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## Our Lady and the Ministry of Women in the Church

Josephine Massingberd Ford

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## OUR LADY AND THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

### *A General Approach*

A deeper understanding of the mystery of the Church, the community of men and women who form the new living temple,<sup>1</sup> goes hand in hand with a deeper understanding of the mystery of the person of Mary, the perfect Christian, the perfect woman. The fact that both themes tend to develop simultaneously is intimated first in the Old Testament in the relationship between the people of God and the matriarchs who foreshadowed the Mother of God<sup>2</sup> but becomes more pronounced in the pages of the New Testament. When one reads the earliest writings, the Pauline Epistles, ecclesiology is not clarified and at the same time the name of Mary is not mentioned. The Apostle of the Gentiles remarks the human origin of Jesus only twice and then he speaks merely of "a woman" or "seed":

God sent forth His son, made of a woman . . . (*Gal.* 4:4).  
. . . which was made of the seed of David . . . (*Rom.* 1:3).

<sup>1</sup> Compare the commentary on Isaiah 54:11-12 . . . 'and I shall lay your foundations in Lapis [lazuli.' . . . *its interpretation* is th[at they have founded the council of the community, [the] priests and the peo[ple . . .] a congregation of His elect, like a stone of lapis lazuli among the stones [... 'and I will make as agate] all thy pinnacles.' Its interpretation concerns the twelve [...] giving light in accordance with the Urim and Thummin [...] that are lacking from them, like the sun in all its light. And [...] Its interpretation concerns the head of the tribes of Israel at the [end of days . . .] his lot, the offices of [...] (*Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan*, Vol. 5, Qumran Cave 4, edited by John M. Allegro [Oxford, 1968] 28.) The covenanters at Qumran had already conceived the idea of a temple of living men and women.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. Massingberd Ford, *The Spirit and the Human Person* (Dayton, 1969) 45-53.

Note that the references are wholly impersonal.

St. Mark is the first writer to record Mary's name but he gives no details about her and he mentions the expression of disparagement on the part of those who belong to Jesus' domestic environment:

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us? And they took offence at him (*Mk.* 6:3).

It is only in the later gospels that Mary appears as a person in her own right and one who profoundly affects the plan of salvation. It is St. Matthew who places her within the perspective of salvation history. Firstly, he introduces her within his framework of the beginning, the rise, the fall and reconstitution of the Davidic kingdom presenting her as the mother of the king. As a mother she would have importance and prestige in Jewish eyes: she would be entitled to the same respect and obedience as the father.<sup>3</sup> However, as the mother of the king, she stood in an even more privileged position. One has only to recall the position of the Great Lady in the eastern courts<sup>4</sup> and to compare the reverence paid even to Bathsheba when she went to interview King Solomon (*1 Kings* 2:19). However, the prestige of Mary for St. Matthew's Jewish readers would be enhanced even more because he shows her as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14.

It is St. Luke and St. John who bring us to an implicit understanding of the active role of Mary both with regard to the physical conception and the earthly life of her Son, and also with reference to the life of His Body which is the Church. Much has been written on the infancy narratives of St. Luke, and the present writer would merely draw attention to one

<sup>3</sup> Compare the interesting selection of texts from rabbinic sources concerning reverence for father and mother in C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (Philadelphia, 1963) 500-506.

<sup>4</sup> See Roland DeVaux, *Ancient Israel* (London, 1961) 117-119.

point. It is permissible to associate the preface of St. Luke's Gospel with the role of Mary and her women companions. The evangelist speaks of

those who from the beginning were eye witnesses (*autoptai*) and ministers (*hupēretai*) of the word (*Lk.* 1:2).

Then St. Luke proceeds immediately to a discussion of the parents of the Baptist and of Mary, who would appear to be eye witnesses and ministers *par excellence*. The phrase "eye witnesses and ministers of the word" may be compared with two other "Marian" texts, namely, *Lk.* 8:1-3 (the Galilean women among whom may have been Mary, although she is not mentioned by name) and *Lk.* 8:19-21. Professor Hans Conzelmann<sup>5</sup> suggests that the appearance of the Galilean women signifies that the first passage belongs to the primary epoch of Jesus' ministry. The women not only point forward to the passion<sup>6</sup> but they function as "witnesses from Galilee" in a way similar to the disciples. Acts 1:22 shows that one cannot limit the circle of witnesses to the "apostles" in the sense of *Lk.* 6:13. Women, too, are witnesses.<sup>7</sup> Professor Conzelmann also suggests why St. Luke moved St. Mark's report about Jesus' relatives (*Mk.* 3:31-35) and introduced it elsewhere (*Lk.* 8:19-21). He comments:

Here we can see both the positive concept of the Galileans and the polemical concept of the relatives, emerging as motif not only from the source, but also as part of Luke's adaptation. Women have their share in the *anabasis* of Jesus, and later they witness the crucifixion and the resurrection. Therefore they must be mentioned in Galilee

<sup>5</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (New York, 1960) 47-48.

<sup>6</sup> The motif of the Galilean women is associated with *Mk.* 15:40.

<sup>7</sup> This is remarkable, for women and slaves were not permitted to be witnesses according to Jewish law; see, for example, *B. K.* 1:3 and *R. H.* 1.8.

in the circle of those around Jesus, which is what is done here. Just as Luke with his narrow interpretation of the concept of witness and apostle (the strict definition of Luke 6:13 is in fact adhered to in the Acts of the Apostles) forestalls the claims of Jesus' brethren, so it is possible that by his emphasis on the women he forestalls those of Mary. The Galilean women and Mary seem to stand in a similar relation to one another as the twelve and the Lord's brethren.

*Lk.* 8:19-21 describes what it means to be disciples, and it is here that Jesus speaks of the privilege of the disciples with reference to the mysteries of the kingdom, that is, in the parable of the sower (*Lk.* 8:4-15) which lies between the pericope on the Galilean women and the one concerning the relatives. However, the present writer cannot wholly concur with Professor Conzelmann when he says that Mary seems to stand in a similar relationship to the Galilean women as the twelve to the Lord's brethren. Professor Conzelmann gives no consideration to the infancy narratives and it would seem that Mary is aligned with the Galilean women as one of the witnesses. There seems to be no disparagement of Mary and the relatives; rather, while denying that they gain prestige by their blood tie with Jesus, He gives them greater tribute by recognizing their religious commitment.<sup>8</sup> One notes that in *Mk.* 3:21 it is not His mother and His cousins but *hoi par' autou* who think that Jesus is mad and who try to seize Him. However, the present writer would agree with Professor Conzelmann<sup>9</sup> when he avers that features from the primitive community have been projected back. Just as the male followers are turned into apostles, so the female followers are turned into deaconesses (cf. *Lk.* 8:3); however, both are witnesses and St. Luke has been careful to point out that the women fulfill the requirements of Acts 1:

<sup>8</sup> Conzelmann thinks that the blood relatives are excluded from playing an essential part in the life of Jesus and the Church. One becomes a relative of Jesus by calling and free choice.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 47, note 1.

21a-22, namely, that of accompanying Jesus from the time of John the Baptist until the ascension. Indeed the women and (as we learn from St. John) Mary are better qualified than the disciples for they are present at the crucifixion:

and all His acquaintances (*hoi gnōstōi autō*) and the women who had followed Him (*hai sunakolouthousai autō*) from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things (*Lk* 23:49).

In the parallel text in *Jn.* 19:24b-27 some of the names of these *gnōstōi* are given and they include His mother. *Gnōstōi* is used of the intimate friends of Ahab whom Jehu slew (*4 Kings* 10:11; *2 Ezra* 15:10; *Ps.* 30:12; 54:14); but more importantly in *Jn.* 18:15 f, of John known to the high priests, and *Lk.* 2:44, of the seeking of the child Jesus among His relatives and acquaintances. Further, the verb *sunakolouthēō* both in secular and religious writings connotes one who is a disciple (cf. *Mk.* 5:37 t. r. an d14:51).

The women are witnesses to the burial:

the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how His body was laid; then they returned, and prepared spices and ointment (*Lk.* 23:55-56).

They also received the announcement of the resurrection (*Lk.* 24:1-12). Thus for St. Luke Mary and the women appear to be fully-fledged disciples and witnesses. As a climax St. Luke associates Mary and Jesus' relatives with the event of Pentecost: the words are the same as in *Lk.* 8:20-21 although the case is dative, not nominative.

It is the latest gospel (St. John's) which throws into high relief the role of Mary both in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of the Church. One must recall the symbolic and theological import of the incidents recorded by St. John. Each of the seven *sēmeia* is representative of many others which Jesus wrought and which St. John could have recorded had he wished

(cf. *Jn.* 21:25). Therefore the incident of Cana might suggest that such behavior on Mary's part was typical, not atypical, of her relationship to the ministry of Jesus. This is confirmed by a consideration of the theme of discipleship which is associated with the miracle at Cana. The incident occurs shortly after the official calling of the disciples (*Jn.* 1:35-51) and is linked with this calling either chronologically or symbolically by the reference to the "third day" in *Jn.* 2:1. The miracle is followed by what would seem to be a confirmation of the faith of the disciples (*Jn.* 2:11). Interestingly enough, the confirmation of Mary's faith is not mentioned but, rather, is dramatically portrayed in her request to the deacons or servants<sup>10</sup> that they should do whatever Jesus tells them (*Jn.* 2:5). When Jesus had thus manifested His glory (*Jn.* 2:11) the evangelist records He went to Capernaum and that His mother and relatives and disciples accompanied Him. Thus the whole pericope might suggest Mary's intimate relationship to the ministry of Jesus not so much as His mother but as a disciple. She continues with Him to the cross where the disciples in the name of John are given to Mary as her sons and daughters. St. John, therefore, would seem to suggest that Mary was not only a prominent figure in the earthly history of Jesus but that she received a clearly "ecclesial" character. One certainly cannot use either the Cana pericope or the crucifixion pericope to argue that these were the only two occasions upon which Mary participated in the ministry of her Son.

I have spent a little time upon this evolution of the figure of Mary in order to suggest that there may be an analogous situation with regard to the role of women within the Church today. Mary, both in her earthly life and in her post-Assumption work, has prepared the ground for the type of work which women may be destined to perform. She appears as a witness and a disciple, then in a personal role and finally in an ecclesial role. Mary indicates the type of ministries in which women

<sup>10</sup> Note that the word for "servant" here is *diakonos*.

may serve but it will be as well to note that in the twentieth century there may be a greater variety of ministries available to women than there were to Mary during her earthly life. Nevertheless, an examination of the ministries performed by Mary can be a valuable contribution to the study of ministry with regard to women.

## MARY AND THE MINISTRIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Mary is intimately associated with the Holy Spirit, so much so that she is sometimes termed the spouse of the Spirit (cf. *Lk.* 1:35). As a mother she ministered to her Son during His childhood and, as we have suggested above, accompanied Him during His public life. The event of Pentecost was the creation of the Body of Christ which is His Church and this occurred in a way analogous to the creation of His physical body as a child, namely, by the descent of the Holy Spirit. Mary was an integral and voluntary part of both events.<sup>11</sup> In the light of this it is proper to inquire how far she is associated with (1) the activities of the Body, for example, the ministries of the Spirit, such as, prophecy, healing, miracle-working, and (2) the nature of that Body, namely, the fruits of the Spirit as shown, for example, in *Gal.* 5:22-23 or *1 Cor.* 13, etc.<sup>12</sup>

One may consider first the ministries of the Spirit. The Pauline Epistles (including the Pastorals) show the following development in ministry.

50's A.D.	60's A.D.	67 or later A.D.
		<i>Eph.</i> 2:20 <i>1 Tim.</i> 3:1-12
<i>1 Cor.</i> 12:28-31	<i>Eph.</i> 4:11      (cf. <i>Eph.</i> 3:5)	(and <i>Titus</i> 1:5-6)

<sup>11</sup> In art the dove is found both in illustrations of the Annunciation and of Pentecost.

<sup>12</sup> It has been commented frequently that *1 Cor.* 13 portrays the character of Jesus. One might also suggest that it illustrates the character of Mary.

*Apostles	Apostles	Apostles	*Bishop
Prophets	Prophets	Prophets	Presbyter (this may be the same as bish- op) ( <i>Titus</i> 1: 5-6)
Teachers	Evangelists		
Miracle Work- ers	Pastors		
Healers	(Shepherds)		Deacon
Helpers	Teachers		Deaconess
Administrators			Widow ( <i>I Tim.</i> 5:3-16)
Speakers in Tongues			

Some of these ministries may overlap, but the table shows approximately thirteen to fifteen ministries. One may now inquire whether Our Lady, after Jesus, was the New Testament prototype of some of these.

### *Mary As Prophet*

In rabbinic tradition seven women are specifically designated as prophets although this does not preclude the existence of many others.<sup>13</sup> The Babylonian Talmud lists them as follows: Sara, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Hulda and Esther.<sup>14</sup> Some of these are types of the Virgin Mary.

Sara, according to one tradition,<sup>15</sup> was called Ischah because she had prophetic vision. Another source tells us that she was

<sup>13</sup> See Abel Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Testament* (Lund, 1965) 159-161 for female prophetism in the Jewish religion.

<sup>14</sup> *Meg.* 14a.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Exod. R.* 11:4.

superior to Abraham in this respect<sup>16</sup> and that he, recognizing this, obeyed her in this regard.<sup>17</sup> Sara was reputed to be the only woman to whom God spoke directly, all other prophetesses receiving their revelations through angels.<sup>18</sup> Sara is said to have converted women to Judaism while Abraham took care of the men.<sup>19</sup>

It is believed that Miriam predicted the birth of Moses and foretold that he would liberate Israel.<sup>20</sup> She appears as a cultic prophetess in *Ex. 15:20-21*.

then Miriam, the prophetess, sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing. And Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea."

She was regarded as the saviour of Israel<sup>21</sup> and it was for her sake that God granted the miraculous well to Israel.<sup>22</sup> She is reputed to have died by a kiss of the Lord like Moses and Aaron,<sup>23</sup> that is, the angel of death did not take her or worms corrupt her body.<sup>24</sup>

Concerning Deborah it is said that the "fact that she was appointed by God to be judge and prophetess while Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was living, was to evidence that the Spirit of God rests alike upon Jew and Gentile, man and woman, bondman and bondwoman."<sup>25</sup> The rabbis explain that Deborah sat under a palm tree because it symbolized the unity of the

<sup>17</sup> *Gen. R.* 47:1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 45:14, although this seems to be a mere pious reflection.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 39:21.

<sup>20</sup> *Meg.* 14a; *Exod. R.* 1:26. See also *Sot.* 12b-13a.

<sup>21</sup> *Exod. R.* 26:1.

<sup>22</sup> *Ta'an.* 9a.

<sup>23</sup> *M. K.* 28a.

<sup>24</sup> But see the other traditions about her death in *Lev. R.* 31:5, cf. *Num.* 20:7-13.

<sup>25</sup> *Meg.* 14a.

hearts of all Israel, "all being turned, like leaves of the palm, to God their father in heaven."<sup>26</sup>

Hulda was the wife of Shallum, the keeper of the wardrobe, in the time of King Josiah. When Hilkiah found the scroll of the law he took it to her rather than the prophet Jeremiah and it is recorded that the king addressed the prophetess rather than the prophet because he thought that women were more stirred by pity than men and that Hulda would intercede for him.<sup>27</sup> Tradition also records that Jeremiah preached repentance to the men while Hulda preached repentance to the women. One authority speaks of Hulda teaching publicly in the schools.<sup>28</sup>

The narratives concerning Hannah and Esther are too well known to detain us here. Suffice it to say that these traditions about prophetesses, slender though they may be, allow us to catch a glimpse of the following characteristics of women prophets. First, the prophet was a woman of prayer, spiritual discernment and prophetic vision; second, in her capacity as prophet, men, even husbands and kings, deferred to her; third, at least one prophetess was associated with sacred Torah (Hulda); fourth, at least two (Deborah and Esther) took an active part in politics, the redemption of their people;<sup>29</sup> fifth, women prophets took a part in the cult;<sup>30</sup> sixth, the miraculous may be associated with their ministry; seventh, they keep their feminine characteristics, for example, Hulda's piety and Esther her feminine charm (*Esther* 15:1-6).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *J. E.*, under the entry Deborah which cites *Tarna debe Eliyahu* 9: cf. *Yalk.* 2:42.

<sup>27</sup> *Meg.* 14a, b.

<sup>28</sup> Targum, 2 *Kings* 2:14.

<sup>29</sup> Compare also the role of Judith, although the present writer is not aware that she is called a prophet.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. W. H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible* (New York, 1964) 69-71, where he discusses the relationship between the psalmist and the prophet; cf. 1 *Sam.* 10:5 and 10; 19:24; 2 *Kings* 3:14-19, etc.

<sup>31</sup> Compare Hulda's piety and Esther's feminine beauty. Indeed the beauty of the prophetesses is frequently remarked. Philo frequently refers to the wisdom of matriarchs such as Sara, Rebecca and Rachel.

One may express these characteristics succinctly by saying that the woman prophet was "a woman of God."<sup>32</sup> Can Our Lady be seen in a prophetic role? Does she succeed to the prophetesses or even surpass them? Before one asks this question one must examine the prophetic character in a larger context than rabbinic tradition, namely, in the Old Testament tradition itself with regard to male prophets.<sup>33</sup>

In the Old Testament one finds no clearly delineated type of the *nabi* or prophet, but all—men and women—have one common feature, that is, they speak by Yahweh's commission: in the pregnant words of Kings

Yahweh has sent forth His word through them (*1 Kings* 16:7, 12:2 *Kings* 14:25).

The prophets use phrases like "thus says the Lord" or "hear the word of the Lord." The form and content of the prophetic proclamation varied considerably, it comprised consolation, threat, admonition, warning, teaching, intercession, prayer, lamentation etc.: only later under Christian influence did *prophētēs* take on the sense of "one who declares the future." The prophetic message may also take the form of a symbolic action (for example *1 Kings* 11:29 ff.; 22:11; *Isaiah* 20:1f).<sup>34</sup> The prophets seem to have been associated with the cult but it is not possible to ascertain how precise this relationship was. Their office, however, was particularly one of intercession for the people; this is seen especially in the office of Moses.<sup>35</sup>

It is, however, also important to realize that the prophet approximated the *exegetēs* or *hermeneus* and also the *didaskalos*. For, to some extent, prophecy was seen as a contemplative consideration of Scripture. An example of this is found in

<sup>32</sup> Compare the title "Man of God" for the male prophets.

<sup>33</sup> In the following observations I am greatly indebted to the article under *prophētēs*, in *TWNT* 6, 781-861.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *1 Kings* 11:29 ff.; 22:11; *Is.* 20:1f.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Num.* chapter 14; *Is.* 37:1 ff.; *Jer.* 7:16 and *Amos* 7.

*Dan.* 9:1, 2f, 20-27. Daniel ponders over *Jer.* 25:11f; 29:10 which speak of the seventy years to be fulfilled with regard to the ruins of Jerusalem. Daniel subjects himself to ascetical practices and the man Gabriel appears to him and imparts a revelation. In this way the significance of the ancient prophecy is made known to Daniel and takes on an importance for the present.<sup>36</sup> Daniel, therefore, not only falls into line with the classical prophets but, to some extent, appears superior to them, for he is granted a fuller understanding of the word of Yahweh imparted to the former prophets. In the same way, the teacher of righteousness, who appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls, has a special office of interpreting aright the words of the prophets. The commentary on *Hab.* 2:8-9 describes him as a priest whom God has placed in the house of Judah to explain "all the words of his servants the prophets" or "all the mysteries of the words of his servants the prophets" (7:4-5). The Essenes also interpreted the Holy Scriptures (cf. Josephus, *War* 2:159). Further, in rabbinic tradition the prophets were regarded as interpreters of the Torah and it was believed that they received their authority from Sinai but that they waited until they had permission to speak. In this way when they unfolded the meaning of the Torah they differ in degree rather than kind from the wise.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the prophets did not only preach the word of Yahweh and interpret it, but, either they or their disciples, wrote down their messages for future peoples. Finally, the personal life of the prophet was often affected by his mission (cf. *Jer.* 16:1 ff.; *Ezek.* 24:15 ff.; *Hos.* 1 and 3). The prophet himself may even become a sign (*Is.* 8:18; 20:3). This personal involvement may even take the form of martyrdom (cf. *Jer.* 37f) and the prophet may suffer vicariously for the people (cf. *Deut.* 9:18 ff. and the suffering servant of Isaiah).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *TWNT* 6, 795.

<sup>37</sup> The *Bat qol* was a continuation of prophecy as the wise men were the successors of the prophets.

*Mary, "The Fiery Chariot of The Word."*

If one sees the prophetic role in the way described above, Mary fulfills this ministry in a unique manner. First, the common feature of all prophets, namely, that the word of Yahweh comes through them, is found in Mary in a wholly unprecedented and un-repeatable way. The Word, not now abstract, though dynamic, *ex Maria* (not *per*) was made flesh and dwelt among us. Mary as the climax of the prophetic tradition brings forth the Word. This is seen clearly not only from Scripture, but within the non-Biblical tradition of the Church. For example, in iconography one finds that one of the most revered icons is the Icon of the Sign.<sup>38</sup> The earliest known Icon of the Sign belongs to the fourth century A.D. It depicts the mother of God in the *orans* position with hands raised but with Christ in her breast. This icon is placed in the center of the Prophets' Storey,<sup>39</sup> that is, the central icon which shows the Old Testament Church awaiting the redemption. The order of the prophets to the right of the icon are David, Zacharias (the father of the Baptist), Moses, Samuel, Nahum, Daniel and Habakkuk, and to the left, Solomon, Ezekiel, Haggai, Elijah, Malachi, Elisha and Zechariah. The prophet Isaiah is sometimes absent but this does not seem to be an omission, for the story culminates in his prophesy of the sign (*Is. 7:14*), and he is represented by the mother of God and her child whom he foretold. Interesting, too, is the difference between the *mandorla* or nimbus of the mother of God and of Christ. Mary's nimbus differs in color and by the absence of the gold-work: it is bluish green with pink around the edge and seems to be an expression of the words in the *Akathiston* in which she is referred to as "the fiery chariot of the word . . ."

Thus Mary appears as the peak of the prophetic tradition

<sup>38</sup> L. Ouspensky and V. Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Boston, 1952) 78-79.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, see plate 1, a Russian icon of the middle 16th Century and also pp. 60 ff.

and experience, the human agent through whom Yahweh has sent forth His Word in a unique way. She is also the handmaid of the Lord as the prophet is the servant of the Lord.

However, Mary portrays other prophetic features also. Although she speaks seldom, her words on two occasions fall into the prophetic genre, namely, the *Magnificat*, a prophetic utterance embodying several prophetic motifs, consolation, threat, praise, etc.; and her role as intercessor, first at Cana and then repeatedly within the non-Biblical tradition of the Church. She is also associated with the worship of the Church, first on the day of Pentecost (*Acts* 1:14) and second, in the liturgies. Perhaps one of the most outstanding examples of the latter is found in the Festival of the Veil (in Russian *Pokrov*, which may mean either veil or protection). This has been celebrated since the tenth century in Constantinople and takes place on the first of October. According to the traditions concerning this festival, the Virgin Mary appeared in the tenth century spreading her veil over the people in the Church, and her veil shown like the glory of God so that all felt her protection. This is the central idea of the feast, namely,

The Virgin is today present in the church: with the choirs of the saints She praised God invisibly for us. Angels and bishops prostrate themselves, apostles and prophets rejoice: for the mother of God intercedes for us before the Eternal God.<sup>40</sup>

In the beautiful icon reproduced by Ouspensky and Lossky Mary is seen standing on a cloud above the faithful, clothed with her traditional *maphorion*, both arms outstretched and interceding with two angels holding a veil which billows over Mary. In some icons there is another veil over the outstretched hands of the Virgin, and sometimes in late iconography there is substituted for this veil, as the result of confusion, an episcopal *omophorion* (*ibid.* 154). Other figures in the picture

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 153-158.

are Saint Romanos, a famous hymnographer, Saint Andrew and Saint Epiphanius, who originally saw the vision. A ciborium on four slender columns stands behind the Virgin; thus Mary is intercessor in a similar way to Moses and the other prophets.

Mary may also be seen to perform the prophetic role of *Exegetēs* or *Hermeneus*. It is obvious that she is the interpreter of the Torah by the very fact that the Torah is fulfilled in her and her Son. However, over and above this, we may observe that she also approximates the exegete in her contemplative consideration of Scripture. She is not unlike the prophet Daniel for to her the meaning of former prophesies is revealed by the same angel, Gabriel. Prof. Laurentin<sup>41</sup> has pointed out in two brilliant theses how skillfully St. Luke has shown that the infancy narratives are a fulfillment of a variety of prophesies. However, one must note, first, that such richness of allusive theology is not found in the other evangelists, even in St. John, and, second, it is not found to such an extent even in the rest of St. Luke's Gospel or in the Acts of the Apostles. One may, therefore, ask whether the uniqueness of the Lukan infancy narratives with their apocalyptic and prophetic features may not be due to the contemplative consideration of Scripture emanating from Mary and also from her relatives, such as Zacharias, Elizabeth and St. John. Such richness, we may be permitted to suggest, might spring more readily from the "inner space" of the mind of a woman, than from the "outer space" of the mind of a man. Indeed, St. Luke records (*Lk.* 2:51) that after finding Jesus in the temple and hearing His reply to her, Mary "kept all these things in her heart." It is, however, important to note that the verb *diatēreō* occurs in the Greek text (Theod.) of *Gen.* 37:11 and *Dan.* 7:28, namely, Jacob, the father of Joseph, keeping Joseph's dream in mind, and Daniel reflecting after the vision of the four kingdoms and the son of man: both texts refer to reflection upon mystical

<sup>41</sup> R. Laurentin, *Structure et Théologie de Luc I-II* (4th edition, Paris 1964), and *Jésus au Temple* (Paris, 1966).

happenings. Laurentin shows how *Dan.* 9:24-26; *Mal.* 2:6; 3:1; 23-24 (*Lk.* 1:16-17); *Zeph.* 3:14-17 (*Lk.* 1:23-26); 2 *Sam.* 7 (*Lk.* 1:32-33); *Ex.* 40:35 (*Lk.* 1:35); 2 *Sam.* 6:2-11 (*Lk.* 1:39-44); *Judges* 13:18-19 (*Lk.* 1:42); *Micah* 4:7-5:5 (*Lk.* 2:1-14) and *Is.* 8:14 (*Lk.* 2:34) have permeated the infancy narratives. Further, sapiental and *Ecclus.* 24 have influenced *Lk.* 2:40-52. Could we see, therefore, St. Luke as the disciple of the prophet Mary who recorded her reflections upon Scripture, which reflections would be made in the light of her experience of an intimate association with the Son of God? May we liken St. Luke to the disciples of the classical prophets who committed the teaching of their masters to writing? This would be no more extraordinary than the action of King Josiah taking the scroll of the law to the prophetess Hulda (*vide supra*, p. 14).

Further, Mary's call, like that of the prophets, involves personal suffering which takes on the character of martyrdom. The sword (*rhomphaia*) pierces her soul "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (*Lk.* 2:35). This word for sword connotes the broad sword used by barbaric people, especially the Thracians. In Philo it is always used of the angel's flaming sword after *Gen.* 3:24, but in the rest of the New Testament it only occurs in the Bezae text of *Lk.* 21:24 and in the Apocalypse of St. John where *Apoc.* 2:16 and 19:15, 21 refer to the sword of the mouth, presumably from the mouth of the Son of God, and 6:8 is the sword of the horseman who may depict God or the avenging angels. The sword, therefore, which pierces the heart of Our Lady may be the prophetic word itself. The prophetic martyrdom of Mary may be compared to the suffering of the mother of the seven Maccabean sons,<sup>42</sup> and the words of that woman are peculiarly appropriate to Our Lady:

<sup>42</sup> It is regretted that this text was not chosen for the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady.

She encouraged each in the language of their fathers. Filled with a noble spirit, she fired her woman's reasoning with a man's courage, and said to them, "I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. Therefore the Creator of the World, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in His mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of His laws" (2 Macc. 7:22-23).

Thus Mary sums up in her person all that is significant in the role of prophet.<sup>43</sup>

### *Mary As Teacher*

The office of teacher is closely associated with that of prophet but differs from it in its mainly rational approach, its audience and also its occasion: the prophetic message is often delivered in a time of crisis whereas teaching is a perennial phenomenon.<sup>44</sup> Mary as a teacher is only implicit in the Biblical text although we may surmise that she must have taught Jesus until the age of about five years and that perhaps, like Mary the sister of Martha, she sat as a disciple at the feet of her Son. Dr. Gerhardsson has suggested that Mary and Martha offered their house as a type of school or an assembly place

<sup>43</sup> In the account of the meeting between Elizabeth and Mary the word *propheteuō* is not used. However, Elizabeth and Zachary are said to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to speak with a loud voice, and this may indicate that they spoke prophetically. They also seem to have known the past and discerned the future. Neither is the word *propheteuō* used with regard to Simeon but once again he is said to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to have the gift of insight. In *Lk.* 2:36 Anna is called a prophetess. One notes with interest that all these are related to the temple.

<sup>44</sup> The teachers expound Scripture, cherish tradition and explain catechesis, but the prophets do not necessarily teach or mediate knowledge and are not necessarily bound by Scripture and tradition but speak to people through revelation. Prophecy often deals with specific situations, and the prophet is often interested in the future whereas the teacher considers the past and the present.

for the wise.<sup>45</sup> The rabbis distinguished between the "lot" of the one who had the opportunity to study the Torah and the "lot" of the one who was constantly active with mundane things. Mary and Martha represent the two different lots, and Jesus commends Mary for choosing the lot or part of attending to the word of God. Gerhardsson compares the text of *Lk.* 10:38 ff. with *Acts* 6 where the same problem occurs. The apostles distinguish between serving at tables, the mundane lot, and the service of the word. But the comparison of the two texts suggests, quite correctly, that a woman could choose between the two. One sees this quite clearly in the example of Priscilla who engaged in a teaching career with her husband (*Acts* 18:24-28): it is not unlikely that the mother of Jesus pursued work similar to that of the wife of Aquila.

Mary's teaching role is also implicit in the accommodation of the Biblical sapiential texts to her in the liturgy. In these texts Wisdom is the teacher of mankind. In the new lectionary the following texts are appropriated for the Marian feasts: *Gen.* 3:9-15, 20 (which is frequently assigned by contemporary scholars to the Wisdom genre); *Prov.* 8:22-31 (which contrasts Wisdom who nourishes men with spiritual and intellectual goods with the adulteress who represents false wisdom and leads men astray); *Sir.* 24:1-2, 5-7, 12-16, 26-30 (Greek 1:3-4, 8-12, 19-21). In these and other sapiential texts Wisdom is presented under the figure of a woman and she symbolizes primarily wisdom which comes through the direct inspiration of God, that is, infused rather than acquired wisdom. One disposes oneself to this gift through complete and personal commitment to God and through a life of prayer (cf. *Wis.* 7:7-14).

In *Prov.* 8:22 ff. Wisdom asserts her relationship to Yahweh, to the world and to men:<sup>46</sup> she has a revelation to give to men

<sup>45</sup> B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Lund, 1964) second impression, pp. 239-243.

<sup>46</sup> O. S. Rankin, *Israel's Wisdom Literature* (New York, Schocken paperback edition, 1969) 241ff.

(*Prov.* 8:4f). Like Wisdom, Mary cooperated with the Most High in a creative and redemptive role through her *Fiat* and her association in the ministry of her Son while He was on the earth. She also has a role akin to that of Wisdom in her spiritual motherhood formally bequeathed to her from the cross by her Son. However, most appropriate to Mary is the accommodation of *Ecclus.* 14:20ff and 51:13ff where Wisdom appears as a noble and tender woman whom a person seeks to know and possess and who meets him "as a mother and as a youthful wife" (*Ecclus.* 15:2). One may also compare *Ecclus.* 6:14-31 where Wisdom is depicted as a teacher-friend.

Bulgakov (Russian Orthodox) discusses Marian teaching along "sophiological" lines. Mary is associated with Wisdom because she is the bearer of the Spirit "in virtue of the personal descent on her of the Holy Ghost" and also as created Wisdom for in her is realized the purpose of creation, the "complete penetration of the creature by Wisdom."<sup>47</sup>

In art the Virgin is sometimes depicted as personified Wisdom and shown at the right hand of her Son, although she does not occupy the same throne. In the altar-piece of the Van Eyck brothers (Berlin) Christ is shown as king, priest, and judge, and in a separate compartment the Virgin is seated on a throne reading a book, probably the book of Wisdom. Further, in one of the four frescoes of the *Camera della Segnatura* in the Vatican depicting theology, poetry, philosophy and jurisprudence, Christ is shown with Mary and with the Baptist. The Virgin is not merely mother but heavenly Wisdom. Of this masterpiece Mrs. Jameson comments

Nothing can be more beautiful than the serene grace and the mingled majesty and humility in the figure of the Virgin, and in her countenance, as she looks up adoring to the fountain of *all* light,

<sup>47</sup> Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, 2 (New York, 1965) 130-133. One may also compare Our Lady's title, "Mother of Good Counsel" and "Seat of Wisdom."

all wisdom, and all goodness. Above the principal group, is the emblematical image of the FATHER; below is the holy Dove, in the act of descending to the earth.<sup>48</sup>

The *Virgo Sapientiae* is also depicted in an altarpiece painted by Cosimo Rosselli for the Servites at Florence. She holds a book and looks upwards towards the dove which hovers over her head; St. John the evangelist and other saints stand nearby.<sup>49</sup> In the Chartres Reliefs Mary is shown as the *Sedes Sapientiae* but, interestingly enough, the Incarnate Wisdom (Christ) is related to human wisdom through the presence of the seven liberal arts and their representatives. Katzenellenbogen comments

that the seven branches of secular learning and seven authors of the past, mostly pagan, were given a place on a church façade is, indeed, a tangible example of the protohumanism pervading the School of Chartres.<sup>50</sup>

Thus Mary may be presented as created, though heavenly, Wisdom and we can accommodate to her such passages as *Prov.* 8:1-21; *Wis.* 6:12-20; 7:7-8:16; *Ecclus.* 6:14-31. In fact, these texts might be more appropriate than those which speak of the pre-existence of Wisdom.

### *Mary and the Ministry of Miracle Working and Healing*

Little need be said about Our Lady as a miracle worker and

<sup>48</sup> Mrs. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna* (London, 1872) 8-10. In note 2 (p. 10) Mrs. Jameson refers us to a detailed description of this fresco; see Passavant's *Rafael*, 1.140, and Kugles's handbook, second edition.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 10.

<sup>50</sup> Adolph Katzenellenbogen, *The Sculptural Programs of Chartres Cathedral* (Baltimore, 1959) 15. See also Edward D. O'Connor, *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception* (Notre Dame Press, 1959) 468-486; *Symbolic Representations* (of the Virgin Mary) in the essay by M. Vloberg, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception*. Many of these symbols are taken from the Wisdom literature; see especially the notes on p. 476.

healer. It suffices to draw the readers' attention to the miraculous occurrences at Lourdes, Guadalupe, La Salette, Fatima, etc. and to those innumerable prayers which have been granted through her intercession throughout the centuries. However, the miracles of physical healing pale beside the miracle of grace, such as conversion or amendment of life. Moreover, the present writer would like to suggest that the mysteries of the incorruptibility of the body of the Blessed Virgin and of her Immaculate Conception may be seen in the context of the Holy Spirit's ministry of healing: they are the climax of that ministry.<sup>51</sup> Truly felicitous is the selection of the second reading for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (*Eph.* 1:3). For the liturgical reading leads one's thought to the pre-election of the Blessed Mother in an even more significant way than the prophet Jeremiah

Before I formed you in the womb  
I knew you,  
And before you were born I  
consecrated you;  
I appointed you a prophet  
to the nations (*Jer.* 1:5)

It also directs our thoughts to the fact that Mary's privilege did not lie so much in the absence of sin as the presence of spiritual health and of virtue. Of her it may be said that she was blessed with every spiritual blessing (v. 3); that she was holy and blameless before God (v. 4); that she was for the praise of His glorious grace (v. 6); that upon her were lavished the riches of His grace (vv. 7-8); that she may have known the mystery of His will in all wisdom and insight (cf. v. 9); Mary herself was a miracle of grace and healing.

These considerations with reference to Mary as prophet,

<sup>51</sup> For a brief discussion of healing, see the author's *Baptism of the Spirit* (Divine Word Publication, 1971) 13-14.

teacher, and miracle worker may encourage one to see the life of Mary in the context of the ministries of the Spirit listed in *1 Cor.* 12:8-10. Of the eight ministries listed she appears to be associated with six. Mary may have received the gift of tongues on the Feast of Pentecost but the text of *Acts* 2:1-4 is not clear; there is, however, no Biblical evidence that Mary had the gift of interpretation of tongues. Our considerations may also suggest that Mary was given some of the ministries listed in *Eph.* 4:11, especially those of prophet and teacher. We must now give some consideration to the Pastoral Epistles.

### *Our Lady as Deacon*

Vatican Council II defined the duty of the deacon as follows:

It is the duty of the deacon, to the extent that he has been authorized by competent authority, to administer baptism solemnly, to be custodian and dispenser of the Eucharist, to assist at and bless marriage in the name of the Church, to bring Viaticum to the dying, to read the sacred scripture to the faithful, to instruct and to exhort the people, to preside at the worship and prayer of the faithful, to administer sacramentals, and to officiate at funeral and burial services (*Lumen Gentium*, para. 29).

We know that many of these functions were performed by women deacons in the early church. For example, they helped in the preparation for baptism, in the teaching of doctrine, they exercised liturgical functions, they administered Holy Communion; they visited the catechumens and the women Christians among the heathen, especially those in prison awaiting martyrdom; they helped with the last rites for women and may even have imposed hands and anointed the sick; they helped bishops in the liturgy; they exercised direction with regard to ecclesiastical widows and probably consecrated virgins; they served as intermediaries between women and the leaders of the Christian community, were present at interviews with bishops and deacons, and they took care of the poor and the sick.

We have discussed ministries akin to these with regard to Our Lady but it would not be pursuing accurate scholarship if one were to attempt to align Mary's work closely with that of the deacon, for there is little evidence that she functioned as such.<sup>52</sup> The Galilean women are said to have ministered (*diakonein*), and we have referred to Dr. Gerhardsson's suggestion that Mary, the sister of Martha, joined in the *diakonia* of the word, but we may not press the evidence as regards Mary, the mother of Jesus.

More pertinent is Mary's association with the Blessed Eucharist: she may indeed be regarded as the patron of those who are custodians and dispensers of the Sacraments. Indeed, one finds authors who compare the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Mary, which created within her the Divine Child, with the epiclesis of the Logos or the Holy Spirit upon the elements of bread and wine so that they become the Body and Blood of the Son of God.

Hirn<sup>53</sup> remarks that in early art the altar is sometimes depicted as a manger and the manger as an altar, and the table which bears the Eucharist is a symbol of the body of Mary who bore the Divine Child. The Holy Spirit changes the bread into the body of Christ but outwardly there is no change, and so in the Virgin's body even though she becomes a mother. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why a dove is often found overshadowing the holy place and in pictures of the Annuncia-

<sup>52</sup> Although Mary is a central figure in the scene of the circumcision of her Son, the Jewish rite which anticipated baptism, it is unlikely that Mary performed the rite of baptism. She is, however, properly associated with the theology of baptism through her position at Pentecost. In art she is often depicted in the position of leadership in the first Pentecostal prayer meeting in Jerusalem. This was followed by the conversion and baptism of three thousand souls. Neither can we associate our Lady with the blessing of marriages, although she was present at the marriage feast at Cana. However, her attendance on her divine Son during His last hours, and her assistance with the burial of His body may associate her with the theology of death, a popular subject today.

<sup>53</sup> Y. Hirn, *The Sacred Shrine* (Boston, 1957) 473f.f.

tion the same dove comes down upon the Virgin. One of the most interesting illustrations of the association between the infancy narrative and the Eucharist is found in the cathedral at Chartres. Adolf Katzenellenbogen<sup>54</sup> discusses the Right Tympanum on the west of Chartres which depicts the Incarnation of Christ. Here the manger of the child is transformed into the altar-like table with very precise sacramental symbolism. This sacramental importance of the Incarnation is implied by Christ in His discourse in *Jn.* 6, "I am the Living Bread . . ." (*v.* 51). St. Gregory in his homily for Christmas refers to the meaning of "Bethlehem," namely, "house of bread," and explains that the place where Christ was born has this name because "he refreshes the minds of the elect with inner abundance." The sermon then proceeds to refer to the eucharistic idea, the ox and ass are symbols of the faithful, and the newborn Child lies in the manger to refresh them with "the grain of his flesh" (pp. 8 and 12). The association between the Eucharist and the childhood of Jesus is also implied in the Presentation scene at Chartres. Whereas the Lintel Reliefs of the Abbey Church at La Charité-sur-Loire (*circa* 1140, see plates 13 and 14 *ibid.*) show the Virgin raising Jesus above the altar and handing him to Simeon, at Chartres the child stands on the altar facing the beholder. "By his very position the child becomes identified with the Host to be sacrificed on the altar" (*ibid.*, 14). The eucharistic idea is stressed again within the capital friezes (plate 21); here are depicted the Last Supper and the Supper at Emmaus and in the burial scene Christ's body is laid down as if upon an altar. Katzenellenbogen concludes that the reliefs link the Eucharist with the earthly body of Christ rather than the glorified body as, for example, in the first Bible of Charles the Bald where Christ is enthroned in majesty and holds the Host in his right hand (*ibid.*, 13).

Further, the Virgin's body is traditionally seen as the ark of the covenant. There are even traditions which suggest that

<sup>54</sup> Katzenellenbogen, *op. cit.*, 8-14.

the Virgin's dead body performed the same miracles as the Jewish ark of the covenant.<sup>55</sup> When depicting the Assumption some artists show Mary with an almond-shaped glory around her figure, and Hirn also observes that "the same disposition appears in pictures which, undoubtedly with symbolic reference to Mary, represent a monstrance borne up on angel hands to heaven . . . it even happens that the connection between Mary and the Host-preserver is called to mind in pictures of the Assumption by making some Hosts float down from the Queen of Heaven's mantle."<sup>57</sup> Interesting, too, are the visions of the German seer, Anna Katharina Emmerich:<sup>58</sup>

I saw . . . how the Holy Virgin's figure was enclosed by an image that filled the whole temple, and with its apparition threw into shade all the light of it. I saw under Mary's heart a glory, and understood that its radiance betokened the promise of God's most holy blessing. But I saw also the glory was surrounded by the Ark of Noah, so that Mary's head arose above the Ark. Then I saw that the Ark was transformed into an Ark of the Covenant, and that again gave place to a temple. Finally, the temple, too, disappeared, and from the glory came forth a Mass-chalice before Mary's breast, and over the chalice there shone before Mary's mouth a wafer bearing the sign of the Cross.<sup>59</sup>

The visionary was probably influenced by devotional pictures and religious literature which she had seen.

Further, there is the work of Jean-Dominique Ingres, a writer flourishing after the French Revolution, who did a series of paintings for the Sulpicians depicting Mary in adoration before the Eucharist. She is not vested but her hands are folded

<sup>55</sup> Hirn, *op. cit.*, 475ff.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 554, note 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, note 2 refers to Kraus, *Geschichte der christl. Kunst*, 2, 430; Bergner, *Handbuch*, 539.

<sup>58</sup> Hirn, *op. cit.*, 475-476.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, see note 3.

and an altar appears in the foreground with a chalice and a Host in the air above the chalice.<sup>60</sup>

We may mention also the beautiful work of Piero della Francesca (15th Century), the Madonna in childbirth;<sup>61</sup> the mother is at the height of her pregnancy and is standing in the eucharistic tabernacle with two angels holding back the conopeum. The figure is the *Mater Misericordiae*. Pregnant women still pray before her even today. Finally, we have an exquisite work from the school of Amiens, 1437, *Le sacerdote de la Vierge* (Paris, Louvre, no. 158). In front of an altar stands a female figure clothed in the robe of a high priest, she holds her left hand out to a child and both have haloes; on the right a donor carries a scroll inscribed with the words "Digne vesture au prestre souverain." This is a symbolic representation of Mary as a priest offering the first Mass and the child is Christ: it is the *Virgo Sacerdos*.<sup>62</sup> J. Dupont (*GBA*, Dec. 1932, p. 265-274) connects the picture with the "Puy d'Amiens." Most of the "Puy" pictures have been destroyed. However, forty-seven of them are recorded by copies in a manuscript.<sup>63</sup> Whereas statues showing the Blessed Virgin clothed in priestly vestments were prohibited by a decree of April 8, 1916, teaching concerning the priesthood of Mary was not condemned,<sup>64</sup> and it is exceedingly interesting to note that our illustration comes from the 15th Century and yet the prohibition was not pronounced until the 20th Century, and this only to safeguard the "indocti." One may ask whether art is prophetic or even predictive. Indeed, St. Antoninus of Florence (died 1458) in the *Titulus XV* in the fourth part of his *Summa Theologica* referred to Mary as the "helper of our redemption

<sup>60</sup> F. Elgar, *Ingres*, Paris, 1951, plates 51 and 52, "Vièrge a L'hostie Entre Des Saints" and "Vièrge a L'hostie."

<sup>61</sup> *All the Paintings of Piero della Francesca* (ed. P. Bianconi, New York, 1962) plate 33.

<sup>62</sup> *A Century of French Paintings* (ed. Grete Ring, New York, 1949).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* p. 218.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *Periodica* 8 (1919) 174f.

and the mother of our spiritual generation" and avers that she is even called "the priestess (*sacerdotissa*) of justice, because she did not spare her own son" but stood by the cross "prepared to offer the son of God for the salvation of the world," a view that has contributed to the later distinction of Mary's priestly function. Antoninus even writes that she absolved us from guilt and punishment through her Son. This is a bold expression, but it probably struck the contemporaries of Antoninus less forcibly than it strikes us.<sup>65</sup> In the *Akathistos* Mary is associated with Old Testament types and almost metaphysical epithets are attributed to her "... she is the space of him who is infinite, and so she is the door to the mystery which has reconciled the opposites, virginity and childbirth... she is the receptacle of God's wisdom, who shows the philosophers to be unwise and who illumines the many with wisdom..." She is seen as the intercessor and the fortress of those who call upon her and a "minister of divine goodness, for she has regenerated those who have been conceived in shame."<sup>66</sup>

## MARY AND THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Even more important than the activities of the Spirit for ministry are the fruits of the Spirit. Our Lady is a model for both men and women in this regard. The fruits of the Spirit are succinctly described in *Gal.* 5:22-23 and *1 Cor.* 13, although it is important to examine also such texts as *Eph.* 1:11-22; 3:14-16; *Col.* 1:9-14; 2:1-5; 3:12-17 etc. These fruits reflect the nature of God and create unity within the Body, which is the Church.

In this paper the present writer has only space to glance at the relationship between Our Lady and the fruits of the Spirit, but we might suggest that the following examination is in-

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Hilda Graef, *op. cit.*, 1, 319.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* 127.

teresting. If we compare the fruits of the Spirit as listed only in *Gal.* 5:22-23 with certain titles of Our Lady, by no means all, it is manifest that she reveals in a unique way what St. Paul would call "walking by the Spirit." She is called mother of fair *love* in the little chapter at Compline in the Little Office of Our Lady and a feast is celebrated under this title in various places. At Lucca in Italy in the church of St. Christopher there is a 14th Century statue of Our Lady of fair *love*. There is a church dedicated under this title in Montreal.<sup>67</sup> The *joys* of Our Lady, usually enumerated as seven, are well known. Indeed, devotion to the joys of Our Lady may have preceded devotion to her sorrows, for evidence of the devotion is found in the 11th Century in a poem written at Canterbury and apparently considerable literature was written upon the subject. The Franciscans helped to popularize the devotion. The number of joys varied from five to fifteen. The Feast of the Seven Joys is celebrated on August 27th and there is also a rosary of the seven joys known as the Franciscan Crown.<sup>68</sup> Our Lady is known as Queen of *Peace*. A feast under this title is celebrated on July 9th; it originated in the 17th Century. The title is also used in the litany of Loreto. The title "Our Lady of Sorrows" illustrates the fruit of *long-suffering* or *patience*. Until recently two feasts were celebrated under this title, although sometimes the word "compassion" rather than "sorrows" is used. We have already commented upon the appropriateness of the reading from the book of Maccabees for this feast.<sup>69</sup> Our Lady's virtue of *kindness* is suggested by her titles "The Virgin of Tenderness," "The Virgin of Pity," and the names "Protectress" and "Advocate."<sup>70</sup> One may discuss many aspects of Our Lady's *goodness* but here we confine ourselves to Our Lady of Good Counsel and Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The image of Our

<sup>67</sup> D. Attwater, *A Dictionary of Mary* (New York, 1955) 81.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 135-136.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* 274f.

<sup>70</sup> L. Reau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien* 2 (Paris, 1957) 72-73, 103, 110ff.

Lady of Good Counsel was first remarked in the 15th Century and is probably the most venerated picture of Our Lady in the West after Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The feast is on April 26th.<sup>71</sup> The title Our Lady of Perpetual Help or, perhaps, constant or unfailing help, is an ancient one. The name originates from one of the most well-known pictures of Our Lady, an icon of the 14th Century. The feast day is kept on June 27th. Mary's *faithfulness* is explicit in her title *Virgo Fidelis* but also has a firm Biblical foundation in the words of Elizabeth to her cousin:

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord (*Lk.* 1:45).

In art this faith *ex auditu* is often illustrated by words placed near Our Lady's ear. The *meekness* of Our Lady is proclaimed in her title "Virgin of Humility."<sup>72</sup> The *self-control* of the Virgin is beautifully illustrated in frescoes and paintings of Our Lady and the throne of Solomon;<sup>73</sup> this is a variant of The Virgin in Majesty or the Seat of Wisdom and portrays the Virgin seated on a throne with the lions of Solomon surrounded by allegorical figures under the form of women who are crowned and symbolize the virtues which were present at the time of the Incarnation of the Savior. Solitude because the angel Gabriel found Mary alone in her oratory; modesty because she was afraid when she heard the salutation; prudence because she asked how this promise could be realized; virginity because she responded "I do not know a man"; humility because she added "I am the servant of the Lord" and, finally, obedience because she said "be it done unto me according to your word." Reau cites examples from the 13th and 14th Centuries.

<sup>71</sup> Attwater, *op. cit.*, 97-98.

<sup>72</sup> Reau, *op. cit.*, 97-99; cf. also B. M. Ahern, C.P., *Mary Queen of the Poor* (St. Louis, n.d.).

<sup>73</sup> Reau, *op. cit.*, 94.

<sup>74</sup> Jameson, *op. cit.*, 27-30.

However, all these fruits of the Spirit are epitomized in Our Lady portrayed as *Mater Misericordiae*. Mrs. Jameson<sup>74</sup> describes this disposition of Our Lady as follows: she is portrayed

as protectress and patroness either of all Christendom, or of some particular locality, country, or community. In such pictures she stands with outstretched arms, crowned with a diadem, or in some instances simply veiled; her ample robe, extended on each side, is held up by angels, while under its protecting folds are gathered worshippers and votaries of all ranks and ages—men, women, children, kings, nobles, ecclesiastics, the poor, the lame, the sick. Or if the picture be less universal in its significance, dedicated perhaps by some religious order or charitable brotherhood, we see beneath her robe the assemblage of monks and nuns, or a troupe of young orphans or redeemed prisoners. Such a representation is styled *Misericordia*.

Reau gives a good reproduction of Our Lady under this guise.<sup>75</sup>

#### CONCLUSION: MARY AND THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN

After studying the ministry of Our Lady, we will attempt to draw some conclusions concerning the ministry of women. John Henry Newman said of Mary that she was "nothing else than our own fellow."<sup>76</sup> This is a salutary statement for the 20th Century, for in the past there has been a tendency to raise Mary to such an ideal status of womanhood that one might even forget her humanness. Women today must realize that Mary is a person whom they are capable of imitating. We have traced the evolution of the importance of Mary in the New Testament from her impersonal status to her personal

<sup>75</sup> Reau, *op. cit.*, plate 5.

<sup>76</sup> H. Graef, *op. cit.*, 2, 119.

status and then her ecclesial role. Our study has suggested that by the time St. Luke wrote his gospel and Acts, Mary and women had an intimate share in the ministry of the Church, but it has been the destiny of woman throughout history to pass through the same stages as Mary, an impersonal state, a personal role, and now to come in the 20th Century to an ecclesial role.

Reflecting upon Mary's ministry, we are drawn to consider the prophetic role of woman within the Church. The distinctive feature which makes a man or woman a prophet rather than a social actionist or revolutionist or outstanding speaker is that a prophet has an intimate personal relationship with God and receives from time to time direct communication even though he or she may not allow their natural talents to lie dormant. Woman as a contemporary prophet must be one who seeks and has the faith to receive the higher gifts of prayer, opening herself, if it be God's will, to infused contemplation and the fruits of the Spirit attendants upon this. Pertinent to this, it is permissible to remark that the so-called "baptism" or "release" of the Spirit in Neo-Pentecostal circles which is found with increasing frequency is a tremendous blessing in this respect, although it must be remembered that the Neo-Pentecostal experience is only one of many ways in which this release of the Spirit may occur. Neither must women, especially religious, fail to realize that this release of the Spirit may have occurred time and again<sup>77</sup> over themselves and others long before the Neo-Pentecostal phenomenon occurred. For women, once the basis of a deep prayer life is established, her prophetic role may lie in various spheres. For example, it may lie in the role of an exegete who acquaints herself with all the contemporary methodology and advantages in the field of Biblical research but complements this with a lively faith and the spirit

<sup>77</sup> For a description of the "baptism in the Spirit," see the author's *Fly United But Not in Too Close Formation: Reflections on the Catholic Pentecostal Movement*, in *SL*, 17, No. 1 (Spring, 1971) 12-20.

of understanding with regard to the spiritual sense of the text. As Our Lady brought forth the Word, it is suitable that woman should proclaim the word of God in the liturgical service as lector, especially on feasts which honor Our Lady. However, the prophet may be called also to be active in politics, in social action and in other public spheres. This may involve a personal suffering or even something close to martyrdom as, for example, in Brazil or as in the case of the Sisters who have worked together with the Berrigan Fathers. Or the prophet may be called to evangelization among, for example, the Jesus Freaks in the inner city or the complacent middle class: in this case the presence of the preternatural gifts, which appear to be more necessary for those lacking in faith than for those with a deep faith, may be of great advantage. Here again the Neo-Pentecostal movement has brought blessings but these blessings must be used with wisdom and love. The prophet as intercessor through prayer and the words of wisdom may be led to heal the breach between class or race or color or sex. We do not know whether Mary assisted in incorporating the Gentiles into the Christian Church and so healing the division between Jew and Gentile, or whether it was due to her influence that women were allowed greater freedom for the different ministries, but it is interesting to note that it is the writings of St. Luke, who may have known Our Lady, which show the greater sensitivity to woman and Gentile and generally to the socially unaccepted.

Mary as teacher draws one's attention especially to the gift of infused wisdom which is necessary together with academic competence for the Christian teacher. When, to some extent, religious teaching is tending to become secularized, women should be encouraged to follow the example of Mary and through their prayer and study and also their companionship with Mary help to integrate truly spiritual and religious learning with all that is good in secular disciplines. Mary as a miracle worker or healer may be imitated by women who may

be called to follow a charismatic ministry such as Miss Kathryn Kuhlmann who conducts healing services at which the Holy Spirit, but not Miss Kuhlmann, heals many people both physically, psychologically and spiritually: the healings vary from physical healings to healing of marital problems. However, Miss Kuhlmann provides counselors also for those converted to Christ during her ceremony and in the same way women who follow the healing ministry of Mary should not despise the assistance of psychological and sociological disciplines in the art of healing.

Finally, Pope John's new Pentecost is surely witnessed in the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate for men and, as we hope, in the near future for women. Many Sisters are already performing the duties of deacons, but women might be especially called to the eucharistic ministry and care for the Blessed Sacrament and administering the Blessed Sacrament or restoring the rite of Benediction. In Brazil the Sisters take Holy Communion to the sick and those confined to their homes, but they are required to proclaim the word of God each time they communicate a person. It is reported that after a Sister had delivered an inspiring homily to two aged people to whom she was taking the Blessed Sacrament, the husband turned to the wife and said "Wife, if you had such faith as Sister, you would rise and walk": the woman who had been paralyzed for twelve years immediately arose and walked. However, the woman deacon would be one who is especially sensitive to social situations and should keep in mind the figure of the *Mater Misericordiae* as described above (p. 44-45). Above all, women who aspire to a ministry similar to Mary must attempt to develop to the full all the fruits of the Holy Spirit listed not only in *Gal. 5:23* but in other texts throughout the New Testament, and to become living examples of the portrait of Mary which could be described in the terms of *1 Cor. 13*. We may add that the *Consensus Fidelium* would suggest that teaching concerning the priesthood of Mary is not totally out

of the question and this might suggest also that the priesthood might in the future be open to women. However, the time does not seem right for such a step. It would, however, not be without value for patristic scholars and historians to collect together and to examine materials on this interesting subject.<sup>78</sup> It may not be without significance that the symbols drawn from the physical world and used to describe Mary are drawn from *Eccles.* 50:6-7 which is in praise of the high priest, Simon<sup>79</sup>

*Electa ut sol.*

*Pulchra ut luna.*

*Stella Matutina.*<sup>80</sup>

DR. J. MASSINGBERD FORD

*University of Notre Dame*

*Notre Dame Ind.*

<sup>78</sup> These may be available in J. B. Terrien, S.J., *La Mère de Dieu et la Mère des hommes*, part 1 (Paris, 1900) 252, but I have been unable to produce this reference.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, 476.

<sup>80</sup> I wish to express sincere appreciation for the help of Mrs. Anne Marian Jones, former curator in the Paul Getty Museum, with reference to the materials from art which I have used.