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## THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF MARIOLOGY ACCORDING TO THE MAGISTERIUM

In his radiomessage to the Second International Mariological Congress and the Ninth International Marian Congress in October, 1954, Pope Pius XII urged very strongly the recognition of a basic norm for all theological effort:

. . . the work of research even in matters of Mariology is safer and more rewarding to the extent that everyone adverts to the truth that in matters of faith and morals the immediate and universal standard of truth for every theologian is . . . the Church's sacred teaching authority. For as we have explained in the encyclical *Humani generis*, God has given this sacred teaching authority to His Church to clarify and to explain things that are contained only in an obscure and, as it were, implicit way in the deposit of faith. . . . It is the theologian's high duty, commissioned and guided by the Church, to investigate this deposit thoroughly and to study and explain the nature and connection of the individual truths according to the norms of sacred doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

It is with an eye to this very sound as well as authoritative directive, and with the conviction that all theology lives and moves and has its being in the sacred Magisterium that this part of our joint effort is taken up. Given the nature of theology and the fact that we have posed for ourselves the problem of the fundamental principle of Mariology, the study of the Magisterium is an indispensable stage through which our work must go. Before we can properly explore other sources of information, our concern must be with what the

<sup>1</sup> Pius XII, Radiomessage *Inter complures*, Oct. 24, 1954, in *AAS* 46 (1954) 678; cf. G. W. Shea, *Theology and the Magisterium*, in *PCTSA* 12 (1957) 229.

Church teaches and what it does not teach on this question.<sup>2</sup>

We have, of course, no single explicit and definitive statement of the solemn Magisterium dealing with the fundamental principle of Mariology. Nor will we find, it would seem, in view of the continuing dispute on this question, any authoritative statement of the ordinary Magisterium pointed enough to terminate the discussion of pro and con in this matter. What we do look for, however, and what we can find are evidences of magisterial thinking and of the implied convictions of the official teachers in the Church with regard to the fundamental principle. Such evidence will have a real value if it enables us to come to at least a tentative conclusion; and it will stand as a strong if not apodictic argument for that conclusion. To seek out this evidence, we will ask the question: Has the Magisterium practically operated in view of a particular principle of Mariology? We will examine the official teaching of the Church on Mary to see if a fundamental principle is implied there.

The search for this evidence obviously requires much sifting; and when the mountain-like proportions of the authentic Magisterium are considered, the process of sifting assumes the character of heroic work. In the hope of bringing it into more modest and more workable proportions, this study will be confined largely to the papal Magisterium. We may describe it as a study of the teaching of the Roman Church. And to this we may add the words of Pius IX from the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*:

Although all of these things . . . show with what zeal also the Roman Church, the mother and teacher of all churches, has promoted the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encyc. *Humani generis*, Aug. 12, 1950, in *AAS* 42 (1950) 567-569; also C. Vollert, S.J., *The Fundamental Principle of Mariology*, in *Mariology*, ed. J. B. Carol, O.F.M., 2 (Milwaukee, 1957) 93.

Virgin, still the illustrious acts of the Roman Church evidently deserve to be reviewed singly, since the dignity and authority of this Church are as great as is her due, considering that she is the center of Catholic truth and unity, and that in her alone religion has been preserved inviolate, and that from her the other churches must receive the tradition of the faith.<sup>3</sup>

This effort, therefore, will be an attempt to set out the teaching of the Roman Church in so far as this is normative for the universal Church.<sup>4</sup>

### *General Statements*

Of prime interest in the study of this teaching is the general statement which apparently links all the graces and prerogatives of Mary with one of her privileges. This is the clearest kind of evidence of implied conviction with reference to the fundamental principle of Mariology. Without the question of the fundamental principle being introduced, the privileges of Mary are discussed in a practical way in the light of one of them, with this one indicated as the source of the others. There are two texts which seem to be particularly uncomplicated and clear in this regard. The first is from the encyclical *Lux veritatis* of Pius XI:

From this dogma of the divine maternity, as from a hidden spring of refreshing water, flows the singular grace of Mary and, after God, her greatest dignity. Indeed as Aquinas writes, "The Blessed Virgin, by the fact that she is the Mother of God, has a certain infinite dignity derived from the Infinite Goodness that is God" (III, 6). Cornelius a Lapide develops and

<sup>3</sup> Pius IX, Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, Dec. 8, 1854, in *ADSC* 6, 836.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encyc. *Humani generis*, in *AAS* 42 (1950) 568; also P. Nau, O.S.B., *Le magistère pontifical ordinaire, lieu théologique*, in *RT* 56 (1956) 389-412.

explains this more fully: "The Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God, and therefore by far excels all the angels. . . . She is the Mother of God, therefore most pure and holy, so much so that under God no greater purity can be imagined. She is the Mother of God, and therefore whatever privilege has been granted to any of the saints in the order of sanctifying grace, she surpasses all others."<sup>5</sup>

This passage is re-echoed in the encyclical *Fulgens corona* of Pope Pius XII. In explaining the privilege of the Immaculate Conception, he indicates "that she obtained this singular privilege, never granted to anyone else, because she was raised to the dignity of the Mother of God." Then he adds:

This high office which the Council of Ephesus solemnly declared and sanctioned against the heresy of Nestorius—an office than which nothing greater can be imagined—demands the fullness of divine grace and a soul immune from stain, since it requires the greatest dignity and sanctity after Christ. Yea indeed, from this sublime office of the Mother of God seem to flow, as it were from a most limpid hidden source, all the privileges and graces with which her soul and life were adorned in such an extraordinary manner and measure.<sup>6</sup>

He concludes this statement by repeating with approval the words of St. Thomas and of Cornelius a Lapide which had been cited by Pius XI.

These texts have an undeniable force in this question of the fundamental principle of Mariology since they apparently enunciate a principle that is universal in its breadth: Mary's graces, her dignity, her privileges are all linked with her divine maternity, and there would seem to be no exceptions envisioned in this enunciation of the principle. While they cannot

<sup>5</sup> Pius XI, Encyc. *Lux veritatis*, Dec. 25, 1931, in *AAS* 23 (1931) 513.

<sup>6</sup> Pius XII, Encyc. *Fulgens corona*, Sept. 8, 1953, in *AAS* 45 (1953) 580.

be construed as a purposeful taking up and settling of the question of the fundamental principle, they would seem to indicate clearly enough the conviction of both of these popes that of all the things we know about Mary the most fundamental is the fact that she is the Mother of God.<sup>7</sup> The case for the divine maternity as the fundamental principle is thereby made the prominent one in discussing the teaching of the Magisterium on the fundamental principle.

We must ask ourselves, however, more searching questions about the meaning of these texts before we can accept them as unquestionable arguments for the divine maternity as the fundamental principle of Mariology. We must try to determine as accurately as possible the content of the expression "divine maternity" as it is used in these documents. Can this expression be extended to include aspects of Mary's motherhood other than her conceiving and bearing the God-Man? More specifically, does it include her spiritual motherhood of all men? These questions are relevant in view of certain aspects of the debate on the fundamental principle. The opinion of those who hold that Mary's "Universal Motherhood" is the fundamental principle has to be discussed in light of these texts.<sup>8</sup>

When we examine each of these statements in their contexts, it would seem that the expression "divine maternity,"

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Vollert, *art. cit.* 75-77; also E. R. Carroll, O.Carm., *Mary in the Documents of the Magisterium*, in *Mariology*, ed. J. B. Carol, O.F.M., 1 (Milwaukee, 1954) 9-10.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. G. M. Roschini, O.S.M., *Mariologia*, 1 (Rome, 1947) 334-337; N. García Garcés, C.M.F., *Mater Coredemptrix* (Turin, 1940) 121-123. Also relevant to this discussion is the opinion that Mary's role as coredemptrix is the basic truth: L. P. Everett, C.S.S.R., *The Nexus between Mary's Coredemptive Role and Her Other Prerogatives*, in *MS* 2 (1951) 140-142; also the opinion that there are two basic principles (Mother of God and coredemptrix): J. Bittremieux, *De principio supremo Mariologiae*, in *ETL* 8 (1931) 249-251. Cf. also Bittremieux, *Doctrina Mariana Leonis XIII*, in *ETL* 4 (1927) 360-383.

precisely when indicated as the source and spring of Mary's graces and privileges, must be interpreted strictly. To use the terminology of Pius XII in another document, "divine maternity" in these places seems to refer exclusively to the fact that Mary is the Mother of God "in the physical order of nature," and does not include the notion that "in the supernatural order of grace she became the Mother of all."<sup>9</sup>

In *Lux veritatis*, Pius XI was concerned with the doctrine of the divine maternity as it had been defined at the Council of Ephesus. In this context he speaks of Cyril's explanation of Mary, the Mother of God, viz., that she is the Mother of the Word according to His human nature. He obviously is seeking to make clear the justification of calling Mary *Deipara* or *Theotokos*, and the Council's repudiation of the heresy of Nestorius.<sup>10</sup> When he speaks of divine maternity in this connection, there seems to be no room for broadening the meaning of the term to include Mary's spiritual maternity. This conclusion is strengthened by a distinct reference that he makes to Mary's spiritual maternity several paragraphs later. He says: "We feel that we should mention another role of the motherhood of Mary, which is still more pleasant and delightful. Since she brought forth the Redeemer of the human race and all of us, whom Christ has willed to regard as brothers, she is our most beloved mother."<sup>11</sup> With this explicit reference to the spiritual maternity as linked to, but still distinct from, the divine maternity, and keeping in mind that it is the divine maternity which is called the "spring" of the graces and dignity of Mary, it would seem proper to conclude that the expression "divine maternity" in this document must be interpreted in a strict sense.

<sup>9</sup> Pius XII, Radiomessage *C'est avec une douce*, June 19, 1947, in *AAS* 39 (1947) 271.

<sup>10</sup> Pius XI, *op. cit.* 511-512; cf. Roschini, *La Madonna nell'insegnamento di Pio XI*, in *Mm* (1939) 137-138, 161-162.

<sup>11</sup> Pius XI, *ibid.* 514.

That this was also the conviction of Pius XII can be shown from the context of the statement quoted in *Fulgens corona*. It seems apparent that he is thinking of the divine maternity as it was defined at the Council of Ephesus, speaking of the "high office which the Council of Ephesus declared and sanctioned against the heresy of Nestorius."<sup>12</sup> It is significant, too, that in this same section he refers to "the Mother of His only-begotten Son," to the fact that "Jesus Christ should have such a mother as would be worthy of Him."<sup>13</sup> Finally, the citations from St. Thomas and Cornelius a Lapide, used also by Pius XI, are unquestionably to be seen as referring exclusively to the divine maternity. From these considerations, we would conclude that the divine maternity indicated as the "hidden limpid source" of the privileges and graces of Mary means her motherhood of Christ and nothing more.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Divine Maternity and Other Privileges of Mary*

Taking the doctrine of the divine maternity as a starting point, our next task is to see what, if any, links are fashioned by the popes between the divine maternity and individual graces and privileges of Mary. Ordinarily, these links appear in the explanations of various doctrines, developing from the reasons given for a specific doctrine. We can usually interpret them as evidence of a connection in the magisterial thinking between the divine maternity and other Marian doctrines. In these texts which we shall examine, the strong impression is given of a subordination of all other doctrines to the divine maternity; and this leaves room for the conclusion that the privileges and graces of Mary have most frequently been con-

<sup>12</sup> Pius XII, *Fulgens corona*, in AAS 45 (1953) 580.

<sup>13</sup> Pius XII, *ibid.* 581.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Vollert, *art. cit.* 75-77.



sidered in the Magisterium as growing out of the divine maternity.<sup>15</sup>

Pius IX, at the very beginning of the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, examines the choice of Mary to be the Mother of Christ. From this he develops a description of Mary's preparation by God, saying that God "filled her . . . with an abundance of all heavenly gifts from the treasury of His divinity, in such wonderful manner that she would always be free from absolutely every stain of sin. . . ." <sup>16</sup> Then he continues at some length:

Indeed, it was quite becoming that so venerable a Mother should shine ever adorned with the splendor of the most perfect holiness, and that she should be entirely free even from the stain of original sin itself, and so should have the most complete triumph over the ancient Serpent. And all this because she it is to whom God the Father willed to give His only Son. . . . He willed to give Him to her in such a manner that He is by nature one and the same Son of God the Father and of the Virgin. She it is, too, whom the Son chose and whom He made really and truly His own Mother. She it is finally from whom the Holy Spirit willed that the Son, from whom He Himself proceeds, should be conceived and born by His operation.<sup>17</sup>

In the latter part of this same document, he returns to much the same theme: "In fact it was quite right that, as the Only-begotten had a Father in heaven whom the Seraphim extol as thrice holy, so He should have a Mother on earth who would never lack the splendor of holiness." <sup>18</sup> And again in the same context, he says of her: ". . . the most glorious Virgin . . . was resplendent with such a force of heavenly gifts, with such fullness of grace and with such innocence, that she is an un-

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* 76-78.

<sup>16</sup> Pius IX, in *ADSC* 6, 836.

<sup>17</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 841.

speakable miracle of God; indeed the crown of all miracles and the worthy Mother of God. . . ."<sup>19</sup>

One hundred years later, Pius XII speaks of the Immaculate Conception in the encyclical *Fulgens corona*; and he, too, links Mary's freedom from original sin with the divine maternity: "From these words, it is clearly apparent that there is only one among all holy men and women about whom it can be said that the question of sin does not even arise, and also that she obtained this singular privilege never granted to anyone else, because she was raised to the dignity of Mother of God."<sup>20</sup> About the same time, he expressed the same idea to the Marian Congress at Beirut: "Was it not at Ephesus, in the Orient, that Mary received the official recognition by the Church of her divine maternity, that supreme prerogative which implies in its inexhaustible richness the privilege of the Immaculate Conception which is being celebrated in this Marian Year?"<sup>21</sup>

These samples, taken from the statement of two popes writing explicitly on the Immaculate Conception, are unmistakably strong evidence of the fact that they saw the divine maternity as the principle of the Immaculate Conception. Nor can there be any serious question that they are using the term "divine maternity" in any but a strict sense.

Not only the Immaculate Conception, but other doctrines, too, are linked by the popes with the divine maternity and apparently are seen as deriving in some way from that prerogative. Pius XII is particularly forceful with regard to the Queenship of Mary in the encyclical *Ad coeli Reginam*:

As we have already indicated . . . the basic principle upon which Mary's royal dignity rests, a principle already evident

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 840.

<sup>20</sup> Pius XII, in *AAS* 45 (1953) 580.

<sup>21</sup> Pius XII, Epist. *Je me suis élevée*, Oct. 18, 1954, in *AAS* 46 (1954) 655-656.

in the documents handed down by the elders long ago and in the sacred liturgy, is without doubt her divine maternity. . . . it is easily deduced that she too is Queen since she brought forth a Son, who, at the very moment He was conceived, was, by reason of the hypostatic union of the human nature with the Word, even as man, king and lord of all things. As a result, St. John Damascene could rightly and deservedly write these words: "Truly she has become the Lady ruler of every creature since she is the Mother of the Creator."<sup>22</sup>

Apart from the obvious clarity with which the pope links the Queenship of Mary with the divine maternity, the statement is striking also because it describes this link in terms of "basic principle."

In the Bull *Munificentissimus Deus* the same pope makes clear the connection between the Assumption of Mary and her divine maternity. Referring to the attempts of the Scholastic theologians to show that the Assumption is in keeping with the teaching of Scripture, he makes this statement:

When they go on to explain this point, they adduce various proofs to throw light on this privilege of Mary. As the first element of these demonstrations, they insist upon the fact that, out of filial love for his Mother, Jesus Christ has willed that she be assumed into heaven. They base the strength of their proofs on the incomparable dignity of her divine motherhood and of all those prerogatives which follow from it.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps it should be pointed out at this juncture that the popes link the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption with other prerogatives of Mary. This will be

<sup>22</sup> Pius XII, Encyc. *Ad coeli Reginam*, Oct. 11, 1954, in *AAS* 46 (1954) 633; cf. also S. Poenit, Apost. (July 6, 1927), in *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* 431.

<sup>23</sup> Pius XII, Bull *Munificentissimus Deus*, Nov. 1, 1950, in *AAS* 42 (1950) 762; cf. *ibid.* 768.

discussed more completely later and is indicated here in the interests of candor and also to prepare immediately for the discussion of the links between the divine maternity and various aspects of the spiritual maternity. For the popes speak frequently of the connection between the Immaculate Conception and Assumption and the association of Mary in the work of redemption. This makes the discussion of the relation of her divine maternity and her association in the redemptive work of Christ one of the really critical points of this discussion. We must try, therefore, to determine the teaching of the popes on the relative position of these two prerogatives.

Beginning with Pope Leo XIII there has been a preoccupation in papal teaching with Mary's motherhood of all men, with the explanation of her part in the redemption of all men and in the dispensing of the graces of redemption. To make this function clear and to connect it with what may already be known about Mary, the popes frequently speak of it in connection with the divine maternity; and what is more important for our purposes, they seem to indicate that they think of it as derived from the divine maternity. This statement of Leo XIII is indicative of the turn of thinking: "From the very fact that the most holy Virgin is the Mother of Jesus Christ, she is the Mother of all Christians whom she bore on Mount Calvary amid the throes of the Redemption."<sup>24</sup> St. Pius X seems to see this connection in much the same way. In the encyclical *Ad diem illum* he examines the reason for our faith in the salvific work of Mary in dispensing the goods of redemption. He puts it in this way: "If we devote only a little thought to the great reasons why this most holy Mother is most eager to bestow upon us these excellent gifts, how high our hopes will mount! For is not Mary the Mother of Christ?

<sup>24</sup> Leo XIII, Encyc. *Quamquam pluries*, Aug. 15, 1889, in *Actes de Léon XIII*, 2 (Paris) 254.

She is, therefore, our Mother also.”<sup>25</sup> Having thus stated the connection between the divine maternity and the spiritual maternity he takes pains to explain it.

Indeed everyone must believe that Jesus, the Word made flesh, is also the Savior of the human race. Now, as the God-Man, He acquired a body composed like that of other men, but as Savior of our race He had a kind of spiritual and mystical body, which is the society of those who believe in Christ. . . . So in one and the same bosom of His most chaste Mother, Christ took to Himself and at the same time united to Himself the spiritual body built up of those who are to believe in Him. Consequently, Mary, bearing in her womb the Savior, may be said to have borne also all those whose life is contained in the life of the Savior.<sup>26</sup>

From these words we can see that St. Pius thought of Mary's motherhood of Christ and her motherhood of all men as beginning at the same moment in time. But the phrases that he uses—“she is *therefore* our mother also” and “*consequently* Mary . . . may be said to have borne also all . . .”—seem to indicate that he thought of the spiritual maternity as dependent on the divine maternity. The fact of the divine maternity is at least one of the reasons why we can affirm the spiritual maternity and, therefore, is apparently basic to it.

Pope Benedict XV in the Apostolic Letter *Inter sodalicia* emphasizes another phase of the spiritual maternity of Mary, viz., her co-operation with Christ in His Passion and Death. He makes no direct and explicit reference to the connection between Mary's physical bearing of Christ and her association in His redemptive work. Still, it seems that he considers her motherhood of Christ as critical in explaining her role as co-

<sup>25</sup> St. Pius X, Encyc. *Ad diem illum*, Feb. 2, 1904, in *ASS* 36 (1903-1904) 452.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 452-453.

redemptrix. This may be seen in a famous passage of the letter.

For the Fathers of the Church commonly teach that if the Blessed Virgin Mary, who seemingly was absent from the public life of Jesus Christ, was present when her Son went to His death and hung upon the Cross, her presence there was not without divine design. For she so suffered and almost died with her suffering and dying Son, she so renounced her maternal rights over her Son for the sake of placating the justice of God, that one can rightly say that, together with Christ, she redeemed the human race.<sup>27</sup>

From these words, it would seem proper to conclude that it is precisely as the Mother of Christ that Mary is present on Calvary and takes part in the passion and death. For as her activity there is explained, it would seem to be related essentially to her motherhood of Christ, and indeed is possible only in view of her motherhood. She is said to offer Christ as His mother, i.e., by the renunciation of her maternal rights over Him; and her sacrificial offering of the Victim is the action of a mother offering her Son. In light of this evidence, therefore, we can understand Mary's presence on Calvary and her co-redemptive activity there as receiving meaning from the fact that she is the Mother of Christ.<sup>28</sup> Since this is the climax of her association with Christ in the redemption of all men, and since it is explained in terms of her divine motherhood, we must conclude that her divine maternity is basic to her co-redemptive acts.

Returning to the encyclical *Ad diem illum* of St. Pius X

<sup>27</sup> Benedict XV, Litt. Apost. *Inter sodalicia*, May 22, 1918, in *AAS* 10 (1918) 182.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. P. F. Ceuppens, O.P., *De Mariologia biblica*, 2nd ed. (Rome, 1951) 201: "Stans juxta crucem Maria Patri coelesti filium suum divinum offert, illumque offert ut Mater."

and to his description of the activity which associates Mary with Christ in the redemption of the world, we can find the same implications. We must say that he is emphatic about explaining Mary's activity and her position in terms of her divine maternity.

Furthermore, the most holy Mother of God had not only the honor of having given the substance of her flesh to the Only-begotten Son of God who was born of the human race, and by means of this flesh the Victim for the salvation of men was to be prepared, but she was entrusted with the task of tending and nourishing this Victim and even of offering it on the altar at the appointed time. The result was a never-broken community of life and labor between Son and Mother. . . . Then when the last hour of the Son arrived, there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother, not merely occupied in contemplating the cruel spectacle, but rejoicing that her Only-begotten was being offered for the salvation of the human race, and she suffered so much together with Him, that, if it had been possible, she would with greater willingness have borne all the torments that her Son endured. And by this community of pain and will between Christ and Mary, she merited to become in a most worthy manner the Reparatrix of the lost world and, consequently, the Dispenser of all the gifts that Jesus acquired for us by His Death and Blood.<sup>29</sup>

From these words it emerges that the fundamental association between Christ and Mary was that of Son and Mother; and it was upon this relationship and by the means that it afforded that Mary's association with Christ in the work of redemption was built and perfected.

Pope Pius XI, in the encyclical *Lux veritatis*, concerned mainly with the divine maternity, speaks of "another role of the motherhood of Mary which is more pleasant and delightful." Then he adds: "Since she brought forth the Redeemer

<sup>29</sup> St. Pius X, *op. cit.* 453-454.

of the human race and all of us whom the Lord Christ has willed to regard as brothers, she is our most beloved Mother.”<sup>30</sup> And again in another place, he states explicitly that Mary was the Mother of Christ “so that she might be made His associate in the Redemption of the human race.”<sup>31</sup> From these few texts, taken by way of sample, it seems legitimate to conclude that Pius XI envisioned the physical bearing of Christ as fundamental to and leading to Mary’s supernatural motherhood of all men.

With the Marian doctrine of Pope Pius XII the teaching of the spiritual motherhood of Mary reached a new stage of clarity and explicitness. His description of Mary as the Mother of the Mystical Body is especially significant.

Within her virginal womb Christ our Lord already bore the exalted title of Head of the Church; in a marvelous birth she brought Him forth as the source of all supernatural life and presented Him, new born, a Prophet, king and Priest to those who were the first to come of the Jews and Gentiles to adore Him. Her only Son, yielding to a Mother’s prayer in Cana of Galilee, performed the miracle by which His disciples believed in Him. Free from all sin, original and personal, always most intimately united with her Son, as another Eve she offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam sin-stained by his fall, and her mother’s rights and mother’s love were included in the holocaust. Thus she who corporally was the mother of our Head, through the added title of pain and glory, became spiritually the mother of all His members.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Pius XI, *op. cit.* 514; cf. Shea, *Teaching of the Magisterium on Mary’s Spiritual Maternity*, in *MS* 3 (1952) 88; cf. Bittremieux, *Ex doctrina Mariana Pii XI*, in *ETL* 11 (1934) 95, 100. For the teaching of Pius XI with regard to coredemptive activity being basically maternal, see Encyc. *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, May 9, 1928, in *AAS* 20 (1929) 178.

<sup>31</sup> Pius XI, *Auspicatus profecto*, Jan. 28, 1933, in *AAS* 25 (1933) 80; cf. Bittremieux, *art. cit.* 97.

<sup>32</sup> Pius XII, Encyc. *Mystici Corporis*, June 29, 1943, in *AAS* 35 (1943) 247-248.



This statement is certainly reminiscent of those of St. Pius X and Benedict XV in explaining Mary's motherhood of all men. Mary's physical bearing of Christ is considered first and apparently is regarded as the basic element of the association with Christ. In the various acts of mediation involved in this process of becoming fully the Mother of all men, it is always her motherhood of Christ that is stressed: her mother's prayer is influential at Cana; her position on Calvary and her ability to offer Christ there seem to be explained by her intimate union with Christ precisely as her Son; her offering of Christ is indicated as the act of a mother since it included the oblation of her mother's rights and love.<sup>33</sup>

From these considerations we can conclude that the popes saw the divine maternity and the spiritual maternity as closely connected. As for the nature of this connection, it would seem that the evidence, at least as it has been presented up to this point, indicates that they thought of the spiritual maternity as derived from the divine maternity; that the divine maternity is the basic prerogative.<sup>34</sup>

While the general statements with which this discussion began create a presumption for the divine maternity as the fundamental principle, and while this presumption is strongly supported by the more specific statements just considered, in the interests of completeness and honesty we must examine the papal documents to see if the popes have ever varied from this pattern of thinking. For example, Pius IX, in his summary of patristic teaching on the Protoevangelium in connection with the Immaculate Conception, emphasizes Mary's

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Vollert, *art. cit.* 75.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Vollert, *loc. cit.*

coredemptive role as critical in explaining her immunity from original sin.

Hence, just as Christ, the Mediator between God and man, having assumed a human nature, blotted out the handwriting of the decree that stood against us, and fastened it triumphantly to the Cross, so the most holy Virgin, united with Him by a most intimate and indissoluble bond, was, with Him and through Him, eternally at enmity with the evil Serpent, and most completely triumphed over him, and thus crushed his head with her immaculate foot.<sup>85</sup>

This same point is made by Pius XII in his discussion of the Immaculate Conception in the encyclical *Fulgens corona*. He mentions that the foundation of this doctrine is revealed in Sacred Scripture, namely, in the Protoevangelium with its teaching on the perpetual enmity between Mary and the Serpent.<sup>86</sup> And the same Pope makes much the same point with reference to the Assumption of Our Lady.<sup>87</sup>

But such indications of the fecundity of the doctrine of the coredeemption, while impressive, cannot be accepted as evidence that this doctrine is the fundamental principle or even part of it. For in these same documents, *Ineffabilis Deus* and *Fulgens corona*, we have already found the clear statement that "from this sublime office of the Mother of God seem to flow . . . all the privileges and graces. . . ." <sup>88</sup> Taken in this larger context, these statements have an unquestioned value in establishing the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption but are not cogent in the discussion of the fundamental principle of all of Mariology.

In the teaching of Pope Leo XIII we find a very strong

<sup>85</sup> Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, in *ADSC* 6, 840.

<sup>86</sup> Pius XII, *Fulgens corona*, in *AAS* 45 (1953) 579.

<sup>87</sup> Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, in *AAS* 42 (1950) 768.

<sup>88</sup> Pius XII, *Fulgens corona*, in *AAS* 45 (1953) 580.

emphasis on the spiritual maternity of Mary. Not only is the doctrine stated clearly and forcefully; but it would seem that it is the intention of the pope to indicate its fecundity. Several samples from the Rosary Encyclicals of Pope Leo should make this clear. The first statement is taken from the encyclical *Adjutricem populi*:

The mystery of Christ's immense love for us is revealed with dazzling brilliance in the fact that the dying Savior bequeathed His Mother to His disciple John in the memorable testament: "Behold thy Son." . . . With wonderful care she nurtured the first Christians by her holy example, her sweet consolation, her faithful prayers. She was . . . the Mother of the Church, the teacher and Queen of the Apostles. . . . It is impossible to measure the power and scope of her offices since the day she was taken up to that height of heavenly glory in the company of her Son to which the dignity and lustre of her merits entitled her. . . . She who was so intimately associated with the mystery of human salvation is just as closely associated with the distribution of graces. . . . The power thus put in her hands is all but unlimited.<sup>39</sup>

And again in the same encyclical, speaking of meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary, he says: ". . . and as one (mystery) follows upon another, Mary stands revealed as God's Mother and our Mother."<sup>40</sup>

The following text, too, should be considered for its emphasis on Mary's spiritual maternity. It is taken from the encyclical *Octobri mense*:

The Eternal Son of God, about to take upon Himself our nature for the saving and ennobling of man, and about to consummate thus a mystical union between Himself and mankind,

<sup>39</sup> Leo XIII, Encyc. *Adjutricem populi*, Sept. 5, 1895, in *Actes de Léon XIII*, 4 (Paris) 238; cf. Roschini, *op. cit.* 43.

<sup>40</sup> Leo XIII, *ibid.* 246.

did not accomplish this design without adding thereto the free consent of the elect Mother, who represented in some sort all humankind. . . . With equal truth may it be also affirmed that, by the will of God, absolutely no part of that immense treasure of every grace which the Lord amassed . . . is bestowed on us except through Mary; for mercy and truth were created by Jesus Christ. Thus as no man goeth to the Father but by the Son, so no man goeth to Christ but by His Mother.<sup>41</sup>

It cannot be denied that such stress on the coredemptive activity of Mary in particular, and on her spiritual maternity more generally, is impressive and significant in the question of the fundamental principle. This stress has been interpreted as indicating that the spiritual maternity, if not the principle of all Mariology, is at least part of the fundamental principle together with the divine maternity.<sup>42</sup> And certainly, taking even these samples, there is reason for urging that Leo XIII has given this doctrine a pivotal place in his Marian doctrine. It must be asked now if this position accorded to the spiritual maternity is truly fundamental, even in the sense of sharing the basic place with the divine maternity.

In trying to put together the pattern of the doctrine of Pope Leo and to see his teaching on the spiritual maternity in context, we can see that he envisions a subordination of the spiritual maternity to the divine maternity: the latter is given as the reason for or root of the former. In the encyclical *Quamquam pluries* he makes this remark: "From the very fact that the most holy Virgin is the Mother of Jesus Christ, she is the Mother of all Christians."<sup>43</sup> And again in the encyclical

<sup>41</sup> Leo XIII, Encyc. *Octobri mense*, Sept. 22, 1891, in *Actes de Léon XIII*, 3 (Paris) 96-98.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Bittremieux, *De principio supremo Mariologiae*, in *ETL* 8 (1931) 249-251; *Doctrina Mariana Leonis XIII*, in *ETL* 4 (1927) 360-383.

<sup>43</sup> Leo XIII, Encyc. *Quamquam pluries*, in *Actes de Léon XIII*, 2 (Paris) 254.

*Magnae Dei Matris*: "Likewise, because Mary was chosen to be the Mother of Christ, our Lord and Brother, the unique prerogative was given to her above all other mothers to show her mercy to us and to pour it out upon us."<sup>44</sup> Taking these texts into consideration, it would seem that they color his teaching on the spiritual maternity; and while an important place is given to this doctrine, it is not the fundamental place that is given to the divine maternity. This reminds us of the teaching of Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII that Mary is the associate of Christ in the redemption precisely because she is His Mother; it would also lead to the conclusion previously made that when we speak of a truly fundamental principle, we can speak only of the divine maternity.<sup>45</sup>

To return to the doctrine of Leo XIII, several other instances of statements more or less directly indicating the divine maternity as the fundamental principle can be cited. In the encyclical *Magnae Dei Matris*, he makes this statement: "As time went on, it became more and more evident how deserving of love and honor was she whom God Himself was the first to love, and loved so much more than any other that, after elevating her high above all the rest of His creation and adorning her with His richest gifts, He made her His Mother."<sup>46</sup> And in the encyclical *Augustissimae Virginis Mariae*: "God predestined her from all eternity to be the Mother of the Incarnate Word, and for this reason so highly distinguished her among all His most beautiful works in the triple order of nature, grace and glory, that the Church justly applies to her these words: 'I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the firstborn before all creatures.'"<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Leo XIII, Encyc. *Magnae Dei Matris*, Sept. 8, 1892, in *Actes de Léon XIII*, 3 (Paris) 142-144.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Vollert, *art. cit.* 78, and Roschini, *op. cit.* 40.

<sup>46</sup> Leo XIII, *Magnae Dei Matris*, in *Actes de Léon XIII*, 3 (Paris) 138.

<sup>47</sup> Leo XIII, Encyc. *Augustissimae Virginis Mariae*, Sept. 12, 1897, in *Actes de Léon XIII*, 5 (Paris) 166.

While this evidence is truly fragmentary, still it must be admitted that it is evidence of an aspect of the thinking of Leo XIII that is very much to the point we are discussing. The implication is strong that the richest gifts of God and a unique distinction among the works of God belong to Mary precisely in view of or because of her motherhood of God. Since these statements are part of the context of his teaching on the spiritual maternity, it would seem that they limit the type of conclusion that can be drawn from his emphasis on the spiritual maternity; and that in the question of the fundamental principle of all Marian doctrine it is the divine maternity that is most basic; and that the fecundity that is attributed to the spiritual maternity is not universal and is subordinate to the fecundity of the divine maternity.

### *Doctrinal Value of the Evidence Adduced*

One last question must be asked: Is the evidence of pattern in papal teaching such that we can speak of it as having a binding force? This question is asked in light of the words of Pius XII in *Humani generis*: "If the Supreme Pontiffs in their official documents purposely pass judgment on a matter, up to that time under dispute, it is obvious that that matter, according to the mind and will of the same Pontiffs, cannot be any longer considered a question open to discussion among theologians."<sup>48</sup> Can any claim be made that the discussion of the fundamental principle of Mariology has been definitely settled in any or all of these documents? It would seem that no serious claim for definitiveness can be made for any one of these statements nor for all of them taken together. For one

<sup>48</sup> Pius XII, *Humani generis*, in *AAS* 42 (1950) 568; cf. E. D. Benard, *The Doctrinal Value of the Ordinary Teaching of the Holy Father in View of "Humani Generis,"* in *PCTSA* 6 (1951) 78-107.

thing, it is not apparent that any of the popes has taken up this question with the set purpose of settling it and thus ending the discussion of the theologians. Moreover, the statement of Pius XII in *Fulgens corona*, seemingly made in awareness of the current debate, is phrased rather tentatively: "from this sublime office . . . seem to flow . . . all the privileges and graces. . . ." <sup>49</sup> This matter, then, of the fundamental principle cannot be considered as having been purposely judged by the popes.

What then can be claimed for this evidence gathered from the Ordinary Magisterium of the popes? It would seem that it can be classified as the implied teaching of the Roman Church that the divine maternity of Mary is the fundamental principle of Mariology. And while this evidence is not definitive, certainly it constitutes a strong argument for this thesis.

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<sup>49</sup> Pius XII, *Fulgens corona*, in *AAS* 45 (1953) 580.