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MARY IN EASTERN LITURGY

(Remarks on Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's paper)

My remarks are a series of observations:

1) Father Schmemmann speaks dominantly from the Byzantine tradition. This tradition, even though it be a diverse theological elaboration (from those prevailing in the West) "belongs to the full catholicity and the apostolicity of the Church" (Vat. II, *Decree on Ecumenism*, n.17)

I wonder if the Nestorian controversy and Ephesus, lived and worked out in the Byzantine area, did not provoke there a fuller liturgical celebration of the *theotokos* than in the West. I tend to suppose that it did, and so gave them a more satisfying and habitual expression of devotion to Mary.

This would support, within that Catholic elaboration of tradition, the stance of Fr. S. that "the proper locus of Mariology is primarily in liturgy and prayer."

2) In contrast, in the West, which lacks such habitual liturgical expression, the thrust of Marian devotion, native to Catholic life, sought other outlets—among them a tendency to elaborate and define privileges of Mary (note the personal declarations of Pío Nono and Pius XII in *Ineffabilis Deus* and *Munificentissimus Deus*, also various movements, the push for use of the title Co-redemptress . . .).

3) As to the Immaculate Conception, it must be remembered that the elaboration of this doctrine, and so its expression and definition, is in terms of Western Catholic tradition; above all, it was worked out against a background of thinking on original sin rooted in Augustine, whose genial views are conditioned by his own personal experience and by the Pelagian controversy, neither of which have ever entered or nourished the Byzantine tradition. Hence, the expression of this doctrine is not, or only with difficulty, accepted by one operating basic-

ally in the Byzantine tradition (see the nuanced expression of this doctrine in the Roman edition of the *Horologion* [1937] for the 9th December).

4) Here I would like to make a particular comment on a paragraph in Fr. Schmemann's section IV. He there writes:

The Orthodox Church has never rationalized this mystery, has not expressed it within the categories of original sin, immaculate conception, *donum superadditum*, etc. Different in this from the Roman Catholic Church, she affirms that Mary shared with mankind the original sin and that She fell asleep, i.e. died.

This presentation is brief and so, without distinctions the author would himself introduce. I speak then only of his text as written. He speaks of certain categories of Catholic theology in our matter. One is *donum superadditum*. In the particular theological elaboration in which this occurs the "category" is understandable. But, for me, the whole elaboration, resting on a notion of *natura pura*, is less than felicitous. I feel in no way constrained to use it.

In distinguishing Orthodox from Catholic doctrine he affirms 1) that Mary shared with mankind original sin, and 2) that Mary fell asleep, i.e. died.

Orthodox often read the dogma of the Immaculate Conception as "exempting (her) from the lot of fallen humanity" VI. Lossky, *Panagia*, in E. L. Mascall (ed.) *The Mother of God* [Westminster 1949] p. 30; also cited by myself in *Byzantine Mariology*, in *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America* [1960] p. 130). If this were really the case, I think they might very well be right. But, as I understand it, this is not the case.

I would first observe two moments in sin: 1) separation from the source of life, which is God, then 2) bodily death, the state of mortality in which mankind lives: the wages of sin.

I would secondly observe that, in my view, Mary was never deprived of the first, but that she, as all mankind and as her Son also, shared fully in the second.

I would thirdly observe that as Mary became more fully aware of the scheme of redemption and her part therein (as at the Annunciation, at the foot of the Cross, at Pentecost) her fulness of grace increased with this increased experience and awareness of God's salvation.

By way of corroboration I would note the remark of Pius XII that "Mary pertains to the whole offspring of Adam" (*Fulgens Corona*, 1953; Denz.-Sch. 1309) and that what the Pope reckons unthinkable is that she should at any time be deprived of grace (grace = divine life; the whole phrase = separated from God), subject to sin or to Satan's domination (*Fulgens Corona*, Denz. Sch. 3908)

Father S. also supposes that for Catholics Mary did not fall asleep, die. I freely admit that the definition of the Assumption sedulously avoids affirming or denying Mary's death before her Assumption; for there are those who would deny her death. Yet, I submit, in view of the distinction I have just made, that the supposition of her death more faithfully represents catholic (small and big "c") tradition in this matter.

* * * * *

In conclusion: by these few remarks I do not intend to preclude discussion of other points in Father S.'s paper, as the possible contrast of "revealed" icons and of Marian apparitions in the West, or of the role of the Theotokos as *strategos* of Constantinople and as the victor of Lepanto.

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