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## THE NEXUS BETWEEN THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND MARY'S OTHER PREROGATIVES

In order to delineate more or less precisely the scope of this discussion I should first like to fix the meaning of the title assigned to me, and its implications.

By the Immaculate Conception we mean, of course, that singular privilege through which the Blessed Virgin, by the grace of God and in view of the merits of Christ the Redeemer, was, in the first instant of her conception, preserved free from all stain of original sin in order that she might be prepared to be the worthy Mother of God. This definition, which is substantially taken from the words of Pius IX in the bull *Ineffabilis Deus* (which defined the dogma), seems to account for all the causal factors of this privilege. The Immaculate Conception has as its *efficient* cause, God Himself; as its *meritorious* cause, Christ the Redeemer, and formally as Redeemer,<sup>1</sup> as its *final* cause, the Divine maternity, i.e., Mary's spotless conception is a fitting preparation, given with a view precisely to her office as Mother of God. The *material* cause of the Immaculate Conception is that human person who is the Virgin Mary; its *formal* cause is Divine grace as preservative<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is clear especially from the Constitution *Sollicitudo* of Alexander VII (8 Dec, 1661). Cf. DB, n. 1100.

<sup>2</sup> Some theologians describe the formal cause of Mary's Immaculate Conception as preservation from sin. In physical reality, however, grace alone can achieve preservation from sin. To the question, what reality intrinsic to Mary formally made her conception immaculate, the only answer is, Divine grace.

Preservation from sin is a mode or quality of Mary's initial grace, which mode looks to the fact that her conception should have been in sin and was not. Thus preservation names not the formal constitutive of her holiness but its mode, namely by way of exception to the general law of transmission of sin. Cf. B. H. Merkelbach, O.P., *Mariologia*, Parisus, 1939, pp. 108-109, G. M. Roschini, O.S.M., *Mariologia*, ed. 2, vol. 3, Romae, 1948, pp. 20-21.

The phrase "Mary's other prerogatives" is used here in a wide sense to designate—except the Immaculate Conception itself—all of Our Lady's supernatural privileges, offices and endowments, including the Divine Maternity. These we can classify under three main headings, namely: (1) those supernatural privileges which relate to God and Christ, i.e. (a) her Motherhood of the Man Christ, Who is the Divine Redeemer; and (b) her predestination and pre-election by God. (2) Those which relate to herself. These include, besides the Immaculate Conception (a) her complete sinlessness, (b) her perfect and perpetual virginity; (c) her fullness of grace and merit; (d) her eminent wisdom; (e) her glorious Assumption into heaven, and her Exaltation there. (3) Lastly, those prerogatives of Our Lady which regard us, namely: (a) her spiritual Motherhood with respect to us; (b) her mediatorship, both in general and in particular, as embracing (c) her Co-redemption of us and (d) her office as Dispensatrix of graces, and finally (e) her Queenship over all creation.

The word "nexus" I take to mean causal relationships; any true causal connections.

The point of this discussion, therefore, is to try to determine what causal relationships, if any, exist between the Immaculate Conception on the one hand, and the above named privileges of Our Lady, on the other hand. Two questions are here involved. In what ways does the Immaculate Conception cause these various prerogatives, or any of them? In what ways, secondly, is it caused by them? Necessary brevity demands the restriction of our attention to the first question: the second we can consider only indirectly and implicitly.

I shall attempt to answer the first question by considering Our Lady's Conception in relation to each of the three classes of her prerogatives. Because of the demands of the order of discipline here, however, I shall consider the Immaculate Conception in relation·

- (1) to the privileges of Mary which regard her within herself.
- (2) to her privileges which regard God.
- (3) to her prerogatives with respect to us.

## I

The exalted prerogatives of Our Lady which regard her in herself we can divide into two general classes (1) those which constitute her eminent and (to us) ineffable sanctity (her sinlessness, her fullness of grace and merit, her wisdom, her virginity, etc.); and those which pertain to her personal glorification (her bodily Assumption and Exaltation in heaven).

What is the connection, first, between Our Lady's personal holiness, that is, the harmony of the fullness of the sanctifying grace, perfect moral virtues, sanctified intellectuality, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit—and her Immaculate Conception? The answer is as evident as light itself. The Immaculate Conception formally considered *is* Mary's holiness; conversely, her holiness *is* the grace which makes her conception immaculate.

For Our Lady's sanctity is, formally speaking, the supernatural organism which consists of her habitual grace, her infused virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And her Immaculate Conception is, in its formal aspect, that same supernatural organism, because Mary's preservation from original sin was achieved by those supernatural habits which are contrary to sin and which alone formally expel sin.

We know that Mary's initial grace and charity (that is, the preservative grace of her Conception) was never lost, or diminished, or tarnished. That grace and charity were rather perfected, intensified throughout her mortal life. But the intensifying of habit does not alter its essence or definition or identity. So the grace in Mary's soul at the instant of her death—presuming that she died—was the identical grace of her

Immaculate Conception. Increase had modified that grace; it had not made it either specifically or numerically a different grace. So, for example, the habit of charity which the Triune God infused into Mary's soul at her conception: numerically that same habit is in her will now and forever in heaven. God does not work by halves: the masterpiece of human sanctity which is Mary God has essentially constituted in that first instant in which His love called her into being and into holiness.

Of Our Lady's prerogatives, none perhaps are better understood by us than those which constitute her own holiness; because, of all her prerogatives, these are closest to us, distant though they may be. And the substance of all her spiritual endowment was hers from the instant of the creation of her soul. This truth perhaps gives a special insight into the majesty of her sinless conception.

It is self-evident that Our Lady's initial grace was the principle of merit, i.e., of her increase in grace. Thus, the grace of her Conception, abstractedly considered as adequately distinct from her increase of grace, is the very principle of that increase.

What role did the Immaculate Conception play in Mary's final glorification, which includes her Assumption into heaven? That there is a nexus here is Papal teaching. "These two privileges are most closely bound to one another. . . . God has willed that the Blessed Virgin should be exempt from (the) general rule. She by an entirely unique privilege completely overcame sin by her Immaculate Conception and, as a result, she was not subject to the law of remaining in the corruption of the grave, and she did not have to wait until the end of time for the redemption of her body." So wrote Pius XII.<sup>3</sup> Note the phrase *as a result*. The fact of causal connection, then, is certain. The problem is the nature of that dependence, or causal relationship.

<sup>3</sup> Bull *Munificentissimus Deus*, 1 Nov. 1950

Some very eminent theologians profess to see a necessary connection here. They reason more or less in this wise: Death, or corruption consequent on death, is, in the present order, a punishment for sin, and has no origin except sin. But Our Lady, because immaculately conceived, was free of all sin. Therefore, she was, by strict right, free from death or corruption following death. If she did die, her death was for our profit, God *could* not have permitted her to remain dead, without a violation of justice. According to this view, then, the Assumption is as a property flowing from the Immaculate Conception: the latter would cause that Assumption as an essence caused its natural or connatural property *secundum resultantiam naturalem*.

Others see a connection of mere fittingness between these terminal privileges of Our Lady. Human nature *as such*, they argue, has been deprived of the preternatural gift of immortality by the sin of Adam. Therefore, man as such is, in the present condition of nature, mortal: it is *due to human nature*, as now constituted, that it die. So, Our Lady as human should have died. Yet, it is most fitting that, as by her origin she was *de facto* without sin, so she should be freed from the condition which *de facto* was brought about by sin. This point of view looks upon the Immaculate Conception as a material disposition freely willed by God relative to Mary's Assumption.<sup>4</sup> The connection is one of fittingness; it is contingent, not necessary. The grace of Mary's Immaculate Conception need not have terminated in her Assumption, it did so because God freely willed that it should.

Within the limits of this paper an adequate presentation of the problem, let alone its solution, would be quite impossible. But I should like to suggest that the first position logically implies, as some of its defenders admit, that Mary ought to

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the exhaustive work by B. Kloppenburg, *De relatione inter peccatum et mortem*, Romae, 1951.

have been in the state of original justice: *de jure*, immortal, impassible, and set, therefore, in mastery over all lower nature. This seems at least unproven. The second opinion might seem to minimize the connection between sin and death, between victory over sin and victory over death.

I should like to suggest that alternative view that the nexus here is one, not of absolute necessity, nor of complete contingency, but of suppositional necessity—that is, by the grace of her conception Mary condignly merited her own anticipated Assumption and glorification. Thus, the first grace of Our Lady would be (with respect to the last in the order of dispositive cause), but a disposition exigitive of her Assumption and not merely fitting with respect to it.

This view proceeds from the reasonable premise that, since original sin is a sin of nature as such, it affects nature as such. Through that sin human nature lost the preternatural gift of original justice: Our Lady's, nature *as a nature* was, therefore, mortal and passible according to the *de facto* condition of the nature she shared.

These defects impinging on our nature as such are remedied only in the supernatural order. Christ Himself attained bodily immortality and impassibility only by the way of supernatural merit. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so enter into His glory?" And "The disciple is not above the master." If the Eternal Father willed that the Divine Redeemer, in Whose Humanity there was not even a *debitum peccati*, should attain to glory only by merit, it would seem not unreasonable that all who are redeemed should follow Him, Who is "the way." All men, therefore, attain to immortality, to glorification only by their own co-operation or merit. But to the order of redemption ought to correspond the order of glorification. Therefore, since Mary's redemption is prior by a priority of nature to that of all other human persons, for hers was a preservative redemption, so is her glorification prior also. This is fittingly attested to by its temporal priority.

Mary's own merit then—which is, radically, the grace of her Immaculate Conception—is her title to glory. That grace of hers is a supernatural disposition exigitive, by its pre-eminence, of her pre-eminent glorification in body no less than in soul. They are correct, therefore, who say that God could not, without injustice, have permitted Mary to remain subject to death. But the justice in question is suppositionally, not absolutely, necessary; that is, granted God's free will to reward merit with even bodily glory.

## II

The two prerogatives of Our Lady which look immediately to God or Christ are her predestination and her Divine Maternity.

The Immaculate Conception is totally an effect of, and in no way causative of, Our Lady's predestination, taking predestination in its total sense. Regarding the act of God in predestination, no one has been so insane, as St. Thomas puts it, as to say that merits cause that action.<sup>5</sup> Even as regards the effect of predestination, in its entirety it has no cause in the creature, for (according to St. Augustine and St. Thomas) whatever is within us, as ordaining us to salvation, is part of predestination.

Yet, it is true that *in ordine executionis* one particular effect of predestination may be caused by another partial effect: our good acts, for example, can be the meritorious cause of our glorification.

So, in Mary's case her grace—which, as we have seen, is substantially identical with her Immaculate Conception—is certainly the principle of her meriting the glory to which she has been predestined from eternity. To determine the relationship of her original grace to the other particular privileges also included in her predestination, is the purpose of this paper as a

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 23, a. 5

whole. A summary statement of those relationships, therefore, must await the completion of our task.

With respect to the Divine Maternity, Our Lady's spotless Conception does exercise some causality. From the Bull defining the Immaculate Conception we discern as Papal teaching that Mary's sinlessness of conception was a certain disposition for her Maternity. In the words of Pius IX: "It was quite becoming that so venerable a mother . . . be entirely free from the stain of original sin"<sup>6</sup> The fact is clear. Our Lady's initial prerogative exercises dispositive causality with respect to her central crown as Mother of God.

Before examining this fittingness in itself it is well to note that other kinds of causality are excluded from the Immaculate Conception relative to Mary's Maternity. *Final* causality is quite impossible. The lower for the sake of the higher, Mary's personal sanctity is for the sake of her quasi-divine office of Maternity. The latter is a final cause of her pure Conception, not vice versa.

*Formal* causality is no less impossible. Whereas the Immaculate Conception consists in a complexus of habits, the Divine Maternity formally consists in a relationship. Hence, the two pertain to diverse genera of being, ontologically, and they imply very different orders of sanctity, as well.

Can we say that in some sense the grace of Mary's Immaculate Conception exercised efficient causality with respect to her Maternity? Some authors list Mary's consent to Gabriel's message as an efficient cause of her Maternity. Now, that consent, as a supremely good act of virtue, proceeded for Mary's habitual virtue, which, as we have seen, is substantially identical with the grace of her Conception. Must we conclude, then, to true efficient causality here? The answer may help us understand better the true role of Mary's consent in the Incarnation.

<sup>6</sup> Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, 8 Dec 1854

Mary's maternal *activity*, the fundament of her relationship of maternity, is essentially physical. Yet, every act of human generation has its spiritual, moral side: it is not an activity of the flesh alone, but of the soul and heart as well. One reason for this is (as Cajetan points out),<sup>7</sup> that the radical principle of generation is not the body as such, but the composite of body and soul. Again, the term of human generation is not brute matter, but a spiritual person. The flesh apart from the spirit could not produce a physical exigence of God's creating an immaterial soul. Therefore, every act of human generation involves the at least virtual concurrence of spiritual activity. We must expect to find this spiritual element of the highest importance in the begetting of the humanity of the Son of God. This spiritual activity, note, was elicited by the virtues given Mary at her Conception.

In the human generation of the Redeemer special reasons demand the co-operation of Mary's soul and virtues.<sup>8</sup>

First, there is the clear tradition that, like the Incarnation itself, the Divine Maternity is a gift, for it involves the altogether special way in which the true God is given to one member of humankind.

Now a gift, and especially a Divine gift, is love's achievement: and love can be given only to love. This means, relative to the Incarnation, that while by God's absolute power any nature, and every created nature, could be assumed by Divinity, still only intellectual creatures are assumable according to God's ordinary power. No wisdom, no motive is discernible in the hypostatic divinization of an irrational nature: It surely could not profit God, nor the creature, unable to appreciate or to love the God it would, in Person, be. So, in the real order,

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Cajetan, in I, q. 113 a. 2.

<sup>8</sup> For a very beautiful and complete explanation of the meaning and role of Our Lady's consent to the Divine Maternity see M. J. Nicholas, O.P., *Le concept integral de la Maternité Divine*, in *Revue Thomiste*, vol. 42, 1937, pp. 58-93, 230-272.

only the intelligent creature can be divinely assumed. That is why St. Thomas says that the Word assumed flesh through a human soul, and the human soul through its *intellect* or mind.<sup>9</sup> *There* is the point of juncture; *there* is the true obediential potency in God's actual ordering of things.

Something like that is true also of the Divine Maternity. That is the reason the Fathers and the great theologians teach (a point sometimes not understood by every theologian) that Mary conceived Christ in her mind before conceiving Him in her womb; that her bodily conception of Him was, so to say, the overflow of her spiritual conception. The tremendous truth here is that her maternity is indeed love's gift: it is the gift of Subsistent love, it is the Gift of God. If God is to give wisely—and He can give only wisely—then the gift must be *unto* love, in other words, the gift must profit and ennoble the recipient. This it can do only if that recipient receives her Gift with return of love. Hence, God's own wisdom *demands* that Mary's bodily Maternity be preceded by her "spiritual" Maternity, i.e., her loving consent unto the gift of God.

We can again arrive at the same truth from the premise—handed on from the early Fathers, through the medieval masters and repeated by modern Popes—that the Incarnation involves a certain marriage, marriage consists, above all, in a certain consenting: it is the knowing, the voluntary self-donation of spouse unto spouse. But by the Divine Maternity—so teach theologians and Popes alike—Mary acted in the name of humankind to give man's consent unto this marriage. So, that consent of hers, that moral activity, is required, in the *de facto* order of things, as something prerequisite to the achievement of the quasi-marriage which is the Hypostatic Union.

Thus, Mary's consent to the Motherhood of God—a consent elicited efficiently by the grace of her Immaculate Conception—is *not* her maternal activity, namely, "of ministering

<sup>9</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 6, a. 1, 2

matter apt for conception" and its aftermath. Nevertheless, God Himself required that consent as a mode of her Maternity without which there would be no Maternity of God, no Incarnation.

We conclude then: the grace of the Immaculate Conception is the efficient cause of Mary's consent to the Divine Maternity, but not, of course, of that Maternity in itself. Relative to the Maternity, her consent and, therefore, the grace whence it proceeded, is a condition or subjective disposition. But this does not make of her consent a factor of no more moment than fitting age in a candidate for Holy Orders. On the contrary, God Himself could not, by His ordinary power, have given her that Maternity except through her consent. It is, therefore, a disposition, not of mere fittingness, not of a completely contingent character; it is a disposition which flows with necessity from God's *de facto* decree relative to the Incarnation. Between these two then—Mary's consent elicited by the grace of her conception, and her maternity—there is a suppositionally necessary connection. Since God has decreed the Incarnation for the redemption of men, then Mary's consent to be the Mother of God is requisite. That consent is efficiently principaled by the Immaculate Conception. Hence, Mary's Immaculate Conception is a necessary, a suppositionally necessary, disposition relative to her Divine Maternity. Somewhat as the distinction of members, that is, organization of matter, is a condition requisite for the infusion of a living soul, so Mary's grace of conception was requisite as the principle of her fitness for the Motherhood of God.

### III

The third, and last, general group of Mary's prerogatives concerns her role as our Mediatrix. Under this heading fall her co-operation in our redemption (she is Co-redemptrix); her co-operation in bestowing the grace earned for us in our

redemption (she is Dispensatrix of grace); her Maternity with respect to us (she is our Spiritual Mother), and her participated sovereignty over us (she is our Queen). I shall try to indicate briefly some causal connections between the Immaculate Conception and these aspects of her grandeur—aspects which have special claim to our love.

First, in Mary's office as Co-redemptrix we distinguish two realities, namely: her aptness for that office, and her exercise of it. The former, which is ontological fitness as Mediatrix of redemption, requires that one be in some way distinct from those being redeemed and from Him to Whom the price of redemption is paid. The latter is actual co-operation in the redeeming activity.

Is there a connection between Our Lady's fitness to be our Co-redemptrix and her holy Conception? There must be, since her initial grace as preservative, is of a different mode than our grace, making her holy in a superior mode and hence apt to assist in our sanctification. The problem would be whether the grace of the Immaculate Conception formally constitutes Mary as apt to be Co-redemptrix, or is merely an inchoative material disposition toward the aptness.

A full discussion of this problem here is quite impossible. I should like to suggest, however, that only the Divine Maternity definitively constitutes the Blessed Mother as a fit Co-redemptrix, since nothing short of that Maternity would make possible Our Lady's co-operation in offering the price of redemption. By her Motherhood of God, and not by her sinlessness, she had power to co-offer Christ, as her Own; Christ, precisely as the *pretium magnum* at which we were bought. Hence, only her Maternity of the Divine Redeemer, giving her true rights with regard to Christ, would establish her as capable of a full, unique co-operation in the offering of Christ.

Nevertheless, her Immaculate Conception is a true disposition for Our Lady's office as Co-redemptrix of mankind. For

her initial sinlessness constitutes her uniquely outside the role of Satan's actual victims; made her from the beginning that woman between whom and Satan there was total enmity which could issue only in her victory over Satan; it constituted her as uniquely pleasing to God to Whom her co-redemptive work was to be offered; and it constituted her as inchoatively superior in grace to those she was to co-redeem. As disposition, then, her all-holy Conception would be reduced to the material order of causality with respect to her aptness for the co-redemptive office.

What now of the relationship between the grace which is Our Mother's Immaculate Conception and her co-redemptive activity? Here we shall, I think, encounter greater complexity

Mary's co-redemptive work is rightly understood only by analogy with, and as dependent on, Christ's redemptive activity. Of the Saviour's redemptive work we know this: it was at once a merit, a satisfaction and a sacrifice which was adequately redeeming because it was of infinite value, as merit, as satisfaction and as sacrifice. Now the infinity of that redeeming work derives from this that the Redeemer Who acted is an infinite Person. His work has infinite value because He is a divine subsistent Person. Yet His redeeming work was the action (or rather the Passion) of a *Man*; for, obviously, His Divine nature could not merit, nor make satisfaction, nor sacrifice to God. Hence, while the Person Who acted or suffered is Divine, the suffering or redeeming was *human*. The proximate principles, then, eliciting the redemptive action (or Passion) of Christ were His virtues; created, human virtues existing, operating, in His human nature.

Somewhat similarly, Mary's co-redemptive work — her Compassion — was a merit, a congruous satisfaction, and an interior sacrifice. How could one who is not head of the race, one who is in no sense Divine, merit and satisfy for *all* other men? and co-sacrifice God's own Son? Whence the utterly

unique value, and universal inclusiveness of her work? The unique value of her work, like the infinite value of Christ's work, derives from a certain relationship; because she who acted is the Mother of God, therefore her acts have unique and eminent value. For example, because she was the Mother of Christ, and Christ was hers, therefore could she alone co-will the sacrifice of His life as something over which she—and she alone among men—had certain rights.

Yet, was that relationship—namely, the Divine Maternity—the proximate principle elicitive of her compassion? No, her co-redemptive work consisted, like Christ's redemptive work, in certain human actions and these were elicited in her, too, by the virtues of her soul, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Now, these virtues and Gifts were infused into her soul at her Immaculate Conception; they are part of that Immaculate Conception in the formal aspect. The conclusion seems unavoidable that the grace of Mary's sinless origin is the efficient cause of her activity as Co-redemptrix, in the same way that any set of virtues is the efficient cause of their corresponding acts.

This by no means exhausts the relationship between these two Marian prerogatives. Besides efficiency we can, I think, attribute three other kinds of causality to the Immaculate Conception as it regards the Co-redemption. For, as we have seen, the former is certainly dispositive for that co-redemptive work and in that sense has the aspect of material disposition. Again, exemplary causality seems to be involved—extrinsic formal causality—and finality also. For the goal of the Co-redemption is the sanctification of man. Man's sanctity consists, formally, in "the grace of the virtues and the gifts." Mary's grace, which constitutes her Immaculate Conception, is a certain exemplar of the grace of all other men, for it perfectly achieved in her what grace begins in us, namely, the perfect supernatural vitalizing of all our powers. Her grace of origin is a certain ideal

of definitive sanctity toward which our grace tends, imperfectly and in varying degree. Thus, the exemplarity and finality of Mary's original grace are implicit in her co-redemptive work. Such aspects of causality, however, are actually exercised in second act only in her ministerial distribution of graces.

Now, as to the other side of the picture—the relation of the Immaculate Conception to Mary as Dispensatrix of the graces which she co-earned for us on Calvary—there is again a certain complexity. First, it is evidently true that Mary's actual will to dispense to men the gifts of God is, in each case, an act of virtue, and especially of charity (in the mode of mercy). But the charity of Mary's heart now and forever is numerically that same virtue which is a constitutive part of her Immaculate Conception. Here, too, therefore, the grace of her origin is an efficient principle elicitive of her mediatorial activity.

But more than that, the grace of her Conception is a disposition toward this activity, since that grace sets her above all other human persons, and makes her apt and indescribably eager for God's glory through our sharing of His life. The dispenser of largesse is most properly herself well-endowed. This pertains again to dispositive or material causality.

Thirdly, the Immaculate Conception has even a certain final causality with respect to Mary's dispensing of grace. For that activity has for its goal the sanctification of men; and our sanctification consists in the sanctifying of our souls and our powers, in order that in us the lower shall be subject to the higher, and the highest, subject to God. But by the grace of her Conception this was perfectly achieved in Our Lady. From her Conception she was so vitalized God-ward as to be, not only free of sin, but even free of inclination to sin, or concupiscence. This is a certain goal of all other grace, so that we can say that Mary's original grace is, for the grace dispensed by her to all other men, a certain goal, or final cause in the sense that what her Immaculate Conception achieved in her is the goal of the grace she dispenses from God to us.

In this truth there is seen again a certain exemplary causality of the Immaculate Conception with respect to Mary's dispensing of graces. Her work for us looks to what God originally achieved in her as the ideal for us; so her original grace is a certain exemplar or extrinsic formal cause of the graces which she (ministerially) bestows on us

Lastly, what is the nexus between Our Lady's original holiness and her offices as Mother of Men, and our Queen?

Mary's Motherhood of us embraces her conception of us by her consent (at the Annunciation) to Motherhood of Christ precisely as He is the Head of regenerated mankind; her bearing of us by that Compassion of hers which is a life-principle for all mankind, and her nurturing of us by her sustaining in us of God's grace.

Considering, then, her motherhood of men in its actual exercise now, and not merely in Mary's juridic titles to Motherhood, we can say that it is materially the same as her dispensing of God's gifts to us. To it, therefore, her Immaculate Conception is related in those ways in which it regards her office as Dispensatrix of graces. Hence, there are here relations of efficiency, dispositive or material causality, final causality, and extrinsic formal causality.

Lastly, Mary's Queenship can be considered either as to its juridic titles or as to its exercise. Our Lady's titles to Queenship are two: (1) her womanly, indissoluble union with the divinely Sovereign Person of Christ entered into at the Annunciation; and (2) her association with Christ's conquest of His kingdom, i.e., her co-redemptive work. Her exercise of Queenly power consists especially in her efficacious obtaining for, and distributing to, men the gift of Divine grace.

Taking Queenship now for Mary's *de facto* exercise of her Queenly power, we can discern several causal relations between her Immaculate Conception and her Queenship so con-

sidered.<sup>10</sup> Assuredly, Mary's personal virtue (which is the grace of her Conception) is the principle which elicits her eager interceding for us and her ministerial giving of grace to us. For this office and work her Immaculate Conception is a fitting preparation or disposition. That Conception of hers is, thirdly, the God-given goal and ideal to which her work on our behalf looks as to the end to be approached, and the exemplar to be imitated. Thus, again, all four orders of causality are here involved: efficient, material, extrinsic formal, and (intermediate) final.

#### IV. *Conclusion*

In the beginning of the Holy Gospel according to St. John it is written: "and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth . . . and of His fullness we have all received."<sup>11</sup> Now, that fullness of grace and truth, Christ's sanctity of soul and mind, we readily acknowledge to have diverse relationships (1) to the Divine Person He is, (2) to His own holiness, and (3) to us.

Relative to the grace of Union, that is, relative to the Person of the Word, the created grace and truth of Christ's soul and faculties are but material dispositions. They are, so to say, preparations for Divinity and could be no more than that, for, obviously, nothing creaturely could be constitutive of Divinity or the goal of Divinity, or its fashioner, not the form, not the final cause, not the efficient cause of the uncaused God.

Yet, Christ's created sanctity is truly a material disposition for the divine personating of His humanity. For Christ, this Man, is the natural Son of God; hence, He has a strict right to the Divine inheritance, namely, to the bliss of God Himself—which can be only through grace. Grace, then, is a true dis-

<sup>10</sup> We are here considering the exercise of Mary's Queenship over man in particular. We have elsewhere considered that Queenship, both in general and as it is exercised over the Angels in particular.

<sup>11</sup> *John* I, 14, 16

position of the humanity *requisite* to this Man's grace of Union. Granted a Divine decree of Incarnation, the Eternal Father could not hence withhold grace from the created nature of His Divine Son.

With respect to us Christ's fullness of grace is not our formal sanctification; your grace is numerically distinct from that of Christ. Yet, the Saviour's grace exercises multiple extrinsic causality on our grace. Christ is the moral cause of our sanctity, He is its efficient cause, its final cause, its exemplary cause; and, as we have just said, His grace is a material disposition for Christ's exercise of these causalities.

Lastly, in Christ Himself this fullness of grace is identical with His created sanctity. Here there is formal identity. Note the progression. Christ's created grace relative to the Gift of the Word's own Person is the least of all causes, a mere disposition — though a necessary one — in the material order of causality. With respect to us His grace has every conceivable causation which is extrinsic—extrinsic for we are not physically one thing with Christ, nor is our holiness one physical thing with His. But with respect to Himself His grace is totally identical with His sanctity. To God, a mere disposition; to us, the full measure of extrinsic causes; to Himself, the very constitutive of His creaturely holiness. Such is Christ's grace.

Our Blessed Mother has received from Christ's fullness of grace more fully and more perfectly than any other person. Therefore, her grace—which is substantially her grace of Conception—more fully and more perfectly than the grace of any other person mirrors the various relationships of His sanctity. In her case, too, there is progression. For the grace of her Conception, her personal holiness, is only a disposition towards God's greatest gift to her, the gift of Himself in her Maternity. Her grace, like Christ's, could be no more than materially dispositive for that gift, yet it is a disposition truly required by Divine Wisdom for her Maternity (though, it should be noted,

that requirement of sanctity for Divine Maternity is clearly less rigorous than that for substantial Divine Sonship).

With respect to us Mary's grace has in a secondary and participated way the full extrinsic causality possible. She, too, is a certain moral cause of our sanctification, its final cause, its exemplary cause; and her grace is certainly the efficient principle elictive of her sanctifying activity

Lastly, her grace, which is her Immaculate Conception, is formally identical with her own holiness Through that Conception she stands as God's greatest work among created things, for through that Conception she is the created child of God Who alone among His many adopted children has never been a prodigal. She is unique: from the beginning she is the *Virgin Most Faithful*.

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