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## DOES THE DIVINE MATERNITY FORMALLY SANCTIFY MARY'S SOUL?

The question we are to discuss in this paper is the relationship between Mary's divine Motherhood and her sublime holiness. Is her Motherhood a supernatural perfection which of itself renders Mary holy and pleasing to God? <sup>1</sup> Does the mere fact that Mary is God's Mother, apart from her sanctifying grace and other privileges, make her an object of God's personal love? The study of this question, as we shall see, will lead us to a greater appreciation of Mary's sublime position in the economy of the Redemption, a position which she holds precisely because she is the Mother of God.

We must not let ourselves be discouraged by the number or complexity of the problems which this question involves. Here we stand at the very crossroads of the mysteries of our Redemption. All the mysteries of our faith are connected intimately with Mary who in becoming the Mother of Christ helped to restore divine life to mankind.

Complexity in this question arises also from the fact that of the four key words in the question (*divine Motherhood, formally, sanctify, Mary's soul*), three of them are frequently understood in different senses. There is no agreement among theologians about what belongs strictly to the notion of divine Motherhood. There is a difference of opinion about the meaning of the word *formally*. And adequate elaboration of the notion of holiness still remains on the agenda of theologians.

Confessing at the beginning and once for all my inade-

<sup>1</sup> This question was introduced into theology under different aspects by two Spanish theologians of the seventeenth century, Sylvester de Saavedra, O. de M., *Sacra Deipara, seu de eminentissima dignitate Deigenitricis immaculatissimae*, Lugduni, 1655, and John Martínez de Ripalda, S.J., *De Ente Supernaturali*, 4 vols., Parisiis, 1870.

quacy to master this subject, much less to give a definitive solution to the question, I launch out into the deep depending on a son's love for his Mother rather than on any brilliance of intellect.

This paper will have three parts: (1) a discussion of the meaning of the terms: divine Motherhood, holiness, formally; (2) a brief presentation of the various opinions given by theologians about the divine Motherhood as a formal principle of Mary's holiness; and (3) a brief suggestion toward a solution of the problem.

### *Terminology*

The first notion we must describe is holiness.<sup>2</sup> All will agree, I think, that holiness in general means some kind of inviolable union with the subsistent infinite goodness of God. In God this union is one of identity with His own infinite goodness, identity both in substance and in operation. Through God's goodness this infinite holiness is shared in by creatures, by rational creatures in a much higher way than by irrational creatures.

Here let us restrict ourselves to a consideration of holiness in rational creatures. While union with God is the general

<sup>2</sup> On the notion of sanctity see among other works the following: J. M. Bover, S.J., *Cómo conciben los Santos Padres el misterio de la divina maternidad*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 8, 1949, see esp. pp. 232-244. B. Leeming, S.J., *Annotationes de Verbo Incarnato*, Romae, 1936, pp. 279-285. L. Lercher, S.J., *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae*, vol. 3; *De Christo Salvatore*, *De Ancilla Domini-Salvatoris*, ed. 4, Hispania, 1945, esp. pp. 68-70. J. Müller, S.J., *Ueber den Begriff der Heiligkeit und deren Ausnahmstellung unter den göttlichen Attributen in Bezug auf die Mittheilbarkeit an die menschliche Natur Christi*, in *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, vol. 20, 1896, pp. 491-501. J. Rohof, S.C.J., *La sainteté substantielle du Christ dans la théologie scolastique. Histoire du problème*, Fribourg, 1952. G. Roza, C.M.F., *Sancta Maria Mater Dei*, Mediolani, 1943, pp. 121-128. B. M. Xiberta, O.Carm., *De elementis doctrinalibus in controversia de Immaculata B. V. Mariae Conceptione*, in *Carmelus*, vol. 1, 1954, pp. 199-235, esp. 201-203.



notion of holiness, not every sort of union with God verifies the notion, but only a union with God under the aspect of His subsistent infinite goodness, a union in which the creature is an object of divine complacency and love. Otherwise every creature insofar as it is an effect joined to the efficiency of God's creation and conservation would be holy. If this were true even the devils themselves would be holy.

There is, however, a kind of union with God which, although of itself it does not make the creature an object of God's personal love of friendship and pleasing to Him, has a real exigency for that union with infinite goodness which in itself means God's love. This type of union with God is sometimes called *fundamental holiness*. It is exemplified in that union possessed in virtue of the baptismal character, or the character of the priesthood. It is a consecration, or character, or bond which of itself is not union in God's love, but certainly demands it.

To be distinguished from this fundamental holiness is *actual holiness*, i.e., a union with subsistent divine goodness which by its very nature confers God's personal love. Such holiness is a participation in God's own union (identity) with His infinite goodness. A creature, however, is by nature complex and can participate this infinite perfection in a threefold way; in the order of *substance*, in the order of *nature* as principle of operation, and in the order of *operation* itself. Now in all of these orders a union with subsistent goodness may exist. Moreover, union in the order of substance demands union in the order of nature, and union in the order of nature calls for union in the order of operation. Thus we have a threefold *actual holiness*: (1) *substantial*, or union in the order of substance; (2) *accidental*, or union in the order of nature; and (3) *moral*, or union in the order of operation. An example of actual substantial holiness is the union of the Humanity of Christ with the Divine Word. Actual accidental holiness



is exemplified in the union of our souls with God through sanctifying grace, a supernatural perfection which unites the soul with the divine goodness in such a way that it is actually pleasing to God. Actual moral holiness consists in the union of the will with God in love.

For the purposes of our paper we need not go into the kind of holiness possessed by inanimate objects such as chalices, churches, and relics, which possess a kind of fundamental holiness.

*Actual holiness* is achieved in created persons by reason of a supernatural perfection infused in the soul, called grace. If a supernatural perfection, of itself, immediately, and independently of any additional perfection or favor of God, produces actual holiness in the soul, we say that such a perfection (even though not a *form*) sanctifies the soul *formally*. If the perfection does not of itself produce actual holiness, but merely demands, or has an exigency for, another perfection which will of itself bring actual holiness, we say that such a perfection sanctifies *fundamentally*. For example, according to most theologians, sanctifying grace, *of itself, immediately, independently of any additional perfection or favor of God*, produces holiness in the soul and thus is said to sanctify the soul *formally*. The baptismal character, however, does not produce actual holiness of itself, but only by means of the additional perfection of sanctifying grace for which the character has an exigency; thus the character is not said to sanctify *formally*, but *fundamentally* or "exigently".

Hence, *actual holiness* in created persons is a union with divine goodness by means of a supernatural perfection which unites the creature with subsistent divine goodness so as to be an object of God's personal love. If a supernatural perfection effects such a union with God of itself, immediately, and independently of any additional perfection or favor from God,

then such a supernatural perfection formally sanctifies the creature.

In this brief explanation of the meaning of holiness, I have tried to cut through the excessively complex terminology of theologians, and give the ideas which are essential to the problem.

Now does the divine Motherhood formally sanctify Mary's soul? Is it a supernatural perfection which of itself, immediately, effects a union of her soul with the divine goodness, making Mary pleasing to God? Our answer to this question, of course, depends on what is meant by the divine Motherhood.

The most fundamental problem in the whole of Mariology is the discovery of the exact definition of divine Motherhood.<sup>3</sup> Motherhood is something easy to understand until we encounter theologians trying to fix the elements which are essential to its definition. A woman is orientated toward motherhood from her conception. At puberty she becomes physically capable of bearing a child. She is more immediately ordered toward motherhood by the bond of matrimony. United with her husband she consents to conceive a child in her womb. Only when she conceives does she actually become a mother. However, her action of conception is not precisely her motherhood, because this action terminates with the conception of the child, but her motherhood endures forever, unfolding itself first in nurturing the child in the womb with her own life blood, then in bringing the child into the world, thereafter continuing somehow to be united with him by a bond stronger than death, caring for him until he has grown to his full stature as a man, following him with solicitous love, which now restrains or strengthens, now suggests or helps or comforts or

<sup>3</sup> J. M. Bover, S.J., *La gracia de la divina Maternidad*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 5, 1946, p. 147; also J. M. Delgado Varela, O. de M., *Maternidad formalmente santificante (origen y desenvolvimiento de la controversia)*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 8, 1949, p. 146.

consoles, working ever to see realized in him the dream son of her heart.

Hence, a human mother may be considered under the following aspects: (1) *potential motherhood*, which includes all those elements belonging to motherhood by way of remote or proximate preparation for motherhood; (2) *motherhood in fieri*: the act of conception in virtue of which a woman becomes an actual mother; (3) *actual motherhood itself*, the state of being a mother, of being related to the child she has conceived; and finally (4) the operations or functions belonging to actual motherhood, such as bringing forth the child, loving him and caring for him until he has reached manhood. To avoid further complications, let us restrict our considerations to *actual motherhood*.

Is actual motherhood only a relation in the flesh, a mere bodily tie of some sort, or is it a bond which also affects the spirit, a perfection of a woman's soul? This bond or relation between mother and child must be something more than the immediate joining of her substance with that of the child in her womb, for that union is terminated at birth. Actual motherhood, which endures, is rather a bond of immediate consanguinity, a relation of connaturality by reason of immediate origin, which is caused by the action of conception, but must be grounded permanently in the mother. This permanent foundation is to be found in the effect which her conception produces either in her own body and/or in her soul or in the composite of both. This effect permanently relates the person of the mother to the person of her child.<sup>4</sup>

If conception is strictly an affair of the body, the perma-

<sup>4</sup>St. Thomas Aquinas, *Comm. in III Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 5: "Item considerandum est quod quaedam relationes non nascuntur ex actibus secundum quod sunt in actu, sed magis secundum quod fuerunt, sicut aliquis dicitur pater postquam ex actione est effectus consecutus, et tales relationes fundantur super id quod in agente ex actione relinquitur, sive sit dispositio sive habitus vel quidquid aliud est hujusmodi."



nent bond which arises between mother and son would be of a bodily or corporal nature. If conception is also an affair of the soul, then the bond may be twofold, one corporal, one spiritual. Or again it may be a single bond by which the mother in both body and soul is related to her child.

In recent years many theologians have given special attention to the part which the soul plays in human motherhood. In a masterful article by Father M.-J. Nicolas, O.P., in the *Revue Thomiste*, 1937, it has been successfully demonstrated that the operation of the soul in giving human consent belongs to the very idea of *integrally human conception*. If a woman conceives a child in any way other than by human consent, then her conception is not integrally human; it is less than human.<sup>5</sup>

Hence, in actual human motherhood the relation between a mother and her child which results from *integrally human conception* is a bond which is rooted not merely in the body of the mother, but likewise (and even with a certain primacy) in her soul.<sup>6</sup>

The essential difference between purely human motherhood and divine Motherhood arises from the fact that in human motherhood the child whom the woman conceives and to whom she is thereby related is a human person, whereas in divine Motherhood the child is God the Son Himself. Mary's conception of the God-Man involved the power of the Most High and the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, whereby her conception was not only virginal but terminated in the Person of the Son of God. Whether or not this divine intervention involved an intrinsic elevation of Mary's generative

<sup>5</sup> This idea has definite repercussions on the motherhood of women who practice birth control and conceive a child without wanting or consenting to do so.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. M.-J. Nicolas, O.P., *Le concept intégral de Maternité divine*, in *Revue Thomiste*, vol. 42, 1937, pp. 58-93, 230-272.

power and its activity is greatly disputed by theologians.<sup>7</sup> However, no one doubts that through her actual divine Motherhood Mary is elevated in some way to the hypostatic order, and possesses "an almost infinite dignity".<sup>8</sup>

At this point a difficulty arises. In purely human motherhood there can be no question of a real relation or bond between mother and child before the child is constituted in existence at the term of conception; for no real relation can exist before the child exists as its term. But in divine Motherhood which involves the conception of a pre-existent Person, the question arises whether the relation of motherhood cannot precede conception. For if actual motherhood is a bond between the person of the mother and the child, such a relation might exist between Mary and her Son in the very action of conception which is prior by nature to the constitution of the Child as Man. Such a relation might even exist from the first instant of Mary's life since Mary was united to her Son even from that moment in virtue of her predestination as physical Mother of God.

It is surprising to discover how many theologians have taught that Mary was somehow constituted Mother of God by a perfection infused in her which preceded not merely in nature but even in time His constitution as Man. To mention just a few of the more prominent, we find a doctrine of this sort taught by Father Sylvester de Saavedra, O. de M., M. J. Scheeben, and in recent years even more emphatically by Father J. Alonso, C.M.F., and Father Delgado Varela, O. de M. Their teaching reflects the thought of St. Peter Chrysologus: ". . . And was she not a mother before His conception, who

<sup>7</sup> Cf. for example, 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, 1949, pp. 65-92.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Pius XII, *Ad Coeli Reginam*.

was a virgin mother after His birth? Or when was she not a mother who conceived the Author of the World?"<sup>9</sup>

It would be imprudent, to say the least, to dismiss the opinion of these theologians in summary fashion without a careful consideration of their thought including the nuances with which they speak of Mary's Motherhood from the beginning of her life. However, our interest is rather in that *actual* Motherhood which Mary possesses from that instant when the Son of God was constituted in the flesh as her Son.<sup>10</sup>

After this lengthy introduction we now understand, I think, the question we are discussing: Did Mary's *actual* divine Motherhood of itself, immediately, without the addition of any further grace of God unite her with the divine goodness in such a way that she was by this very Motherhood an object of divine complacency and love?

### *The Negative Position*

Although all theologians attribute to Mary the greatest holiness possible for a mere creature, because of her almost infinite dignity as Mother of God, a good number are opposed to the opinion that her divine Motherhood formally sanctifies her soul. Among those denying her formal sanctification through Motherhood we find: Contenson, George of Rhodes, Theophilus Raynaud, Pesch, Van Noort, Muncunill, Garrigou-Lagrange, Merkelbach, Dublanchy, Ragazzini, and Roschini.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Serm. 146, PL. 52, 592.*

<sup>10</sup> I should be noted, however, that neither Mary's predestination, nor even temporally antecedent elevation of her generative power (if there was such), made Mary an actual physical mother before the instant of the physical conception of her Son.

<sup>11</sup> George of Rhodes exemplifies the attitude of most of this group: "Haec questio, antiquioribus ignota Theologis, moveri coepit iam pridem a quibusdam amatoribus Virginis, quorum magis laudabilis pietas quam vera sententia." *Disputationes de Beata Virgine Maria*, q. 4, Lugduni, 1676, p. 233.



The more important arguments presented by this group may be set down as follows:

(1) The first argument is taken from the answer of Our Lord to the woman who said within His hearing: "Blessed is the womb that has borne thee. . . ." Our Lord answered: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and observe it!"<sup>12</sup> It is better, therefore, according to these words, to love God by keeping His word than to be His physical Mother without loving Him. The reason evidently is that the love of God itself makes one blessed and holy, whereas being simply the physical Mother of God does not. Hence divine Motherhood of itself does not formally sanctify Mary's soul.<sup>13</sup>

(2) The Council of Trent defines that the one and only (*unica*) formal cause of holiness (justification) is sanctifying grace.<sup>14</sup> But the divine Motherhood is not the same as sanctifying grace. Therefore, the divine Motherhood cannot formally sanctify Mary's soul.

(3) Furthermore, the spiritual activity of the Blessed Virgin in consenting to the divine Motherhood, although it has as object the second divine Person as Son, does not constitute the maternal action of Mary as such; for of itself it does not effect the generation of the Word in the flesh. If then we speak of divine Motherhood as distinct from the ordinary grace of the children of God, we cannot say that it is essentially a grace in the soul of Mary, although it implies grace in her soul.<sup>15</sup> Hence the divine Motherhood does not of itself sanctify Mary's soul.

(4) Moreover, the divine Motherhood, taken in itself, is not a relation of union, but a relation of origin, of opposition.

<sup>12</sup> *Lk.*, 11:27f.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. for example, G. Van Noort, *Tractatus de Deo Redemptore*, ed. 4 per J. P. Verhaar: Hilversum in Hollandia, 1925, pp. 139-140; also B. H. Merkelbach, O.P., *Mariologia*, Paris, 1939, p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> *D.B.*, n. 799.

<sup>15</sup> M.-J. Nicholas, O.P., *art. cit.*, p. 240.

For the operation of generation has as its proper effect not union but the distinction and separation of the offspring from the parent. Hence, since of itself motherhood is a relation of origin and opposition, it cannot of itself be a relation of union such as is required to fulfill the definition of holiness.<sup>16</sup>

(5) Finally, if the divine Motherhood would of itself formally sanctify Mary's soul, Mary would be thereby physically, intrinsically impeccable. But to posit such impeccability in Mary is to go contrary to the common opinion of theologians. Hence, to hold that the divine Motherhood formally sanctifies Mary's soul is at least implicitly contrary to the common opinion of theologians.<sup>17</sup>

### *The Positive Side*

Now the other side of this controversy; let us examine the teachings of a few of the more prominent defenders of Mary's formal sanctification through her Motherhood. Each understands the terms involved in a somewhat different sense; hence we must consider their doctrines individually. This procedure is all the more necessary because each has his own contribution to make toward the solution of the problem.

### *Saavedra's Theory*

To Sylvester Saavedra, O. de M., even more than to J. Martínez de Ripalda, S.J., must be attributed the honor of bringing this question into our treatise on Mariology.<sup>18</sup> The question he proposes to answer is stated by him as follows:

. . . Whether besides the habitual holiness which is found in her [Mary's] most pure soul, there is also to be found in her body that corporeal grace and sanctity by which her flesh is elevated to a supernatural level of being. . . ?<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. E. Dublanchy, art. *Marie*, in *D.T.C.*, vol. 9, col. 2364.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. M. Delgado Varela, O. de M., art. *cit.*, pp. 133-136.

<sup>19</sup> Sylvester de Saavedra, O. de M., *op. cit.*, vest. 2, n. 63.

In answer Saavedra says: "My opinion is that in the holy Mother of God there was and there is a corporeal sanctity distinct from spiritual grace, by which her flesh and body are truly and properly sanctified and constituted in the supernatural order. . . ." <sup>20</sup>

In fact Saavedra considers the divine Motherhood from three points of view:

(1) as the physical potency of conceiving the God-Man, a power which Saavedra conceives as being a supernatural participation in the fecundity of the Eternal Father. Given to Mary in the first instant of her existence, it is thus the reason and foundation for the natural existence of Mary as well as of her Immaculate Conception;

(2) the divine Motherhood *in fieri*, i.e., the actuation of this potency in virtue of which it unfolds its whole supernatural dynamism;

(3) the Mother-Son relation arising from actual conception.

In each of these aspects and in all taken together, the divine Maternity signifies a holiness superior to that of sanctifying grace. <sup>21</sup>

The grace of the divine Maternity itself is described as a physical form, which is a formal participation in the fecundity of the Eternal Father, infused in the generative potency of the Virgin Mother, putting her in first act for the generation of the God-Man. This corporal form formally constitutes in Mary her supernatural corporal sanctity. <sup>22</sup> Saavedra does not contend that the grace of divine Motherhood formally sanctifies Mary's soul; that function belongs to sanctifying grace. The divine Motherhood, however, in itself is a more excellent grace than sanctifying grace, <sup>23</sup> a more sublime

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 65.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Varela, *art. cit.*, p. 137, n. 16; pp. 155-159.

<sup>22</sup> Saavedra, *op. cit.*, vest. 2, n. 186.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 188.



sanctifying form; it is the root principle, *at least morally*, of Mary's sanctifying grace and her other supernatural gifts.<sup>24</sup>

It is not Mary's *actual* divine Motherhood which formally sanctifies her body, but that grace whereby Mary is only in first act with respect to her conception of the God-Man. Although the further actuation whereby Mary actually conceives her Son and possesses a Mother-Son relation is a factor in Mary's complete sanctification, Saavedra speaks of only one corporal form as formally sanctifying, i.e., the form which puts Mary in first act with respect to the generation of her Son.

In virtue of this grace Mary becomes the principal cause of the generation of the God-Man. As such causality is in itself a formal participation in the divine nature as fecund in the Father, this grace sanctifies Mary's soul by way of formal causality.<sup>25</sup>

Whatever claims are made for Saavedra's doctrine, it is clear that he never contended that the divine Motherhood *formally* sanctifies Mary's *soul*; the divine Motherhood merely demands, by an exigency which is at least moral, her soul's perfect sanctification.

The importance of Saavedra in the controversy consists chiefly in his emphasis on the divine Motherhood as a formal participation in the fecundity of the Eternal Father,<sup>26</sup> a point taken up by later theologians in developing their teaching on the divine Motherhood as a formal principle of the sanctification of Mary's soul.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 203.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, vest. 1, nn. 460-475.

<sup>26</sup> J. M. Alonso, C.M.F. interprets Saavedra's teaching on formal participation in the fecundity of the Eternal Father as signifying for Saavedra mere appropriation; however, this interpretation fails, I believe, to do justice to Saavedra. Cf. *Naturaleza y fundamento de la gracia de la Virgen*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 5, 1946, pp. 74-77.

*Ripalda's Theory*

Ripalda treats of the sanctifying power of the divine Motherhood in the fourth book of his *De Ente Supernaturali*, wherein he treats of the properties of supernatural acts. The question proposed in the 79th disputation is: "whether the dignity of the Mother of God itself alone, independently of habitual grace, can sanctify her person and make her acts meritorious of eternal life?"

The question whether the divine Maternity by itself alone could make the actions of God's Mother meritorious of eternal life is placed in the hypothetical order; for Ripalda holds that in the actual order of divine providence all human actions, even those of Christ, are *de facto* meritorious because of sanctifying grace. But the question of Mary's sanctification solely through her divine Motherhood is rather a question of fact in the actual order of providence.<sup>27</sup>

For Ripalda, there would be no question even of the absolute possibility of the divine Motherhood dignifying the Mother of God's actions so as to make them meritorious *de condigno* of eternal life, if the divine Motherhood itself were not a sanctifying, justifying grace, constituting God's Mother His friend and His adopted Child.<sup>28</sup>

The divine Motherhood is understood by Ripalda in the traditional sense. He doesn't bother to analyze or define the

<sup>27</sup> Fr. Varela fails to make this distinction in treating of Ripalda's doctrine; cf. *art. cit.*, p. 134.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. J. M. de Ripalda, S.J., *De Ente Supernaturali*, disp. 79, sect. 1, n. 2: "Ponimus secundo, explicationem controversiae pendere ab explicando, an Maternitas Dei sit dignitas justificans, et constituens Matrem amicam Deo, et filiam adoptivam ipsius; siquidem praemisimus superioribus aliquam gratiam justificantem esse necessariam ad meritum condignum vitae aeternae *etiam de potentia absoluta*. Item non unam, sed plures esse possibiles, quae opera dignificent ad tale meritum? Quare ubi ostendatur eam dignitatem Matris Dei esse justificantem, ostenditur plane esse sufficientem ad condignitatem meriti." (*Italics are my own.*)

notion. He treats the divine Motherhood as a supernatural relation of union between Mother and divine Son, a union which is both spiritual and corporal. There is no doubt that he is speaking of *actual* divine Motherhood, taken in itself, independently of sanctifying grace and other supernatural gifts.

The divine Motherhood for Ripalda is a sanctifying grace far superior to ordinary sanctifying grace.<sup>29</sup> It is a more excellent participation in the divine nature, which originates an irrevocable state of union with God in Mary, issuing in continuous supernatural activity. For Ripalda, ordinary sanctifying grace is a physical participation<sup>30</sup> in the divine nature understood as the root principle of divine moral holiness. Of itself alone grace does not confer an integral divine filiation or adoption, but gives only a moral title to God's friendship, to freedom from sin, and the other so-called formal effects of sanctifying grace. These effects, according to Ripalda, are due not to grace alone, but to a new favor of God which the intrinsic dignity of grace demands by connatural right and which God cannot fail to give. Now the divine Motherhood by reason of its superior intrinsic excellence demands in an eminent degree all the effects of ordinary sanctifying grace.<sup>31</sup> But, as is the case in habitual grace, the divine Maternity does not of itself realize these effects; a new favor and intervention of God is required.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, according to Ripalda, there is only a moral connection between the divine Motherhood and actual holiness which includes God's personal love. However, this moral connection, he says, suffices for the divine Motherhood to sanctify

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, disp. 79, n. 38.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. G. R. de Yurre, *La teoría de la maternidad divina formalmente santificante, en Ripalda y Scheeben*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 3, 1944, pp. 256-257.

<sup>31</sup> Ripalda, *op. cit.*, disp. 79, n. 44.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, nn. 76, 102.



formally Mary's soul. For formal participation in the holiness of God is a formal similitude or likeness with the divine nature understood as the root principle of divine moral holiness. But the divine Motherhood is such a likeness with the divine nature; for it is the foundation and root source from which all the effects of grace derive in Mary (including the supernatural infused virtues),<sup>33</sup> even though they follow only by a *moral* necessity from the intrinsic dignity of her Motherhood. Hence the formal sanctification of Mary through the divine Motherhood according to Ripalda.

The brevity which is necessary in this paper does not do justice to the theologians whose doctrines we must treat. Nevertheless, it should be clear that Ripalda is not using the terms *formally sanctifying* in the sense of immediately realizing a union which of itself confers God personal love. In reality, Ripalda holds nothing more than a sort of fundamental holiness coming to Mary in virtue of the divine Motherhood alone; only an additional divine favor gives her divine love and friendship.

Ripalda's main contribution to the solution to our problem is the impressive array of texts from the Fathers, and the arguments he has elaborated to establish the sanctification of Mary through her divine Motherhood, for which all theologians are grateful.

#### *Scheeben's Contribution*

Unlike Ripalda who takes the traditional notion of divine Motherhood, Scheeben elaborated a new concept. He unites the two traditional notions of Mary's *Brideship* and her *Motherhood* into *one* idea which becomes for him the key to the whole of Mariology. Whereas Ripalda uses sanctifying grace as his starting point and basis of comparison, Scheeben

<sup>33</sup> Cf. G. R. de Yurre, *art. cit.*, p. 261.

prefers to exploit the analogy of the divine Motherhood with the Hypostatic Union in Christ.<sup>34</sup> More than any other theologian of his century, he engaged in defending the formal sanctifying power of Mary's Motherhood.

Scheeben conceives the divine Motherhood as the supernatural distinguishing mark of Mary's person. It is more than a mere privilege or office divinely entrusted to her. It involves the highest service a mere creature can offer to God. For in her Motherhood Mary co-operates in the birth of the most perfect Son that can be born, and touches the very confines of the divinity. In union with the eternal Father she conceives His Son in her womb. The Son makes the perfect gift of Himself to Mary, giving Himself to be her Son, clothing Himself with her flesh. He could not give Himself to Mary without communicating to her His Spirit, who unites Mary with Himself as principle of all her holiness just as He is the principle of holiness in the Church.<sup>35</sup>

The mutual giving of the persons of the *Word* and *Mary* to each other in mutual consent can be described only as a divine marriage. Mary possesses the Word who gives Himself to her as her Son, and forms with her an organic oneness, in which Mary is His closest associate and helper in the most intimate and permanent community of life.<sup>36</sup>

Mary is Bride and Mother of the Word: Bride because she is Mother, and Mother because she is Bride. These two aspects are indissolubly associated in Mary; one element cannot be adequately conceived without the other. These two elements taken together constitute what Scheeben calls the supernatural distinguishing mark of Mary's person.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> For an elaborate comparison of Scheeben with Ripalda, see de Yurre, *art. cit.*, pp. 255-286.

<sup>35</sup> M. J. Scheeben, *Dogmatik*, vol. 3, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1882, nn. 1588, 1602, 1609.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1588.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1597; cf. Charles Feckes, *The Mystery of the Divine Mother-*

Mary's state as Bride, specifically designed to achieve and complete her Motherhood, is a spiritual and personal union with the Word. This bridal union is described in terms of a *matrimonium ratum* between Mary and the Word, a real objective consecration and anointing, by which the Word is already made her own Son by right. These divine nuptials do not merely prepare or place in prospect the actual divine Motherhood, but already give it *virtually* and *radically*. In this form the divine Motherhood is possessed by Mary from the first moment of her existence.<sup>38</sup>

Mary's divine brideship reaches its perfect completion, however, only with the infusion of the Word into her body to make her actually His Mother. This perfected union with the Word, described as a *matrimonium consummatum*, is the most perfect analogue of the Hypostatic Union.<sup>39</sup> However, the spiritual union, which is intensified by the Word actually taking flesh in her body, is formal with respect to the bodily union; for in its purely psychological aspects the divine Motherhood does not reveal the deepest and most proper foundation of the dignity of Mary's Motherhood.<sup>40</sup>

The formal perfection of the supernatural personal character of Mary by which the bridal Motherhood is constituted is not merely an accident or a moral relation; it is in a sense a hypostatic, substantial or essential distinguishing mark of Mary's person, due to her spiritual union with the Word dwelling in her with whom she is formed into one organic whole. By reason of this union the whole dignity and perfec-

hood, New York, 1941, pp. 65-66; see also E. Druwé, S.J., *Position et structure du Traité Marial*, in *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Etudes Mariales*, vol. 2, 1936, pp. 26-27.

<sup>38</sup> M. J. Scheeben, *op. cit.*, n. 1590.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1609.



tion of Mary is determined, even her substantial individuality.<sup>41</sup>

Thus the divine Motherhood is a substantial grace in content, mode, and time. For fundamentally it is the divine essence of her Son infused into her. His divine person is joined with her in a substantial manner; He becomes grown together with her as a fruit with its root, and dwells bodily in her. Moreover, Mary is endowed with this substantial grace from the beginning of her existence, making her always the bride of the Person of the Word, so that this relation to His Person conditions and determines her whole being.<sup>42</sup>

In virtue of her consecration by this "grace of union", Mary's whole being is sanctified in a way similar to that in which the Humanity of Christ is sanctified by the Hypostatic Union. Hence the grace of the divine Motherhood is also, in an analogous way, a *gratia sanctificans* and *gratum faciens*, in itself "virtually and formally" making its subject pleasing to God.<sup>43</sup>

In brief, the grace of divine Motherhood consists formally in an entirely unique possession of uncreated grace, in the bridal, spiritual union of Mary with her Son. By itself and as such it sanctifies and makes Mary holy and pleasing to God. It is a *forma sanctificans* precisely because it is the most perfect image of the Hypostatic Union, and thus gives her possession of uncreated grace.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, according to Scheeben, the grace of divine Motherhood does not consist formally in Mary's physical co-operation in the conception and birth of Christ.<sup>45</sup> Nor does it by itself alone adequately produce the effects proper to sanctifying

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1602.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1603.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1605.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1609.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1609: Here Scheeben wrongly thinks that Ripalda and Vega limit the notion of the Divine Motherhood merely to its physiological aspects.

grace, such as the right to the beatific vision and the capacity to merit eternal life; all such effects belong to the accidental or moral order.<sup>46</sup>

The divine Motherhood is a substantial grace, somehow in the substantial order, analogous to the Hypostatic Union; in this union Mary is united to the Word in a substantial manner determining the supernatural character of her person and elevating it to the hypostatic order. This grace of spiritual personal union with the Word as a Bride-Mother, *of itself, immediately* and in a manner superior to sanctifying grace, makes her the image and likeness of God, the only-begotten and first-born daughter of the Father, excludes all sin, gives absolute, even physical impeccability, and thus makes Mary "substantially" holy and pleasing to God. The divine Motherhood does not take over the functions of sanctifying grace in Mary, but it is the foundation, the measure, and the root source from which flow sanctifying grace and all Mary's supernatural privileges and graces,<sup>47</sup> as accidents in the proper sense flow from their substance.<sup>48</sup>

For Scheeben, then, the grace of the divine Motherhood which formally sanctifies Mary's *soul* is a grace which is given her in the first moment of her existence. *This grace* actuates her soul in stages which are necessarily included in the initial grace. *Actual* divine Motherhood is only the fuller realization, a kind of *delayed* formal effect of her original and "substantial" bridal union with the Word.

What formally sanctifies Mary's soul, then, if I read Scheeben correctly, is not her *actual* divine Motherhood, but the "potential" divine Motherhood which she has as Bride of the Word. Her *actual* divine Motherhood only intensifies the formal sanctification already possessed by Mary, somewhat

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1609.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Druwé, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

in the way that an external act intensifies the corresponding internal act.

Here I would like to point out only two of the difficulties inherent in this theory. (1) If the two elements of Brideship and Motherhood are *essentially* and *indissolubly* connected, how then can Mary *freely* accept the divine Motherhood at the Annunciation since she already possessed it as a necessary, *not a hypothetical*, consequence of her Brideship since her birth? (2) Moreover, what can Scheeben mean by a "substantial union" of Mary with the Word, a substantial, essential, hypostatic mark distinguishing Mary's person? Here it would seem that Scheeben's enthusiasm bubbles, leading him to forget the limitations of the use of analogy.

Scheeben, however, has made a very great contribution to our understanding of the riches of the divine Motherhood. His exploitation of its analogy with the Hypostatic Union is extremely valuable. Nevertheless, we are still looking for a theologian who teaches that Mary's soul is immediately-formally sanctified by her *actual* divine Motherhood.

#### *Nicolas' Solution*

Father M.-J. Nicolas, O.P., is sometimes cited on both sides of the controversy. His penetrating article on the integral concept of the divine Motherhood is a significant contribution to the solution of our problem.

Mary is Mother because she has conceived a man and thus became the original principle of human flesh in a person distinct from her. She is Mother of God, because she has conceived the Son of God whom she has not called into existence, but who has drawn her to Himself, clothing Himself with her flesh in her womb.<sup>49</sup> Father Nicolas distinguishes

<sup>49</sup> Cf. M.-J. Nicolas, O.P., *Le concept intégral de maternité divine*, in *Revue Thomiste*, vol. 42, 1937, pp. 62-63; 230-272.



between the essential and the integral concept of the divine Motherhood. Essentially the divine Motherhood consists in "the assumption of her human motherhood," by the Son of God. This expression means that the assumptive action by which the human nature of Christ is made to subsist in the Word, at the same time constitutes Mary formally and physically the Mother of God. This action elevates Mary's generative activity so that it issues in a supernatural term without intrinsically modifying her generative action. The "assumptive action" itself is entirely incommunicable, according to Nicolas, and in no way elevates Mary's generative action itself in its intrinsic efficacy, but only in its term.<sup>50</sup> Father Nicolas explains as follows:<sup>51</sup>

. . . When we speak of the assumption of a human motherhood which is a tendential, relative reality, we express only the elevation of this motherhood to a supernatural term which is given to it and consequently made truly its own. The Word draws to Himself both His humanity and the action from which it proceeds; the humanity to subsist in Him, the action to be completed in Him: *actio est in passo*. Here the formal difference must not be lost sight of in the development of this analogy: while the humanity of Christ is intrinsically grasped by the divine person, the term alone of the maternal action is thus substantially supernaturalized and this term is an effect which does not remain immanent in its cause. At the instant of nature when the generative activity attains its term, it separates the term from its principle and opposes them to each other. The obediential potency of the mother is then crowned with a perfection which remains external to it and which is directly received by the nature assumed by the divine person of her Son. In one word which bespeaks at once all the likenesses and differences: the reality which is formally assumed in this mystery, is the formal term of the virginal motherhood as such.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

The supernatural reality which is conferred on Mary by the assumption of her motherhood is the foundation of a relation whose term is essentially separated from the person of Mary. This relation is not a relation of union, but of origin, even of opposition. For the person terminating a generative action is separated from the person who conceives him at the very instant the new human nature appears with personal being. The proper effect of generative action is *precisely* separation, for it terminates at the person only in giving him existence apart in a determined nature. Mary, therefore, is not substantially united to the divine Word. The instant the Hypostatic Union is realized, the flesh substantially sanctified is no longer Mary's flesh, although it proceeds immediately from her and preserves this élan of origin. Yet the two substances are joined in the closest possible way.<sup>52</sup>

Thus the divine Motherhood, considered in itself, apart from its spiritual implications, is not a UNION with the Word Incarnate. Rather it is a relation of origin, founded upon a supernatural reality which stands midway between two orders of union with God, namely the Hypostatic Union and the accidental, intentional union realized through sanctifying grace. Although in itself it is not a formal principle of holiness in Mary, the divine Motherhood is the foundation, root source, and measure of the grace which formally sanctifies Mary's soul. Likewise, by its very essence it is entirely orientated toward the grace of the Hypostatic Union.

The divine Motherhood itself, however, can be called a grace insofar as it is a kind of possession of God, a possession by way of physical right to union with God in knowledge and love. This right is essential to a Mother whose Son is God. The supernatural physical reality, which is the foundation of

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 241-242.

this right, is thus in a true sense a grace, although it does not formally realize a union with God.<sup>53</sup>

However, to limit the divine Motherhood in this way to its bare physical essence is to make Mary's divine Motherhood something *less* than human.

The integral concept of human motherhood includes more than its *physical* essence. If all of man's corporal actions are dignified by their human and spiritual end, the act of human generation is dignified in a special manner, because it is an operation of the human substance itself. Its radical principle is not the body as such, but the composite of body and soul. Moreover, it has in view not a brute supposit, a portion of matter given over to a transitory autonomy, but a person, a conscious and spiritual unity. This fact gives a kind of eternal dignity to the generative action and subjects it to proper natural laws. The two beings who unite for such work ought to perform it not only according to the flesh, but with their whole personalities and all that is most complete and perfect in human love. Moreover, the work of generation is far from finished at the birth or even with caring for the corporal needs of the child; it has in view above all the formation of the soul and the personality of the child. For the parents are responsible for the *person* they bring into the world who continues always to be the consecration of their indissoluble union.

Thus the generative activity whose most striking side is so concerned with matter and the senses, has a whole interior side immediately governed by the laws of the spirit, laws founded in the very nature of man's being. Hence, it is metaphysically impossible for man to make any purely animal use of his generative power which is not inhuman and immoral. If a woman conceives a child in violation of the laws of her spiritual nature and in any way other than by human consent, that conception is not fully human. It is true that because of

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.



original sin the spirit governs this life of the flesh only from afar, as it were, by a political control, wherein complete mastery escapes it, a fact which is its shame. But thanks to the institution and sacrament of marriage and to the ensemble of habitual attitudes and intentions which it is destined to fashion in the husband and wife, human generation is restored to the status of an act commanded by human love with a clear view of the end pursued through the common will to bring a man into the world.<sup>54</sup>

This spiritual accompaniment which is essential to integrally human generation corresponds to the accompaniment of passion and instinct attached by nature to animal generation, which man also experiences in his animal nature. The role of the spirit does not consist essentially in any quantitative limitation of sensible pleasure, but in the conscious voluntary love of the end intended by nature, a love which makes the pleasure serve perfectly its primary purpose.<sup>55</sup>

True, there is always some concomitance, at least virtual, of the spiritual forces of the soul in human generation, insofar as the spiritual soul of the parent is the substantial form of the physical principle of generation. But the spiritual accompaniment will be so much the more perfect as this spirituality passes more and more perfectly into act through the explicit conscious ordination of the generative function to the end inscribed in it by nature. Such ordination to an end supposes that the end be consciously known and loved. The spirit loves and wills precisely what the body begets.<sup>56</sup>

The generative act thus by its very nature calls for this connatural concomitance of the will, and finds therein the perfection of its operation. This role of the spirit is contingent owing to the frailty of fallen nature; but its existence is a

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-75.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

necessity and its absence a privation. Although a perfection extrinsic to the generative act itself, this spiritual accompaniment is intrinsically demanded by it.<sup>57</sup>

This same reason which led the Word to assume only a nature ideally human and adorned with all the gifts of the state of innocence, led Him to submit Himself only to a generation which was ideally human and radiant with spiritual love. In making this human conception His own, He removed from it as from his own human nature, every shadow of sin or ignorance. That is why He wished it not only to be chaste and virginal, but that it be conscious and voluntary, endowed with all the sentiments which motherhood is capable of inspiring in the human heart.<sup>58</sup>

What Nicolas calls the "assumption of the divine Motherhood", begins then with Mary's spirit and is completed in her flesh. Just as it is from the soul that the flesh has the aptitude to be assumed by the person of the Word, so it is from the spiritual soul of Mary that her flesh could be worthy to be fecundated by the Holy Spirit. However, spirituality of nature alone is not enough for a woman to be fit for the grace of divine Motherhood. Otherwise every woman, even a sinner, would have this aptitude. Spirituality in act is necessary, because it is by her action that Mary attains the divine Person, hence by a spiritual action concomitant with the generative action. Thus by her interior and total consent, Mary's potency to become a mother became an obediential potency *secundum congruitatem* for the divine Motherhood. It is by the part that Mary's soul took in the generation of her Son that the Word, without any indignity, made His own not only an animated flesh, but also gave Himself as Son to a Mother conscious of her Motherhood.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77, 240.

Moreover, to receive the supernatural gift of her Son, Mary had to receive Him with love. For the primary content of a gift is love, which cannot be received formally except with love. But to love her divine Son, Mary needed grace. Hence the divine Motherhood presupposes in the soul of Mary a first grace which permits her to conform her thought and her love to the divine Son who is given to her. What concupiscence and human love in its most noble integrity does in other generations, the faith and love of Mary does here. "Mary believed, and what she believed was done in her."<sup>60</sup>

At the instant of birth, when the child is separated from its mother, an instinctive love more profound than that of the will arises in the heart of both mother and child. This love is *natural* in the strongest sense of the term; it is imposed with the first inclinations of nature, and cannot be violated without monstrosity.<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, in the measure in which the generative act is accompanied by the spiritual, it accomplishes something spiritual and immortal. In Mary and Jesus what is accomplished in the flesh has its immediate, full, and eternal echo in the spirit.<sup>62</sup>

Hence, although through the generation and birth of her Son, Mary is separated from Him, "this separation is of such a nature that it makes of the Son of God a *connatural* object of knowledge and love for His Mother."<sup>63</sup> Mary "naturally", "instinctively" regards her divine Son as the *connatural* object of her maternal love.

Thus Mary's life of grace and glory is not something added to her life as Mother. It is the very life of her maternal soul as such, elevated to the highest possible perfection. The holi-

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78-80, 237-238.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86, 261.



ness proper to Mary was and is eternally the holiness of being God's Mother.<sup>64</sup>

Mary's holiness is a union with God which is not essentially different from the union of the Saints with God through sanctifying grace and glory. But it is a new, special mode of union, founded, proportioned, and measured by the divine Motherhood itself.<sup>65</sup>

In such brief compass, it is impossible to give an adequate account of Father Nicolas' thought. It should be clear, however, that according to him the divine Motherhood in itself, in its essential elements, is not a formal principle of Mary's sanctification. Formal sanctification is given only by Mary's sanctifying grace which the essence of the divine Motherhood implies but which is essential only to her integral motherhood. Hence, Mary's actual essential Motherhood does not formally sanctify her soul, but gives to the formal sanctification which she already possessed a new dimension, a special mode, making her holiness entirely maternal. Although Nicolas touches on the idea of Mary's assimilation to the Father in her generation of His Son, he does not find in that notion any element of Mary's formal sanctification.

#### *Müller's Views*

Dr. Alois Müller, like Father Nicolas, holds that Mary is formally sanctified by her sanctifying grace. Whereas Nicolas holds that this grace is intrinsic to the integral concept of divine Motherhood, but only necessarily implied in its essential concept, Müller holds that sanctifying grace itself by its very nature is maternal in character, designed to achieve divine Motherhood.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Alois Müller, *Um die Grundlagen der Mariologie*, in *Divus Thomas* (Freiburg), vol. 29, 1951, pp. 385-401; condensed in *Theology Digest*, vol. 1,

In Mary and in each individual Christian, too, the mystery of giving birth to Christ is fulfilled under the condition of preparing by faith for the Word of God. In Mary who has the fullness and perfection of grace, it achieves physical divine Motherhood. In us, who participate the same grace but in an imperfect way, it achieves only an analogous divine motherhood, since through it we conceive Christ in our souls.

Mary is simply the one full of grace. All that we know of grace and of the Church has its perfect form in Mary, just as whatever we know of Mary finds a correlative in the Church and in the life of grace.

It is clear from Müller's work that the perfection of Mary's *actual* Motherhood is not altogether identical with the grace which formally sanctified her; rather it appears as a kind of delayed formal effect. Father Lennerz, S.J., notes a special difficulty in regard to Müller's theory of the maternal character of grace: He asks, in view of this theory, what the perfection of the fullness of sanctifying grace should accomplish in Christ. Does Christ become the mother of Himself? <sup>67</sup>

#### *Rozo's Contribution*

Father William Rozo, C.M.F., devotes his book entitled *Sancta Maria Mater Dei* principally to the divine Motherhood as a formal principle of Mary's sanctification.<sup>68</sup> While he is a disciple of Scheeben in this matter, Father Rozo says that his opinion approaches more closely that of Father Nicolas, but presents conclusions which, he says, are only implicit in the latter.

1953, pp. 139-144. See also his patristic study entitled *Ecclesia-Maria: Die Einheit Marias und der Kirche*, Freiburg, 1951.

<sup>67</sup> H. Lennerz, S.J., *Maria-Ecclesia*, in *Gregorianum*, vol. 35, 1954, pp. 90-98.

<sup>68</sup> Gulielmus Rozo, C.M.F., *Sancta Maria Mater Dei, seu de sanctificatione Beatae Mariae Virginis vi Divinae Maternitatis*, Mediolani, 1943.

Whereas Nicolas finds that the supernatural reality which is the foundation of the Mother-Son relation in Mary is not a sanctifying grace in itself, Father Rozo sees in it a formal participation in the divine nature as fecund in the eternal Father and, therefore, a formally sanctifying principle. ". . . The divine Motherhood formally sanctifies the Blessed Virgin because this Motherhood in its essence, in its constitutive element, is determined by the supreme accidental participation of the divine nature, than which none greater can be given to a mere creature. This sanctification is first of all a sanctification of the soul and then of the body of the Virginal Mother of God."<sup>69</sup>

Unlike Nicolas, who admits no intrinsic elevation of Mary's generative action, but only an elevation by reason of its term, Rozo demands an intrinsic elevation of Mary's generative action in order to salvage the truth of the divine Motherhood.<sup>70</sup> This elevation consists precisely in the grace of participating in the fecundity of the eternal Father, to whom alone it is proper to generate His Son and send Him into the world.<sup>71</sup>

Father J. M. Bover, S.J., who goes into a much more detailed analysis of the intrinsic elevation of Mary's generative activity, is of the opinion that this formal participation in the fecundity of the eternal Father is a formally sanctifying grace given to Mary in the first instant of her conception, a grace identical with her transcendent virginity, which constitutes Mary formally but only in first act the Mother of God.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53. Rozo depends largely on Saavedra, whose work is mentioned above, and José de la Cerda, *Maria revelatio Trinitatis et attributorum Dei*, Almeriae, 1640; cf. Rozo, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. J. M. Bover, S.J., *La gracia de la Divina Maternidad*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 5, 1946, pp. 147-164; also *Cómo conciben los Santos Padres el*



Father Rozo, however, holds that this participation in the divine paternity is given to Mary only at the time of the Annunciation.

This grace of divine Motherhood is a *vital* sanctity, according to Rozo, namely a principle of supernatural operation inhering immediately in the soul. Moreover, it is a fully vital sanctity. It penetrates and perfects Mary's soul not only in its spiritual capacities, but also in its sensitive and vegetative powers. It sanctifies Mary's whole soul, as sensitive and vegetative as well as intellectual principle of all her activity. This grace is like that of our first parents which made them immune from concupiscence and immortal as well as adopted children of God.<sup>73</sup>

It seems that, according to Rozo, the grace of divine Motherhood would replace sanctifying grace in Mary's soul at the Incarnation. For its formal efficacy would leave nothing more for sanctifying grace to accomplish in Mary. The grace by which she is formally (really *in actu primo proximo*) Mother of God is the identical reality by which she is formally and totally sanctified. Such a doctrine is hardly the one taught by Father Nicolas.

Moreover, while for Nicolas the supernatural reality founding the Mother-Son relation in Mary is by nature consequent upon Mary's generative action, for Father Rozo, this supernatural reality is by nature prior to it.

Nicolas had pretty well convinced theologians that if they were ever going to find in the very essence of the divine Motherhood a principle formally sanctifying Mary's soul, they would have to focus their attention on some aspect other than direct union with her Son. Father Rozo's main contribution to the solution to the problem seems to be that he once more

*misterio de la divina maternidad. La virginidad, clave de la maternidad divina, in Estudios Marianos, vol. 8, 1949, pp. 185-236.*

<sup>73</sup> Rozo, *op. cit.*, pp. 125, 128.

centered the attention of theologians on Mary's participation in the fecundity of the eternal Father as a formal principle of her sanctification.

*Alonso's Theory*

The theologians who have devoted themselves in a special way during the past ten years to the explanation of the divine Motherhood as a formal participation in the fecundity of the eternal Father are Father Joaquín María Alonso, C.M.F., and Father Delgado Varela, O. de M.

Father Alonso finds in the Greek Fathers and their interpretation of the function of the divine Persons in the communication of grace the basis for his opinion regarding the trinitarian nature of all grace.<sup>74</sup> In the light of his patristic study he gives a novel and somewhat daring interpretation to the dogma that all divine operations of efficient causality are common to the divine Persons, from whom such operations proceed as from one principle. He holds that even in the order of efficient causality the three divine Persons retain their distinct personal functions in identity of operation and, at least in the supernatural order, impress their personal characters on the effect produced.<sup>75</sup> He would have benefited a great deal, I believe, from the study of Father M. de la Taille's theory of created actuation by uncreated act, and Father Malachi Donnelly's application of this theory to the inhabitation of the divine Persons.<sup>76</sup> Father Alonso, however, does not even refer to these authors.

<sup>74</sup> Joaquín María Alonso, C.M.F., *Hacia una Mariología Trinitaria. Dos Escuelas*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 10, 1950, pp. 141-191; vol. 12, 1952, pp. 237-267. See also his article, *Naturaleza y fundamento de la gracia de la Virgen*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 5, 1946, pp. 11-110.

<sup>75</sup> J. M. Alonso, C.M.F., *Naturaleza y fundamento . . .*, pp. 49-54.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. M. de la Taille, S.J., *The Hypostatic Union and Created Actuation by Uncreated Act*, West Baden College, 1952; also Malachi J. Donnelly, S.J.,

While every grace consists in the life of the Blessed Trinity unfolding itself in the soul, the divine Motherhood is an altogether singular supernatural communication of trinitarian life, giving Mary a specifically distinct kind of possession of the divine Persons in a presence which is reductively substantial. The Father gives Himself to Mary in a formal participation of His own fecundity. By reason of this communication the divine fecundity which manifests itself within the divinity in the Word, is now manifested externally through the unique and perfect image of the divine paternity which alone could be the reason why Mary could have the same Son as the eternal Father.<sup>77</sup>

This gift of the Father to Mary brings with it the gift of the Son who gives Himself formally as Son; for the only reason that the Son of God could be the Son of Mary is precisely that His personal being is to be Son.<sup>78</sup>

The Holy Spirit also gives Himself according to His own personal function, realizing in Mary the fecundity of the Father and the filiation of the Son; for every external actuality must be "verified in Him, who is the ultimate trinitarian actualization".<sup>79</sup>

The supernatural form which the presence of the divine Persons effects in Mary is called her personal maternal being, her *esse maternale*, which receives its specification directly from the trinitarian relation of the Father.<sup>80</sup>

This trinitarian presence was in Mary from the first instant of her conception, and remains always specifically one identical presence before, during, and after the Incarnation.<sup>81</sup>

*The Inhabitation of the Holy Spirit: A Solution According to De La Taille*, in *Theological Studies*, vol. 8, 1947, pp. 445-470.

<sup>77</sup> J. M. Alonso, C.M.F., *art. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.



Before the Incarnation it was a dispositive preparation of Mary's whole being. In the Incarnation it is the effective realization of itself. The only thing which distinguishes the trinitarian presence before and after the Incarnation is the realization of an effect achieved in the Incarnation.<sup>82</sup>

By analogy, this *esse maternale* is for Mary what the *esse personale* is for the Humanity of Christ. It elevates her whole being, not merely in an accidental way, as is the case with sanctifying grace, but with a kind of hypostatic, personal elevation. Mary is vitally and organically built into the supernatural order.<sup>83</sup> The *esse* is absolutely and totally THE supernatural form which gives to Mary her specific supernatural being. It is the only sanctifying form she possesses. It is an eminently sanctifying grace, sanctifying her in all orders of her being.<sup>84</sup>

Thus we see that also according to Father Alonso the perfection which formally sanctifies Mary's soul is something antecedent to, and the cause of, her actual divine Motherhood. This sanctifying form is not only prior by nature to *actual* divine Motherhood, which as we have said belongs to Mary only from the instant of the conception of Christ; it is also prior in time.

#### *Varela's Synthesis*

Father Delgado Varela, O. de M., intends in his work<sup>85</sup> to overcome the existing differences of opinion among theologians by presenting a superior synthesis of doctrine. The philosophy

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>85</sup> J. M. Delgado Varela, O. de M., *Maternidad formalmente santificante (origen y desenvolvimiento de la controversia)*, in *Estudios Marianos*. vol. 8, 1949, pp. 133-184. Cf. also his other articles: *En torno al sistema mariológico de Saavedra* (actos "ad extra") y *sobrenaturaleza de la divina maternidad*, in *Estudios*, vol. 3, 1947, pp. 25-38; *Silvestre de Saavedra y su concepto de maternidad divina*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 4, 1945, pp. 521-558.

which serves him as a basis for his solution is a modalistic philosophy stemming from John Vincentius, O.P., and Palmieri.

The principle which Varela uses as a point of departure is the following: the fruit of generation is the norm and measure of the generative potency and act from which it issues; hence the Word of God Incarnate is the norm and measure of the divine Motherhood.<sup>86</sup>

The fruit of Mary's womb is the norm and measure of her Motherhood in the order of efficient causality, insofar as Mary, through the miraculous activity upon her maternal ovum, causes efficiently the formation of the human body of Christ with an exigency for its soul. Thus she is constituted *transmitting principle* of her own nature to her divine Son. This element is not a characteristic proper to the Mother of God, but proper only to virginal conception, which is in its own way a reflection of the virginal fecundity of the heavenly Father.<sup>87</sup>

The fruit of her womb is also the norm and measure of her Motherhood in the order of relation, insofar as Mary is really ordered to the generation of the Son of God. Thus she is constituted *generative principle* of a divine Person in human flesh. Her Motherhood in this relative order, says Varela, is divine and cannot be called human.

This relation is explained both by the filial gift of the Son to Mary giving her the quality of Mother, and by the gift of the virginal fecundity of the Father. The gift of the first two divine Persons implies the gift of the Holy Spirit in order to accomplish the sanctity which the Incarnation demands.

The Father gives Himself to Mary as generating principle, not to cause the formation of the body of Christ and thus be a transmitting principle of His human nature, but to give

<sup>86</sup> Cf. J. M. Delgado Varela, O. de M., *Maternidad formalmente santificante* . . . , pp. 148-149.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

Mary a relation to His Son as generative principle to His person. To be a transmitting principle of nature does not constitute the differentiating element of the divine Motherhood, although it is essential to the concept of motherhood.

The divine Motherhood thus includes within its essence the elements of efficiency, intrinsic finality, and relation.<sup>88</sup> It is not a *form* inhering in Mary, but a permanent accidental mode of being, indistinct from Mary's substance, divinely "maternalizing" her whole being. This mode is the term of the gift of the fecundity of the eternal Father, and is realized in Mary not through the mediacy of any form, but as the immediate term of a positive divine decree.<sup>89</sup> It belongs to Mary from the first instant of her conception, and all the stages of its actuation possess a functional unity. Up to the Incarnation, it is a real potency; in the Incarnation it is a potency and an act.<sup>90</sup>

It is this one mode which intrinsically and immediately transforms and sanctifies Mary's whole being; she has no other sanctifying principle.<sup>91</sup> Sanctity for Varela means a special communication of God which originates from a positive and personal decree of God to give Himself and to be present in the creature, and terminates in an intimate transformation and divinization of the creature by way of an accidental mode intrinsically modifying its subject.<sup>92</sup> Mary's Motherhood verifies in an eminently superior way this notion of sanctity. For it transforms physically and substantially Mary's whole being, renewing her with the fullness of grace. It exists in immediate dependence on a special decree or new favor of God. This grace is her complete sanctification—corporal, vital, and moral.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.



Such, in general, is the construction of Father Varela's solution. His underlying philosophy is not Aristotelian-Thomistic in character, but a new system of ontological correlativism, in which the concept of substance, accident, person, relation, etc., "are not objectivized in absolute reality, but in elements intertwined by an essential correlation."<sup>93</sup>

For Varela, then, the divine Motherhood is an accidental mode of being, indistinct from Mary's substance, intrinsically and immediately sanctifying Mary from the first moment of her conception. Although this sanctification achieves fuller realization in the Incarnation, it is not altogether identical with Mary's actual Motherhood.

#### *Suggestion for a Solution*

In regard to the opinions of theologians who hold that the divine Motherhood has a formally sanctifying character, I would like to make an observation which will serve as a point of departure for a suggestion toward a definite solution to the problem. I have observed that no theologian who holds that the grace of the divine Motherhood itself immediately sanctifies Mary's soul speaks of this grace as the identical perfection which formally constitutes Mary actual physical Mother of God. Saavedra, Scheeben, Rozo, Bover, Müller, Alonso, Delgado Varela—all of them place the element which formally sanctifies her soul in a perfection which precedes her actual conception of Christ. This perfection puts Mary *in actu primo* or even *in actu primo proximo* to the actual physical conception of Christ, but does not formally constitute Mary an actual physical Mother. According to them, the perfection or actuation formally constituting Mary an actual

<sup>93</sup> Cf. J. A. de Aldama, S.J., *El tema de la Divina Maternidad de María en la investigación de los últimos decenios*, in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 11, 1951, pp. 59-80, esp. pp. 79-80.

physical Mother is either a sort of delayed formal effect of what they call the grace of divine Motherhood, or some sort of further actuation distinct from this grace, but implicitly contained in it.

It seems to me that if there is any element in Mary's Motherhood capable of formally sanctifying her soul, it should be that perfection which formally makes her actual Mother of God, not merely Mother of God *in actu primo*. If I read the Fathers correctly, they place Mary's greatest dignity in the fact that she *is* the Mother of God, not in any perfection by which she is more or less *in actu primo proximo* to this Motherhood.

Hence, my suggestion toward a solution to the problem. First of all, the perfection by which Mary is actual physical Mother of God must be the permanent foundation of her Mother-Son relation. This perfection cannot consist in her generative action, which is a transient affair, no longer existing in Mary; nor is this perfection anything which merely puts her generative potency *in actu primo proximo* to generation. The perfection which formally constitutes Mary actual physical Mother of God is in her as a permanent foundation of her Mother-Son relation in consequence of her generative act; it is a perfection somehow achieved in her through the generative act itself. Nicolas is the only theologian writing on this question who understands the permanent foundation of Mary's Motherhood in this sense; but he holds that of itself it does not formally sanctify Mary's soul.

Secondly, I think that this perfection must consist in a formal participation in the fatherhood of the first Person of the Blessed Trinity. For Mary's Motherhood is the closest possible assimilation to the divine paternity. She is by her Motherhood assimilated to the Father in a way different from her assimilation to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. For of all Persons other than the Father, only Mary possesses with Him

a real relation to His own Son through generation. Hence she alone participates formally in the divine paternity as such.

Moreover, this perfection formally unites Mary with the Father, thus giving her a formal participation in the divine goodness itself, making her irrevocably an object of divine personal love and giving her an antecedent physical impeccability. Before the Incarnation she did not possess this kind of impeccability.

Thirdly, the only way I can see of giving any theological explanation of the formal participation in the divine fatherhood is through an application of Father de la Taille's theory of created actuation by uncreated act to the problem. Father Malachi Donnelly has already applied this theory to the inhabitation of the divine Persons through sanctifying grace in our souls. I would like to apply this same theory to the divine Motherhood. Here, however, I can only suggest it; discussion may bring out the explanation. Only in this way, it seems to me, can we come to any coherent explanation of Mary's greatest dignity.

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