employment of but one "*Mater*" which is made to do duty for both the divine and the spiritual maternity. Elsewhere Leo affirms that Mary is "at one and the same time God's Mother and our Mother (*simul Mater Dei, simul Mater nostra*),"⁶² and the Pope then goes on to speak of "the excellence of this double dignity, the fruits of this double ministry."⁶³ On another occasion the Pontiff states that "just as the most holy

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 158, 160, 162, 166, 168, 174, 184, 232, 234, 268, 272.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 136, 186, 222, 244.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁵⁸ Thus Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁵⁹ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 186; cf. also p. 288, Apostolic Letter *Parta humano generi*, September 8, 1901: "The Virgin Mother of God and our most tender Mother."

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 230.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

Virgin is the Mother of Jesus Christ, so she is the Mother of all Christians.”⁶⁴

The divine and the spiritual maternities are mentioned in close proximity and on the same plane in yet other passages, as in *Fidentem piumque*: “We can never have done with honoring the Mother of God, who is in truth ‘worthy of all praise,’ and with urging love and affection toward that same Mother of men, who is ‘full of mercy, full of grace.’ ”⁶⁵ And *Magnae Dei Matris* exhorts us to entreat Mary “by the maternal bonds which unite her so closely to Jesus and at the same time to us.”⁶⁶

That the spiritual maternity is a motherhood in the proper sense of the word is conveyed to us in yet other ways; for instance, this emerges from the following passage of *Quamquam pluries*, quoted here at length that we may return to it later for other ends:

Now the divine household which Joseph governed as with a father's authority contained the beginnings of the nascent Church. Just as the most holy Virgin is the Mother (*Genetrix*) of Jesus Christ, so she is the Mother of all Christians, whom indeed she bore (*generavit*) on Mt. Calvary amid the supreme throes of the Redeemer: also, Jesus Christ is as the first-born of all Christians, who by adoption and Redemption are His brothers.

These are the reasons why the blessed Patriarch looks upon the multitude of Christians who constitute the Church as confided especially to his trust—that vast family, spread throughout the earth, over which, because he is the spouse of Mary and the father of Jesus, he holds an almost paternal authority.⁶⁷

The statement, “Just as . . . so . . . ,” has already been singled out on an earlier page as arguing that the spiritual ma-

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

ternity is a motherhood in the strict sense of the word. But the above passage also suggests other lines of argument, such as the following. According to *Quamquam pluries*, Mary's spiritual maternity, no less than her divine maternity, involves and is based on a giving-birth (*Christi Genetrix . . . christianorum Mater . . . quos generavit*): common to the two maternities is a birth, and the comparison would hardly be warranted were there not in each case a true (though different) birth. Clearly, then, Mary cannot be our Mother merely in some improper, e.g., merely juridical, sense—say, simply on the grounds of an ordinary adoption; still less can she be our Mother by a merely metaphorical use of the term.

Another significant passage, this time from *Magnae Dei Matris*, lends itself to our purpose at the moment and will also prove serviceable later on:

Now, if it pleased Christ, in His boundless goodness, to render Himself so like unto us, and to call and present Himself as the son of man and therefore as our brother, in order that His mercy toward us might be the more manifest, 'it behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become merciful.' (*Hebrews 2: 17*).

Even so Mary—by the very fact that she was chosen to be the Mother of Christ, Our Lord, Who is at the same time our brother (*ex eo quod Christi Domini eiusdemque fratris nostri electa est mater*), she was singularly endowed above all other mothers with the mission of manifesting and pouring out her mercy upon us. Moreover, if we are indebted to Christ in that He has shared with us in some way the right, peculiarly His own, of calling God our Father and possessing Him as such, to Christ's loving generosity we are similarly indebted for sharing in His right to call Mary Mother and to possess her as such.

But though nature itself has made the name of mother the sweetest of all names, and motherhood the very model of tender and foresighted love, no tongue suffices to tell what every devout soul feels: how intense is the flame of benevolent and active charity

burning in Mary, in her who is our Mother, not in a human way, but through Christ.⁶⁸

As dogmatically profound as it is deeply moving, the above passage cannot be done full justice in these pages. We must be content to dwell on the one assertion, that to Christ we are indebted not only for our filial relationship (analogous to His own) with the heavenly Father, but also for a filial relationship (analogous to His own) with Mary. That the just are sons of God is, of course, no mere metaphor; nor, yet again, is their filiation merely an adoptive one, in the purely juridical meaning and human understanding of that term. For God does not, as in merely juridical or human adoption, simply will to have men as His sons, without communicating something of His nature to them: He does not only adopt the just as His sons, He goes further and gives them actually to share, through grace, in His own nature (2 *Peter* 1: 4) and life. Whence they are truly His sons, "*born of God*";⁶⁹ their relationship with God is a truly filial one, one whose basis is ontological (grace, infusion thereof), not just juridical (an act of the will).

This much recalled as to the filial relationship of the just with the heavenly Father, we may now go on to suggest that the language and thought of Leo XIII invite us to understand our filial relationship with Mary in somewhat similar fashion: as a true filiation, with an ontological basis. The Pope says, in effect: Thanks to Christ, we are truly sons of God, have the right not only to call Him Father but actually to possess Him as such (*ius . . . Deum vocandi et habendi patrem*)—and, again thanks to Christ, we are in some equally true sense sons of Mary, have the right not only to call Mary our Mother but actually to possess her as such (*ius, Mariam vocandi et habendi matrem*). Clearly, the spiritual maternity of Mary is no

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 158, 160.

⁶⁹ Cf. *John* 1: 13; 3: 5; 1 *John* 3: 9; whereas in human adoption the child is not and cannot be said to be born of the one who adopts him.

mere metaphorical maternity, any more than God's paternity is a merely metaphorical one. Nor would a purely adoptive maternity satisfy Leo's thought and language. We do justice to the latter only if we suppose the Pope to hold that the spiritual maternity is a true maternity, with some ontological basis: Mary exercised a truly maternal function in procuring for us the spiritual regeneration which makes us sons of God.⁷⁰

That Mary is our Mother in a proper sense of the word is, moreover, amply confirmed by the analysis, which now follows, of the reasons which Leo advances for the spiritual maternity, the grounds upon which this dignity of Mary is based.

While earlier Popes, notably Pius IX, had frequently paired the divine and the spiritual maternities, speaking of Mary as "Mother of God and Mother of men," etc., Leo is the first to bring out the eminent justice of such juxtapositions. He gives us to understand that there is an intrinsic connection between the two maternities. For, he teaches in effect what Pius X will later say expressly: Mary is the Mother of our Redeemer, and therefore the Mother of men. By the very fact that she became Christ's Mother, Mary became our Mother as well.

For a first instance, there is this passage of *Octobri mense*:

As such (gentle, most tender, of a limitless loving-kindness) God gave her to us, Mary, in whom, by the very fact that He chose her for the Mother of His only-begotten Son (*cui, hoc ipso quod Unigenae sui Matrem elegit*), He infused without stint those maternal feelings which breathe nothing but love and pardon. Such Jesus Christ . . . proclaimed her from the Cross, when He entrusted to her care and protection the whole human race in the person of His disciple John. Such, finally, did she prove herself

⁷⁰ Though he is not commenting on this Leonine passage, we may quote T. Koehler, *Maternité spirituelle de Marie*, in *Maria* (ed. H. du Manoir, S.J.), vol. 1, p. 584: "Just as God does not only adopt us as His sons but goes further and gives us veritably His own divine life, so Mary adopts us on Calvary as her children, because she really procures for us spiritual regeneration."

to be, when, magnanimously embracing the heritage of immense labor left her by her dying Son, she forthwith began to fulfill her maternal duties toward all.⁷¹

Here we learn at least this much, the existence of some connection between the divine and the spiritual maternities; God willed that Mary be so richly endowed with a mother's qualities in order that she become the Mother of Christ and then also our Mother. Indeed, that the above text bespeaks even an intrinsic connection, we gather from the Encyclical *Lux veritatis*, December 25, 1931, where Pope Pius XI quotes this very passage on the heels of, and seemingly in support of the following assertion:

She, by the very fact that she brought forth the Redeemer of the human race (*ex hoc quod humani generis peperit Redemptorem*), is also in a manner the most tender Mother of us all, whom Christ Our Lord deigned to have as His brothers (*Romans 8: 29*).⁷²

Since Pius here clearly teaches that the spiritual maternity is in some fashion included in the divine maternity,⁷³ and then recites the Leonine passage, the latter would seem to have the same import. At any rate, Pius' thesis and his very reasoning were definitely proposed in advance in the passage already quoted from *Magnae Dei Matris*. For there Leo argues in this fashion, as it were: through the Incarnation Christ became our brother; *atqui*, Christ is the son of Mary; *ergo*, we, too, are sons of Mary, and she is our Mother.⁷⁴ Recall also the passage

⁷¹ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 400.

⁷³ Thus G. Roschini, O.S.M., *La Madonna nel pensiero e nell'insegnamento di Pio XI*, in *Marianum*, vol. 1 (1939), p. 166; cf. C. Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-272.

⁷⁴ So J. Bittremieux, *art. cit.*, p. 362; and, following him, D. Bertetto, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-275.

from *Quamquam pluries*, for, among other things, its similar appeal to the fact that Christ is our brother.⁷⁵

Thus Leo clearly teaches the fact of an intrinsic connection between the two maternities, and at the same time explains the fact. Moreover, by the same token, he is teaching yet another thing. Mary became the Mother of men at the very same time that she became Christ's Mother. The spiritual maternity did not first commence on Calvary: it was inaugurated together with the divine maternity (the latter, of course, enjoyed a priority of nature).⁷⁶ Pope Pius X will drive home this same point in terms of the doctrine of Christ's Mystical Body.⁷⁷ As theologians often put it, summing up these papal teachings, Mary's *Fiat* wrought at once the physical conception of her divine Son and the spiritual conception of her human children.⁷⁸ Fully to appreciate this, we must bear in mind with the theologians⁷⁹ that Mary's *Fiat* at the Annunciation was a thoroughly deliberate consent, and, indeed, a thoroughly deliberate consent to become the Mother of the suffering Messiah, promised by the prophets of old—the Mother of the Redeemer, formally as such; a consent, moreover, upon which, by God's positive will, the Incarnation and our Redemption hinged.⁸⁰ Leo XIII himself has touched on these matters. Here is a famous passage

⁷⁵ Cf. Bittremieux, *art. cit.*, p. 362; Bertetto, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-275; Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 62; J. Keuppens, Soc. Miss. Africae, *Mariologiae Compendium*, ed. 2, 1947, p. 140.

⁷⁶ Cf. Bittremieux, *art. cit.*, pp. 362-363; Bertetto, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-275; Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-272.

⁷⁷ See, *infra*, the Encyclical *Ad diem illum*. In this connection, note Leo XIII, Encyclical *Divinum Illud*, May 4, 1897: "Ecclesia, quam iam concepta, ex latere ipso secundi Adami, velut in Cruce dormientis, orta erat . . ."; *A.S.S.*, 29 (1897), p. 649; compare, *infra*, Pius XII, Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*.

⁷⁸ Cf., e.g., Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 29; Bertetto, *op. cit.*, pp. 462-464.

⁷⁹ Cf. Carl Feckes, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-161; M. Scheeben, *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*, vol. 3, Freiburg im Br., 1882; p. 612-613; J. Terrien, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 128-167.

⁸⁰ Cf. L. Lercher, *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, ed. tertia retractata, vol. 3, Oeniponte-Lipsiae, 1942, pp. 333-334.

of *Octobri mense*, one which has partial parallels in *Iucunda semper*⁸¹ and in *Fidentem piumque*:⁸²

The Eternal Son of God, when He wished to assume human nature for the redemption and ennoblement of man, and was, therefore, about to contract a kind of mystical marriage with the whole human race, did not accomplish this design without first having obtained the wholly free consent of the elect Mother, who represented in some fashion all humankind, according to the renowned and most true statement of St. Thomas Aquinas: 'In the Annunciation there was awaited the consent of the Virgin, standing in the place of all human beings' (*III, q. 30, a. 1*).⁸³

Whereas this passage and its parallels stress the freedom of Mary's consent and its role in bringing about the Incarnation, another passage, from *Iucunda semper*, reveals Mary's *Fiat* as having intended the begetting of our Saviour, as such, whose sufferings she foreknew:

In the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus trembles and is sorrowful unto death, and in the praetorium, where He is scourged, crowned with thorns, condemned to death, Mary is not present: but she knew and saw clearly all these things long beforehand. For, when she yielded herself to God as His handmaid for the office of Mother, or when in the Temple she offered up to Him without reserve herself and her Son, already in virtue of each of these facts she shared with her Son in the painful expiation for the human race: whence it is certain that she also suffered (*condoluisse*) in the very depths of her soul with the most bitter agonies and torments of her Son.

Besides, it was in her very presence and before her very eyes that the divine sacrifice was to be accomplished, that sacrifice for which she had nurtured the Victim with her own milk. This

⁸¹ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 248, 250.

⁸³ *Octobri mense*; Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 134; cf. Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-339.

we contemplate in the last and most piteous of these (sorrowful) mysteries: 'there stood by the cross of Jesus Mary, His Mother,' who, animated by a desire of immense charity to receive us as her sons (*tacta in nos caritate immensa ut susciperet filios*), herself voluntarily offered up to Divine Justice her own Son, dying with Him in her heart, pierced by the sword of sorrow.⁸⁴

Thus it is Leo's merit that, whereas his predecessors, in indicating reasons for the spiritual maternity, drew attention chiefly to Calvary, this Pontiff leads us back to Nazareth, for the very beginnings of the spiritual maternity. That the latter was not inaugurated on Calvary seems, moreover, implied in *Adjutricem populi*:

As often as we . . . devoutly recite the Rosary, we go over in memory the marvelous work of our salvation, in such wise that we contemplate, as though they were unfolding before our eyes, those facts by whose sequence and accomplishment Mary stands revealed as at one and the same time God's Mother and our Mother (*quorum serie et effectu exstitit illa simul Mater Dei, simul Mater nostra*). The excellence of this double dignity, the fruits of this double ministry, appear in vivid light if we reverently consider Mary associated with her Son in the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries.⁸⁵

As this same passage would lead us to expect, and as in fact earlier quotations have already betrayed, Leo did not fail to relate the spiritual maternity to the sorrowful and glorious mysteries of which the Rosary reminds us. If at Nazareth Mary conceived us together with her divine Son, she did not bear us together with Him in the joyful Nativity of Bethlehem.

⁸⁴ Tondini, *op. cit.*, pp. 204, 206. In the translation of "*tacta . . . filios*," we have followed Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 57: "Animée d'un désir de charité immense de nous recevoir comme ses enfants . . ."; cf. *ibid.*, p. 57, note 3. Incidentally, unless otherwise indicated, the English translations throughout the present study are those of the writer.

⁸⁵ Tondini, *op. cit.*, pp. 230, 232.

Rather, after a longer and painful period of gestation, in anguish—like another Rachel—she gave birth to us on Calvary; and, after Christ's dying proclamation of her spiritual maternity, Mary began at once, as formerly in the cave of Bethlehem, to exercise a mother's care and duties toward her offspring. Such is the further course of Leo's teaching on the spiritual maternity; and in tracing this course we come to appreciate the extent to which Leo confirmed, clarified, and enriched the doctrine of his predecessors.

Thus Pius VI, Pius VII, and Pius IX had already introduced, as a factor in the spiritual maternity, Mary's compassion with Jesus, especially on Calvary. And these her sufferings were depicted as the pangs of a woman with child, pangs culminating in the parturition whereby Mary bore us as her spiritual children at the foot of the Cross.

Leo's contributions to this theme cannot have been overlooked in the lengthy quotations given previously from *Iucunda semper* and *Quamquam pluries*. In *Iucunda semper* the Pope stresses Mary's compassion with Christ, her co-sufferings from the Incarnation onward, sufferings which reached their climax on Calvary, where Mary's "immense charity" toward us led her to surrender her divine Son in order to receive other sons, ourselves.

Here is the supreme evidence and exercise of that charity which *Magnae Dei Matris* termed ineffable, that "benevolent and active charity burning in Mary, who is our Mother, not in a human way, but through Christ."⁸⁶ Out of love for us, or, as an indulged prayer approved by Leo XIII puts it, "for our sake (Mary) endured so many and such great sorrows in

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 160. The Apostolic Letter *Parta humano generi*, September 8, 1901, by a quotation from St. Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, cap. 6, also refers to the role of Mary's charity in bringing about our spiritual rebirth: ". . . Virgo Mater, quae olim 'cooperata est caritate, ut fideles in Ecclesia nascerentur'"; Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 288. The import of St. Augustine's text is much discussed; cf. Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 273-274.

the life, passion, and death of Jesus Christ"; and thereby became, by a new title, our Mother—for, as the same prayer immediately goes on to say: "we are the children of thy distress."⁸⁷

In short, by her compassion and by her part in offering up the sacrifice of Calvary, Mary bore us unto the new life of grace. This is the doctrine which we heard summed up in *Quamquam pluries*: Mary "is the Mother of all Christians, whom indeed (*quippe quos*) she bore on Mt. Calvary amid the supreme throes of the Redeemer." Elsewhere, too, Leo speaks of Mary as having brought us forth. The Encyclical *Adjutricem populi*, after declaring that it properly belongs to the office of Mary's spiritual maternity to grant a favorable hearing to prayers for Christian unity, goes on to say: "For Mary has not brought forth, nor could she bring forth, those who are of Christ except in the one same faith and the one same love."⁸⁸

If one takes at face value these several utterances of Leo XIII, especially that of *Quamquam pluries*, the Pontiff would seem to be teaching thereby our spiritual birth of Mary in the strict sense of the word, i.e., that on Calvary the Blessed Virgin co-operated formally and immediately (though in subordination to Christ) in acquiring for us the life of grace *in actu primo*. And here would be the pre-eminent reason for the spiritual maternity—that which would make Mary our Mother in the strict and proper sense of the word.⁸⁹

However, some authors hesitate to interpret Leo XIII in

⁸⁷ The prayer, approved February 14, 1902, is replete with references to Mary as our Mother; *A.S.S.*, 36 (1903-1904), 246-247. The exact text of the passage quoted above runs: "ut . . . possimus te consolari pro tot tantisque doloribus quos nostri causa pertulisti in vita, passione ac morte Iesu Christi. Sumus filii tui angoris, ac sub Cruce Iesus te nobis omnibus Matrem reliquit." We are reminded of Rachel, *Genesis* 35: 18.

⁸⁸ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

⁸⁹ Cf. Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Carl Feckes, *Die Kirche als Herrnleib*, Koeln, 1949, pp. 172-173.

this fashion, even though they are not foes of the thesis on Mary's formal and immediate co-operation in the objective Redemption, in the acquisition of the life of grace *in actu primo*. Seiler, for example, understands the Pope to say no more than this, that Mary surrendered the Redeemer unto the death through which *He* won for men the life of grace.⁹⁰

The present writer finds it difficult to understand Seiler's hesitation, and is of the humble opinion that the passages quoted above support the doctrine of our spiritual birth of Mary in the strict sense, or, what amounts to the same thing, the full thesis of the Co-redemption. Such authorities in the matter as Dillenschneider,⁹¹ and, more recently, Father Juniper Carol⁹² have demonstrated the high probability that the Pontiff did expound just such a doctrine. There is also the consideration that, as we have argued previously, Leo takes Mary to be our Mother in the strict and proper sense of the word, which truth is eminently verified if on Calvary she had a formal and immediate part in acquiring for us the life of grace.

We have already noted, in *Octobri mense*, an allusion of Leo XIII to *John* 19: 26-27—"Such Jesus Christ . . . proclaimed (*praedicavit*) her from the Cross, when He entrusted to her care and protection the whole human race in the person of His disciple John." Another allusion is had in the Pope's letter to the English, the Encyclical *Amantissimae voluntatis*, April 14, 1895: "Mary, the most holy Mother of God, whom Christ Himself from the Cross left and bestowed upon mankind as its Mother (*humani generi . . . reliquit atque attribuit matrem*)," and also in the prayer for England appended to the

⁹⁰ H. Seiler, S.J., *Corredemptrix. Theologische Studie zur Lehre der letzten Paepste ueber die Miterloeserschaft Mariens*, Rom, 1939, pp. 67-68.

⁹¹ Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-59. Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 76, is among those who hesitate to understand Leo XIII (and later Popes) as teaching our spiritual birth of Mary in the strict sense; Dillenschneider's work is not in Baumann's bibliography and was not used by him, as we gather from the reference at second hand, p. 47, note 86.

⁹² J. Carol, *op. cit.*, pp. 514-516.

encyclical: "pray for us, whom at the foot of the Cross of the Lord thou didst receive as sons, O sorrowful Mother."⁹³ More significant still is the following, from *Augustissimae Virginis*: "We . . . shall never cease to promote the glory of so great a Mother . . . we cannot but repeat to each and all of our children in Christ those last words of His as He hung upon the Cross, words left as a kind of testament: 'Behold thy Mother.'"⁹⁴ Above all, there is this passage in *Adjutricem populi*:

The mystery of Christ's immense love for us is also revealed in brilliant fashion by this, that when dying He willed to leave His Mother to the disciple John, by this memorable testament: 'Behold thy son.' Now in John, according to the constant mind of the Church (*quod perpetuo sensit Ecclesia*), Christ designated the whole human race (*in Joanne . . . Christus designavit personam humani generis*), especially those who are joined with Him by faith: it is in his sense that St. Anselm of Canterbury has said: 'O Virgin, what dignity could be more highly prized than to be the Mother of those of whom Christ deigns to be the Father and Brother?'⁹⁵

Thus again we gather from the authoritative words of a Pope, and with ample evidence, that the Johannine text bears upon Mary's spiritual maternity in virtue of some genuine Scriptural sense, rather than by mere accommodation.

On the other hand, it is clear from our previous studies of Leo's doctrine that the spiritual maternity of Mary had already been inaugurated at the Incarnation and had been augmented by the new title of her compassion with Christ, especially on

⁹³ *A.S.S.*, 27 (1894-1895), 592, 593. See also the prayer quoted above, note 87; also, a pastoral letter of Leo XIII while Bishop of Perugia, quoted in J. Carol, *op. cit.*, p. 516, note 18.

⁹⁴ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 222. See also the decree approved by Leo XIII, *Ex quo beatissima*, April 22, 1903, citing *John* 19: 26, and adding: "Joannem autem omnes Christifideles tunc repraesentasse ab Ecclesiae Patribus traditum est"; *A.S.S.*, 35 (1902-1903), 627.

Calvary, when she bore us spiritually as the Mother of Sorrows. Hence Christ's words from the cross, rather than creating Mary's maternal relationship to us, officially confirmed and promulgated it, and solemnly charged Mary with the exercise henceforth of this her office as the spiritual Mother of men.⁹⁶

We have already heard, in *Octobri mense*, that Mary forthwith began to fulfill her maternal duties toward all. This exercise of the spiritual maternity Leo describes throughout his Encyclicals with loving care. Regretfully, we must content ourselves to note the following. After the passage from *Adjutricem populi* quoted just above, the Pontiff goes on to recount how Mary with a generous heart took up and began to discharge her exalted but heavy responsibility, first in the Cenacle, nurturing the first Christians, as "Mother of the Church, teacher and Queen of the Apostles, to whom, moreover, she confided no small part of the divine oracles which she kept in her heart."⁹⁷ There, too, as *Iucunda semper* tells us, she prepared by her prayers the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.⁹⁸ Assumed into Heaven, she began at once to plead our cause,⁹⁹ to watch over the Church,¹⁰⁰ especially zealous in behalf of its unity,¹⁰¹ and, in short, to assist and befriend us as our Mother; so that she "who was so closely associated with the mystery of human salvation is just as closely associated with the distribution of the graces" flowing from the Redemption.¹⁰² Thus Mary is a "Mother whom God has endowed with an unfailing fecundity."¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Cf. J. Bittremieux, *art. cit.*, p. 365.

⁹⁷ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁹⁹ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁰⁰ *Adjutricem populi*; Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

¹⁰¹ A favorite theme in the Rosary Encyclicals, as in *Adjutricem populi*, *passim*.

¹⁰² *Adjutricem populi*, Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

¹⁰³ *Adjutricem populi*, Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

Pius X (1903-14)

In one of his first official documents, *Abbiamo appreso*, September 14, 1903, a letter to the bishop of Tarbes, thanking the French for prayers offered at Lourdes for their new Sovereign Pontiff, Pius X avowed a confidence equalling that of his predecessor "in the maternal protection of Mary most holy."¹⁰⁴ Even before this he had composed and made public an indulgenced prayer hailing Mary as "our blessed Mother, our Queen and our Advocate."¹⁰⁵ And in the Apostolic Letter *Summa Deus*, November 27, 1907, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the apparitions at Lourdes, Pius spoke of the pilgrims coming to the Grotto from every nation to implore the "aid of the Mother of mercy."¹⁰⁶ Another letter on the same occasion, *Sollemnia sacra*, December 24, 1907, named Cardinal V. Lecòt as papal legate to the solemnities at Lourdes that he might represent the Pope in giving public thanks to "the august Mother of the Church."¹⁰⁷ In the Apostolic Letter *Quae ad fidei*, March 4, 1910, to the faithful in the Philippines, Pius inserted a richly indulgenced prayer invoking "our Immaculate Mother . . . our most benevolent Mother. . . ."¹⁰⁸ In an allocution of November 10, 1910, Pius X touched briefly on the truth already urged by Leo XIII, that Christ is our Brother: "May . . . Mary continue to exercise her maternal office in our regard, and grant us to behold . . . Jesus . . . as our merciful Brother."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

¹⁰⁵ Appended to the letter of September 8, 1903, to Cardinal Vannutelli and other members of the commission for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of *Ineffabilis Deus*; in *Actes de Pie X*, vol. 1, Paris: La Bonne Presse, p. 97.

¹⁰⁶ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 346.

¹⁰⁸ *A.A.S.*, 2 (1910), 227; similarly, other indulgenced prayers approved by the Pontiff.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 69, from *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 11, 1910, n. 311.

Apart from these testimonies to the spiritual maternity, and a few others of similar nature, there remains only the Encyclical *Ad diem illum*, February 2, 1904. However, this profound Marian document, issued on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception, more than compensates for the relatively few contributions to our subject by Pius X. Only a limited commentary on some of the relevant portions of the encyclical can be attempted here.¹¹⁰

As was already indicated in connection with Leo XIII, Pius X, proceeding from the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, drives home in striking fashion the intrinsic nexus between the divine and the spiritual maternities, and, by the same token, that they were inaugurated together:

For is not Mary the Mother of Christ? She is therefore our Mother also. Indeed everyone must believe that Jesus, the Word made Flesh, is also the Saviour of the human race. Now, as the God-Man He acquired a body composed like that of other men, but as the Saviour of our race He had a kind of spiritual and mystical Body, which is the society of those who believe in Christ. "We, the many, are one body in Christ" (*Romans* 12: 5). But the Virgin conceived the Eternal Son not only that He might be made man by taking His human nature from her, but also that by means of the nature assumed from her He might be the Saviour of men. For this reason the angel said to the shepherds, "Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you, Who is Christ the Lord" (*Luke* 2: 11). So in one and the same bosom of His most chaste Mother, Christ took to Himself human flesh and at the same time united to Himself the spiritual body built up of those "who are to believe in Him" (*John* 17: 20). Consequently Mary, bearing in her womb the Saviour, may be said to have borne also all those whose life was contained in the life of the Saviour. All of us, therefore, who are united with

¹¹⁰ Cf. J. Dillersberger, *Das neue Wort ueber Maria*, Salzburg, 1947, pp. 197-205; Baumann, *op. cit.*, *passim* (cf. "Personen-register," p. xii).

Christ and are, as the Apostle says, "Members of His body, made from His flesh and from His bones" (*Ephesians* 5: 30), have come forth from the womb of Mary as a body united to its head. Hence, in a spiritual and mystical sense, we are called children of Mary, and she is the Mother of us all. "The Mother in spirit . . . but truly the Mother of the members of Christ, which we are" (St. Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, ch. 6).

If then the Most Blessed Virgin is at once the Mother of God and of men, who can doubt that she makes every effort to bring it about that Christ, "head of His body, the Church" (*Colossians* 1: 18), infuses His gifts into His members, and above all that we might know Him and "live through Him" (1 *John* 4: 9).¹¹¹

Here, again, as when we dealt with Leo XIII's treatment of the initial stage of spiritual maternity, it is useful to bear in mind that Mary's *Fiat* at the Annunciation was a consent which freely and deliberately intended that she become the Mother of the Redeemer, as such. That such was her consent is conveyed to us not obscurely in the passage of *Ad diem illum* which immediately follows the one given above, and which we shall have occasion to quote presently.

It is, therefore, the teaching of Pius X that already at the Incarnation Mary became, by her *Fiat*, the Mother of the Mystical Body. Still, we may say with Koehler: "In reality, Mary is not fully the Mother of the Mystical Body except by her compassion at the foot of the cross."¹¹² This is implicit in the teaching of earlier Pontiffs, notably of Leo XIII, as has been seen. Above all, the statement is authorized by what Pope Pius XII came to say in the Marian epilogue of the Encyclical

¹¹¹ Tondini, *op. cit.*, pp. 310, 312; the English translation is that of D. Unger, O.F.M.Cap., *Mary Mediatrix: Encyclical Letter Ad Diem Illum*, Paterson, St. Anthony Guild Press, 1948, pp. 7-8. Note, as to the last paragraph, the Latin original of "at once the Mother of God and of men": "Dei simul atque hominum Parens est."

¹¹² T. Koehler, *art. cit.*, in *Maria* (ed. H. Du Manoir, S.J.), vol. 1, p. 589.

Mystici Corporis, June 29, 1943—words written, of course, with full knowledge of *Ad diem illum*:

... always most intimately united with her Son, as another Eve (Mary) offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam . . . , and her mother's rights and mother's love were included in the holocaust. Thus she who corporally was the mother of our Head, through the added title of pain and glory became spiritually the mother of all His members.¹¹³

If, as Dillersberger remarks, this doctrine of *Mystici Corporis*, that Mary's co-operation in the sacrifice of Calvary made her by added title the spiritual Mother of Christ's members, is not expressly contained in *Ad diem illum*, nevertheless it appears to us to be there implicitly.¹¹⁴ For Pius X continues:

Furthermore, the most holy Mother of God had not only the honor of "having given the substance of her flesh to the Only-begotten Son of God, Who was to be born of the human race" (St. Bede the Venerable, *Expositio in S. Lucam*, lib. 4, cap. 9), and by means of this flesh the Victim for the salvation of men was to be prepared, but she was entrusted with the task of tending and nourishing this Victim and even of offering it on the altar at the appointed time. The result was a never-broken community of life and labor between the Son and the Mother, so that in regard to both of them the Prophet's words are equally true, "My life is wasted with grief and my years in sighs" (*Psalms* 30: 11). Then, when the last hour of the Son arrived, "there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother" (*John* 19: 25), not merely occupied in contemplating the cruel spectacle, but rejoicing that "her Only-begotten was being offered for the salva-

¹¹³ *A.A.S.*, 35 (1943), 247-248; *N.C.W.C.* translation, n. 107.

¹¹⁴ As Dillersberger's own remark, *op. cit.*, p. 200, seems to intimate: "Davon hat Pius X . . . nicht mehr *ausdruecklich* gesprochen" (emphasis supplied). Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 197: "Marias gebaerende Mutterschaft gruendet nach diesen *beiden* paepstlichen Dokumenten (*Ad diem illum*, *Mystici Corporis*) auf *drei* wichtigen Tatsachen. . . ." (the emphasis is Dillersberger's).

tion of the human race, and she suffered so much together with Him, that, if it had been possible, she would with greater willingness have borne all the torments that her Son suffered" (St. Bonaventure, *Comment. in I Sent., dist. 48, dub. 4*). And by this community of pain and will between Christ and Mary "she merited to become in a most worthy manner the Reparatrix of the lost world" (Eadmerus, *De excellentia B. M. V., cap. 9*) and, consequently, the Dispenser of all the gifts that Jesus acquired for us by His Death and Blood.¹¹⁵

The thought here is essentially the same as that in the excerpt of *Mystici Corporis*. Only the latter's conclusion, "Thus she who . . . His members," is lacking in *Ad diem illum*, but if that conclusion does not appear here expressly, it is implicitly contained in the premises.

Commenting on the above passage of *Ad diem illum*, Father Unger says that Pius X is explaining Mary's part in assisting Christ to acquire for us the graces of salvation, the reasons why Mary is truly Co-redemptrix: firstly, by reason of her consent to become the Mother of Him Who she knew would redeem the world; secondly, by offering Him to the Father for the salvation of mankind, especially at the cross; thirdly, by offering her own sufferings, especially at the cross, for that same purpose—and the latter two reasons are nicely and succinctly expressed by "a community of pain and will."¹¹⁶

Once more we are at the controversy as to whether Mary formally and proximately co-operated in the objective Redemption; more accurately, at the controversy on whether this doctrine is taught in *Ad diem illum*. The affirmative position, that of Father Unger, is in our opinion successfully sustained by Dillenschneider's analysis of the above passage, even independently of the much-discussed pericope which follows immediately thereafter.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 312; Unger, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

¹¹⁶ Unger, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-26 (note 8) and pp. 26-27 (note 10).

¹¹⁷ Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-65.

In effect, then, Pius X teaches what we held to be the doctrine of Leo XIII, that on Calvary Mary brought us forth by a genuine spiritual birth—by offering up her Divine Son to the Heavenly Father, and by her compassion with the Redeemer, she co-operated formally, proximately and positively in the objective Redemption, thus helping to gain for us the life of grace *in actu primo*.

The continuity in papal thought extends also to *John* 19: 26-27. While *Ad diem illum* makes no direct reference to these verses (though v. 25 is quoted: "There stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother"), Pius X personally granted an indulgence for the recitation of a prayer which exhibits Mary as recalling in Heaven Christ's words on Calvary: "Woman, behold in place of Me thy son." And the prayer goes on to say that "on that mount and with those words you were appointed as Mother of the faithful."¹¹⁸ Thus another Pope vindicates the genuine relevance of the Johannine text for Mary's spiritual maternity. Again, however, in the light of what has gone before, we are not to take it that these words of Christ inaugurated the spiritual maternity.

Leo XIII had dealt lovingly with our Blessed Mother's exercise, in Heaven, of her maternal offices. Pius X does not neglect this aspect of the spiritual motherhood. Of the several pertinent statements in *Ad diem illum*, the following may be noted. Already in the final paragraph of the first passage we quoted, and again in the last clause of the second passage ("and consequently, the Dispenser . . ."), the Pontiff had touched on Mary's maternal function as Dispenser and Media-

¹¹⁸ See the entire prayer for many expressions relevant to the spiritual maternity of Mary: *A.S.S.*, 37 (1904-1905), 724-725; for instance, in the final paragraph Mary is addressed not as "Madre dei credenti," but as "Madre di tutti." The prayer is reproduced, but with several interesting changes and omissions, in *Preces et Pia Opera* (1938), n. 314.

trix of the fruits of the Redemption. He next comes to say, among other things:

. . . since (Mary) was chosen by Christ to be His associate in the work of human salvation, . . . she is the principal minister of the graces to be distributed. Christ "has taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (*Hebr.* 1: 3), and Mary as Queen stands at His right hand; "she is the safest refuge and the most trustworthy helper of all who are in danger, so that nothing is to be feared and nothing is to be despaired of, under her guidance, under her patronage, under her kindness and protection" (Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*).¹¹⁹

The quotation from Pius IX fuses two passages of *Ineffabilis Deus*.¹²⁰ The antecedent context of the second of these ("nothing is to be feared . . .") urges all to fly with confidence to "this most dear Mother of mercy and of grace," while the subsequent context speaks of Mary's "truly maternal affection towards us" as she takes care "of the work of our salvation," and is "solicitous about the whole human race." Thus Pius IX and Pius X illustrate each other in the matter of the exercise, in Heaven, of Mary's spiritual maternity.

In the present connection one must, of course, quote this further portion of *Ad diem illum*:

"A great sign"—the Apostle John narrates a vision with which he was divinely favored—"a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (*Apocalypse* 12: 1). No one is ignorant that this woman signified the Virgin Mary, who remained inviolate when she brought forth our Head. The Apostle continues: "And being with child, she cried out in her travail and was in the anguish of delivery" (*Apocalypse* 12: 2). So John saw the most holy Mother of God already enjoying

¹¹⁹ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 314; Unger, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

¹²⁰ Tondini, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 56.

(eternal—*aeterna iam beatitate*) happiness, yet travelling in a kind of mysterious childbirth. What birth was it? Clearly, it was the birth of us who are still detained in exile and are yet to be generated to the perfect charity of God and to eternal happiness. And the labors in the childbirth show the desire and love with which the Virgin on her throne watches over us and strives with unceasing prayer to complete the number of the elect.¹²¹

This is the only known instance of a papal employment of *Apocalypse* 12 in the matter of Mary's spiritual maternity.¹²² Leaving the Scriptural problems of *Apocalypse* 12 to the exegetes,¹²³ we confine ourselves to what the Pope himself meant in the above passage. Certainly he had in mind Mary's co-operation in the subjective Redemption, her part in communicating to us the life of grace *in actu secundo*; in short, her role as the "Mother whom God has endowed with an unfailing fecundity."¹²⁴

Baumann tends to understand the Pontiff as referring the "mysterious childbirth" of *Apocalypse* 12: 2 also to Mary's part in the objective Redemption, to the dolorous spiritual birth at the foot of the cross, familiar to us from Pius VI and Leo XIII.¹²⁵ But this seems excluded by the fact that Pius X visualizes Mary as in Heaven (*aeterna iam beatitate fruente*). Preferable therefore is the view that the Holy Father is speaking exclusively of our spiritual birth *in actu secundo*, effected by Mary's heavenly intercession and part in the distribution

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 322; Unger, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17. The prayer cited in note 118 also identifies the Woman of *Apoc.* 12 as Mary: "O Maria, Tu che incoronata di stelle hai per isgabello ai Tuoi piedi la luna e per seggio le ali degli Angeli. . . ."

¹²² Cf. Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 38.

¹²³ For a summary of the divergent opinions, cf. Bertetto, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-127.

¹²⁴ Leo XIII, *Adjutricem populi*; cf. the whole passage, in Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

¹²⁵ Cf. Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38.

of graces. The dolorous character of this childbirth is not to be taken literally; rather, Mary's "travail," as Pius X himself says, "shows (*indicat*)," i.e., represents the intensity of "the desire and love with which the Virgin on her throne watches us and strives with unceasing prayer to complete the number of the elect."

It is along these lines that C. Henze, for example, understands the papal passage.¹²⁶ Similarly, Dillersberger.¹²⁷ However, the latter places his main emphasis on Mary's part in achieving for us the consummated spiritual birth which is had only when the soul actually gains Heaven (the Liturgy celebrates the deathday of the Saints as their *dies natalis*).¹²⁸

Fittingly we may conclude our study of Pius X with Dillersberger's summation of the doctrine of *Ad diem illum* (and of *Mystici Corporis*) on the mystery of the spiritual maternity:

Great, therefore, is this mystery, which already began when in her virginal womb (Mary) conceived of the Holy Ghost "the Head of us all," which achieved its first perfection when, as the "new Eve," she suffered under the Cross the immeasurable anguish of delivery for the re-birth of mankind—but which unfolds its full blessing only in the glory of Heaven, in that, so to speak, it descends personally to every human, accompanies him from baptism to death, to the day of his new "birth" into Heaven itself! ¹²⁹

Benedict XV (1914-22)

Had Benedict XV done no more than promulgate the *Codex Iuris Canonici*, the latter alone would have been a capital con-

¹²⁶ C. Henze, C.S.S.R., *De essendi ratione praecipua dolorum B.M.V.*, in *Marianum*, vol. 11 (1949), p. 68.

¹²⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 203-204.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

tribution to the doctrine of Mary's spiritual maternity, thanks to Canon 1276:

Bonum atque utile est Dei Servos, una cum Christo regnantes, suppliciter invocare . . . ; sed prae ceteris *filiali* devotione Beatissimam Virginem Mariam fideles universi prosequantur.

Even if it did not say so explicitly (*fideles universi*), the Canon is among those which bind the universal Church *ex ipsa rei natura*.¹³⁰ Thus, though not speaking *ex cathedra*, a Sovereign Pontiff authoritatively teaches the universal Church that the devotion we owe to Mary is that of children toward their Mother. As is clear from the language of the Canon, Mary is our spiritual Mother in a unique and eminent sense; her spiritual maternity is on a plane apart and above the "spiritual fatherhood or motherhood" which we may ascribe to other Saints "by reason of their prayers and good example, their good works and their sufferings."¹³¹ And this same teaching of Benedict XV is that of his successors, since these have maintained the Canon in force.

The other major testimony of Benedict XV to Mary's spiritual maternity, the Apostolic Letter *Inter sodalicia*, will engage our attention later. Meanwhile, from among others, the following attestations may be adduced. In the letter to Cardinal Vannutelli, *Era Nostro proposito*, May 25, 1915, the Pope concluded: "Let us all turn with confidence to the afflicted and Immaculate Heart of Mary, the most gentle Mother of Jesus and our Mother. . . ." ¹³² Prayers to the "Mother of Pity and Queen of Peace" are urged in the letter *Di Altissimo Pregio*, Sept. 18, 1915, to Father Becci, O.P., director

¹³⁰ Cf. *C.I.C.*, can. 1.

¹³¹ Cf. C. Feckes, *The Mystery of the Divine Motherhood*, pp. 162, 167-168; also, L. Lercher, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 356-358.

¹³² *A.A.S.*, 7 (1915), 254.

of the Association of the Perpetual Rosary in Italy.¹³³ In his allocution to the College of Cardinals, Dec. 24, 1915, the Pontiff expressed confidence in the intercession of "the Mother of so many orphans," and went on to direct "Christian thought and Christian faith to the prevailing ministry of the Mother of God," who will not disappoint the "prayers of her faithful children."¹³⁴ Again, the same Pope would have us address such aspirations to Mary as: "My Mother, my confidence,"¹³⁵ "My Mother, free me today from mortal sin."¹³⁶ In a letter to Cardinal Gasparri, *Il 27 Aprile*, May 5, 1917, Benedict XV describes Mary as "the Mother of Mercy and omnipotent through grace,"¹³⁷ and elsewhere he urges the faithful to return the love of "this most loving Mother."¹³⁸ A letter to the Archbishop of Vercelli, Nov. 14, 1921, puts it that Mary is "the most loving and most dear Mother of the whole human race."¹³⁹ Finally, to conclude these representative utterances, the Pope's letter *Cum annus*, Jan. 20, 1919, to the bishop of Tarbes, says that Mary is both "she who gave birth to the 'Prince of Peace,' and who is the most benign Mother of the human race."¹⁴⁰ In these citations one notes, among other things, the juxtaposition of the divine and the spiritual maternities, the extension of the spiritual maternity to the whole human race.

Classic for our subject is the Apostolic Letter *Inter sollicitudinem*, March 22, 1918. As to the authority of this document, an observation of C. Henze needs correction, or at least

¹³³ Quoted from *Principles for Peace. Selections from Papal Documents: Leo XIII to Pius XII* (ed. H. Koenig), Washington, 1943, p. 187.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹³⁵ Decree of Jan. 3, 1917; *A.A.S.*, 9 (1917), 229.

¹³⁶ Apostolic Letter *Nihil magis*, July 30, 1921; *A.A.S.*, 13 (1921), 422.

¹³⁷ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

¹³⁸ Letter to Bishops of Colombia, Mar. 21, 1919; *A.A.S.*, 11 (1919), 265.

¹³⁹ *A.A.S.*, 14 (1922), 38.

¹⁴⁰ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

qualification. The aforesaid author has remarked that *Inter sodalicia* is not a document destined for instructing the universal Church; rather, it was directed to the Sodality of Our Lady of a Happy Death, and such documents are not usually worked up by the Pontiff who gives his name to them, but by some official of the Curia.¹⁴¹

It seems just to reply that no matter who prepares a document, if a Pope gives his name to it, it and the teaching it contains become his own, and participate in his authority; for that matter, many an Encyclical is worked up by others for the Pope's specific approval and signature. *Inter sodalicia* is therefore a papal document. Moreover, it is a public document, wherein Benedict XV came to exercise his ordinary Magisterium. Whence, even if the Apostolic Letter be looked upon as not directed to the universal Church, its doctrinal content has importance, at the very least, in conjunction with the concordant teaching of bishops throughout the world. Finally, it does not seem correct to view *Inter sodalicia* as addressed solely to the Sodality of Our Lady of a Happy Death. For, in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* it is prefaced by the rubric:

Sodalitati Nostrae Dominae a Bona Morte diebus quibusdam festis, et *Christifidelibus omnibus* certas quasdam preces ad sanctam mortem assequendam recitantibus indulgentiae plenariae ac partiales conceduntur.¹⁴²

The relevant portion of our document is rather long, and it is convenient to paragraph the unbroken official text¹⁴³ as follows:

Those who are enrolled in (the Sodality) propose to honor, and to promote among all the honor of, the Sorrowful Virgin; and

¹⁴¹ C. Henze, *art. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁴² *A.A.S.*, 10 (1918), 181; cf. 184.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

thus to present to God the merits of the prayers and sufferings of this Virgin, standing at the Cross of Jesus, with the confidence that these merits will obtain for themselves and others the grace of perseverance in Christian faith and morals, or the grace of conversion, and, above all, that of a holy death in Christ, on which eternal bliss depends.

Now, the choice and invocation precisely of the Sorrowful Virgin as the Patron of a happy death is a thing which marvelously corresponds to Catholic doctrine and to the pious sense of the Church, and is felicitously based on a sound hope.

For the Fathers of the Church commonly teach that if the Blessed Virgin Mary, who seemingly was absent from the public life of Jesus Christ, was present when her Son went to His death and hung upon the Cross, her presence there was not without divine design.

For she so suffered and almost died together with her suffering and dying Son, she so renounced her maternal rights in her Son for the salvation of men, and, as far as lay in her power, immolated her Son for the sake of placating the justice of God, that one can rightly say that, together with Christ, she redeemed the human race.

But if, clearly for this reason, all the varied graces . . . of the Redemption are distributed by the hands, as it were, of that same Sorrowful Virgin, no one fails to see that from her the grace of a happy death is to be awaited, since by this gift is the work of the Redemption definitively and eternally completed in each of us.

It is likewise clear that, since she, having been constituted by Jesus Christ as the Mother of all men, received them as bequeathed to her by a testament of infinite charity, and since with maternal tenderness she fulfills her office of protecting their spiritual life, the Sorrowful Virgin cannot but assist, more zealously than ever, her most dear sons by adoption at that moment when their eternal salvation is at stake.

Mary is therefore, as the last paragraph declares, the Mother of all; and, indeed, their spiritual Mother in the proper sense of the word. For, as Beumer notes,¹⁴⁴ in terming us Mary's children by adoption, Benedict XV certainly does not wish to imply that she is our Mother only in virtue of a purely juridical act; rather, we are sons by adoption in the sense that grace makes us "adopted" children of the Heavenly Father and "adopted" brothers of Jesus Christ. This we gather from an analysis of the preceding context.

For the doctrine developed in the first four paragraphs teaches—in effect, if not in so many words—that we were born of Mary at Calvary by a genuine spiritual birth. For there the Pontiff indubitably (there are a few dissenters) advances, and as the teaching of Tradition, that by God's own design Mary cooperated formally, proximately, and positively in the work of our Redemption.¹⁴⁵

In the light of this, the references in the last paragraph to Christ's testamentary utterance (in *John* 19: 26-27), and to Mary as having been "constituted" our Mother, cannot be taken as though the spiritual maternity were simply and solely the creation of Our Lord's dying pronouncement: "Woman, behold thy son—behold thy Mother." Rather, these words of Christ are to be understood as a solemn and formal confirmation, proclamation, and consecration of Mary in her already acquired relationship to us as our spiritual Mother.¹⁴⁶

Interesting and enlightening in the present connection is a declaration of Benedict XV in a homily delivered in St. Peter's, May 13, 1920, at the solemn canonization of Bl.

¹⁴⁴ J. Beumer, S.J., *Maria Mutter der Christenheit*, in *Katholische Marienkunde* (ed. P. Straeter, S.J.), vol. 2, Paderborn, 1942, pp. 187-188; cf. pp. 183-184.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. H. Seiler, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-83; Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-49; Carol, *op. cit.*, pp. 524-527, 530.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin and of Bl. Margaret Mary Alacoque:

These two things are intimately and necessarily bound together: to have compassion with the torments of Jesus and to have compassion with the sufferings of Mary. For, as the first Adam had a woman as his associate in the Fall, so the second Adam willed that there participate in the reparation of our salvation she whom, by styling her "Woman" from the Cross, He declared to be the second Eve, that is, the ineffably sorrowing Mother of all men, for whom He was dying, to win life for them.¹⁴⁷

Here, as Baumann remarks, "the Pope gives *John* 19: 26-27 a Messianic significance, in that he exhibits the testament of the dying Saviour as the fulfillment of the prophecy in *Paradise*." The same author continues:

The Pope shows us that Mary is, as the second Eve, the Mother of all men, and indeed of men as redeemed by Christ. Herein we recognize great progress beyond the earlier Popes, in that Benedict XV, by reference to the *principium consortii* ("*participem*"), outlines the connections between *Gen.* 3: 15 and *John* 19: 26-27. . . . Earlier we had already emphasized Mary's community of pain as an essential element of the spiritual maternity, and, in consequence, came to designate *John* 19: 26-27 as proclamation. In this sense is also the testimony of Benedict XV, portraying the second Eve to us as the Mother of Sorrows, to be understood.¹⁴⁸

Like Leo XIII and Pius X, Benedict XV frequently enlarged on Mary's exercise in Heaven of her maternal offices. The context of several of the testimonies cited at the outset of our study of this Pope proclaims Mary's maternal solicitude and intercession in behalf of all, and her part, as Dispenser of

¹⁴⁷ *A.A.S.*, 12 (1920), 224.

¹⁴⁸ Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.

all graces, in communicating to us the life of grace *in actu secundo*. To these, several other attestations could be added, as the prayer composed by Benedict for peace in Italy, July 25, 1921:

Virgin Immaculate, Queen of Hearts, come down among thy children and make them hear thy Mother's voice. Thou alone by thy intercession canst reconcile them with Almighty God and reconcile them among themselves; thou alone canst give them a taste of the sweetness of the peace that is a prelude of eternal life. Amen.¹⁴⁹

Again and again the same Pontiff bears witness to Mary's special solicitude for the Church, and his doctrine on this point is summed up when he says, in the Encyclical *Fausto appetenti*, June 29, 1921, that the Church has always found Mary to be just what the Church is accustomed to style her—the Mother of mercy and of grace.¹⁵⁰

Above all, it is *Inter sodalicia* which, in the final paragraphs as in the first, depicts Mary in the exercise of her role as our spiritual Mother. Her prerogative as the Dispenser of all graces, especially at the hour of our death, is emphatically exhibited as a function of her spiritual motherhood; but at the same time the Pope makes it abundantly clear that the spiritual maternity of Mary is not grounded simply in this her cooperation in the subjective Redemption. On the contrary, Mary comes to have this function precisely because of her cooperation, at Calvary, in the objective Redemption. It was the latter which constituted her our spiritual Mother.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Quoted from *Papal Principles for Peace*, p. 313.

¹⁵⁰ A.A.S., 13 (1921), 334. See also the Encyclical *Ad beatissimi Apostolorum*, Nov. 1, 1914; A.A.S., 6 (1914), 581; see further the letter to the General of the Society of Mary, J. Hiss, Mar. 7, 1917, in A.A.S., 9 (1917), 173.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

Pius XI (1922-1939) ¹⁵²

The first Encyclical of Pius XI, *Ubi arcano*, Dec. 23, 1922, with its early reference to Mary as "the Virgin Mother of God and the most benign Mother of us all," ¹⁵³ foretold that the new Pontiff would not be outdone by his predecessors in devotion to our Blessed Mother. And, in fact, on more than fifty occasions, in documents and discourses, Pius XI reiterated and developed in signal fashion pontifical teaching on Mary's spiritual maternity. The Pope's devotion took a turn of special interest to us in America, when permission was granted to the Servites to celebrate on Mother's Day, at their Shrine of the Sorrowful Mother in Portland, Oregon, a Mass in honor of "Mary, Mother of the Human Race." ¹⁵⁴

The juxtaposition of the divine and the spiritual maternities, already met with in *Ubi arcano*, recurs several times in the pronouncements of Pius XI; for example, in an allocution to Hungarian pilgrims, May 16, 1931; ¹⁵⁵ in a discourse on Bl. Andreas Fournet, Nov. 20, 1932; ¹⁵⁶ in the consistorial allocution of March 13, 1933. ¹⁵⁷ Particularly striking is the formulation in the Pope's letter *Quamquam in augustis*, Aug. 30, 1933, to Cardinal Capotosti, legate to the National Eucharistic Congress at Loretto. Pius visualizes a Eucharistic procession where Mary, "the great Mother of God and of men," gazes

¹⁵² Cf. J. Bittremieux, *Ex doctrina Mariana Pii XI*, in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, vol. 11, 1934, pp. 95-101; G. Roschini, O.S.M., *La Madonna nel pensiero e nell'insegnamento di Pio XI*, in *Marianum*, vol. 1, 1939, pp. 121-172; H. Seiler, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-96; Bertetto, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-302; Baumann, *op. cit.*, *passim* (cf. "Personenregister," p. xii).

¹⁵³ A.A.S., 14 (1922), 675.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *American Ecclesiastical Review*, vol. 90, 1934, p. 510.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted by Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 16, from *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 18-19, 1931, n. 115.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted by Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 51, from *L'Osservatore Romano*, Nov. 21-22, 1932, n. 272.

¹⁵⁷ A.A.S., 25 (1933), 106.

upon this triumph of her Son and on the huge concourse of other sons supplicating Him.¹⁵⁸

G. Roschini, citing a response of the Holy Office, March 23, 1908, has insisted that one should never refer to Mary's spiritual maternity as her "human maternity."¹⁵⁹ We note therefore with interest that Pius XI himself used the expression ("la Maternità umana di Maria") in an allocution to the Salesians, April 3, 1934.¹⁶⁰

The intrinsic connection between the divine and the spiritual maternities, taught by Leo XIII and Pius X, is confirmed by Pius XI. In the consistorial allocution of Dec. 24, 1931, the Pontiff declared: "Mary (is) the Mother of men because (she is) the Mother of God."¹⁶¹ As the Pope's own commentary on this we have the Encyclical *Lux veritatis*, which was issued the very next day, and which we have already quoted in the discussion of Leo XIII's doctrine on the present point:

She, by the very fact that she brought forth the Redeemer of the human race, is also in a manner the most tender Mother of us all, whom Christ our Lord deigned to have as His brothers (*Rom.* 8: 29).¹⁶²

Having cited the doctrine of this passage as one of the two foundations assigned by Pius XI for Mary's spiritual maternity, Bittremieux then represents the Pontiff as having conceived the other foundation to be the dying words of Christ to Mary and John, whereby He solemnly promulgated the

¹⁵⁸ *A.A.S.*, 22 (1930), 453.

¹⁵⁹ G. Roschini, O.S.M., *Mariologia*, ed. 2, vol. 2/1, Romae, 1947, p. 200, note 1.

¹⁶⁰ Text in G. Roschini, *La Madonna nel pensiero e nell'insegnamento di Pio XI*, in *Marianum*, vol. 1, 1939, p. 149; cf., *ibid.*, p. 166, Roschini himself.

¹⁶¹ Quoted by Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 79, from *L'Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 25, 1931, n. 300.

¹⁶² Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 400; cf. Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 64, 69-70.

spiritual maternity.¹⁶³ Similarly, Bertetto.¹⁶⁴ This is something of an over-simplification. By neglecting to give prominence at this point to Pius' teachings on Mary's proximate cooperation in the objective Redemption, Bittremieux and Bertetto do not quite do justice to the Pontiff's further doctrine on the foundations of the spiritual maternity. Though such certainly is not the intention of these authors, their language could beget the impression that, according to Pius XI, Mary is our spiritual Mother solely in virtue of having conceived the Redeemer, our Brother, and in virtue of Christ's subsequent promulgation of the spiritual motherhood.

Pius XI himself indicated where the correct emphasis should be laid, when he said in an allocution to a large group of Spanish pilgrims, March 23, 1934: Mary "is our Mother and our Co-Redemptrix."¹⁶⁵ For, in the Pope's thought, these two prerogatives of Mary are intimately connected. No less than his predecessors, Pius XI teaches—in effect if not in actual words—that Mary is our Mother above all because she bore us on Calvary by a genuine spiritual birth, in that she cooperated formally, proximately and positively in the objective Redemption.

It is true that Pius XI directly and indirectly refers more frequently than any previous Pope to the words of promulgation from the Cross. It is convenient to view these pronouncements first, before we come to fit them into the over-all doctrine of Pius XI on the spiritual maternity. We give them in their chronological order; not a few of these pronouncements, one will note, occurred in connection with the extraordinary Holy Year which began on April 2, 1933, in observance of the nineteenth centenary of our Redemption, an occa-

¹⁶³ Bittremieux, *art. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

¹⁶⁴ Bertetto, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted by Seiler, *op. cit.*, p. 93, from *L'Osservatore Romano*, March 25, 1934, n. 69.

sion which inspired many a precious utterance of Pius XI relevant to Mary as our spiritual Mother and Coredemptrix.

(1) In the Apostolic Letter *Explorata res*, Feb. 2, 1923, the Holy Father reiterated the teaching of Benedict XV's *Inter sodalicia* on Mary as the Patron of happy death, and, still following the thought of Benedict XV, Pius went on to explain that this doctrine rests, above all, on the fact "that the Sorrowful Virgin participated with Jesus in the work of the Redemption, and, having been constituted the Mother of men, has taken them to her heart as children commended to her by the testament of divine charity, and protects them with ineffable love."¹⁶⁶ Unmistakable is the allusion to Christ's words from the Cross, and that it is not by mere accommodation that they apply to the spiritual maternity. But noteworthy, and normative for interpreting all the other utterances of Pius relating to *John* 19: 26-27, is the fact that in this very papal text Mary's spiritual maternity (her motherly protection especially at the hour of death) is based also on a factor distinct from Christ's declaration—namely, Mary's participation in the work of the Redemption. Hence, if it is implied that the Saviour's testamentary utterance "constituted" Mary as the Mother of men, this is to be understood of a solemn and official confirmation, promulgation, and consecration of Mary in her office as spiritual Mother, an office already won by her cooperation in gaining for us the life of grace *in actu primo*. Pius XI and Benedict XV are at one.

(2) The Encyclical on the Kingship of Christ, *Quas primas*, Dec. 11, 1925, states that the liturgical feasts in honor of the

¹⁶⁶ *A.A.S.*, 15 (1923), 104-105; cf. Seiler, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87. Note also the discourse to Catholic matrons of Rome, Dec. 21, 1923, wherein Pius XI exhibited Mary in terms of the second Eve and, at the same time, as Coredemptrix: "(It) was the supreme glory of their Heavenly Mother, the most Blessed Mary, that, a woman, she wished to repair the fall of the first woman and therefore, Coredemptrix, she shared the work of her Son, the Divine Redeemer"; quoted from Roschini, *art. cit.*, p. 131.

Blessed Virgin incite the faithful to a greater love of her as a "Mother left to them by a testament, as it were, of the Redeemer."¹⁶⁷

(3) The Encyclical on the Propagation of the Faith, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, Feb. 28, 1926, concludes: "May Mary, the most Holy Queen of the Apostles, graciously further our common undertakings, for since on Calvary all men were commended to her motherly affection, she loves and cherishes no less those who do not know of their Redemption by Jesus Christ than those who happily enjoy the benefits of the Redemption."¹⁶⁸

(4) An allocution addressed on May 9, 1926 to 2,000 men, members of Marian Sodalties, urged them to be mindful of the "infinite and maternal goodness" of her who "was left to us, as in a supreme testament of love" by "the paternal heart of Jesus," "at the most solemn and divinely tragic moment (on Calvary)"; "Mary, Mother and Queen, Sovereign of Heaven and of earth, of men and of angels."¹⁶⁹

(5) "On the attestation of the dying Jesus (*moriente Jesu testante*), all men are children of the Virgin Mother of God," we read in the letter *Saeculum mox*, Dec. 25, 1930, to Cardinal Pompilj.¹⁷⁰

(6) *Lux veritatis*, the Encyclical in commemoration of the Council of Ephesus, quotes and makes its own the statement of Leo XIII in *Octobri mense*: "Such Jesus Christ . . . proclaimed (*praedicavit*) her from the Cross, when He entrusted to her care and protection the whole human race in the person of His disciple John."¹⁷¹

(7) In the consistorial allocution of Dec. 24, 1932, wherein the Holy Father made known his intention of proclaiming the

¹⁶⁷ A.A.S., 17 (1925), 604.

¹⁶⁸ A.A.S., 18 (1926), 83.

¹⁶⁹ Quoted from Roschini, *art. cit.*, p. 132.

¹⁷⁰ A.A.S., 23 (1931), 10.

¹⁷¹ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

extraordinary Holy Year which would mark the nineteenth centenary of the Redemption, Pius spoke of the ineffable work of the Redemption of humanity by Jesus Christ. Describing it as an ensemble of divine works, rather than a single work, the Pontiff went on to recall some of these: "the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist, the First Communion and the sacerdotal initiation of the Apostles; the Passion, Crucifixion, and Death of Jesus; Mary, under the Cross, constituted the Mother of men; the Resurrection of Jesus, condition and pledge of our own. . . ." ¹⁷² This mention of Mary, "constituted" under the Cross as the Mother of men, occurring as it does in the midst of an enumeration of paramount dogmas of the Faith, and of "divine works" pertaining to the objective Redemption, seems highly significant.

(8) The remarks of the Holy Father in the above allocution were reproduced almost verbatim in the official proclamation of the impending Holy Year, *Quod nuper*, Jan. 6, 1933. ¹⁷³

(9) A letter to the Prior General of the Servites, *Septimo abeunte saeculo*, July 16, 1933, speaks of the Holy Year as solemnly recalling "both the Redemption of the human race and the Virgin Mary, constituted under the Cross of her Son as the Mother of all men." ¹⁷⁴ Again an interesting association of the spiritual maternity with the objective Redemption.

(10) Similarly, an allocution to the Servites on Aug. 19, 1933: "The nineteenth centenary of the Redemption . . . is also . . . the centenary of the universal Maternity of Mary, officially proclaimed by the Divine King from His throne, the Cross." ¹⁷⁵ One notes that the interpretation we have given to the Pontiff's use, on other occasions, of the term "constituted" is here confirmed by Pius XI himself: "officially proclaimed."

¹⁷² *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, vol. 8, Paris: La Bonne Presse, p. 147.

¹⁷³ *A.A.S.*, 25 (1933), 6.

¹⁷⁴ *A.A.S.*, 25 (1933), 435.

¹⁷⁵ Quoted from Roschini, *art. cit.*, p. 148.

(11) Pius cites *John* 19: 27 in an allocution to women of French Catholic Action groups, Oct. 8, 1933: "It is likewise nineteen centuries ago that at the foot of the Cross . . . (Mary) became at the same time our Mother. *Ecce Mater tua*. . . ." ¹⁷⁶

(12) Speaking to newlyweds on Oct. 30, 1933, the Pontiff urged them to recall daily "the Heavenly Mother who was confided to us under the Cross and who united her sufferings with those of the Saviour for the salvation of her children." ¹⁷⁷ This reference to Mary's community of pain with Christ on Calvary conjures up thoughts of our spiritual birth, of Mary's childbirth travail on Golgotha, spoken of by earlier Popes.

(13) Striking is the discourse of Pius XI on November 30, 1933, to pilgrims from the diocese of Vicenza. "The Redeemer could not, by the very necessity of things, but associate the Mother with His work, and for this reason we invoke her under the title of Co-redemptrix. She gave us the Saviour, she nurtured Him for the work of the Redemption and went on, under the Cross, to share with Him the sufferings of the agony and of the death in which Jesus consummated the Redemption of all men. It is precisely under the Cross, in the last moments of His life, that the Redeemer proclaimed her our Mother and universal Mother: *Ecce filius tuus*, He said to St. John who represented us all; in the same Apostle we, all of us, received those other words: *Ecce Mater tua*. These good faithful have come, therefore, to celebrate with the Holy Father the nineteenth centenary not only of the Redemption, but also of the universal Maternity of Mary, proclaimed officially and solemnly by those same words of the Son of God in the particularly solemn moment of His death." ¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Quoted from Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted from Roschini, *art. cit.*, p. 148.

¹⁷⁸ Quoted from Roschini, *art. cit.*, pp. 148-149. The first portion of the above passage invites comparison with the following excerpt from the Encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, May 9, 1928 (A.A.S., 20 [1928], 178): ". . . the Virgin Mother of God, who, since she bore for us the Redeemer, nur-

(14) We have already quoted from the allocution of March 23, 1934, to Spanish pilgrims, wherein Pius declared Mary to be "our Mother and our Co-redemptrix." In this discourse the Holy Father also came to repeat quite the same things as were reported just above, from the allocution to the pilgrims of Vicenza.¹⁷⁹ Here, however, there is this significant addition: "They have come to celebrate with the Vicar of Christ the nineteenth centenary of the divine Redemption, but also the nineteenth centenary of Mary, the centenary of her *Co-redemption*, of her universal Maternity."¹⁸⁰ One cannot fail to remark the Pontiff's increasing insistence on associating Mary with the objective Redemption, and, in turn, her spiritual maternity with her role as Co-redemptrix.

(15) A fitting climax to the whole is provided by the Pope's discourse in St. Peter's on April 3, 1934, after the canonization of Don Bosco: "One of the most precious fruits of the Redemption is the universal Maternity of Mary. And the centenary of the Redemption could not be celebrated without recalling that from His Cross, just when His death-agonies were most acute and terrible, the Saviour gave to us all His very Mother to be our own: 'Behold thy son; behold thy Mother.' It is the Divine Redeemer Who has given us Mary as our universal Mother, and this is the intimate nexus between the Redemption and the human Maternity of Mary."¹⁸¹

tured Him, offered Him as victim on the Cross, through her mysterious union with Christ and by a most singular grace was likewise Reparatrix and is piously thus called"; cf. Seiler, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88; and Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹⁷⁹ Quoted by Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31, from *Osservatore Romano*, Mar. 25, 1934, n. 69. Baumann dates the allocution on Mar. 24, while Seiler, *op. cit.*, p. 93, and Roschini, *art. cit.*, p. 149, give Mar. 23 (Feast of the Seven Dolours).

¹⁸⁰ Quoted from Roschini, *art. cit.*, p. 149.

¹⁸¹ Quoted from Roschini, *art. cit.*, p. 149. To these testimonies the following may be added, from the consistorial allocution of Apr. 1, 1935: "The Virgin . . . , to whom, as she stood sorrowfully by, the Only-begotten Son confided the human Family, as to a Mother"; *A.A.S.*, 27 (1935), 133.

The mere perusal and comparison of the above testimonies (significantly, only 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, are adduced by Bittremieux) readily reveals that, to the mind of Pius XI, Our Lord's words from the Cross, however important for Mary's spiritual maternity, were nonetheless of secondary importance in comparison with the Blessed Mother's proximate participation in the objective Redemption. Baumann's commentary on the last of the above testimonies deserves to be reproduced here, to serve also as an apt summation of the doctrine contained in the whole series of testimonies:

We are to hold fast to this, then: Mary's spiritual maternity is a fruit of the Redemption, therefore not a product of pious credulity but rather something of significance in the economy of salvation. Christ surrenders Mary to us as spiritual Mother according to the words recorded by John. Here Mary is proclaimed as our Mother. But why? The constitutive elements of the spiritual maternity are not to be sought in those words of the Johannine text; for the act of surrender is not an essential fundamental element, but only a confirmation and promulgation of a fact which already existed. Of prime importance here is the clear indication of the act of surrendering Mary to us humans, and the employment to this end of the words of the Evangelist (*John* 19: 26-27).¹⁸²

If, then, as many of the texts quoted above intimate and as competent authorities have well shown,¹⁸³ Pius XI taught Mary's formal and proximate co-operation in the objective Redemption, by the same token it is this Pontiff's doctrine

¹⁸² Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 31; cf. also p. 26, where the same author points out that the passage of *Explorata res* distinguishes, as had Benedict XV's *Inter sodalicia*, between the constitutive element of the spiritual maternity (*participavit*) and the confirmation in the office of spiritual Mother (*constituta*). G. Roschini, *Mariologia*, ed. 2, vol. 2/1, Romae, 1947, p. 206, note 1, explains the term *constitutio* as *notificatio publica*.

¹⁸³ Cf., e. g., Seiler, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-96; Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-53; Carol, *op. cit.*, pp. 527-530.



that the Blessed Mother brought us forth on Calvary by a genuine spiritual birth, contributing as she did, directly and immediately, to the acquisition for mankind of the life of grace *in actu primo*. Truly, therefore, as *Ubi arcano* put it, that same Mary who is the "Virgo Deipara" is also "omnium nostrum benignissima Parens."¹⁸⁴

All this is tellingly reinforced by the consistorial allocution of Pius XI on December 24, 1934.¹⁸⁵ The Dean of the Sacred College had declared, among other things: "With her 'Be it done unto me according to thy word,' Mary consented to become the Co-redemptrix of fallen humanity, while at the same moment summoning down from Heaven the Divine Word into her most sacred womb."¹⁸⁶ After signifying his hearty approval of these and other convictions voiced by the Dean in the name of the entire College, Pius XI went on to add: "Mary is the Mother of mercy, the Mother of the Redeemer, the *Mother of the Redemption*, one can well say (si può ben dire)." Seiler's comment on this is most illuminating:

If one may take the expression "Mother of the Redemption" in the strict sense—as one seems entitled to do by the ascending gradation: Mother of mercy, Mother of the Redeemer, Mother of the Redemption—then this formulation is most significant. For, to be a mother means to impart life, to transmit life from one's own life. When therefore the Pope, not content with calling Mary Mother of the Redeemer, goes further and expressly terms her Mother of the Redemption itself, therewith he puts his finger on the prerogative of Co-Redemptrix in its fullness. Mary is not only the Mother of the Redeemer, in that she gives Him life, but also Mother of the Redemption, in that, together with

¹⁸⁴ A.A.S., 14 (1922), 675.

¹⁸⁵ *L'Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 26-27, 1934, n. 299; excerpts in Seiler, *op. cit.*, p. 96, and in Roschini, *La Madonna nel pensiero e nell'insegnamento di Pio XI*, in *Marianum*, vol. 1, 1939, p. 150; French translation of complete text in *Actes de S.S. Pie XI*, vol. 12, Paris: La Bonne Presse, pp. 248-250.

¹⁸⁶ Seiler, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

the Saviour, she brings forth (*gebiert*) for the world the life of grace.¹⁸⁷

The many quotations already advanced sufficiently illustrate yet other aspects of the doctrine of Pius XI on Mary's spiritual maternity. For example, that the latter reaches to the whole human race (Pius XI seems to be the first Pope to use the very expression "universal maternity"); especially noteworthy is the passage from *Rerum Ecclesiae*.¹⁸⁸ A further corollary of all that has gone before is the fact that Pius XI, no less than Benedict XV and his predecessors, is far from grounding the spiritual maternity in Mary's co-operation in the subjective Redemption. The latter co-operation is but Mary's exercise of her maternal office already achieved on Calvary. This exercise is amply depicted in many of the passages given above, e.g., from *Explorata res*, from *Rerum Ecclesiae*,¹⁸⁹ and it is marvelously conveyed to us in the testimony now to be adduced, as a fitting conclusion to our study of Pius XI.

A compendium, as it were, of the whole of Pius' doctrine on the spiritual maternity is the Pontiff's prayer pronounced, April 28, 1934, via radio to Lourdes and to the entire world.¹⁹⁰ The occasion was the solemn conclusion of the Jubilee Year of the Redemption, and, in the judgment of Mariologists, only a formal *ex cathedra* pronouncement would exceed the doc-

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 95. Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, p. 53, note 2, is disinclined to attach such importance to this pronouncement of Pius XI; however, his animadversions are directed against a text of St. Ambrose, summoned by Seiler for comparison with Pius XI, but not cited by the latter himself.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. also the Apostolic Letter *Romani Pontifices*, July 16, 1935: "The Virgin of Virgins is the most benign Mother of the human race"; *A.A.S.*, 28 (1936), 63.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. H. Chappoulie, *Les Missions et la Spiritualité Mariale*, in *Maria* (ed. H. Du Manoir, S.J.), vol. 1, pp. 899-902. See also the conclusion of the Encyclical *Mortalium animos*, Jan. 6, 1928; *A.A.S.*, 20 (1928), 16.

¹⁹⁰ For the text and commentaries thereon, cf. H. Seiler, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-93; Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-53; Carol, *op. cit.*, pp. 528-529.

trinal authority of the Pope's message on that occasion.¹⁹¹ The prayer teaches at once the fact of Mary's spiritual maternity; the extension of this her motherhood to all mankind; her formal and proximate co-operation, by her Compassion on Calvary, in the objective Redemption—and hence, that, together with the Saviour, she brought forth for the world the life of grace; and, finally, our Blessed Mother's exercise in Heaven of her maternal offices toward all.

Let us all pray to our Common Mother:

Immaculate Queen of peace, have mercy (*miserere*) on us.

Immaculate Queen of peace, pray for us.

Immaculate Queen of peace, intercede for us.

O Mother of pity and of mercy, who as Co-sufferer and Co-redemptrix assisted thy most dear Son, as on the Altar of the Cross He consummated the Redemption of mankind (*quae dulcissimo Filio tuo humani generis Redemptionem in ara Crucis consummanti Compatiens et Corredemptrix adstitisti*). . . . Preserve in us and increase each day, we beg of thee, the precious fruits of the Redemption and of thy Compassion, and, thou who art the Mother of all, grant that in purity of conduct and worthiness of life, in unity of minds and in harmony of souls, the peace of peoples remaining safe, we may finally enjoy untroubled the gifts of peace. Amen.

*Pius XII (1939—)*¹⁹²

The theme of Mary, "our Mother," has constantly engaged the tongue and pen of Pope Pius XII, gloriously reigning. For the period ending with April 9, 1947, Baumann lists some fifty-two Encyclicals and other documents, radio-messages, and allocutions, in which the Holy Father touched on our sub-

¹⁹¹ Cf. J. Bover, quoted in Carol, *op. cit.*, p. 528, note 53; see also Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52; Seiler, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

¹⁹² Cf. Bertetto, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-323; C. Balic, O.F.M., *De doctrina philosophica et theologica Pii Papae XII eiusque momento*, Ad Claras Aquas, 1949, pp. 91-98; Baumann, *op. cit.*, *passim* (cf. "Personenregister," p. xii).

ject. Even for that period Baumann's list is incomplete; and, what is more, subsequent pronouncements of the Pontiff number over thirty. Hence, again, we must be content with a selection of representative utterances bearing on the spiritual maternity.

As will be seen later, the Marian epilogue of the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* stands as a truly magnificent synthesis of the doctrine of Pius XII on our Blessed Mother, and it will serve as a framework within which other pertinent declarations can be integrated. First, however, a few arresting features of the Pope's teaching may be presented here in random fashion.

For example, there is the statement that Mary's Queenship is "essentially maternal."¹⁹³ Also worthy of special note is the Pope's practice of directing the attention of children to the fact that Mary is their Heavenly Mother, to be loved ardently and invoked confidently. Instances of this are the radio-messages to Catholic school children of the U. S. A., and various documents decreeing prayers for peace.¹⁹⁴ Our catechisms might well take the hint and give greater prominence to Mary's spiritual motherhood. And, as another if obvious conclusion from this same papal inculcation of children, it argues that the spiritual maternity is an assured doctrine of the faith, and one of prime importance.

Another thing of interest is the Pope's teaching that the Blessed Mother exercises her maternal offices also with regard

¹⁹³ Radio-message to Fatima, May 13, 1946; Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 518. Cf. also the address to the new Ambassador of Portugal, Nov. 23, 1950: "maternal protection of the august 'Queen of the World'"; *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII*, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, vol. 12, p. 330. Note also "eadem Matre nostra et Regina protegente" in the oration of the new feast accorded to all Franciscans, "Regina Ordinis Minorum"; decree of S. C. of Rites, July 14, 1949; cf. *Marianum*, vol. 12, 1950, pp. 108-109.

¹⁹⁴ See, e. g., the messages of Feb. 23, 1950, and Jan. 25, 1951; *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi . . .*, vol. 11, p. 376, and vol. 12, p. 433. Cf. also the letters to Cardinal Maglione, *Superiore anno*, Apr. 15, 1940, and *Singulis annis*, Apr. 15, 1943; Tondini, *op. cit.*, pp. 438, 476.

to the souls in Purgatory, interceding that these her children may soon gain the beatific vision.¹⁹⁵ Also to be remarked is the frequent insistence of Pius XII on the antiquity of the cult of Mary as our Mother. A recent instance of this is the Pope's letter of September 1, 1951, to the Polish episcopate, where Pius pays tribute to the Poles' devotion to Mary as their dear Mother throughout the thousand years of their history as a Christian people.¹⁹⁶

Far too lengthy would be a complete list of the allocutions, radio-messages, Encyclicals and other documents, wherein Pius XII juxtaposes the divine and the spiritual maternities.¹⁹⁷ To give but a few of the more recent instances, the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950, has, among other testimonies to the spiritual maternity, the declaration that Mary is "God's Mother and our most loving Mother too"; while in his homily after the definition of the Assumption Pius went on to speak of Mary as "the Mother of Jesus and our Mother," whom he then addressed in prayer: "O Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God and Mother of men."¹⁹⁸ Similarly, the Pontiff's radio-message, September 30, 1951, to the Eucharistic Congress at Nîmes, and the already cited letter of September 1, 1951, to the Polish episcopate.¹⁹⁹

The epilogue of the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, June 29, 1943, a "Mariology in miniature," is also a compendium of the doctrine of Pius XII on Mary's spiritual maternity.²⁰⁰ The

¹⁹⁵ Cf. the letter *Neminem profecto*, Feb. 11, 1950, to the Prior General of the Carmelites; *A.A.S.*, 43 (1950), 391.

¹⁹⁶ *Cum iam lustris*; *A.A.S.*, 43 (1951), 775-778.

¹⁹⁷ See, e.g., Tondini, *op. cit.*, pp. 438, 444, 450, 472, 480, 506, 532, 538, 568. Cf. also the Pope's exhortation to the clergy, *Menti nostrae*, Sept. 23, 1950; *A.A.S.*, 42 (1950), 701. A score of other references could be added.

¹⁹⁸ *A.A.S.*, 42 (1950), 758, 780, 781; cf. also p. 784, the Pope's discourse on Nov. 2, 1950, to the members of the hierarchy.

¹⁹⁹ *A.A.S.*, 43 (1951), 775, "Dei hominumque Matre."

²⁰⁰ See, besides the authors cited in note 197: G. Roschini, *La Madonna nell'Enciclica "Mystici Corporis Christi,"* in *Marianum*, vol. 6, 1944, pp. 108-

following excerpts from the Marian pericope, given in the NCWC translation, are of major interest for our theme:

(107) . . . "in the name of the whole human race," she gave her consent for a "spiritual marriage between the Son of God and human nature" (*III, q. 30, a. 1*). Within her virginal womb Christ Our Lord already bore the exalted title of Head of the Church; in a marvelous birth she brought Him forth as source of all supernatural life. . . . Free from all sin, original and personal, always most intimately united with her Son, as another Eve she offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam sin-stained by his fall, and her mother's rights and mother's love were included in the holocaust. Thus she who corporally was the mother of our Head, through the added title of pain and glory became spiritually the mother of all His members. She it was who through her powerful prayers obtained the grace that the Spirit of our divine Redeemer, already given to the Church on the Cross, should be bestowed through miraculous gifts on the newly founded Hierarchy on Pentecost. Bearing with courage and confidence the tremendous burden of her sorrows and desolation, truly the Queen of Martyrs, she more than all the faithful "filled up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ . . . for His Body, which is the Church" (*Col. 1: 24*); and she continued to show for the Mystical Body of Christ, born from the pierced Heart of the Saviour (*Vesper hymn, Office of the Sacred Heart*), the same mother's care and ardent love, with which she clasped the Infant Jesus to her warm and nourishing breast.

(108) May she, then, most holy mother of all Christ's members (*cf. Pius X, Ad diem illum*), to whose Immaculate Heart We have trustingly consecrated all men, her body and soul refulgent with the glory of heaven where she reigns with her Son—may

117; J. Bittremieux, *La Mariologie de 1942 à 1945*, in *Marianum*, vol. 9, 1947, pp. 34-36; Dillenschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-69; C. Feckes, *Die Kirche als Herr-leib*, Koeln, 1949, pp. 169-173; J. Carol, *op. cit.*, pp. 530-536. Above all, J. Dillersberger, *Das neue Wort ueber Maria*, Salzburg, 1947, *passim* (the whole book is a commentary, of singular charm and learning, on the Marian epilogue of *Mystici Corporis*).

she never cease to beg from Him that a continuous, copious flow of graces may pass from its glorious Head into all the members of the Mystical Body. . . .²⁰¹

Here we meet, but more expressly and concisely put, what had been the doctrine of Pius X in *Ad diem illum*, on the grounds of Mary's spiritual maternity. She is the "Mother (*Genitrix!*) of all Christ's members," because, with full knowledge and consent, she conceived and gave birth to Him Who already in her virginal womb was the Head of the Mystical Body, and because of her true and effective co-operation in the work of man's Redemption, consummated on Calvary.²⁰²

As to the first of these grounds, the Pontiff's thought may be paraphrased thus, with Roschini: "Mary gave us Jesus as Head, as Redeemer. With the Incarnation, and in virtue of it—as the Apostle repeatedly teaches—the physical flesh of Christ became morally the flesh of all, because in the womb of Mary He took *physically* His flesh and *morally* the flesh of all men. Morally, therefore, all men, together with Christ, were conceived in the most pure womb of Mary and were born of her. Rightly, then, the Virgin can be called their spiritual Mother."²⁰³ This reasoning supposes, of course, as one recalls from our discussion of Leo XIII, that Mary knowingly and deliberately consented to become the Mother of the Redeemer, as such; and, in fact, as Leo XIII in his day, so Pius XII teaches this very point by his quotation of the familiar passage from St. Thomas.²⁰⁴ On all this the Holy Father has himself supplied a lucid commentary, in his radio-message of June 19, 1947, to the National Marian Congress at Ottawa:

But when the little maid of Nazareth uttered her fiat to the

²⁰¹ *A.A.S.*, 35 (1943), 247-248.

²⁰² Cf. Dillersberger, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-206.

²⁰³ Cf. Roschini, *art. cit.*, p. 115.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Dillersberger, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-52; Feckes, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170; Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-74.

message of the Angel and the Word was made flesh in her womb, she became not only the Mother of God in the physical order of nature, but also in the supernatural order of grace she became the Mother of all, who through the Holy Spirit would be made one under the Headship of her divine Son. The Mother of the Head would be the Mother of the members (St. Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, cap. 6). The Mother of the Vine would be the Mother of the branches.²⁰⁵

All this is familiar to us since Pius X, indeed, since Leo XIII. But as far back as Pius VI, Sovereign Pontiffs had begun to direct our attention to a distinct ground for Mary's spiritual maternity, her community of life and pain with the Saviour, her compassion with Him, especially on Calvary. Here it was that her spiritual motherhood achieved its perfection (just as it was here that Christ came to be the Head of the Church, of the Mystical Body, in the full and complete sense of the word, when the Church, already conceived, was born from His pierced side).²⁰⁶

Summing up this doctrine of predecessors, with the words "Free from all sin . . . holocaust," Pius XII takes express cognizance of it as constituting a "new title of pain and of glory," for the spiritual maternity of Mary.²⁰⁷ As the same Pontiff came to say later, in the Encyclical *Mediator Dei*, November 20, 1947: "(Mary) became our Mother when the Divine Saviour was accomplishing His sacrifice of Himself; and thus, under this title also, we are her children."²⁰⁸ For the explanation of this simple statement of fact in *Mediator Dei* we must, of course, look to the text of *Mystici Corporis*: Mary

²⁰⁵ The English is the Pope's own; Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 538.

²⁰⁶ Cf. *Mystici Corporis*, in *A.A.S.*, 35 (1943), 204, 205, 206, 248; *N.C.W.C.* translation, nn. 26, 28, 30, 31, 107.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Dillersberger, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-157, 200-201.

²⁰⁸ *A.A.S.*, 39 (1947), 582; English translation *Mediator Dei: On The Sacred Liturgy*, Paulist Press, New York, n. 203.

became our Mother on Calvary by reason of her maternal compassion and by reason of her mission as the new Eve.

This latter reason merits some attention. Mary, Pius XII teaches, offered up her Son to the Heavenly Father, not only in her capacity as Mother, but also in the role of the associate of the Redeemer, of the new Adam—"as a new Eve . . . for all the children of Adam sin-stained by his fall." Anent this, Feckes, among others, has commented as follows:

The Pope considers Mary, in this climactic point of world history, not at all as a mere private person, simply as the Mother of Jesus—understandably suffering in union with and by reason of His sufferings, but as an official personage who belonged there, to wit, as the new Eve. Just as at the Annunciation by the Angel Mary was more than the Virgin of Nazareth, namely, the representative of mankind, so also was it with her in this moment. According to the divine plan of Redemption, she had something to accomplish, in an official position, at the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. What? As the Pope says: renouncing her maternal rights and mother's love, to offer up her Son to the Heavenly Father. Therewith was she to associate herself, as the consentient (*mitzustimmende*) Eve of the New Testament, with the sacrifice of her Son, the new Adam. This association had, therefore, to reach as far as the sacrifice of her Son, hence: for all the children of Adam.²⁰⁹

As Baumann shows, this clear-cut designation of Mary's official position on Calvary as the new Eve, a designation also made by Pius XII on other occasions,²¹⁰ is a marked advance

²⁰⁹ C. Feckes, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-171.

²¹⁰ Allocution to Genoese pilgrims, Apr. 21, 1940: ". . . Jesus and Mary . . . are . . . the new Adam and the new Eve, whom the tree of the Cross reunites in suffering and in love, to repair the guilt of our first parents . . ., the one the source, the other the channel of grace, to regenerate us to the spiritual life"; quoted from *Marianum*, vol. 2, 1940, p. 404. See also an allocution to newlyweds, Apr. 15, 1942: ". . . new Eve, the Mother of Christ and of men"; quoted from Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 58. Compare also the Pope's homily to the

in clarity beyond the doctrine of earlier Popes (including the homily of Benedict XV on May 13, 1920).²¹¹ In this designation of Mary on Calvary as the new Eve, Mother of all the living, and from the general tenor of the whole excerpt in *Mystici Corporis*, authoritative Mariologists understand, rightly, in our humble opinion, the Pope to teach implicitly Mary's formal and proximate co-operation in the objective Redemption, her meritorious co-operation in our regeneration *in actu primo*, by her maternal compassion and of her mission as the new Eve.²¹² In short, we have here the doctrine of our genuine spiritual birth on Calvary, of Mary's dolorous spiritual maternity. Thus Pius XII is at one with predecessors, and his assertion that Mary is "the *Genetrix* of all Christ's members" is adequately accounted for. To quote Feckes once more:

It seems that Mary can be called our true Mother, in full and unrestricted fashion, only if she co-merited our objective (*eigentliche*) Redemption, so that we owe our filial relationship to God, to the wounds of her Son and to the sufferings of her heart. Otherwise, would not her motherhood have to be termed rather an adoptive one? ²¹³

We gather from the cited passages of *Mystici Corporis* that Mary's spiritual maternity was already a fact before Our Lord came to say: "Woman, behold thy son — behold thy Mother," and that, therefore, this testamentary utterance of the Saviour, which is not mentioned in the Marian epilogue of the Encyclical, is to be construed as the official proclama-

faithful on Nov. 1, 1950: "We are all children of the same Mother, Mary, who lives in Heaven, the bond of union for the Mystical Body of Christ, and, new Eve, new Mother of the living, who wishes to lead all men to the truth and grace of her Divine Son"; *A.A.S.*, 42 (1950), 781.

²¹¹ Cf. Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

²¹² Cf. Bittremieux, Dillenschneider, Carol, *ut supra*, note 205.

²¹³ Cf. Feckes, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.

tion, etc., of Mary in her already achieved prerogative of spiritual mother of men. It is in this sense, then, that the Pontiff's few references, on other occasions, to Our Lord's dying pronouncement, are to be understood. An instance would be the letter to Cardinal Maglione, *Dum saeculum*, April 15, 1942: Christ, "as He neared death while hanging on the Cross, bequeathed to us the dearest possession still left to Him on earth, by giving us His Mother to be our own."²¹⁴ Again, in an allocution to newlyweds, May 5, 1943: Christ "constituted His Mother as our Mother."²¹⁵ Interesting in its own right is the following, from the allocution of April 21, 1940, to the Genoese pilgrims: "To her . . . Jesus committed in the person of John, under the world-redeeming Cross, all men as her children, the sheep and the lambs of a collected and dispersed flock, thus constituting her Divine Shepherdess, the common and universal Mother of the faithful, and likening her to Peter, who is their common and universal Father and earthly Shepherd."²¹⁶

We must forego formal treatment of the Holy Father's teachings, in *Mystici Corporis* and elsewhere, on Mary's exercise of her spiritual maternity.²¹⁷ For it seems more important to discuss the implications for our theme of the Pontiff's consecration, in 1942, of the human race to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to which *Mystici Corporis* refers. This solemn and official consecration of the Church, of all mankind, of the whole world, made formally to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, "our Mother and Queen of the world," would seem to be an act of the papal Magisterium as profoundly significant for our subject as was the prayer pronounced by Pius XI on April 28, 1935, in his radio-message to Lourdes and to the whole world.

²¹⁴ Tondini, *op. cit.*, p. 450.

²¹⁵ Quoted from Baumann, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²¹⁶ Quoted from *Marianum*, vol. 2, 1940, p. 407; the entire allocution (*ibid.*, pp. 402-410) deserves study on many counts; see the commentary in *Marianum*, vol. 5, 1943, pp. 53-55.

²¹⁷ On this, cf. e. g., Dillersberger, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-242.

Since the matter is complicated somewhat by a few problems as to the actual wording used on that occasion, it is necessary to go into some detail.²¹⁸

A first consecration was made on October 31, 1942, at the end of a radio-message by Pius XII to the Portuguese people in their own tongue, on the occasion of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima. The address proper has many things of interest for our subject, but our attention centers on the act of consecration itself, and its wording. Only the most important passages can be reproduced here.²¹⁹ To facilitate comparison with a later version of the prayer of consecration, we enclose a few sections of the text in parentheses:

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, . . . we humbly prostrate ourselves before thy throne, confident that we shall receive mercy, grace and bountiful assistance and protection of thy maternal Heart.

To thee, to thy Immaculate Heart (We, as the common Father of the great Christian family, as the Vicar of Him to Whom was given all power in Heaven and on earth (*Matthew* 28: 18), and from whom We have received charge of all the souls on earth redeemed by His blood—to thee, to thy Immaculate Heart), in this tragic hour of human history We confide, We offer, and We consecrate, not only Holy Church, the Mystical Body of thy Jesus . . . , but also the whole world. . . .

O Mother of mercy, obtain peace for us from God and above all procure for us those graces which prepare, establish and assure the peace. . . .

²¹⁸ Cf. G. Geenen, O.P., *Les Antécédents doctrinaux et historiques de la Consécration du monde au Cœur Immaculé de Marie*, in *Maria* (ed. H. Du Manoir, S.J.), vol. 1, pp. 828-831; *idem*, *La consécration du monde à Marie, sa date "historique" et "officielle,"* in *Marianum*, vol. 11, 1949, pp. 318-338; G. Roschini, *La consacrazione della Chiesa e del genere umano all'Immacolato Cuore di Maria*, in *Marianum*, vol. 5, 1943, pp. 1-10. See also *Documenta Magisterii Ecclesiastici*, in *Marianum*, vol. 5, 1943, pp. 131-132.

²¹⁹ A.A.S., 34 (1942), 313-319; official Italian translation, *ibid.*, pp. 319-325; both in Tondini, *op. cit.*, pp. 458-469.

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Lastly, as the Church and the whole human race were consecrated to the Heart of thy Jesus . . . , so in like manner (from this day forward let them be) consecrated perpetually also to thee, to thy Immaculate Heart, our Mother and Queen of the world, that thy love and patronage may hasten the triumph of the Kingdom of God. . . .²²⁰

On November 17, 1942, substantially the same prayer, adapted for recitation by the faithful, was enriched with indulgences by the Holy Father. Omitted from this version of the prayer are the words contained in the first parenthesis above, while those which follow are altered to read: "we consign and consecrate ourselves, not only in union with Holy Church, the Mystical Body of thy Jesus, . . . but also the whole world. . . ." Substituted for the words in the second parenthesis are: "we consecrate ourselves. . . ." ²²¹

In the Basilica of St. Peter on December 8, 1942, addressing himself to the universal Church, Pope Pius XII again consecrated the Church and all mankind to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as is stated in the Decree of the S. Congregation of Rites, May 4, 1944, which introduced the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (August 22) as a feast of the universal Church.²²² Basing himself on the information in this decree and on other criteria, G. Geenen, O.P., contends that December 8, rather than October 31, 1942, is the official date of the consecration of the Church and of mankind to Mary's Immaculate Heart. The actual text of the act of consecration as pronounced by the Holy Father on December 8 has not

²²⁰ *A.A.S.*, 34 (1942), 317, 318, 319.

²²¹ "Preghiera di S.S. Pio XII: Consacrazione al Cuore Immacolato di Maria," *A.A.S.*, 34 (1942), 345-346; the chronological index (*ibid.*, p. 408) gives Oct. 31 as the date of the prayer; Nov. 17, 1942 is therefore the date of the concession of the Indulgence.

²²² *A.A.S.*, 37 (1945), 51; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 44-50, for the Office and Mass of the Feast, which in several instances express the doctrine of Mary's spiritual maternity.

been published; but Geenen shows that in all probability it was substantially the text of October 31; if so, it cannot be determined whether the wording of the act of December 8 included, for example, the solemn formula: "We, as the common Father. . . ."

The text of the act of consecration used by the Holy Father on October 31, 1942, and the version adapted for use by the faithful, teach that Mary is our Mother and that this her maternity, as expressed by her maternal love for men redeemed by the blood of the Redeemer, pertains to the formal object or motive of the cult of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and is one of the reasons for consecration to that same Heart.²²³ That Mary's maternal relationship to men is embraced in the formal object of the devotion is also confirmed by the decree of May 4, 1944, which established the universal Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.²²⁴ Also to be noted is Geenen's contention that the prayer of consecration composed by Pius XII teaches that Mary's maternity toward men is founded not only in her divine maternity but also in what she did in regard to the Redemption of mankind, *qua* Co-redemptrix.²²⁵

Such, then, was the doctrine of Pius XII in speaking to the Portuguese people in the broadcast of October 31, 1942, when, moreover, he employed the solemn references to his ex-

²²³ Cf. G. Geenen, *art. cit.*, in *Maria* (ed. H. Du Manoir, S.J.), vol. 1, pp. 828-831; cf. also C. Feckes, *Die Weihe der Kirche und der Welt an Maria*, in *Katholische Marienkunde* (ed. P. Straeter, S.J.), vol. 3, Paderborn, 1951, pp. 329-334. See also Baumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-82, for the connection between devotion to the Heart of Mary and the doctrine of her spiritual maternity, and for papal teaching thereon.

²²⁴ A.A.S., 37 (1945), 50: "Hoc porro cultu Ecclesia Cordi Immaculato Beatae Mariae Virginis debitum honorem tribuit, cum sub huius Cordis symbolo Dei Genetricis eximiam singularemque animae sanctitatem, praesertim vero ardentissimum erga Deum ac Iesum Filium suum amorem, maternamque erga homines divino Sanguine redemptos pietatem devotissime veneratur."

²²⁵ As reported by J. Valvekens, O.Praem., reviewing a Dutch work of Geenen; *Marianum*, vol. 10, 1948, p. 408.

alted official position. Further, the same doctrine was inculcated to all Catholics, when the Holy Father adapted his own prayer for recitation by the faithful, and enriched it with indulgences. Finally, the same doctrine was again taught to the universal Church, in more authoritative fashion, by the solemn and official consecration of December 8, 1942.

Here, of necessity, we terminate our study. Though much has been left unsaid, it would be difficult to conclude with a more signal act of the papal Magisterium, relative to Mary's spiritual maternity, than the Holy Father's consecration of the Church and of all mankind to "the Immaculate Heart of Mary, our Mother and Queen of the world."

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