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MARY'S MATERNAL ROLE IN JOHN 19, 25-27

According to the teaching of Pius XII in *Divino afflante Spiritu*, "the supreme rule of interpretation is to discover and to define what the sacred writer intended to express. . . ." The fulfillment of this duty to ascertain the literal meaning of the words of Jesus from the Cross to His Mother and to the beloved disciple has proved to be among the more formidable tasks of biblical exegesis. The laconic manner in which the fourth evangelist has recorded the words of Jesus, "Woman, behold thy son," "Behold thy mother," appears to be astonishing in the light of the development of Mariological doctrine in the teaching of the Church. Since the evangelist records the incident as a personal reminiscence, one doubts that he is in possession of an insight into Mary's distinguished role in the divine plan of salvation.¹ The evangelist's concluding remark, "From that hour he took her . . ." would seem to indicate that he is concerned to show his diligence in responding to a command of the Lord rather than to express a sensitivity to Mary's maternal role over himself.

The state of the question on the exegesis of these words of Jesus provides adequate reason to direct our attention to their literal meaning, i.e., to the sense intended by the evangelist. Papal teaching on this Johannine passage has been well investigated.² The ordinary magisterium of the Popes

¹ The note of personal reminiscence in Jn. 19, 27 is the pivot of the exegesis of F. Ceuppens, *De Mariologia Biblica* (Romae, 1948) 202-203. Since the emphasis of the evangelist lies in his protection of Mary, the author concludes against the intention of the evangelist to propose the spiritual maternity of Mary in the words of Jesus to her from the Cross.

² Benedict XIV first alluded in 1748 to Jn. 19, 26-27 as the proclamation of Mary's spiritual maternity. Thereafter, this reference is found frequently in papal documents. Cf. George W. Shea, *The Teaching of the Magisterium on Mary's Spiritual Maternity*, in *MS* 3 (1952) 35-141; and Armand Thyges, S.C.I., *Jean 19, 25-27 et la maternité spirituelle de Marie*, in *Mm* 18 (1956) 111-115.

teaches in these words of Jesus to Mary and John a genuine Marian sense that expresses the spiritual maternity of Mary over all men. The nature of this biblical sense is not specified in the papal documents. The literal sense,^{2a} the full sense,³ the *sensus plenior*,⁴ or the typical sense⁵ would presently satisfy the statements of the magisterium.

The interpretation of the Fathers has been thoroughly examined.⁶ There was no exegetical tradition among them that advanced the spiritual maternity of Mary as the sense of Jesus' words to her from the Cross. The three great Fathers, St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and St. Augustine propounded only the filial piety of Christ toward Mary in connection with our text. It has been recognized that the so-called *subintroductio* existing in the Church from the third to the fifth centuries inhibited the Fathers from ex-

^{2a} Defended by Juan Leal, S.J., *Sentido literal mariológico de Jo. 19, 26-27*, in *EstB* 11 (1952) 303-319.

³ Defended by Manuel de Tuyá, O.P., *Valor mariológico del texto evangélico: 'Mulier, ecce filius tuus. . .'* (*Jn. 19, 25-27*), in *CT* 82 (1955) 189-223. The author adopts a position similar to that of P. de Fraine, S.J., *Ecce Mater Tua*, in *MD* (1953) 79-97. This opinion draws a distinction between the meaning of the words of Jesus to His Mother from the Cross (the spiritual maternity) and the meaning of the evangelist (who may or may not comprehend this sense in the historical words of Jesus, or at least has not intended to record the historical meaning of Jesus). The spiritual maternity is, then, the literal sense of Jesus' words, but not the meaning intended by the evangelist. The sense is described as the *full sense*.

⁴ The interpretation of Isaac Zudaire favoring the spiritual maternity, *Mujer, he ahí a tu hijo: Jn. 19, 26*, in *CB* 11 (1954) 365-374 tends in the direction of the *fuller sense*. This sense of Scripture is the deeper meaning in the literal sense, intended by God, but not clearly apprehended or intended by the human author. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The "Sensus Plenior" of Sacred Scripture* (Baltimore, Maryland, 1955) 92.

⁵ Defended by J. M. Bover, "*Mujer, he ahí tu hijo*," *maternidad espiritual de María para con todos los fieles, según S. Juan 19, 26-27*, in *EE* 1 (1922) 5-18; "*Mulier, ecce filius tuus*," *Spiritualis et universalis B. Virginis maternitas ex verbis Christi morientis demonstrata*, in *VD* 4 (1924) 225-231.

⁶ Cf. William R. O'Connor, *The Spiritual Maternity of Our Lady in Tradition*, in *MS* 3 (1952) 142-173.

plaining Mary's spiritual maternity in the light of her relationship to John at the Cross.⁷ In spite of the fact that appeal was made to the relationship between Mary and John by the supporters of the *subintroductio*, the Fathers did not deny the promulgation of Mary's spiritual maternity from the Cross⁸

Due no doubt to the teaching of the magisterium, there has been a marked tendency among exegetes to advocate the spiritual maternity of Mary as a genuine biblical sense in our passage⁹ It has been stated that "the exegesis of the text has arrived at its full maturity and perfection."¹⁰ From the viewpoint of scientific exegesis, this judgment is premature. Catholic exegetical opinion has not been swayed decisively to the acceptance of Mary's spiritual maternity as the clear teaching of the evangelist in his record of Jesus' words from the Cross. Among more representative works of Catholic exegesis, the opinion favoring the spiritual maternity of Mary as a scriptural sense of our text was adopted by H. Lesêtre for the *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (1912)¹¹ and by D. Mollat, S.J., for the *Bible de Jerusalem* (1953).¹² On the other hand, the contrary opinion was maintained by W. Grossouw in the *Bijbelsch Woordenboek* (1941),¹³ who held for an applied sense, and by A. Wikenhauser in the *Regensburger Neues Testament* (1957), who retained only the opinion of the

⁷ The *subintroductio* consisted in the protection of the chastity of a young girl by an unmarried Christian man Cf. C. A. Kneller, S.J., *Joh 19, 26-27 bei den Kirchenvatern*, in *ZfKt* 40 (1916) 603-605, also Armand Thyès, *art. cit.*, 98, note 82

⁸ Cf. Leal, *art. cit.*, 304

⁹ *Ibid.*, 306-307 The author lists nineteen exegetes and mariologists since 1900 who have upheld the spiritual maternity of Mary in Jn 19, 26

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 305

¹¹ Cf. Vol. 4, "Marie, Mère de Dieu," col. 797.

¹² *L'Évangile et les Épîtres de Saint Jean*, tr. by D. Mollat, S.J., F. M. Braun, O.P. (Paris, 1953) 183

¹³ Cf. article "Maria," col. 1013.

Fathers that Jesus performed an act of filial piety on Calvary toward His Mother.¹⁴ These facts reveal that a distinguished group of Catholic exegetes are not convinced that the doctrine of Mary's spiritual maternity in our passage has as yet been placed on an acceptable foundation by the science of biblical exegesis. The fact is that recent authors have advocated every possible biblical sense for the Marian meaning of our text with the exception of pure accommodation.

We have every reason, then, to study the literal sense of our passage. If the interpretation of the Fathers that Jesus performed an act of filial piety on Calvary cannot be minimized or rejected, it follows that John on Calvary understood this meaning in the words of His Master.¹⁵ It then becomes difficult to perceive how the proclamation of Mary's spiritual maternity by Jesus from the Cross coheres with a specifically divergent meaning in a precise historical situation. If Jesus did intend to proclaim from the Cross the spiritual maternity of Mary over mankind, it is strange that the text of John would not provide clear and simple evidence of this meaning. Certainly, in the eyes of the fourth evangelist, this spiritual maternity of Mary would count for much more than his purely personal role in her temporal life. Yet the evangelist does not seem to take evident pains to manifest this spiritual doctrine.

The Literary Form of Jn. 19, 25-27

The words of Jesus from the Cross to His Mother and to the beloved disciple are placed in a literary context of the fourth gospel where the evangelist is at pains to distinguish sharply between the Calvary scenes he presents to his read-

¹⁴ *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 332.

¹⁵ This difficulty of combining Jesus' act of filial piety with a proclamation of the spiritual maternity has led Leal, *art. cit.*, 318-319 to depreciate filial piety as the literal sense in favor of making it the natural consequence of John's grasp of the spiritual maternity.

er.¹⁶ With the exception of our passage, each scene is bounded by the well-known literary device of *inclusio*. The guiding principle the evangelist has followed in the presentation of his material is theological: in the events of Calvary the Scriptures are fulfilled.¹⁷ This fulfillment of the Scriptures in the thought of the gospel is a conscious act of Jesus by which He performs the duty imposed upon Him by His Father to sacrifice His life for the spiritual salvation of mankind.¹⁸

The evangelist introduces the words of Jesus to His Mother and the beloved disciple by indicating those followers of Jesus who are present at the foot of the Cross. These persons are, in the order of mention, the Mother of Jesus, a second woman described as the sister of the Mother of Jesus, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. One cannot determine from the text with certainty if Mary of Cleophas is to be identified with the woman who is the sister of the Mother of Jesus. If this identification is to be made, we have three women at the foot of the Cross: the Mother of Jesus, Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene. Otherwise, we have four women, the unnamed person being Salome, the mother of St.

¹⁶ Paul Gächter, S.J., *Maria im Erdenleben* (Innsbruck, 1953) 203-205 has analyzed the literary structure of the Johannine Calvary narrative. It is composed of five distinct episodes: (1) The title on the Cross, the account of which is bounded by *inclusio*, 19, 19-22; (2) the division of Jesus' clothing, also related within *inclusio*, 19, 23-24; (3) the words of Jesus to Mary and John from the Cross, *inclusio* in this case not being utilized, 19, 25-27; (4) the thirst of Jesus, *inclusio* being resumed, 19, 28-30; (5) the episode of the lance, concluding with a double scriptural citation, 19, 31-37. *Inclusio* is a semitic literary technique consisting in the repetition with verbal similarity, at the end of a narrative, of the idea or scene invoked at the beginning of the account.

¹⁷ Gächter, *op. cit.*, 205-212. Cf. also the excellent treatment by Karl Hermann Schelkle, *Die Passion Jesu* (Heidelberg, 1949) 81-109.

¹⁸ Cf. Gächter, *op. cit.*, 207-208; Schelkle, *op. cit.*, 81: "For Jesus the OT is not a mere record of the history of His people; it is both for Him and to Him the witness of the will of His Father"; Mollat, *op. cit.*, 188, note d: "The Scriptures, the will of the Father . . . all is accomplished."

John, in all probability.¹⁹ One purpose of this introductory verse would appear to be to bring the reader more consciously to the foot of the Cross in order that he might be attentive to the words of Jesus that are to follow. We are next informed that Jesus alerts Himself to the presence of His Mother and that of another person, previously unmentioned, who is also at the foot of the Cross: the disciple whom Jesus loves. There does not seem to be any reason to doubt that this unnamed person is John the apostle and the author of the fourth gospel.²⁰ The words of Jesus then follow. He first addresses His Mother, utilizing the Marian title peculiar to the fourth gospel, "Woman, behold thy son." The allusion to the beloved disciple is clear in the context. Jesus then addresses the disciple, without name or title, "Behold thy mother." The scene is quickly terminated with the sole observation of the evangelist that the beloved disciple understood the words of Jesus as being instructive in character, and that he made the provision for the Mother of Jesus which the instruction to him implied.

Our analysis reveals the solemn character of this Johannine scene. It has been suggested that its literary form derives from ancient formulas of adoption.²¹ If the formula of adop-

¹⁹ Exegetes favor the mention of four women. Cf. M. J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon S. Jean* (Paris, 1925) 493; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London, 1955) 458. The data of the gospels suggest Salome as the unnamed woman. The absence of identification is strange; the explanation may well lie in theological considerations rather than in the loss of the name in the tradition.

²⁰ The identification of the beloved disciple with St. John the apostle is more certain than the precise literary role of St. John in the actual composition of the gospel. Cf. A. Feuillet, *L'auteur du quatrième Évangile*, in *Introduction à la Bible*, edited by A. Robert and A. Feuillet, 2 (Tournai, 1959) 644-662; F. M. Braun, *Jean le théologien et son évangile dans l'Eglise ancienne. Etudes Bibliques* (Paris, 1959) 301-330.

²¹ Lagrange, *op. cit.*, 494; Barrett, *op. cit.*, 459. No precise parallel has been found in ancient literature wherein the mother is first addressed; this peculi-

tion is the literary model influencing the evangelist, we must be attentive to the historical difficulty that this procedure would create: the evangelist would have Jesus historically replacing Salome, the natural mother of John, with His own Mother.²² Such an action by Jesus, taken in the natural sense, appears implausible. This aspect of the literary form of our text is an indication that the evangelist may not understand his scene wholly in the sense of a natural adoption. But an even more pertinent consideration is that the evangelist in the light of the whole conception of his gospel, regards this act of Jesus from the Cross as a last will.²³ Jesus witnesses the division of His garments by the soldiers in fulfillment of the Scriptures (*Jn.* 19, 23-24), and then disposes of His last earthly possessions, His Mother and the beloved disciple. The evangelist's record of this last will of Jesus would be intended by him as a final testament to the Church. We may describe the literary form of the narrative as "The Last Will and Testament of Jesus and of John the Evangelist to the Church."

Catholic exegesis has no *a priori* reason to contest the essential historicity of this Johannine passage.²⁴ In the absence of another source of information upon the event the evangelist has described, it would be idle to indulge in specu-

arity of the Johannine account must be recognized, but this diversion from the customary formula of adoption does not vitiate the possible use of such a known formula.

²² Gächter, *op. cit.*, 217-218 has utilized the presence of Salome as an argument for the spiritual significance of Jesus' words from the Cross designating His Mother as the mother of John.

²³ Lagrange, *op. cit.*, 492, entitles *Jn.* 19, 25-27 "*La dernière volonté de Jésus sur sa mère et le disciple qu'il aimait.*"

²⁴ The attitude of non-Catholic exegetes, as Gächter has observed, *op. cit.*, 201, is often one of aversion both to the historicity and to the theology of the passage. Against the historicity, cf. Barrett, *op. cit.*, 455, and for a severe judgment on the absence of theological content, C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1958), 428.

lation upon what historical facts the evangelist has drawn to shape his scene. Conclusions on this subject must result from our analysis of the text. If this analysis reveals that objective history may have been simplified or modified by the gospel tradition, this literary procedure would have been in the interest of making more pointed the religious significance of the last acts of Jesus from the Cross. It is today a platitude in gospel criticism that the historical material from the life of Jesus has been utilized, not for the purpose of presenting history as an academic record, but in the interest of inculcating values of religious import.²⁵ The gospels make use of history to teach doctrine with authority.

The literary form of our narrative is both a last will of Jesus and a testament of the evangelist. Since the evangelist's record is the one we actually possess, it is necessary that our study begin where the emphasis is placed in the gospel. The greater stress in the narrative lies in the filial role of John toward Mary: "From that hour, he took her to his home."²⁶ The evangelist has offered no similar comment upon Mary's exercise of her maternal role. Except for the usage of the term "woman" and the implied notion of "mother" in the words of Mary, ". . . behold thy son," her maternal role is not further specified. One would be inclined, however, to acknowledge a delicate allusion to her maternal affection as the response to John's filial care.

²⁵ Cf. David Michael Stanley, S.J., *The Conception of Our Gospels as Salvation-History*, in *TS* 20 (1959) 561-589.

²⁶ Tuya, *art. cit.*, 194, has shown that the notion of domicile cannot be excluded from the Greek expression *eis ta idia*. While this expression is to be translated "to his home," the actual sense is determined by the evangelist's conception of the relationship between Mary and the beloved disciple in his preceding context. If this sense includes a spiritual maternity of Mary, there would be allusion to it in *eis ta idia*. Cf. *Acts* 21, 6, where *eis ta idia* means an activity *centering* in domicile.

The Nature of John's Filial Role Toward Mary

The historical reminiscence in John's observation, "From that hour he took her . . ." is decisive evidence of the nature of the task assumed by him on Calvary. This duty was the natural care of Mary. The Mother had been present to witness the agony of the crucified Victim who was her Son.²⁷ The psychological suffering of Mary would have been commensurate with her maternal sensibilities. This observation is not to delimit the sorrow of Mary on Calvary to the conclusions from natural psychology. But the teachings of the Faith do not exclude the normal functioning of her maternal sensibilities before the scene of crucifixion. In these circumstances, the words of Jesus to John would have been in the nature of an appeal. Jesus, solicitous for the suffering of His Mother, requested the beloved disciple to undertake the responsibility for the care that she would require upon His death and burial. This action of Jesus is heroic in its deliberate consideration for His Mother in a posture of suffering which one may readily concede would absolve Him, even in her eyes, from the moral responsibility required by filial piety.

The choice of John for the care of Mary is striking in

²⁷ Some authors object that the presence of friends of Jesus near the Cross is improbable (cf. Barrett, *op. cit.*, 458). The synoptic gospels have the women followers of Jesus standing at a distance from the Cross. Gächter, *op. cit.*, 210 suggests that the period of darkness alluded to in the synoptics would explain how some friends of Jesus could have approached the Cross. This explanation is not certain, as the mention of "darkness" may be rather theologically motivated than a record of an objective phenomenon. The difficulty is more imagined than real, since it is clear from the synoptic accounts that the jeering multitude was near enough to the Cross to attempt to torture the Victim by their comments (*Mt.* 27, 39-43; *Mk.* 15, 29-32; *Lk.* 35, 35-37), and are effective enough to be joined by one of the crucified robbers (*Lk.* 23, 39). Historical evidence would seem to point to the practice of permitting crucified victims to be tortured further during their agony (Cf. Josef Blinzler, *The Trial of Jesus* [Westminster, Maryland, 1959] 256-257). There is no evidence of restriction upon the presence of observers near the condemned.

the circumstances of Calvary. The evangelist has noted—and very likely in order to stress the unusual aspect of the choice²⁸—the presence of women at the foot of the Cross. None of these is requested to aid the Mother. One could judge that their emotional condition would have rendered them unfit for this task. The task, however, would not have involved any greater burden for the women than for John. Seclusion and understanding would have been the principal requirements of Mary at this time. It is only sensible to suppose that John would have made use of womanly assistance in fulfilling the charge Jesus had requested of him.²⁹

These considerations make it sufficiently clear that there is no reason to minimize the value of the exegesis of the Fathers. The virtue of filial piety is exercised by Jesus on Calvary in circumstances that make His action heroic. Since His action is quite deliberate, His choice of the beloved disciple in preference to the women suggests a slight element of mystery.

This mystery deepens when we reflect upon the evangelist's insistence on the perpetuity of his charge, "From that hour, he took her *to his home*." Jesus' request on Calvary

²⁸ The significance of the choice of John rather than the women is controverted among authors. Tuya, *op. cit.*, 196-197, concedes that the women would be the logical choice, but observes that this factor would not exclude a special care by John. Leal, *op. cit.*, 309, considers choice of John the apostle to be pointless for the natural care of Mary. It would seem necessary to admit the choice of John for the natural provision of Mary as well as a theological reason that motivates this choice.

²⁹ It does not seem probable that John's mother, Salome, played the more important role in the care of Mary, for it then becomes difficult to explain the presence of Salome and the absence of Mary among the women at the tomb (*Mk.* 16, 1). Gächter, *op. cit.*, 216, uses the presence of Salome at the Cross as evidence for a spiritual maternity of Mary over John. It is rather that *the absence of the name* of one woman at the foot of the Cross would be explained by the evangelist's theology of the spiritual maternity of Mary over him. This unidentified woman would then be Salome, the natural mother of John (cf. *Mk.* 15, 40).

simply does not explain why John is anxious to inform us that his care of Mary was a controlling interest of his life. His original concern for Mary lay in the circumstances of her bereavement. This motive would endure throughout the period of bereavement. But with the resurrection of Jesus the original motive for John's care of Mary would have ceased altogether. We must search out, therefore, another motive for the evangelist's insistence upon his care of the Mother of Jesus.

The evidence of the gospels and the Acts reveals that the motive for the evangelist's insistence upon the perpetuity of his task cannot have been Mary's need of provision in the material circumstances of her life. Jesus had already seen to whatever provision was necessary for His Mother (*Mk.* 3, 32) during His public ministry. The fact of His death would not in itself have effected any change in this arrangement. Moreover, the practices of the early Church concerning the material welfare of all the brethren removes this motive entirely from John's conception of his care for the Mother of Jesus. All things were held "in common" (*Acts* 2, 44; 4, 32); and there existed the group of women followers of Jesus (*Acts* 1, 14), with whom Mary is grouped by St. Luke, and with whom also she would have found her natural place. John's motive for his insistence on his personal care of Mary simply cannot have been the consideration that otherwise she would not have found a satisfactory domicile.

The true motive for John's insistence on his role toward the Mother of Jesus can lie only in the changed religious atmosphere that was the result of the resurrection of Jesus. With the resurrection, the psychological effects of the events of the passion were almost entirely counteracted. It was then perceived that the sufferings of the passion were a divinely willed plan (*Acts* 2, 23), and that Jesus was that which He had signified, the divine Messiah (*Acts* 2, 36). More than any

merely human consideration, this perception, which continued to deepen and to develop in the early Church, eliminated from the story of the passion any record of the emotional reactions of Jesus' followers to the realities of the crucifixion. The sufferings of Jesus, not the sufferings of His disciples, had effected the redemption.

This transformation among the disciples of Jesus, caused by His resurrection, would have similar effect upon the motivation of John in His solicitude for Mary. It would now be realized by the beloved disciple that Jesus had placed in his charge the physical Mother of the Messiah and Son of God (*Jn.* 20, 31). Lagrange has made a very correct observation that John would have recognized His filial relationship to Mary, not as a burden, but as a privilege.³⁰ His original motive in caring for Mary, the bereaved Mother of Calvary, would have been transformed into solicitude for the Mother of the divine Redeemer.

One cannot offer valid objection to John's historical role as guardian of Mary on the ground that this task would have been incompatible with the duties of apostleship.³¹ Jesus' commission to John would have been realized to presuppose the resurrection and the changed circumstances of Mary due to the origin of the actual Church on Pentecost. Luke makes it quite clear (*Acts* 1, 14) that Mary considered herself among those redeemed by her son. The filial function of John was carried on by him in this change of circumstances, for he well knew that all had been foreseen by His Master. John already possessed the example of Jesus' provision for His Mother during the period of the public ministry. This conduct of the Master set a pattern the beloved disciple would follow in the

³⁰ *Evangile selon S. Jean*, 494.

³¹ So argues Leal, *art. cit.*, 312. The response of Tuya, *art. cit.*, 196-197, who reduces the words of Jesus to the beloved disciple to a duty of "special affection," is not adequate.

execution of the charge laid upon him. John's commission concerning Mary would naturally have to be comprehended in conjunction with his apostolic duties. The evangelist would lead us to understand (*Jn.* 19, 27) that he fulfilled the charge by retaining Mary within his personal circle. In judging the nature of John's personal role toward Mary, we must bear in mind that the relationship between himself and the Mother of Jesus was on an adult plane. An adult relationship between mother and son does not suppose on the part of either party a predominance of personal attentiveness.

In summary of the filial role of John toward Mary, we conclude that this role took its historical origin in an act of filial piety by Jesus on Calvary. John's original motive of regard for Mary in her bereavement was transformed by the resurrection of Jesus into an increased understanding of her personal dignity as Mother of the Messiah and Son of God. It was natural for the beloved disciple to understand that all had been foreseen by Jesus, and that it was the wish of the Lord that he undertake the care of the Mother in her changed circumstances brought about by the rise of the Church.

Mary's Maternal Role Over John

Evaluation of Jesus' words to His Mother, "Woman, behold thy son," is a critical point in the exegesis of our passage as a whole. If these words to Mary are to be understood in the same sense as the words of Jesus to John, namely, that she is about to be committed to the care of John, it follows that the direct, literal sense of the whole passage is solely an act of filial piety. We are on solid ground, however, when we examine the words of Jesus to His Mother in the light of an act of filial piety. This act, according to the Johannine narrative, had its inception in Jesus' statement to His Mother.

In His words from the Cross, Jesus could have been motivated only by the intent to console His Mother in her

suffering. In a situation like that of Calvary, there could have been no other immediate purpose for the utilization of human language. The consolation offered by Jesus would have been in itself sufficiently complex. He would be attempting to soothe the Mother's suffering, to provide a comforting memory to her, to give indication that her presence in the circumstances was appreciated by Himself, and, if possible, to provide opportunity to the Mother to assent to a last request that would be a source of solace to the dying Son. All these elements are necessarily involved in Jesus' words to Mary from the Cross.

Now it cannot be supposed that Jesus' offering of consolation to Mary would have been predicated upon her concern at the foot of the Cross for her material welfare. Upon Calvary, this consideration would have been psychologically irrelevant to Mary. It would be suggested that both now and in the future the chief cause of the Mother's sorrow would not be the loss of the person of her Son, but the loss of one morally obligated to be her provider. Jesus could not be suggesting to Mary in His words, "Woman, behold thy son," that she would find in John a support for her material welfare. This suggestion is in place to John. But it is absolutely out of place in application to Mary as a source of solace in the circumstances of her sorrow.

The nature of the consolation offered Mary by Jesus must be sought in His act of filial piety. He would be appealing, not to the instinct of self-preservation in Mary, but to her maternal instinct as it was in fact operative in the circumstances of Calvary. The Lucan infancy narrative makes it clear enough that the maternal function of Mary, with the aid of interior revelation, centered in the religious life and mission of Jesus. Whatever may have been the exact precisions of her original knowledge from interior revelation, she did know from divine enlightenment that the life of Jesus was

to be a religious consecration, and that He possessed the divine, messianic mission. She had seen this life unfold throughout the public ministry. This mission of Jesus was necessarily the religious center of her own prayer and meditation. The events of the passion, for which she was not entirely unprepared (*Lk.* 2, 35), would have served to stimulate her own psychological religious life. The consolation of Jesus to Mary had necessarily to be orientated to her religious sensibilities. No other object of consolation would have been truly meaningful to her.

When Jesus, therefore, informed Mary on Calvary that she had a son in John, He appealed to her religious devotion to His ministry. He invited her to include within the ambit of her maternal, religious affection, as this affection had been expended upon Himself, the one whom He designated, the beloved disciple. Hereafter, the beloved disciple was to be as centrally located in her interior religious activity as Jesus had been before him. Mary's source of consolation was to be found in the expenditure upon John of her religious solicitude. The acceptance of this replacement would constitute a solace to her dying son.

The words of Jesus to His Mother must be admitted, then, to be of an essentially different cast of thought than the appeal to John. There is nothing in the circumstances of Calvary that compels us to acknowledge that Jesus offered His Mother consolation in the thought that He was about to provide for her material welfare. The direct, literal sense of the words to Mary reflects Jesus' understanding of her interior, religious life. Only a meaning within this area of Mary's personal religious sensibilities can be the direct, literal sense of the words of Jesus to her in the circumstances of Calvary. Just as certainly as the appeal of Jesus to John directed the concern of the beloved disciple to the immediate physical welfare of Mary, so the words of Jesus to Mary directed her

concern to the immediate religious welfare of John. The nature of the task requested of Mary is clear: she is to uphold the faith of John in the messianic mission of Jesus.

Mary's function toward John is described in a delicate allusion to maternity, "... behold thy son." It is significant that the women at the Cross are not included by specific mention in Mary's spiritual concern. The exclusion of the women in the words, "... behold thy son," makes it necessary to admit that there is special choice of John. This fact might tempt one to conclude that the thought ascribed to Jesus does not direct itself beyond the physical person of John. However, we cannot draw this conclusion until we have examined the sense of the term *gynē*.

There is a body of evidence utilized to show that *gynē* does not possess a religious meaning in our passage. The term is found as a title of honor in Sophocles and Homer; it is used of Cleopatra by Caesar Augustus. The Jewish historian, Josephus, is familiar with this honorary title,³² while the synoptic gospels (*Mt.* 15, 28; *Lk.* 13, 13) depict Jesus following the same practice in addressing women. All this evidence indicates that the term *gynē* can have merely an honorific sense. But is such true of our passage?

The first reason to think that *gynē* has a religious meaning in our passage is the sense of Jesus' words to Mary in the historical circumstances of Calvary. His consolation to her presupposes old knowledge and presents new knowledge. In broad outline, the old knowledge is her awareness of the messianic mission of her Son. The new knowledge lies in the declaration to her that upon the death of Jesus she is no longer to make His person in His earthly mission the center of her religious activity. John is to be the direct concern of her religious activity. What is the factor that has dictated this change? The text supplies no answer outside the possi-

³² For a succinct résumé of the evidence, cf. Tuya, *art. cit.*, 191-193.

bility of a religious meaning to the term *gynē*. *Gynē* is the introduction to Jesus' words, ". . . behold thy son." The meaning of these words is that Mary is to be consoled in her religious life in the fact that she has a son in John. She is, at the least, being honored by Jesus in being given a certain role over His closest disciple. This honor can only be on the religious level of Jesus' ministry. Consequently, it is necessary to concede that *gynē* so fixes the place of Mary in the eyes of Jesus on Calvary that this title cannot be *merely* a natural form of address.

A second consideration is the evangelist's view of the term *gynē*. The evangelist does not entertain the notion that in the double recommendation of the beloved disciple to Mary and of Mary to the beloved disciple there lies a single idea of mutual affection. His concluding observation reads, ". . . *he took her. . .*" If he did entertain a single idea of mutual affection, it would be natural for him to write, ". . . *they took one another. . .*" He could hardly wish to exclude the Mother of Jesus from her part in the fulfillment of her Son's last request. The fact that the evangelist restricts himself to his own fulfillment of Jesus' double request indicates with sufficient clarity that he does not regard Mary's role toward the beloved disciple as being simply the correlative of the disciple's role toward her. He suggests that Mary's role, unlike that of the beloved disciple, is not a rendering of natural aid, even though it is of a maternal character. But the allusion to maternity is entirely too vague to be enlightening. We are compelled, then, if we are to be further illuminated, to search out the meaning of *gynē*. It goes without saying that for the evangelist this hint can only be to a religious meaning in the term.

In summary of Mary's maternal role over John, we conclude that its historical origin was consolation rendered the Mother of Jesus by her crucified Son. This consolation was directed toward her concern for His mission, and was an invi-

tation to oversee the religious welfare of the beloved disciple. Mary's role in the welfare of the disciple must be further elucidated, according to the intention of the evangelist, by determination of the religious sense of the term *gynē*.

"Gynē" and the Fulfillment of the Scriptures

We have already alluded to the fact that the guiding thought in John's description of events on Calvary is the fulfillment of the Scriptures.³³ In four of his five Calvary scenes there is either express citation of the OT or clear allusion to OT texts (*Jn.* 19, 19-28) which the evangelist believes his reader should be able to detect from his general knowledge of the Scriptures. In our passage, only the term *gynē* could be a possible invocation of OT texts.

The puzzle, however, is why the evangelist has not clearly directed us to the OT passage to which *gynē* is intended to allude. He insists in 19, 28 that the words of Jesus from the Cross to His Mother and the beloved disciple pertain to the redemptive act of Jesus: "... knowing that all things were now accomplished. . . ." This accomplishment is a conscious fulfillment by Jesus of the will of the Father as He sees it outlined in the Scriptures.³⁴ Basic to the evangelist's thought is Jesus' act of filial piety. But he does not invoke any OT text

³³ Cf. note 17 *supra*.

³⁴ Gächter, *op. cit.*, 207-208, develops evidence from verbal usage and literary structure in *Jn.* 19, 28-30 to make this point. Schelkle, *op. cit.*, makes it more forcefully by a study of the evangelistic concept of Jesus' attitude toward the passion: (1) in the words and signs of OT prophecy the Father has outlined the path for the Son (p. 59); (2) the fourth gospel in particular stresses the free decision of Jesus to fulfill this will of His Father (p. 59); (3) Jesus' knowledge of this scriptural outline of His passion stems from both supernatural and natural knowledge (p. 60); (4) the evangelists are so imbued with the idea of Jesus' conscious fulfillment of the Scriptures that they write the history of the passion in terms of the OT without citing it (p. 88); (5) the obedience of the Son fulfilling this will of the Father is the basis of the passion narratives (p. 114).

in connection with this aspect of his thought.³⁵ It is necessary to conclude that the evangelist has intended to eliminate certain aspects of Jesus' act of filial piety from a fulfillment of the Scriptures. The consolation of the Mother, implied in the announcement that she has a son in the beloved disciple, is not a fulfillment of the Scriptures. Nor is the transfer of the care of the Mother to the beloved disciple such a fulfillment. Neither of these actions of Jesus in the thought of the evangelist are constitutive elements of the redemptive act of Jesus. This deliberate exclusion of the consolation of the Mother and the honor shown the beloved disciple from the fulfillment of the Scriptures deepens the religious mystery in the term *gynē*. In this term alone lies the key in the thought of the evangelist to the redemptive significance in the words of Jesus to the Mother and the beloved disciple.

But how does the evangelist expect us to arrive at the religious meaning of the term *gynē*? Due to the method of OT citation and allusion which is followed in the Johannine description of Calvary, it has been customary to have immediate recourse to *Gn.* 3, 15.³⁶ However, this procedure is anything but enlightening. To pose only two questions of the many that it raises, we may ask: are we to elucidate *Gn.* 3, 15 by the *gynē* of Calvary? Or are we to elucidate Calvary by *Gn.* 3, 15? Unless we determine which procedure the evangelist would have us undertake, we achieve religious speculation that may be useful but is not necessarily relevant to his thought. Nor can it even be said with confidence that *Gn.* 3,

³⁵ Very pertinent texts were available to the evangelist, e.g., *Sir.* 7, 27, ". . . do not forget the pangs of your mother. . ." (cf. also *Sir.* 3, 4); *Pvb.* 1, 8; 6, 20-22; 23, 22; and *Ex.* 20, 12 in the Commandments. All these books are either cited or alluded to by the fourth gospel.

³⁶ So Leal, *art. cit.*, 312-314; Gächter, *op. cit.*, 224-226, who, however, actually bases the possibility of the allusion to *Gn.* 3, 15 on *Ap.* 12. But it is necessary to establish (1) a connecting link between the "woman" of *Jn.* 19, 26 and *Ap.* 12; and (2) the nature of the allusion to *Gn.* 3, 15.

15 is the actual OT text alluded to in the *gynē* of Calvary. There are other OT texts that employ the metaphor of *gynē*.³⁷ It is not possible to exclude from our passage a like reference to these texts, nor even to think they have not been referred to in preference to *Gn.* 3, 15. It must be confessed that, if we pursue a theory of OT allusion in explanation of the *gynē* on Calvary, we are led down an avenue of frustration.

Since we are in pursuit of the literal sense of the evangelist, the only safe approach to his understanding of *gynē* is to investigate his thought concerning the redemptive act of Jesus on Calvary.

The Johannine Theology of the Redemptive Act on Calvary

To determine the essence of the Johannine theology of the Redemption, we suffer only from an embarrassment of riches. There is no essential divergence between John's understanding of Jesus' redemptive act and that of the synoptic gospels. For all four gospels Jesus' mission consists theologically in a conflict with Satan. In the synoptic gospels, the greater stress is placed upon Jesus' exorcisms and healing miracles, which are directed against the kingdom of evil (*Mk.* 3, 22-27 and the parallels, especially *Mt.* 12, 28 and *Lk.* 11, 20).³⁸ This supernatural activity of Jesus in His public ministry makes manifest the truth of His declaration that the reign of God has arrived. In the fourth gospel, the greater stress on Jesus' conflict with Satan occurs once Jesus announces that His "hour" has arrived (*Jn.* 12, 23).³⁹ In the context of this announcement, Jesus states that "the prince of this world" is to be "cast out" (*Jn.* 12, 31). The evangelist

³⁷ E.g., *Jer.* 13, 21; *Is.* 26, 17-18; 37, 3; 66, 7-8, etc.

³⁸ Cf. Alan Richardson, *The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels* (London, 1956) and A. Feuillet, *Le regne de Dieu et la personne de Jésus . . .*, in *Introduction à la Bible*, 2, 778-9.

³⁹ It is evident that from *Jn.* 7, 30 the "hour" of Jesus is the time of the passion. In *Jn.* 19, 27, "From that hour he took her. . ." the meaning has

observes that Jesus "said this signifying by what death he was to die" (*Jn.* 12, 33), i.e., in conflict with Satan. The scene of the Last Supper begins with the observation that the betrayal of Jesus had already been put into the heart of Judas by Satan (*Jn.* 13, 2). Judas leaves the supper to carry out the betrayal because "Satan entered into him" (*Jn.* 13, 27). At the supper, Jesus is consciously aware of the betrayal, but takes no action other than an announcement to the Twelve and a secret revelation to the beloved disciple (*Jn.* 13, 23-26). He gives last instructions to His disciples within the limited time available to Him, for He has, as it were, an appointment with Satan: "I will no longer speak much with you, for the prince of the world is coming . . ." (*Jn.* 14, 30). Finally, the victory of Jesus is already assured: ". . . the prince of this world has already been judged" (*Jn.* 16, 11).

There can be no doubt that in the theology of the fourth gospel, Jesus' redemptive act on Calvary consisted in a conscious action by which He undertook, at the command of His Father, to experience in His person the effect of Satanic activity upon the decisions of men.⁴⁰ This effect, historically, was the crucifixion; and this weapon of Satan against Jesus was transformed by Jesus into a sacrifice for the redemption of mankind. John's theological conception of Calvary is the conflict between Jesus and Satan in which Jesus becomes the victor by turning the very weapon of Satan against him.

necessarily to be the same: the supreme moment of Jesus' act of redemption. One cannot reduce the "hour" of *Jn.* 19, 27 simply to a sheer historical reference of John's "taking" Mary, as does Tuyá, *art. cit.*, 211. The author uses this interpretation to argue that the beloved disciple did not grasp the spiritual maternity of Mary on Calvary. This opinion may be entirely true, but we are interpreting the written gospel, composed after a long period of divine enlightenment and meditation by the evangelist.

⁴⁰ This point is stated bluntly by Barrett, *op. cit.*, 392, "The passion itself may be regarded as a conflict between Jesus and Satan." A. Feuillet, *Le Messie et sa Mère d'après le chapitre XII de l'Apocalypse*, in *RB* 66 (1959) 59 concurs in this judgment.

"Gynē" and the Conflict With Satan

It remains to be determined what relevance to the conflict between Jesus and Satan the term *gynē* possesses in the thought of the evangelist. The fourth gospel does not supply a direct answer to this question, for it enters into the theology of diabolic activity throughout the public ministry of Jesus only by way of allusion (*Jn.* 6, 70-71; 8, 44). One must employ the data of the synoptics, whose doctrine is presupposed, at least in great part,⁴¹ by the fourth gospel.

The first observation is that all the followers of Jesus are affected by the satanic activity against Him. This point is made expressly in *Lk.* 22, 31-32, "Simon . . . Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat . . . when once thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren." The instruction of Jesus during the agony in the garden, "Pray, that you may not enter into temptation" (*Lk.* 22, 40 and parallels) obviously implies this doctrine of satanic activity against the disciples of Jesus. This theology would appear to be the real reason for the repetition in all four gospels of both the betrayal of Judas and the denial of Peter.

This theology of satanic activity against the disciples of Jesus leads to the conclusion that the sufferings of Mary on Calvary would have been likewise viewed by the evangelist in this light. In the theology of the synoptics, satanic activity against the disciples follows logically from the nature of their association with Jesus. During His public ministry, the Lord gave, both to the Twelve in particular (*Mk.* 6, 7) and to a larger body of disciples (*Lk.* 10, 17), the power to exorcise and to heal. Enmity existed between Satan and those posses-

⁴¹ A certain degree of caution is required in judging the relationship between the fourth gospel and the synoptics, but that the author of the fourth gospels knew the synoptic tradition is the considered judgment of Barrett, *op. cit.*, 44, and of Mollat, *op. cit.*, 37-38. On major themes, such as we are entering into here, there is no danger in supposing full knowledge of the synoptic tradition by the fourth evangelist.

sing these powers. It cannot be said, therefore, that the evangelist's view of Mary's sorrows on Calvary would escape the application of this theology in the gospel. Being the physical Mother of Jesus, the person who brought this Enemy of Satan into the world, she also would have been a prime victim of his hatred of Jesus. In this context of the effect of satanic activity upon Mary, an allusion to the opening words of *Gn.* 3, 15, "I will place enmity between thee and the woman . . .", becomes possible. However, the reference is too indeterminate on these grounds alone to say that the evangelist actually intends to press it in the words of Jesus on Calvary. But it would seem necessary to acknowledge, apart from the possibility of reference to *Gn.* 3, 15, that the title *gynē* makes allusion to Mary's position of honor due to her maternal suffering on Calvary, brought about by Satan's activity against her as the Mother of Jesus. Without intending to exhaust the religious significance of *gynē* in the thought of the evangelist, we accept it as a designation of Mary on Calvary as suffering Mother of the Redeemer.

"Gynē," the Suffering Mother of the Redeemer

In the theological thought of the gospel, the consolation offered to Mary by Jesus revolves about His conflict with Satan. His words to the Mother and to the beloved disciple are placed in the evangelist's chronology shortly before the death of Jesus. Jesus, therefore, consoles His Mother in the theology of the evangelist by announcing the imminent end both to her suffering and to His own that have taken their origin in the activity of Satan. As part of the consolation also, He offers her a son in the beloved disciple.

The son given to Mary by Jesus from the Cross must necessarily be the product of His conflict with Satan, the issue of which is never in doubt (*Jn.* 16, 11). In Johannine theology the redeemed are the children of God (*Jn.* 1, 12). The be-

loved disciple as son is, therefore, the first fruits of the conflict, the first of the redeemed in the thought of the evangelist. Concerning Mary, Jesus announces that she, as the suffering Mother of the Redeemer, is the suffering Mother of the first of the redeemed.

It must be kept in mind, however, that the evangelist does not complete his thought on Jesus' redemptive act until he describes the episode of the lance (*Jn.* 19, 31-37). He places great stress on the flow of blood and water from the pierced side of Jesus. The water symbolizes the Holy Spirit, as the evangelist expressly states in 7, 39. The first fulfillment of the sending of the Spirit, promised by Jesus at the supper, occurs in the evangelist's thought at this moment on Calvary. The victory over Satan has been achieved by Jesus (*Jn.* 19, 30) and the supernatural effects enter history. Since the water has a symbolic value expressly stated by the evangelist, the blood must necessarily be in the same line of thought.⁴² The image of the blood evokes Jesus' allusions to the drinking of His blood in the Eucharistic discourse (*Jn.* 6, 53.54.55.56). The imagery becomes very complex, evoking the idea in the gospel of "life" from Jesus (*Jn.* 6, 54-55) and of intimacy with Him (*Jn.* 6, 57). These images in turn send us back over the gospel, in particular to Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus on the necessity of man's spiritual re-birth (*Jn.* 3, 1-15), where there is express allusion to Jesus' "lifting up" as the source of man's everlasting life; and also to the allegory of the Vine and the Branches (*Jn.* 15, 1-11), where the thought lies in a more profound union with Jesus. The essential thought of the evangelist in the image of the blood flow-

⁴² In exegetical tradition, the idea of the Church as the new Eve originated in the symbolism of this Johannine passage. This line of thought has been developed in the encyclical of Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, on the theological origin of the Church. For a brief summary of the exegetical tradition, cf. F. M. Braun, *Évangile selon S. Jean*, in *La Sainte Bible*, 10 (Paris, 1946) 472.

ing from the side of Christ would appear quite clearly to be that all the supernatural values possessed by mankind from the redemptive act of Jesus had their origin in the design of God in this moment of the piercing of the heart of Jesus with the lance.

Since the effect of Jesus' redemptive act in the thought of the evangelist is universal in scope (*Jn.* 12, 32) and effective for all those who have true faith in Him (*Jn.* 1, 12.16.17), we have an enlargement in the episode of the lance on the thought in the words of Jesus to His Mother and the beloved disciple: the *gynē* becomes the suffering Mother of the redeemed, and the beloved disciple the representative of redeemed humanity. In the episode of the lance, the evangelist has made actual in a given moment in history the application of Jesus' redemptive act to all mankind.

In the thought of John, it is not possible for man to be spiritually reborn except he be included in the effect of the redemptive act of Jesus on Calvary (*Jn.* 3, 14-15). The words to Mary from the Cross, "Woman, behold thy son," can only mean for the evangelist an announcement that concerns the fulfillment of Jesus' universal mission. In presenting the beloved disciple to His Mother, He consoles her with the first fruits of this mission, acknowledging her spiritual role in His own conflict with Satan that was sure to result in victory. For the evangelist, if Jesus speaks at all of this spiritual maternity of Mary, there would be one thing he could not mean: that this spiritual maternity would be restricted to an individual. Since Jesus' mission is universal, the maternity that rests on His announcement of its fulfillment must be universal. The inclusion of the other women expressly in the spiritual maternity of Mary would have been in the circumstance of Jesus' intention to make provision for His Mother in the words to the beloved disciple an irresolvable oddity. Theologically, it would have added nothing to the religious content

of her maternity; rather it would have risked delimiting its extension to those immediately about the Cross.

Mary's Spiritual Maternity in the Development of Revelation
— *A Summary*

So far as we have been able to judge, *Jn.* 19, 25-27 affords two initial certainties that guide the assessment of its scriptural sense: (1) The evangelist has stressed his role as guardian of Mary. On this element in the text rests the whole case for Jesus' act of filial piety on Calvary. (2) By the same token, the evangelist clearly intends to distinguish between this role toward Mary, given him by Jesus on the Cross, and Mary's role toward himself. On this element in the text rests the case for a function of Mary, the characteristic of which diverges in the eyes of the evangelist from the role of the beloved disciple.

Analysis of Jesus' act of filial piety toward His Mother in its purpose on Calvary and in the light of the religious condition of her life, as depicted in *Lk.* 1-2, necessarily suggests a maternity over the beloved disciple that is religious in nature.

At this point in the exegesis of the text, grammatical and philological analysis of verbal content and literary structure break down. The evangelist has not intended to supply any direct data that bear upon the nature of this religious maternity of Mary. In lieu of direct data, he supplies us with a religious mystery in the term *gynē*.

This factor of religious mystery in *gynē* suggests that at the time the evangelist wrote, or at least at the stage when the finishing touches on the narrative would have been completed, the religious significance of the term *gynē* was thought to be known.⁴³ This conclusion appears to be quite sound

⁴³ Modern criticism places the Apocalypse first in the chronology of Johannine writings. Cf. Braun, *Jean le théologien*, 62. However, in order

within a gospel context that is an invocation of OT texts, but where there is a conspicuous absence of reference determining the nature of the religious mystery implied in the oblique use of *gynē*. In the absence of specific direction to the OT to decide the sense of *gynē*, we have no choice, if we are to avoid problematic determinations, but to investigate the evangelist's theology of the passion.

Since the passion represents for the evangelist a conflict between Jesus and Satan, this conflict is necessarily an essential ingredient of the religious mystery implied in the term *gynē*. In this factor of satanic activity affecting the Mother of Jesus on Calvary, we have a basic element in the theological thought that has contributed to the formation of the doctrine of Mary's spiritual maternity in the fourth gospel. According to the gospel tradition, it is at the instigation of Satan that Peter denies, Judas betrays, and the disciples flee (*Mk.* 14, 50; *Mt.* 26, 31). This uniform view is evidence of theological reflection that has evaluated the conduct of Jesus' intimate associates in the light of the satanic struggle that He Himself undertakes. In this theological tradition, it would be simply incredible that similar reflection would not have expended itself upon the Mother of Jesus.

The interest would have taken its natural center in her maternity, the religious characteristics of which would have been the predominant point of evaluation. The existence of theological motive impelling assessment of Mary's religious characteristics as the Mother of the divine Redeemer forbids us to assert without due caution that the material of the infancy narrative of *Lk.* 1-2 was of haphazard origin.⁴⁴ In its

to establish allusion to *Ap.* 12 in the *gynē* of the fourth gospel, the identity of the theological conception behind the fourth gospel and *Ap.* 12 would be safer ground.

⁴⁴ For the evidence of the literary and theological unity of *Lk.* 1-2, cf. René Laurentin, *Structure et Théologie de Luc I-II. Etudes Bibliques* (Paris, 1957).

Marian theology it is necessarily integral to the gospel tradition as a whole.⁴⁵ The *kecharitōmenē* of *Lk.* 1, 28 has a religious significance which in the thought of the primitive Christian tradition enters profoundly into the spiritual formation of the Mother of Jesus for her role in the divine plan of Jesus' conflict with Satan. The same observation must be made of the prophecy of Simeon in her regard. The Lucan infancy narrative is the result of a theological motivation and purpose that have central bearing on the divine preparation of the Mother of Jesus in the divine plan of her Son's redemptive act on Calvary. The two scenes in the fourth gospel, Cana and Calvary, which place Mary at the beginning and the conclusion of her Son's public life,⁴⁶ presuppose the Marian doctrine of Luke's infancy narrative. This presupposition imposes itself in the usage of *gynē* in both these Johannine passages. When Mary appears at Cana, she is already in Johannine thought the *gynē*, as Jesus is already the Messiah. She possesses by divine design all that is needful for her role on Calvary. What she is announced to be on Calvary, she is at Cana, the spiritual Mother of the redeemed.

There appears to be, however, an evident lacuna in the thought of the fourth gospel between its announcement on Calvary of Mary's spiritual maternity and its theology of satanic conflict that forms the background of the announcement. The question left unanswered in the theology of the

⁴⁵ Careful study of the literary pattern of *Lk.* 1-2 is required before critical judgment can be made of the historical nature of these chapters. For a suggestive effort along these lines, cf. J. P. Audet, O.P., *L'annonce à Marie*, in *RB* 3 (1956) 346-374; and our own criticism, *Luke 1, 34 and Mary's Virginity*, in *CBQ* 19 (1957) 329-342.

⁴⁶ For an attempt to integrate the evangelist's thought in Cana and Calvary narratives, cf. F. M. Braun, *La Mère des Fidèles* (Paris, 1954); and our criticism of the position taken: *Jesus and Mary at Cana: Separation or Association?*, in *TS* 17 (1956) 1-38; *The Problem of Ambiguity in John 2, 4*, in *CBQ* 21 (1959) 316-340.

gospel is precisely *why* the spiritual maternity of Mary is attributed to her in the words of Jesus from the Cross.⁴⁷ The doctrine of the Co-redemption of Mary would find its logical place as the bridge between the gospel theology of Jesus' conflict with Satan and His announcement on Calvary of Mary's spiritual maternity.⁴⁸ But the evangelist does not directly concern himself with the nature of Mary's maternal role on Calvary. That her role in the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross is active in a religious sense may be subtly intimated in the maternal allusion of the words, ". . . behold thy son." We cannot conclude, therefore, that the announcement of Mary's spiritual maternity on Calvary is intended to be the evangelist's full understanding of the religious mystery he suggests in the term *gynē*.

In our final judgment, the literal sense of *Jn.* 19, 25-27 certainly invokes the spiritual maternity of Mary over mankind. Her spiritual maternity is posed by the evangelist as a mysterious sequel to Jesus' redemptive death. In the religious mystery of the term *gynē* the fourth gospel has bequeathed, as a legacy to the Church, what is very probably the most important key to the Mariological conception of the NT.

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⁴⁷ That the evangelist is aware of a more profound reason for Mary's spiritual maternity is very possibly intimated in *Jn.* 16, 20-22. In this passage, Jesus speaks of the sorrow about to be experienced by his disciples due to the events of the passion. The theological explanation of their sorrow would be, of course, the activity of Satan. The example is then employed of "a woman about to give birth," and this sorrow is termed "her hour"; for the fourth evangelist "hour" is a theological concept pertaining to Jesus' redemptive act.

⁴⁸ The study of *Ap.* 12 by A. Feuillet, cited in note 40, is currently the most suggestive exegesis to determine the Johannine conception of Mary's role on Calvary. Cf. also Bernard J. Le Frois, S.V.D., *The Mary-Church Relationship in the Apocalypse*, in *MS* (1958) 79-106.