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## The Nature of the Divine Maternity

Jasper Chiodini

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## THE NATURE OF THE DIVINE MATERNITY

At the outset we would like to remark that what is to follow may strike some of the listeners as an unusual study of this all-important and most basic point in Mariology. What is said is substantially a presentation of the interesting and thought-provoking views on the nature of the Divine Maternity, of the Rev. Crisóstomo de Pamplona,\* a Spanish Capuchin, who studied the traditional dissertations, broadly divided into the opinions expressed under the general headings, Thomist and Scotist Schools of thought, and developed his own opinion.

With the help of the Triune God and the Blessed Mother, we hope to stir your curiosity, and to obtain further enlightenment on the nature of the Divine Maternity, always with the desire to bring glory to God and to increase appreciation for Mary's singular privileges all based upon her Divine Motherhood.

We will take for granted that all readily agree that Mary is really and truly the Mother of God. We are concerned with showing *how* Mary is the Mother of God, that is, we want to learn exactly what the *nature* of the Divine Maternity is.

### *The Divine Maternity Fundamentally Considered*

Since all true motherhood generically consists in a *relatio realis* of the mother to the son, it follows that the Divine Motherhood is a *relatio* whose extremes are Mary and Christ.<sup>1</sup> The cause, then, of the Divine Maternity, the reason because

\* Crisóstomo de Pamplona, O.F.M.Cap., *Naturaleza de la Maternidad divina y elevación de la Virgen Santísima al orden hipostático*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 8, Madrid, 1949, pp. 65-92. Reference is made here to the excellent presentation of this question in an article containing thorough bibliography also: F. Lopera, *De divina Maternitate in ordine unionis hypostaticae ad mentem Doctoris Eximii*, in *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, vol. 4, 1954, pp. 67-68.

<sup>1</sup> J. Keuppens, S.M.A., *Mariologiae Compendium*, ed. 2, Antuerpiae, 1947, pp. 22-25.

of which Mary Most Holy can and ought to be most fittingly called "Mother of God" is that she has conceived and given life to the Son of God. Thus the Council of Ephesus categorically affirms it<sup>2</sup> and all are in agreement in admitting it.

We must not forget, however, that the generation of the Word differs notably from the generation of ordinary men. The chief differences are three: (1) In ordinary generations the woman is fertilized by the man; in the case of Mary, fertilization occurred as a result of the action of the Holy Spirit to Whom is appropriated this operation common to the three Divine Persons. (2) In ordinary generations, the person of the son *begins to exist simpliciter* by virtue of the generative action; on the other hand, in the generation of the Word by Mary, the Person engendered was divine, and for that reason, is pre-existent and subsists in the divine nature and *begins to subsist now in the human nature*. (3) Finally, in the case of Mary Most Holy, in addition to the creative action present in the creation of every soul, there is also found a fecundative action which supplies that action of the man, and the unitive action, that is to say, that action by which God unites the human nature formed by Mary to the Person of the Word.<sup>3</sup>

All theologians, morally speaking, are agreed in affirming that the formation of the human nature by Mary should be simultaneous with the unitive action. In the words of Suárez, "I think . . . that the Word of God could not properly have been called the Son of the Virgin, if in the very instant of conception It (the Word) had not terminated the Humanity in the womb of the Virgin."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Can. 1; *DB*. 113.

<sup>3</sup> For a more complete explanation of whether or not these actions should be distinguished, cf. Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus; De Incarnatione*, disp. 5, dub. 2, n. 19 ss., vol. 9, Lugduni, 1686, p. 344 seq.

<sup>4</sup> F. Suárez, S.J., *In* 3, q. 27, disp. 1, sect. 1, n. 12 (ed. Vivès), vol. 19, p. 6.

*Is Simultaneity of the Two Actions Enough?*

The great majority of theologians hold to this opinion. The learned Saavedra speaks for the group when he says: "In that very instant in which she (Mary) generated the Man, the Divine Person was united to His Humanity, filling the void of a human personality, which ought to result from generation; the divine *Suppositum*, therefore, in this way is the Son of the Virgin, and Mary Most Holy is the Mother of God."<sup>5</sup>

We, however, with all due respect to the defenders of this opinion, find it somewhat ambiguous and judge that it does not preserve the reality or truth of the Divine Maternity of Mary. We believe that the above quotation does not prove that Mary truly gave birth to the Son of God. We base our divergent opinion on the very concept of generation.

*Basic Facts*

It is always well to begin by defining terms: (1) All theologians agree that the *terminus qui* of generation which is, as Hugon says, "that to which generation ultimately tends and in which it ultimately rests,"<sup>6</sup> is the *suppositum*, and that this is properly that which is generated "quia eius est fieri secundum naturam aliquam, cuius est esse et subsistere secundum naturam hanc," as Billot says,<sup>7</sup> reflecting the doctrine of St. Thomas. (2) It is a scientific truth ascertained and proved in biology that the mother is an active principle<sup>8</sup> in the gen-

<sup>5</sup> S. de Saavedra O. de Mer., *Sacra Deipara seu de eminentissima dignitate Dei Genitricis Immaculatissimae*, Lugduni, 1655, vestig. 1, disp. 1, sect. 5, n. 70, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> E. Hugon, O.P., *Cursus Philos. Thomist.*, *Phil. Natural.*, P. 1, tract. 2, q. 2, n. XV, vol. 2, Parisiis, p. 168.

<sup>7</sup> L. Billot, S.J., *De Verbo Incarnato*, ed. 6, Romae, 1922, p. 431.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. A. Breitung, S.J., *De conceptione Christi Domini inquisitio physiologico-theologica*, in *Gregorianum*, vol. 5, 1924, pp. 391-423, and 531-568; B. Merkelbach, O.P., *Mariologia*, Parisiis, 1939, p. 27.

eration of the offspring, and not merely a passive principle, as many philosophers and theologians, following Aristotle and St. Thomas, have maintained. (3) One should not forget that the parents, by means of the generative action, are the cause by which "this particular man" begins to exist; it must be remembered, however, that the soul is not produced by them. They are truly the cause of "this particular man," they are truly the cause of the existence of their offspring, in so far as they produce, in the body formed by them, certain dispositions which demand, according to the laws established by God, the creation and infusion of a soul.<sup>9</sup>

*The Simultaneity Between the Two Actions Is Insufficient*

We have already indicated that, in our judgment, it is not enough to say that simultaneity between the formation of the human nature by Mary and the action by which God united that nature to the Person of the Word is sufficient proof for the Divine Maternity; we base our stand on the concept of generation.

For one person to beget another, the former must communicate his own nature to the latter in conformity with the very order of generation. This is the concept of generation accepted by all. Moreover, it is evident that it cannot be rightly said that Peter communicates his nature to someone, if

<sup>9</sup> L. Billot, S.J., *De Sacramentis*, ed. 6, vol. 1, Romae, 1924, p. 58: "Nam causa perficiens pertingit actione sua ad ultimam rei perfectionem; causa vero disponens solummodo inducit in subiecto id quod est necessitas, quantum in se est, ad susceptionem formae, quo pacto homo generans est causa filii. Non enim pertingit actio generantis ad efficiendam animam . . . , sed pertingit tantum ad inducendum in materia dispositiones exigentes animae rationalis infusionem. Verumtamen nota bene quod dispositio . . . intellegi debet de eo quod formam . . . exigit atque omnino appellat. Sic enim et non aliter, inducens dispositionem potest cum veritate dici efficiens causa, non solius dispositionis, verum ipsius rei perfectae, prout in exemplo allato satis manifeste apparet."

Peter forms the human nature and someone else takes that nature and unites it to an already pre-existing *suppositum*. No one would say, for example, that I have put a suit on a person because I have made that suit, and he has taken it home and put it on. Therefore, it could not properly be said that Mary had begotten God if we assume that Mary merely formed the human nature and, simultaneous with her action, God united that nature to the Person of the Word. If Mary had not begotten God, she would not have been truly the Mother of God. (The first to indicate the insufficiency of the "simultaneity" theory, according to our opinion, was Suárez.)<sup>10</sup> Among those who agree with our stand we can mention the Salmanticenses, and the well-known modern Mariologist, J. Bittremieux.<sup>11</sup>

*Arguments of the Salmanticenses Favoring Our Thesis*

While expounding the revealed truth of Mary's divine Maternity, the Salmanticenses proposed a theological explanation of this fact which merits our consideration.<sup>12</sup> Their views, which, incidentally, were shared by some of their contemporaries, seem to have escaped the attention of such learned Mariologists as Rozo and Ragazzini<sup>13</sup> who have written excellent monographs on this subject in recent years.

(1) *First Argument*: The Salmanticenses presuppose the thesis admitted by all theologians that the generative action of Mary ought in some way to be linked with the very Person

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, n. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Bittremieux, G., *Utrum B. Virgo dici possit causa efficiens instrumentalis Unionis Hypostaticae?*, in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, vol. 21, 1945, pp. 170-171.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, num. 30-33, pp. 352-354.

<sup>13</sup> G. Rozo, C.M.F., *Sancta Maria Mater Dei, seu de sanctificatione B. Mariae Virginis vi divinae Maternitatis*, Mediolani, 1943; S. Ragazzini, O.F.M., Conv., *La Divina Maternità di Maria nel suo concetto teologico integrale*, Roma, 1948.

of the Word, since He is the *terminus qui* of the generation. Their argument against those holding the "simultaneity theory" is as follows: In order that any causality might be said to reach up to any *suppositum*, it is not enough that the *terminus* reached through such a causality be at the same instant in such a *suppositum*: otherwise God, in creating the rational soul, would be said, by that same causality, to be creating man, since the soul is produced at that very instant, and is in man. This, however, is false: because God is not said to create man, nor is man *per se* said to be the effect of God's creative action. Therefore, the fact that the Blessed Virgin was the cause, or the principle of the Sacred Humanity, and the fact that this Humanity *in primo sui esse* was constituted in the divine *Suppositum*, would not suffice in order to call the Blessed Virgin the principle and mother of such a *Suppositum*. And the reason is proportionately the same, for God, creating a soul, which in the first moment is in man, is not said to create man, because creation is understood properly to terminate anteriorly to the generation of a man (*pro priore ad generationem hominis*); it happens that in the same moment another action producing a man occurs; likewise the causality of the Blessed Virgin is understood properly as terminating in the production of humanity, and this anteriorly to the assumption of the humanity; it happens that in the same moment, there follows an action that is totally diverse and of a different order, which unites the humanity to the divine *Suppositum*: therefore, *concursus* of this type does not suffice to prove that the Blessed Virgin, by her act, attains to the divine *Suppositum*, or gives birth to It. And therefore, it is not enough to constitute her properly the Mother of God.<sup>14</sup>

(2) *Second Argument*: This argument, vigorously propounded against those holding the "simultaneity theory," seems most conclusive: Other women in the generation of their chil-

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, disp. 11, n. 17, p. 706.

dren either unite the subsistence to them, or produce their subsistence. But according to the teaching of our opponents it cannot be held that the Blessed Virgin either united or produced the subsistence of that divine *Suppositum* subsisting in human nature. The major seems evident: because either the rational soul is created with its subsistence "pro priori ad humanitatem" (as we think and as is commonly held) and according to this the woman joining by her maternal act the parts of the human nature, communicates the subsistence of the soul to the matter, and thence to the whole humanity; or the soul "pro priori ad humanitatem" does not have subsistence, as some say, and according to that opinion, the subsistence of man is not created but comes about through generation, as the humanity itself upon which it follows: and consequently, the mother by the same act (however it may be explained) by which she causes the humanity and the offspring, causes their subsistence. Therefore, it is universally true that women in the generation of their children either cause their subsistence or, at least, causally apply it and unite it.

The minor premise of this syllogism, as regards the first part, is thus explained: for our adversaries teach that the soul of Christ "pro priori ad humanitatem" did not have divine subsistence; they teach also that after the Blessed Virgin exercised her causality toward the human nature, this human nature was assumed to the divine subsistence through another act of a different order. Therefore, according to their opinion, the Blessed Virgin does not produce the subsistence of that *Suppositum*, as is *per se* known, nor did she unite its subsistence nor communicate it to the divine *Suppositum* or to Its humanity.<sup>15</sup>

This reasoning offered by the Salmanticenses to prove that the simultaneity between the formative action of the human

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

nature on the part of Mary, and the unitive action on the part of God, is not sufficient to establish the truth of the Divine Maternity, seems conclusive to us, and acceptable to all who examine it impartially.

*Father Crisóstomo's Solution*

According to Father Crisóstomo's opinion, it is necessary that Mary influence, not only the formation of the human nature, but also the union of the latter with the Word; thus and only thus will we have the right to assert that Mary *really begot* the Word and that she is truly the Mother of God. He rests his claim on the following reasons:

*First Argument:* Begetting, in the case of living beings, is nothing other than the transmitting, the communicating from one to another (from parents to offspring) of one's own nature, in a manner ordained to that end. But, when the person begotten is pre-existent, it does not mean, nor can it mean, as is clearly seen, anything other than to bring it about that that person begin to have the generator's own nature, to bring it about that that person begin to subsist in the nature formed by the generator from his very own substance. Hence, it can be said with truth that Mary begot the Word, only insofar as it may be said that she brought it about that the Word began to have her own nature by virtue of an action directed to that end. Now, we cannot conceive of Mary bringing about that effect except inasmuch as she united the human nature, formed by her, from her own substance, with the Word, since it is evident that the action of the creature cannot terminate in God Himself. It follows then that in order for Mary to be called, in all truth, the Mother of God, it was necessary that she have some influence on the Hypostatic Union, that is to say, in the uniting of the human nature with the Person of the Word.

This influence could be exercised by Mary either by producing dispositions exigitive of the infusion of the soul and of the union of the human nature with the Word, or by producing dispositions that required the infusion of a soul subsisting already with the very subsistence of the Word, according to the opinion one adopts relative to the order in which the Word assumed the Sacred Humanity and its parts.<sup>16</sup>

*Second Argument:* Generative action presupposes generative potency, and the generative potency in turn implies, as every active faculty implies, a tendency or transcendental *relatio* to the *terminus*,<sup>17</sup> and it is certainly and universally admitted by all that the *terminus qui* of the generation is the *suppositum*. But in the case of Mary, certainly the generative potency could not imply a tendency to produce the *Suppositum*, which was already pre-existent. Therefore, her only possible tendency toward the Word was the one that is contained in the power of uniting the human nature with that Divine Hypostasis. Consequently, saying that Mary engendered God, necessarily supposes in her a power for uniting the human nature, once formed by her, with the Person of the Word. If that unitive power is denied Mary, the termination in a divine Person would result as something accidental; neither would the generative action of Mary have any connection with the Son of God; and therefore, neither would the Word Incarnate be the end *per se* of the generative action of Mary.

*Third Argument:* Why are the parents the cause of their offspring, since they are not the cause of the soul? According to all, it is because the parents, besides forming the body, are the cause of the union of the latter with the soul, and they are such inasmuch as they produce in the body certain dispositions requiring the infusion of the soul. Thus and only

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Salmanticenses, *op. cit.*, disp. 11, n. 16 and 17, pp. 706-707.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. I. Gredt, O.S.B., *Elementa Philosophiae*, vol. 1, Friburgi Brisg., 1921, n. 176, 1.

thus do parents deserve the name of "cause" of their offspring. Then, a *pari*, Mary being, as she is, the cause of this particular man who is the Man-God, will be such inasmuch as she produces in the body dispositions that require the formation of a Man-God, and this cannot be except by her producing dispositions requiring the infusion of the soul, and the union of the human nature with the Person of the Word, or by properly producing dispositions requiring the infusion of a soul subsisting with the subsistence of the Word.<sup>18</sup>

### *Summarizing Father Crisóstomo's Position*

(a) The action by which Mary influenced the Hypostatic Union is entitatively, intrinsically supernatural, since it is self-evident that this action, in its very entity, exceeds the forces and exigencies of all nature.

(b) Since an intrinsically supernatural action cannot proceed but from an elevated, supernaturalized potency, and since there ought to be proportion between cause and effect, and because the generative potency of Mary lacks physical power to realize said union, that potency had to be elevated intrinsically for that task. We say *for that task*, that is to say, to influence the Hypostatic Union, since in order to form the human nature of Christ Mary had sufficient physical capacity.

<sup>18</sup> Only because of excessive attachment to what St. Thomas taught even in the field of experimental sciences, one of the most eminent, modern theologians, Billot, declared himself inimical to the thesis now defended by Father Crisóstomo. Actually, Billot admits that, had there been an active human principle in the generation of the Son of God, that principle would have had to produce "in fetu dispositiones exigitivas formationis hominis, et huius numero hominis," that is to say, "dispositiones quae exigent constitutionem humanitatis tractae ad esse personale Dei." However, he denies with St. Thomas that Mary was the active principle in the generation of the Son of God. (*De Verbo Incarnato*, p. 432, note).

(c) The generative potency of Mary did not influence said union as a principal cause, but as an instrumental cause, and therefore, it did not possess permanent power to produce that effect. We say, first, that she did not influence that union as a principal cause, because, as Suárez very reasonably observes, "that would be something like subjecting God to the power of a creature."<sup>19</sup> We say, secondly, that since Mary was not the principal cause of the Hypostatic Union, it is *ipso facto* evident that she did not possess permanent power to produce that effect (as, on the other hand, she had it to produce the human nature of Christ).<sup>20</sup>

### *Is That Instrumental Influence Possible?*

There are many theologians who find it impossible to accept the thesis that Mary instrumentally influenced the union of the human nature with the Person of the Word.<sup>21</sup> We subscribe to the opinion of Suárez who says: "Wherefore, speaking of possibles, I am of the opinion that it is not repugnant for God to assume a creature as an instrument to this union, just as in the case of other effects, as for example, transubstantiation or justification, because neither *ex parte modi* nor *ex parte termini actionis* is there any repugnance."<sup>22</sup> The same

<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, q. 2, disp. 10, sect. 1, n. 2, p. 387.

<sup>20</sup> John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philos. Thomist.*, *Phil. Nat.*, 1 P., q. 26, art. 1, ed. Reiser, Taurini, 1933, pp. 517-518: "Denique, quod ista virtus instrumentalis solum se habeat per modum transeuntis a causa principali probatur, quia talis virtus non habet radicem in ipso instrumento, quia non oritur ex eius natura, sed ex alterius participatione. Ergo non habet permanentiam in instrumento nisi ex influxu alterius actuali; proprie autem virtus permanens datur causae operanti principaliter et utendi illa aut semper aut quando voluerit."

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Bittremieux, *art. cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, n. 8, p. 389.

opinion is held by Lépiciér,<sup>23</sup> Bittremieux,<sup>24</sup> Al Janssens,<sup>25</sup> and Roschini.<sup>26</sup>

### *Objections*

*First Objection:* To the objection of Father Rozo,<sup>27</sup> who argues against the possibility of that influence, Father Crisóstomo replies that what St. Thomas teaches is not, as Father Rozo pretends, that the instrument ought to produce *all the effects* to which the activity of the principal cause extends, but that when a being is elevated as an instrument for the production of *an effect*, the latter is fully produced, it is completely, totally produced, by the principal and instrumental causes.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, from the fact that Mary is the instrument of God for the union of the human nature with the Word, it does not follow in any manner, that for the same act she ought also to influence the union of the *divine* nature with the Hypostasis of the Word. Actually, the truth is that the virtue and activity of God did not extend to that (to unite the divine nature to the Person of the Word) since the Divine Essence and the Persons are really identified. Also in support of his refutation of Father Rozo's objection, the Salmanticenses are quoted: "Since, therefore, the humanity of Christ is presupposed as produced according to its substantial entity by generative action, there is no repugnance in stating that it is

<sup>23</sup> A. Lépiciér, O.S.M., *Tractatus de Beatissima Virgine Maria, Matre Dei*, ed. 5, Parisiis, 1926, p. 98.

<sup>24</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 168.

<sup>25</sup> Al. Janssens, *De heilige Maagd en Moeder Gods Maria. III. De heerlijkheiden van het Goddelijk Moederschap*, ed. 2, Antwerpen-Nijmegen, 1939, pp. 154-177.

<sup>26</sup> G. M. Roschini, O.S.M., *Mariologia*, vol. 2, Mediolani, 1942, pp. 267-268.

<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. E. Hugon, O.P., *La causalité instrumentale dans l'ordre surnaturel*, ed. 2, Paris, 1924, p. 31.

the subject of an instrumentally assumptive action which does not produce the human nature but unites it with the Word.”<sup>29</sup>

*Second Objection:* Suárez argues against the fact of this instrumental influence of Mary in the Hypostatic Union: “That influence would not be properly generative; it would not be “per modum matris generantis quia concursus matris non est instrumentalis sed principalis in suo genere.”<sup>30</sup> This objection, repeated by later theologians, bears great merit, but it is not conclusive as the following arguments will show.

1. According to all theologians, the sacred writers are the *instrumental* causes of the Sacred Books. Will they, then, cease to be the true authors of those books, simply because the writers or authors of other books are the *principal* cause of them? And yet, no theologian denies that the hagiographers are true authors of those books. The fact that the sacred writer is not a principal cause but only the instrumental cause of the Sacred Books does not hinder him from being considered as such and actually being the author of those books, even though the authors of other books are the principal cause, and not merely the instrumental cause, of the same. And the reason is that to act in the capacity of a principal cause does not enter the definition of an author of a book, as it does not enter the definition of generation: *Origo viventis a principio vivente coniuncto in similitudinem naturae*, and it will be seen that among the essential elements we do not find that of being the principal cause. Actually, there is generation, according to the definition, in an active sense when a living being gives birth to another living being from its own substance in a way ordained to that end. Hence it appears evident at once that there is nothing to indicate that the generator gives origin to another living being as a principal cause. Therefore, it is not

<sup>29</sup> *Op. cit.*, n. 44, p. 360.

<sup>30</sup> *Op. cit.*, cf. q. 2, disp. 10, sect. 1, n. 9; vol. 17, p. 389; q. 27, disp. 1, n. 15; vol. 19, p. 6.

essential to the generation. Therefore, there will be generation, properly so-called, even in the case in which the mother works as an instrument of God, if it occurs that the express requisites in the definition of the generation of a living being are verified. Moreover, it must be remembered that Mary's instrumentality does not refer to the formation of the human nature, but only to the union of the latter with the Word.

2. It is not at all surprising that the generative action differs somewhat in Mary and in other mothers, considering that we have here a most singular case in that the Person begotten was already pre-existent and was no other than God Himself. Do we not find other notable differences between both cases? In Mary, for example, the conception is verified through the operation of the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit over the female egg, while in the other mothers conception is realized by means of the fusion of the masculine and feminine elements. Didn't Mary, then, conceive *per modum matris generantis*? Wasn't her action properly generative?

*Third Objection:* It might be argued that if this instrumental causality of Mary is admitted as necessary for the generation of the Son of God, it must be concluded that God is the generator, since He is the principal cause of the unitive action.

To this we reply: (1) By denying the conclusion: since, so long as a living being does not produce *from his own substance* the nature which he communicates to another, he is not the generator, nor is there true generation in that case, as all admit.

(2) If the above objection were valid, it would follow, according to Catholic teaching, that the Holy Spirit had begotten the God-Man, since He is, along with Mary, the principal cause of the formation of the human nature of Christ.<sup>31</sup>

Again it might be objected: If the influence of Mary in the union of the human nature with the Person of the Word were necessary for the truth of the generation of the Son of

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Merkelbach, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

God, one would have to say, *a pari*, that for the generation of a human being it was necessary for the parents to influence the union of the body and soul. And yet, this is not required.

Reply: Exactly the opposite is true and admitted by all, as previously indicated. I will limit myself to a quotation from Donat: "Nevertheless, the parents, although they are the cause only of the body and not also of the soul, are rightly said *to beget a man*. For inasmuch as they furnish the material for the body and confer upon it that disposition which, according to the law decreed by God, is followed by the infusion of a soul, they are the cause not only of the body but also *of the union* of the body with the soul, from which union man is made." <sup>32</sup>

*Fourth Objection:* If for the truth of the Divine Maternity of Mary it were necessary that she influence the Hypostatic Union, it would follow that God would not be able to assume the human nature without using Mary as an instrument, which is repugnant to the divine independence.

Reply: I deny the conclusion. Actually, God could: (1) Deprive a *human person* begotten by Mary of his human personality, and then unite that nature to the Person of the Word.<sup>33</sup> (2) He could likewise act simultaneously with Mary: God could unite to the Person of the Word, the nature produced by Mary, *in the same instant* in which that nature was produced, without the Blessed Virgin intervening in any way in that process. These two hypotheses are realizable, but the fact is that in neither of them would Mary be the Mother of God.

*Fifth Objection:* The tendency of the generative action toward the Word is satisfactorily explained by means of the fertilizing action of the Holy Spirit, without it being necessary

<sup>32</sup> Donat, *Summa Philosophiae Christianae*, ed. 8, vol. 5, Oeniponte, 1936, n. 656.

<sup>33</sup> C. Billuart, O.P., *Cursus Theologiae, De Incarnatione*, dissert. 7, art. 1, # 2, Suppono 3, vol. 2, Parisiis, 1895, p. 420.

to resort to an elevation of the generative potency which may orient it toward that Divine Person.

Reply: (1) We judge this opinion to be false, for it presupposes and implies that the Holy Spirit could not miraculously fertilize a woman for the generation of *a mere man*. This is evidently not so.<sup>34</sup> Now, in that case, it is clear that the fertilizing power of the Holy Spirit would orient the maternal activity toward *a human person*. It follows, then, that that power is not enough to explain said orientation and tendency.

There are some who maintain that according to the Fathers, a virgin could not beget anyone but God. Although texts to prove this have not been made available by the objectors, we are sure, without examining these texts, that we are dealing here with a hyperbolic expression. In our humble understanding, the proposition taken in its obvious sense is false, as is evident from what has just been said.

(2) Even if the tendency of the generative potency to the Person of the Word could be explained as was proposed above, that would mean that our second argument was not valid; the other arguments, however, are conclusive and remain in favor of our thesis.

#### *Is the Divine Maternity a Physical Or Moral Entity?*

Father Crisóstomo's reply is categorical: that entity by which Mary, both formally as well as fundamentally, is the Mother of God, is nothing merely physical, but a physico-moral entity. And this by reason of the *terminus*: the Son of God, since both the relationship of maternity (of consanguinity toward a Divine Person) and the begetting of a Man-God imply a most exalted dignity. It is thus that the Divine Maternity of Mary, under this double aspect, enters completely within the moral order.

With regard to the first aspect, it seems obvious that it

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Rozo, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

transcends the limits of the physical order. With regard to the second aspect, it cannot be reasonably doubted either. We are aware that not a few theologians,<sup>35</sup> while pondering the Divine Maternity, consider this prerogative, not in itself, but rather insofar as it is adorned by the graces and divine gifts with which God enriched it. Others, as Father Nicolas, O.P.,<sup>36</sup> cause the dignity of the Divine Maternity of Mary to depend on the freedom and liberty with which she begot the Word. While we respect these views, we consider them erroneous. In our opinion, the dignity of Mary's Motherhood, which, according to Cajetan's happy phrase, borders on the limits of the divinity, arises simply and clearly from having conceived and given to the world the God made Man.

In submitting the conclusion that Mary was elevated to the Hypostatic Order, Father Crisóstomo first defines his terms. He indicates that there are three essentially different orders in this world, stemming from and corresponding to three divine and specifically distinct communications with which God is given to creatures. These orders are the natural, supernatural, and hypostatic, representing three different planes of perfection, corresponding to those three different divine communications, and integrated by as many other categories of convergent beings, to a common principle. In the Hypostatic Order, the common principle is the Hypostatic Union.

In order to avoid mistakes, we must clearly understand that the Hypostatic Union is one thing, whereas the *order* of the Hypostatic Union is another, very distinct thing. The Hypostatic Union refers only to the union of the Person of the Word with the human nature, and excludes all other beings;

<sup>35</sup> A. Luis, *Principio fundamental o primario. ¿Como enunciarlo si se da ese único principio?*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 3, Madrid, 1944, p. 194.

<sup>36</sup> M. J. Nicolas, O.P., *Le concept integral de Maternité divine*, in *Revue Thomiste*, vol. 42, 1937, p. 46.

the *order* of the Hypostatic Union includes other realities which converge upon and are ordained to it.<sup>37</sup>

What, then, are we to understand by the Hypostatic Order? By this terminology we understand that plane of perfection integrated by realities which are ordained and converge upon the Hypostatic Union, in such a manner that they participate in the excellence of the said Union. It is true that all things, as Father Nicolas so beautifully says<sup>38</sup> are ordained in some way to the Word Incarnate. However, that is not what is of interest to us here, since those things do not, because of that fact, participate in the perfection of the Hypostatic Union, even analogically.

When we inquire, therefore, whether Mary does or does not belong to the Hypostatic Order, what we are interested in discovering is if Mary may be found among those realities which are ordained to the Hypostatic Union in such a manner that they participate in its excellence. A reality pertains to the Hypostatic Order *in this manner* in the following cases: (a) that which is elevated to that plane by the same Hypostatic Union, that is to say, the entity which is the subject of the grace of the Union, *as such* (the Sacred Humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ); (b) that which is ordained to the Hypostatic Union and bespeaks proportion to it, as the power of producing it; (c) the being which is the subject of that power, as such (the Most Blessed Virgin).

Suárez seems to have been the first to propose the question, although he uses a *quodammodo* in affirming that Mary belongs to the Hypostatic Order. Post-Suarezian theologians are divided on the point: some affirm that Mary belongs to the Hypostatic Order as indicated above; others deny it.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Ragazzini, *op. cit.*, p. 233; Rozo, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>38</sup> M. J. Nicolas, O.P., *L'appartenance de la Mère de Dieu à l'ordre hypostatique*, in *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Etudes Mariales*, 1937, p. 17.

Modern Mariologists, as a general rule, favor the affirmative side.<sup>39</sup>

Having already maintained the influence of Mary in the union of the human nature with the Word, our position is clear. Actually, we have shown that Mary was the instrument or medium employed by God to achieve that admirable union. Now, if the instrument, considered in its own power, is disproportionate with respect to the effect to whose production it contributes, nevertheless, considered as it was elevated by the divine power, it does have proportion with the effect produced in the sense that it is able to produce it and does produce it.

In a parallel case, the Sacraments of the new law, because they produce grace as instruments, are considered by all theologians<sup>40</sup> as intrinsically belonging to the supernatural order, and they are listed among the entitatively supernatural realities. An intrinsically supernatural entity, such as grace, cannot proceed from a natural potency unless it has been elevated, albeit transitorily, to the plane of entitatively supernatural realities.

Therefore, since Mary instrumentally influences the Hypostatic Union, she belongs by reason of that fact, to the Hypostatic Order, and she participates therefore in the supernaturalness of that union, a very singular supernaturalness, concerning which Michel and Hugon remark judiciously: "The Hypostatic Union is supernatural with a supernaturalness which surpasses all others."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Ragazzini, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-222, where one may find a long list of authors favorable to this opinion; cf. also Suárez, *op. cit.*, q. 27, disp. 1, sect. 2; vol. 19, p. 8.

<sup>40</sup> R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *De revelatione*, ed. 2, vol. 1, Romae-Parisiis, p. 211; J. M. Hervé, *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae*, ed. 18, vol. 2, n. 373.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. art. *Hypostatique (Union)*, in *D.T.C.*, vol. 7, col. 532, where Michel makes his own Hugon's words. Cf. also Bittremieux, *art. cit.*, p. 173: "Rursus

We must remember that Mary may influence the Hypostatic Union, either by producing dispositions which require the infusion of the soul and the union of the human nature with the Word, or by causing dispositions which require the infusion of a subsistent soul possessing the very substance of the Word. In either case, only a power found on the same level as the Hypostatic Union can produce these dispositions.

Mary not only produced the human nature of Christ which was assumed by God as His human nature, but also produced a human nature which, by divine ordination, was to require the infusion of a created soul intimately united to the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. This means a fecundation by the Holy Ghost as we know,<sup>42</sup> plus the elevation of her generative potency, physically unable to influence this union, to a plane superior to other beings, introducing her into the order of the Hypostatic Union. This is the ontological foundation for her incomparable dignity and the root of all her privileges and prerogatives.

REV. JASPER CHIODINI,  
St. Louis, Mo.

itaque optime intelligitur B. Virginis pertinentiam ad ordinem hypostaticum ultimo fundamentum habere in eo quod Ipsa causa sit instrumentalis unionis hypostaticae."

<sup>42</sup> *Lk.*, 1, 35 seq.