

Marian Studies

Volume 65 *Forty Years after 'Marialis Cultus':
Retrieval or Renewal?*

Article 3

5-23-2014

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Recommended Citation

McCaughey, Mary (2014) "The Marian Spirituality of 'Lumen Gentium' and the Renewal of Marian Devotion
in the Church Today," *Marian Studies*: Vol. 65, Article 3, Pages 1-42.

Available at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol65/iss1/3

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THE MARIAN SPIRITUALITY OF *LUMEN GENTIUM* AND THE RENEWAL OF MARIAN DEVOTION IN THE CHURCH TODAY

Mary McCaughey, PhD

1. Introduction

While Marian devotion is alive today, its contemporary expression differs from the form it took before the Second Vatican Council and has developed since. My paper will explore the present state of Marian devotion—forty years after the publication of *Marialis Cultus* by Pope Paul VI, and fifty years after the Second Vatican Council—and consider how the form of devotion that exists today, understood with reference to the ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium*, might better be interpreted as a Marian spirituality. While some might disagree that there is such a concept as a Marian Spirituality at all, my paper will demonstrate that it corresponds to the norms for Marian devotion put forward by *Marialis Cultus* and as such it is Trinitarian, Christological, Soteriological, Ecclesial, and Eschatological. I will also demonstrate that this type of Marian devotion is exemplified concretely today for the Church in the Marian spirituality of the New Ecclesial Movements. These communities provide a sign that the future of Marian

devotion, while embodied in new forms, is vital for the continuing renewal and mission of the Church.

2. The Development of Marian Devotion

Since the beginnings of the Church, Mary has been the worthy subject of devotion and veneration, through her place in the history of salvation as Mother of God. Marian devotion developed through the early Church as an expression of gratitude for Mary's faith response to God's unique invitation to her. For apologists of the second and third centuries, such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, the focus of devotion was on Mary's faith in the work of salvation: Mary's identity was as the New Eve undoing the knot of Eve's disobedience.¹ In theological battles over Christ's nature, Mary's place guaranteed the full humanity of Christ against Gnostic alternatives,² her virginity pointed to Christ's divinity,³ and following on from the definition of Mary as *Theotokos* at Ephesus, Christ's hypostatic union was confirmed at the Council of Chalcedon. From the beginnings of Monasticism, the emphasis on Mary's holiness and purity put her forward as a model of the consecrated life⁴; from the early Middle Ages, devotion to

¹ See Luigi Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), 47, 53–55.

² Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, 63.

³ Ibid., 220.

⁴ Ibid., 104.

Mary as “Mater Dolorosa” and “Mediatatrix” flourished and her role as intercessor was firmly established.⁵

In the later theological debates over Mary’s Immaculate Conception, the focus centered on Mary alone, rather than on her role in salvation history. As the 2005 ARCIC statement, *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*, put it, in the High Middle Ages:

The centre of attention of believers shifted from Mary as representing the faithful Church, and so also redeemed humanity, to Mary as dispensing Christ’s graces to the faithful. Scholastic theologians in the West developed an increasingly elaborate body of doctrine about Mary in her own right. Much of this doctrine grew out of speculation about the holiness and sanctification of Mary.⁶

The joint statement goes on to explain that “scholastic theology grew increasingly apart from spirituality” and spirituality itself emphasized “affectivity and personal experience,” so that “in popular religion, Mary came widely to be viewed as an intermediary between God and humanity, and even as a worker of miracles with powers that verged on the divine.” Such popular piety influenced the theology of the period and the rationale for the “florid Marian devotion

⁵ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 125–136.

⁶ See ARCIC II, *Mary, Grace and Hope in Christ*, no. 42. Accessed May 1, 2014, at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/angl-comm-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20050516_mary-grace-hope-christ_en.html.

of the Late Middle Ages.”⁷ This type of Marian devotion gave Martin Luther an impetus to express his theological principles of ‘faith alone’ and ‘grace alone,’ highlighting in his Commentary on the Magnificat, that none of Mary’s privileges are due to her own merit but solely through God’s work in her.⁸

On the eve of the Second Vatican Council, the type of Mariology familiar to most of the Council Fathers was what was described as “maximalist,” As such, its roots in Medieval and Counter-Reformation piety remained unchanged, bound up as it was with affective Marian devotion which emphasized her virtues, holiness and role as intercessor. As evidenced by documentation of Council debates, the Fathers gave much time and discussion to the place of Mary. Some called for Mariology to remain as it was, while others recognized that, along with the renewal of theology through *Ressourcement*, Mariology must also be reformed through emphasizing its scriptural roots and the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See Donal Flanagan, “Luther on the Magnificat,” 5, accessed July 25, 2017, <http://content.yudu.com/Library/A2jx2e/LutherontheMagnifica/resources/3.htm>.

theology of the Church Fathers.⁹ Conciliar discussions concluded that Mariology needed to re-emphasize Mary's place in relation to Christ and hence in relation to the Church. Otto Semmelroth in his commentary on Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium* notes:

What the dispute was about was not whether the Blessed Virgin should be more honoured or less honoured. Devotion to her has always had its secure place in Catholic piety. Rather the question was how Mary's position, and devotion to her, could be better explained: should she be treated as a figure apart, as it were in her own right, with all the risk of isolation that would involve, or in a context which alone could bring out her importance in the work of redemption and therefore in the Church's devotion?¹⁰

Stefano De Fiores points out how this new approach to Mariology, demonstrated in chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium*, was a formal expression of the replacement of the

⁹ See Giuseppe Alberigo, ed., *History of Vatican II, Vol. IV: Church as Communion, Third Period and Intersession, September 1964–September 1965* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 52-62. According to Alberigo's commentary, "the text had a troubled history, marked by the considerable tensions between an orientation that concentrated on the person and distinct privileges of Mary alongside Christ and one that wished to place her and her role in the context of the mystery of Christ and the Church. The former approach wished to confirm and carry further a movement that had been consecrated by papal teachings in the last two centuries; the latter wished to provide a more biblical and patristic foundation for Marian doctrine and piety. Inevitably, if somewhat unfairly, the two tendencies were commonly criticised as 'maximalist' and 'minimalist.'"

¹⁰ Herbert Vorgrimler, ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (5 vols.; New York: Herder and Herder, 1967–96), 1:285–86.

isolationist Mariology from the post-Tridentine period.¹¹ Yet despite the recognition of the place of Marian devotion in this document, there followed a period described by W. Beinert as “the decade without Mary.”¹² While De Fiores points out that this is probably an exaggeration in that it ignored the various Marian publications and the continuation of devotion to the Virgin among the majority of the faithful, nevertheless he notes that, by 1970, many Mariologists recognized the waning in Mariology and Marian devotion.¹³ The response to the crisis saw the publication of *Marialis Cultus* in 1974, where Pope Paul VI attributed the change in attitude towards Marian devotion and religious sentiment to cultural changes and changes in “people’s sensibilities, manners of expression in art and letters and in the forms of social communication.”¹⁴ At the same time the document

¹¹ See Stefano De Fiores, S.M.M., “Mary in Postconciliar Theology,” in *Vatican II, Assessment and Perspectives: Twenty-Five Years After (1962–1987)*, ed. René Latourelle (3 vols.; New York: Paulist Press, 1988–89), 1:525, n. 6, where he refers to Yves Congar, “Sur la conjuncture présente de la publication de l’exhortation ‘Marialis Cultus,’” *La Maison Dieu*, 121 (1975): 118. Here Congar links the “isolationist Mariology” to its medieval roots.

¹² W. Beinert, “Devozione mariana: una chance pastorale,” *Communio* 7, 37 (1978): 88.

¹³ De Fiores, “Mary in Postconciliar Theology,” 1:474.

¹⁴ Pope Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus (For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary)* (February 2, 1974), accessed March 10, 2014, at http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19740202_marialis-cultus.html.

also recognized the opportunities for recasting the understanding of Marian piety in the context of “seeking new ways of expressing the unchangeable relationship of creatures with their Creator, of children with their Father.”¹⁵

3. Communion Ecclesiology and the Renewal of Mariology and Marian Devotion

In this section of the paper, we explore the changing emphasis in Marian devotion as a result of the Second Vatican Council. Firstly, it is important to explain the nature of the ecclesiology of communion that emerged through the Second Vatican Council and since. While many theologians, such as those of the Mystical Body movement (like Johann Möhler, Matthias Scheeben, and others such as Henri De Lubac and Joseph Ratzinger¹⁶), paved the way for the ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium*, the document itself was central in restoring the understanding of the Church as mystery, with attention to its scriptural and patristic sources.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Henri De Lubac, *The Splendour of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999) and Joseph Ratzinger, *Das neue Volk Gottes: Entwürfe zur Ekklesiologie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1972).

¹⁷ Edward P. Hahnenberg, “The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70 (2005): 3-30 and Kevin McNamara, “From Möhler to Vatican II,” in *Vatican II: The Constitution on the Church, a Theological and Pastoral Commentary*, ed. K. McNamara (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968).

In 1985, at the special meeting of the Synod of Bishops to mark the twentieth anniversary of the closing the Council, it was established that “the ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the Council’s documents.”¹⁸ Such an ecclesiology is based on an understanding of the Church as mystery with its roots in Trinitarian and Eucharistic ecclesiology.¹⁹ It is, as Henri De Lubac says, about “our mystery.”²⁰ This idea was also echoed in the profound statement of Romano Guardini immediately after the First World War that “an event of incalculable portent has begun: the Church is being reawakened in souls,” meaning that ecclesiology had finally turned its attention to the inner life of the Church rather than confining its identity to institution alone.²¹ Joseph Ratzinger explained that in the early years of the twentieth century there was finally “an awareness that we ourselves are the Church; it is more than an organisation; it is the organisation of the Holy Spirit, something vital which takes hold of us all, beginning from

¹⁸ John Paul II, Address at the conclusion of the Extraordinary Synod, 7 December, 1985, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 78 (1986).

¹⁹ The Church originates from above as God’s plan of salvation to raise up men and women to participate in the divine Trinitarian life: to make “a people (made) one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” (LG, 4).

²⁰ De Lubac, *The Splendour of the Church*, 46.

²¹ Joseph Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of Vatican II,” *Origins* 15 (1985): 371, citing Romano Guardini, *The Reality of the Church* (Brescia, 1973), 160.

our innermost selves.”²² However, to describe the Church as a mystery is not to neglect its visible dimensions, but rather to understand it as “sacrament” and so to hold together its visible and invisible dimensions.²³

The first chapter of *Lumen Gentium* on the idea of the Church as mystery is concretized in the eighth chapter on Mary “in the Mystery of Christ and the Church.” The idea of the Church “awakening in people’s souls” is exemplified in the person of Mary as its archetype. While *Lumen Gentium* in chapter one states that the Church is a communion of “faith, hope and charity” (LG 8) and hence grows from the inside out through the prayer and sacramental participation of its members,²⁴ it is Mary who, in chapter eight, is expressed as the “pre-eminent and singular member of the Church” and as its “type and excellent exemplar in faith and charity” (LG 53). The idea of Mary as “type of Church” is not simply an ontological concept but also a historical one that is worked in her life of faith. Hence Mary also exemplifies the role of the People of God journeying in communion with God through history.

Understanding how Mary is the interpretive key between both these chapters offers a response to the criticism that communion ecclesiologies, based on the Church as mystery,

²² Ibid.

²³ Aloys Grillmeier, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. H. Vorgrimler, 1:138.

²⁴ Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of Vatican II,” 371.

are “blueprints” and too idealistic.²⁵ In preparation for the Jubilee year, Pope John Paul II, in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (1994), wrote of the need for a “renewed commitment to apply, as faithfully as possible, the teachings of Vatican II to the life of every individual and of the whole Church.”²⁶ Similarly, as Joseph Komonchak states, “an ecclesiology remains merely formal and abstract as long as it remains at the level of the merely theological and the universal, ignoring the human subjects and local communities in and out of which the Church exists.”²⁷ Thus in reference to Mary, the Church as mystery can be concretized as a sacramental sign when those in the Church live out their communion with the Triune God in the world after the form and pattern of Mary. Such a move to a concrete ecclesiology is not a call for a “bottom up” ecclesiology, but is, as *Sacramentum Caritatis* affirms, a call to “a reality that

²⁵ Nicholas Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25ff. Healy coins this phrase, “blue-print ecclesiologies,” in this book, arising from modern ecclesiologies which “attempt to encapsulate in a single word or phrase the most essential characteristics of the Church” (26). See John O’ Brien, “Ecclesiology as Narrative,” *Ecclesiology* 4 (2008): 148–165 (149).

²⁶ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (*As the Third Millennium Draws Near*), accessed April 10, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_10111994_tertio-millennio-adveniente_en.html.

²⁷ Joseph Komonchak, “Conceptions of Communion, Past and Present,” *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 337–38, quoted in Denis Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* (New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 6.

demands visible expression in the life of our communities”²⁸ as *agapé*.²⁹ In fact, as this document goes on to affirm strongly, “wherever we do not live communion among ourselves, communion with the Triune God is not alive and true either.”³⁰ As I will demonstrate, this is best understood through a new form of Marian devotion that could be expressed as a Marian spirituality.

In the Post-Conciliar era, it may be the case that the Marian understanding of Church and the ecclesial understanding of Mary have not been received.³¹ Could it be

²⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Post-Synodal Exhortation, “On the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church’s Life and Mission” (Feb. 22, 2007), accessed Dec 18, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html, 76: “Called to be members of Christ and thus members of one another (cf. 1 Cor 12:27), we are a reality grounded ontologically in Baptism and nourished by the Eucharist, a reality that demands visible expression in the life of our communities.”

²⁹ John 15:5. St. John’s Gospel explains that the Christian community is to embody this same *agapé* as the “vine united to the branches.”

³⁰ *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 76.

³¹ De Fiores, “Mary in Post-Conciliar Theory,” 1:480–81. De Fiores points out the problem: “... the patristic teaching on Mary as ‘the type of the Church,’ which was used in Chapter VIII of *Lumen gentium*, is completely absent from the various treatises on ecclesiology and in the articles on ‘The Church’ in various dictionaries. This means an impoverishment of the Church, which is deprived of one of its specific and highly evocative images; it also leads to a mutilation of mariology, which is deprived of its ecclesial dimension and therefore runs the risk of being reduced to a marginal and unconnected chapter.”

then, that this accounts for the failure of the Church to fully understand, appropriate and teach the new understanding of Marian devotion as Trinitarian, Christological and Ecclesial and, hence, to fall short for its renewal? Before demonstrating how and where this new understanding of Marian devotion exists in the Church, we will enter more deeply into the document that primarily concerns us, *Marialis Cultus*.

4. Marian Devotion as Spirituality: Trinitarian and Christological Roots

Marialis Cultus outlines the important premise for the renewal of Marian devotion, that devotion to Mary should be Trinitarian, Christological and Ecclesial.³² This fits in with the portrait of Mary in *Lumen Gentium*, where she is described as “Mother of the Son of God ... beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit” (LG 53) and in this way embodies the mystery of the Church as a

³² Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Marialis Cultus*, “For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary” (February 2, 1974), accessed March 10, 2014, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19740202_marialis-cultus.html.

communion in the life of the Triune God. Mary radiates the life of God through her transparency to him.³³

Elaborating on the Trinitarian norms of Marian devotion, we can draw out from *Marialis Cultus* a view of devotion that is not so much devotion *to Mary* but rather veneration *of Mary*, because of her relationship of communion with the Triune God. The Christological dimension of Marian devotion as “going to Jesus through Mary” is present for centuries in Church Tradition, based on the reality of the Incarnation. As St. Bernard of Clairvaux pointed out, Christians should approach God “in the same way as God approached humanity: through Mary.”³⁴ This theological idea formed the basis of what St. Anselm of Canterbury called “Marian slavery,” anticipating St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort (1673–1716), in his *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, who explained how “genuine

³³ See Hans Urs von Balthasar on the transparency of the new creature, the believers in Christ who are like mirrors “in their pure transparency, which is an anticipatory assurance of the new aeon in the old, ... ‘from glory to glory’ which must mean from the hidden glory of Christ, which they see proleptically in faith and reflect, to an open glory which manifests itself in the kerygmatic and existential public character of the gospel in the world,” In H. Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord* (7 vols.; London: T & T Clark, 1982–89), 1:521.

³⁴ Sarah Jane Boss, “Marian Consecration in the Contemporary Church,” in *Mary, the Complete Resource*, ed. Sarah Jane Boss (London: Continuum, 2007), 416.

devotion to Mary is the shortest and surest path to Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity.”³⁵

In taking up Pope Paul VI’s challenge of expressing Marian devotion in new ways, we could propose that for a more contemporary mindset Marian consecration can be interpreted as a way of actualizing baptismal consecration, confirming it and deepening its possibilities of expression. Just as Mary is the first of the redeemed creatures in a unique way through her immaculate conception, so Baptism unites Christians to Christ, destroying the power of original sin and death in their lives. Marian consecration is a way of entering into the mystery of the Triune God as demonstrated archetypically and historically in Mary. Through Marian consecration, members of the Body of Christ are aided to concretely express the life of redemption in lives of self-giving love and communion as Mary did.

Another way of looking at Marian devotion as a spirituality is through the eyes of Joseph Ratzinger who describes Marian devotion not as devotion *to* Mary, but as *embodied in Mary*, the “Daughter Zion,” rejoicing in the

³⁵ See Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary, with Preparation for Total Consecration* ([Charlotte, NC]: Tan Books, 2010). See also Brian McMaster, *Totus Tuus: A Consecration to Jesus through Mary with Blessed John Paul II* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2013), 8–9. McMaster describes the de Montfort consecration as Trinitarian and Christocentric, rooted in the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, related to baptismal renewal, and total (holding nothing back). Sarah Jane Boss argues that today, while the de Montfort consecration is used, the notion of slavery is less emphasized. See Sarah Jane Boss, “Marian Consecration in the Contemporary Church,” 416.

God who has come to dwell in her, the new Ark of the Covenant. He expresses it thus:

Marian devotion is the rapture of joy over the true, indestructible Israel; it is a blissful entering into the joy of the Magnificat and thereby it is the praise of him to whom the daughter Zion owes her whole self and whom she bears, the true, incorruptible, indestructible Ark of the Covenant.³⁶

Ratzinger's idea is not a new one. Already St. Ambrose (quoted by *Marialis Cultus*) had emphasized that all worshippers should have in themselves the spirit of Mary who rejoices in her Lord and in salvation.³⁷ *Marialis Cultus* explains the Trinitarian aspects of Mary's worship as a model for believers. It is, like Mary, to offer Trinitarian worship: to the Father through Christ in the Spirit (MC 25). There is also a virginal-maternal aspect to her worship which of its form is ecclesial. The Virgin, who has wholeheartedly received God's word, rejoices in the fruitfulness of her conception as mother (MC 17). The more anthropological dimensions of worship are also evident in the Virgin in prayer (MC 18) who "pours out her soul ... in expressions of humility, faith and hope" (cf. Lk. 1:46–55). Glorifying God and the Trinitarian dimensions are highlighted again in the image of the Virgin presenting offerings (MC 20),

³⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *Daughter Zion: Meditations on the Church's Marian Belief* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1983), 82.

³⁷ Referred to in *Marialis Cultus*, 21. See Ambrose, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam*, 11 26: CSEL 32, IV, p. 55: S. Ch. 45, pp. 83–84.

namely Christ, who is the perfect sacrifice of love bringing about reconciliation with the Father.

5. Marian Devotion as a Soteriological Spirituality

A theological emphasis today on the need to connect doctrines to human experience and the Christian life in general is embodied in the Trinitarian theology of Karl Rahner and Catherine LaCugna. They both argue that St. Augustine's use of psychological analogies to explain the "three in one" in the Godhead makes the doctrine irrelevant to Christian life. Hence, their corrective wish is to re-establish that "God is God for us."³⁸ While their critics note their work may have the effect of reducing God to his relevance "for us," that is not reason enough to avoid addressing their suggestion. Mariology enables theology to reemphasize the relevance of Trinitarian doctrine in terms of Trinitarian missions and the outpouring of God's love in salvation history in a way that transforms and recreates. Emphasizing the soteriological aspects of Marian devotion assists us in this task.

³⁸ See Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991) and Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970). Rahner and LaCugna critique Trinitarian theology influenced by Augustine as focusing too much on God *ad intra* and not so much on the economic Trinity, God *ad-extra* and God's work in salvation. See Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology: Christian Living and the Doctrine of God* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998), 78, for a defense of Augustine within the context of his worldview and his own rejection of individualism in his *City of God*.

From an ecumenical perspective, within the norms of *Marialis Cultus*, Marian devotion must not take away from Christ as sole redeemer (MC 32–33). However, I would agree with Joseph Ratzinger that always tracing the Mariological back to the Christological can fail to recognize the importance of the Mariological *for* the Christological.³⁹ The distinctiveness of Mariology for Christology and all theology is that it recognizes a place for the subjective dimensions of the work of salvation, while not failing to acknowledge the objective work of God. Thus, while salvation is a divine gift from outside the creature, unconnected with any creaturely merits, it also has to be received as a gift in order to be effective. This is demonstrated marvellously and perfectly in Mary.⁴⁰ Mary concretizes Trinitarian ecclesiology, proclaiming in her Magnificat that God had indeed worked marvels for her (Lk 1:49).

Ignace de La Potterrie, in his commentary on Mary's Annunciation, brings out the soteriological dimensions of

³⁹ Ratzinger, "On the Position of Mariology and Marian Spirituality within the Totality of Faith and Theology," in *The Church and Women: A Compendium*, ed. Helmut Moll (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 79.

⁴⁰ Joseph Ratzinger, *Gesammelte Schriften: Offenbarungs-Verständnis und Geschichts-Theologie Bonaventuras* (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna: Herder, 2009), 107. Ratzinger, through his post-doctoral work on St. Bonaventure, recognized the idea that Revelation was only revelation if it was received. He stressed that for Bonaventure if Revelation is truly to be a manifestation or disclosure of God to man (*Er-Öffnung-Gottes an den Menschen*), it must touch the very Spirit of the individual during the historical experience.

the mystery of Mary. She receives the gift of salvation, and this gift becomes *effective* in and through her. He explains that the word used by the angel to Mary, “Rejoice!”⁴¹ (*kécharitôménê*), is related to the Greek word *écharitôsén*. The root of these words, *charitóô*, is present only twice in the New Testament: at Luke’s Annunciation (Lk 1:28) and in the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph 1:6).⁴² La Potterie emphasizes that since this verb is causative, it indicates an action that effects something in the object. Like the passage in Ephesians 1:3–14, we see that Mary rejoices because there has been a change brought about in her by the grace of redemption in Christ. She is “most blessed in the heavenly realms,” chosen by the Father, predestined to be one of God’s children, filled with his Spirit and made holy for the glory of God. As La Potterie highlights, this applies to Mary being “purified in advance by God” in order to prepare her for the task of being the Mother of God and suggests that in Church Tradition this scriptural reference to being “full of grace” points to the Immaculate Conception.⁴³

Mariology represents the fact that, while the gift of salvation is given objectively from outside the creature, there is also a subjective dimension, in that actions are effected

⁴¹ Ignace de La Potterie, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant* (New York: Alba House, 1992), 17. Immediately here is the echo of the Daughter Zion of the Old Testament who is now focused in one woman.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 19. La Potterie also refers to this idea in Church Tradition in Sophronius of Jerusalem, *Or. II, in Annunt.*, 25 (PG 87/3, 3248).

through the creature, through the new relationship possible between the human and God. Thomas Lane points out that, while an ecumenical emphasis continually points from Mary to Christ, this de-emphasizes what is specifically Mariological. He writes,

Catholics have been shy about speaking of human activity as an expression of real partnership with God. At the time of the Reformation, there was so much emphasis on human merit and good works that Catholics could easily be accused of thinking that they could somehow add to or improve on the work of our one Saviour. The Reformers' emphasis on Christ alone, faith alone and grace alone provided a salutary corrective. But we can now see more clearly that both Catholics and Protestants inherited a common tradition in which Christians saw themselves as fellow-workers with God. Christians are called to be partners in a "wonderful exchange" in which we come to share in the divinity of Christ who shared in our humanity.⁴⁴

At the time of the Reformation, Luther's Mariology aimed to curb a trend that culturally could have led to an excessive emphasis on Mary's merits and even fostered a certain Pelagianism.⁴⁵ However, in an ecumenical attempt to avoid a de-emphasis on God's work in Mary, Catholicism

⁴⁴ See Thomas Lane, CM, *The Heart of Catholic Spirituality: Finding a Voice through the Centuries* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2000), 102.

⁴⁵ For a commentary on Luther's Magnificat, see Donal Flanagan, "Luther on the Magnificat," 6. Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary uploads, accessed May 1, 2014, <http://www.esbvm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/Flanagan01.pdf>.

seems to have downplayed the unique emphasis of Mariology: the role of the creature in relation to the gift of salvation. Joseph Ratzinger highlights that the uniqueness of Mariology not only points to God and how Mary reflects God's work, but also guarantees the autonomy of creation.⁴⁶ Mary, the woman, represents the stance of creation that in freedom chooses to respond to God's invitation to communion with him, to obedience to his will, and, therefore, to fulfillment in love.⁴⁷ This prioritization of the Mariological as representing the human response "expands the horizon beyond salvation history," so that the emphasis is not on God alone as the sole agent, but includes the reality of creation that has been summoned by God to respond to him in freedom.⁴⁸ Of course, this is not to deny that in Mary this response is through the work of God's grace and his gift of pre-redemption in her.

The importance of the Mariological as representative of the free human response is echoed in the understanding of the centrality of Mary's faith in the encyclical of Pope John Paul II on Mary, *Redemptoris Mater*. There Pope John Paul II, from an ecumenical and scriptural perspective,⁴⁹ writes

⁴⁶ Ratzinger, "On the Position of Mariology and Marian Spirituality," 76.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 77.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Matthew Levering highlights the nature of John Paul II's biblical-typological approach to Mary in *Redemptoris Mater*. See his *Mary's Bodily Assumption* (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. Of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 24, 31.

that the “Annunciation is the culminating moment of Mary’s faith in her awaiting of Christ” and the point of departure from which her whole “journey towards God begins, her whole pilgrimage of faith.”⁵⁰ *Lumen Gentium*’s portrayal of Mary is also centered on Mary’s free and faith-filled response to the Triune God, beginning with her words at the Annunciation (Lk 2:38). It recognizes, as did the Church Fathers, that Mary’s obedience undoes the disobedience of Eve and reverses the movement of humanity towards death (LG 56). Interestingly, paragraph 57 emphasizes that Mary is “used by God not merely in a passive way, but as freely cooperating in the work of human salvation through faith and obedience”(LG 57).

Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Letter of 2002, *Rosarium Virginiae Mariae*, also deepens the understanding of the mystery of Mary’s communion of faith with the Triune God, by connecting it to a traditional Marian devotion, the Rosary. It states that the Rosary is “a prayer commentary” or, in other words, a contemplative development of Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*.⁵¹ Through the Rosary the “Christian people sits at the school of Mary,” contemplating the face of Christ,

⁵⁰ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, “Encyclical Letter on the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Life of the Pilgrim Church,” 14, accessed May 1, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html.

⁵¹ John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, “Apostolic Letter on the Most Holy Rosary,” accessed July 31, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae.html, 3

and experiences “the depths of his love.”⁵² As such then, the Rosary fits into our attempt to draw out a Marian spirituality, of how Mary leads believers into the heart of God through contemplating Christ. John Paul II offers Mary as an incomparable model of contemplating Christ:

The contemplation of Christ has an *incomparable model* in Mary. ... No one has ever devoted himself to the contemplation of the face of Christ as faithfully as Mary. The eyes of her heart already turned to him at the Annunciation, when she conceived him by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the months that followed she began to sense his presence and to picture his features. When at last she gave birth to him in Bethlehem, her eyes were able to gaze tenderly on the face of her Son, as she “wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger” (Lk 2:7) ... Thereafter Mary’s gaze, ever filled with adoration and wonder, would never leave him. At times it would be a *questioning* look, as in the episode of the finding in the Temple (Lk 2:48); it would always be a *penetrating gaze*, one capable of deeply understanding Jesus ... as at Cana (cf. Jn 2:5). At other times it would be a *look of sorrow*, especially beneath the Cross. ... On the morning of Easter hers would be a *gaze radiant with the joy of the Resurrection*, and, finally, on the day of Pentecost, a *gaze afire* with the outpouring of the Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14).⁵³

Contemplation of the face of Christ with Mary, and through Mary in the Church, leads to a theological reality for the Church, a resting of believers in the indwelling Trinity through the Holy Spirit. All through her life, and revealed at

⁵² John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 1.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 10.

the Annunciation and Pentecost (LG 59), Mary's communion with her Son includes communion in faith with the Spirit (MC 26). She now becomes the "Abode of the King," "Bridal Chamber of the Word," the "Temple" or "Tabernacle of the Lord," the "Ark of the Covenant." These images of the indwelling of God in Mary help concretize the nature of the Church as the "Temple of God" (LG 6) in *Lumen Gentium*.

Mary is also the first of the new creatures fashioned by the Spirit (LG 56) and symbolizes the generativity of creation under the power of the Spirit.⁵⁴ She expresses the freedom of the child of God as one who is continually held in existence by the Spirit.⁵⁵ This emphasis on the existential dimensions of the Spirit's work in fashioning new creatures in Christ and leading them to freedom is a part of Marian devotion which appeals to contemporary sensibilities with a particular prioritization of freedom.

6. Marian Devotion as a Spirituality of Ecclesial Personhood

Devotion to Mary represents an ecclesial spirituality since Mary represents the "yes" of the Body, which is the

⁵⁴ Anthony Kelly, "Mary and the Creed: Icon of Trinitarian Love," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 69 (2004): 22, 26.

⁵⁵ Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit constitutes her freedom. See Joseph Paredes, *Mary and the Kingdom of God: A Synthesis of Mariology* (Slough: St. Paul, 1991), 141, citing the Pauline principle, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17). Mary opened up to the Spirit in complete docility and thus she was totally free.

“yes” of the Church on behalf of all creation. All creation is dependent on this yes, as St. Bernard wonderfully portrays in one of his homilies on the divine motherhood: “The whole world is waiting, prostrate at your feet. Not without reason, since upon your word, depends the consolation of the wretched, the redemption of the captives, the liberation of the condemned; in a word, the salvation of the sons of Adam, of your whole race.”⁵⁶ Ratzinger highlights that recognizing the connection of Mariology to Christology is at the same time a recognition of the Church. Christology is not about “*solus Christus*,” but a Christ who is “both head and body.”⁵⁷

Secondly, devotion to Mary is an ecclesial spirituality because her role as “mother of the Church” is connected to her role as “mother in the order of grace.”⁵⁸ *Marialis Cultus* notes that understanding the Church as “family of God” reminds members of the Church that they are sons and daughters of Mary. Mary’s love and concern for others is extended in the Church’s concern for those who are weak and those who seek salvation. Thus love for the Church will

⁵⁶ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Super Missus Est*, 4,8; PL 183, 83D, in Luigi Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of the Medieval Latin Theologians* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005), 134.

⁵⁷ Ratzinger, “On the Position of Mariology and Marian Spirituality,” 77.

⁵⁸ She is our Mother in the order of grace (LG 61), with a “maternal duty” towards men for their salvation which flows from Christ himself and his mediation (LG 60). This role had already begun at the Annunciation and continues until all who are in Christ are brought to full communion with him (LG 62).

become love for Mary (MC 28) and this in itself deepens Marian devotion. The image of Mary as Mother of the Church presents a perennially attractive way of presenting the Church as a home, a place of refuge and of healing.

A third way of drawing out the ecclesial aspects of a Marian devotion conceived of as a spirituality is through focusing on Mary's virgin-motherhood, which represents the status of the new creation. For both St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, Mary is like the Church because she is Virgin and Mother (LG 63). Blessed Isaac of Stella drew the conclusion that the mystery of the Church is composed of *many* ecclesial persons, both in the form of Christ as Son and in Mary's form as virgin and mother.⁵⁹ Thus, what is said in general of the Virgin-Mother the Church is said individually of the Virgin Mary, and what is said in the particular case of the Virgin-Mother Mary is rightly understood of the Virgin-Mother Church universally.⁶⁰ Hence, Mary is thus not just a *macro*-ecclesial sign of the Virgin-Mother, but also a *micro*-ecclesial sign or an embodiment of the Church in an anthropological way. She is the "ecclesial person"⁶¹ *par*

⁵⁹ Isaac of Stella, *Sermo* 51, Advent Sat. Wk 2, in *Divine Office*, Vol 1 (London: Collins, 1974), 94–95. This Christ is both many sons and one Son. For as the head and Body are one Son and many Sons, so Mary and the Church are one mother and many—one virgin and many.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Henri de Lubac, *Paradox and Mystery* (Shannon: Ecclesial Press, 1969), 2. Here he points out how the saint is the *Anima Ecclesiastica*, or the Church revealed in a person.

excellence, and, because of her, members of the Church are virgin-mothers or “ecclesial persons” in her form, giving birth to Christ (mother) through their openness to grace (virgin).

Rahner highlights how Mary’s virginity is inseparable from her fruitfulness as *Theotokos*, or Mother of God.⁶² Ratzinger makes the connection between virginity, motherhood, and grace in his book *Daughter Zion*. There he explains how the infertile women of the Old Testament, such as Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth, became fertile through God’s intervention. They point to the fruitfulness of Mary the Virgin by the Holy Spirit alone.⁶³ Mary in turn represents the fruitfulness of the Church and the new creation through the power of God, and not through human means or merit. As Ratzinger explains:

In Jesus God initiated a new beginning in the midst of a barren and hopeless humanity. This beginning is not the result of mankind’s own history, but a gift from above. A new Incarnation starts with Jesus ... he not only *receives* the Spirit but also he *is* in his earthly existence through the Spirit. ... In this way Mary, the barren, blessed one, becomes a sign of grace, the sign of what is truly fruitful and salvific: the ready openness which submits itself to God’s will.⁶⁴

⁶² Karl Rahner, *Mary, Mother of the Lord* (Freiburg: Herder, 1963), 66.

⁶³ Ratzinger, *Daughter Zion*, 48.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

The link between motherhood and virginity also highlights that a Marian spirituality is not an abstract or a gnostic concept but is concretized through bodily self-giving. David Schindler writes that creaturely being has an “original-symbolic-nuptial meaning” revealed in Mary.⁶⁵ This has practical implications. Mary Timothy Prokes demonstrates how Mary’s body illustrates that the human body’s nuptial capacity for self-giving *can be actualized*, to bring *persons into communion*.⁶⁶ Hence a spirituality of “virgin-motherhood,” which is related to the nuptial identity

⁶⁵ David Schindler, “Creation and Nuptiality: A Reflection on Feminism in Light of Schmemmann’s Liturgical Theology,” *Communio* 28 (Summer 2001): 265–295, esp. 277.

⁶⁶ Mary Timothy Prokes, “The Nuptial Meaning of the Body in Light of Mary’s Assumption,” *Communio* 11 (Summer 1984): 175.

of our bodies,⁶⁷ is about living concrete relationships of mutuality, self-gift, and receptivity in families, workplaces, and society. Living a Marian spirituality of “virgin-motherhood” is connected to the ongoing Incarnation in history through the Church. If the Church is to be the sacrament of salvation in the world, then by looking at her members it should be obvious that through them today, “Verbo Caro hic factum est,” the Word has become flesh here.

A fourth ecclesial dimension of Marian spirituality is the connection with mission. The Church is rooted in the Trinitarian missions of Son and Spirit that continue to reach into the world and draw all humanity into communion with God and others. After conceiving Christ by the power of the Spirit, Mary then “set(s) out ... as quickly as she could” to

⁶⁷ Pope John Paul II explained in his *Theology of the Body* catechesis that the body is a sacramental sign. The human body has a “nuptiality” encribed in it, meaning that it is made for giftedness in love and receptivity to the other and makes that loving communion with God and others present through the body. In explaining the nuptial meaning of the body, Pope John Paul points out that the image of God seen in humans is reflected in the male as “alone” and the female as “helper.” This affirms that “alone,” man does not realize his essence, but only in self-gift to the other, “by existing ‘with someone’—and even more deeply and completely—by existing ‘for someone.’” See Pope John Paul II, General Audience, Jan. 9, 1980, in *The Theology of the Body* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1997), 60. He also says “the human body with its sex, and its masculinity and femininity ... includes right from the beginning the nuptial attribute, that is, the capacity of expressing love, that love in which the person becomes a gift and —by means of this gift—fulfills the meaning of his being and existence.” See General Audience, Jan. 16, 1980, in *The Theology of the Body*, 63.

visit her cousin in need (Lk 1:29). She embodies the model of Christian spirituality as both contemplative and apostolic. Through her “yes,” and that of all the members of the Body, God’s mission of reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:18) continues, and the kingdom of God grows in the world.

A final dimension of Marian spirituality drawn from *Lumen Gentium* is based on Mary’s Assumption. *Lumen Gentium* connects her Assumption to her Immaculate Conception and how in her the work of redemption is revealed in the whole person (LG 59), body and soul. Mary is the sign of the redeemed who, through openness to God’s mercy, radiate divine eschatological glory already, even in the midst of creation.⁶⁸ Rahner connects Mary’s Assumption and the work of Redemption in her, writing that “since Mary is the ideal representation of exhaustive redemption because of her unique place in saving history, then she must ‘even now’ have achieved that perfect communion with God in the glorified totality of her real being (‘body and soul’).”⁶⁹ As Ratzinger also explains, the Assumption of Mary brings out the “eschatological transcendence of the Incarnation.”⁷⁰ This eschatological dimension of Marian spirituality highlights

⁶⁸ See LG 65: “But while in the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle (cf. Eph. 5:27), the faithful still strive to conquer sin and increase in holiness.”

⁶⁹ Karl Rahner, “Interpretation of the Dogma of the Assumption,” in his *Theological Investigations*, vol. 1 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), 225.

⁷⁰ Ratzinger, “On the Position of Mariology and Marian Spirituality,” 78.

how the work of redemption is present through all stages of life and works to bring about human holiness as an ever deeper integration of body and soul.

7. Renewed Marian Devotion Concretized in the New Ecclesial Movements

Highlighting the Trinitarian, Christological, ecclesial, and eschatological aspects of Marian devotion has helped us draw out a spirituality of communion. We have also noted how the concretization of the Church as love and communion is intrinsically connected to the Marian dimensions. The Balthasarian scholar Brendan Leahy writes: “If we diminish the centrality of the community-life, the sacramental understanding of the Church would be impoverished and the fundamental Marian profile of the Church would be tarnished in its transparency to the beauty of Christ in the community.”⁷¹ He also connects the Ecclesiology of Communion and its Marian expression to the new ecclesial movements, the focus for the remainder of this paper.

Pope John Paul II wrote that for the Church to be this “home and school of communion” in practice, it would need *a spirituality of communion* which recognizes the indwelling

⁷¹ Brendan Leahy, “A Theology of Community Revisited,” in *Ecclesia Tertii Millennii Advenientis*, ed. F. Chica et al. (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1997), 207–216. See also Brendan Leahy, “The Marian Principle in the Church according to Hans Urs von Balthasar” (dissertation, Pontificia University Gregoriana; Frankfurt, 1996).

presence of God in ourselves and in others.⁷² Pope Benedict XVI calls those who live this spirituality “a stimulating force” for the Church in terms of their expression of communion.⁷³ Another way in which they can be a stimulating force is in terms of the characteristics of their Marian devotion. This can be demonstrated in the Marian spirituality of three contemporary movements: the *Focolare* movement, the Emmanuel Community, and Youth 2000.

7a. The Focolare Movement

In an address given to Bishops in 1987 on “Mary in the Experience of the *Focolare* Movement,” Chiara Lubich (the foundress) expressed how, even in the early days of the movement, members were coming to live a new understanding of Marian devotion. She wrote that “it was as if she (Mary) had been a beautiful, pure and living statue that made our Christian experience more beautiful and more sweet. But this was transformed and we were given a way of seeing that more accurately reflects what lies in God’s heart.”⁷⁴ When, in 1947, she was asked by someone why the first *Focolarini* never spoke of Mary, she said, “We

⁷² Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2000), 43.

⁷³ Joseph Ratzinger, “Ecclesial Movements and Their Place in Theology,” in his *New Outpourings of the Spirit: Movements in the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 42.

⁷⁴ Chiara Lubich, *Mary, the Transparency of God* (New York: New City Press, 2003), 18.

answered that she was a gate that leads to God.”⁷⁵ She also stated, “We had contemplated Mary as being set within the Trinity, but now, because of her son, in her own particular way, we saw her as containing the Trinity.”⁷⁶

Interestingly, Lubich was inspired by St. Louis de Montfort’s consecration to Jesus through Mary and desired that she and her group would become like Mary, in order that God would dwell most fully in them. She quotes de Montfort’s declaration that “the main result (of this consecration) is that Mary comes to live in the soul, to the point that it is no longer just the soul that lives but Mary who lives in it. She becomes, in a matter of speaking, the very soul of that soul.”⁷⁷ She saw herself and her companions becoming “other Marys” and came to understand her relationship to Mary in mother-daughter terms, similar to the way St. Thérèse described how Mary as Mother would see herself reflected in her daughters.⁷⁸ Becoming “other Marys” meant to receive and enflesh the Word of God in one’s life and also to share a spiritual maternity with Mary

⁷⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁷⁷ Louis Grignion de Montfort, “Il segreto di Maria,” no. 55, in *Trattato della vera devozione alla santa Vergine e il segreto di Maria* (Roma, 1985), 205.

⁷⁸ Lubich, *Mary, the Transparency of God*, 31. Here Lubich refers to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, “Ms A, 56v–57r,” in *Opere complete* (Rome, 1997), 166.

by speaking that Word to others to generate Christ in them.⁷⁹ She expressed that, after asking God in prayer why, if he could give us the Eucharist as his presence on earth, he had not left a way to leave us his mother, she heard God's reply in the silence:

I have not left her because I want to see her again in you. Even if you are not immaculate, my love will virginise you, and you, all of you, will open your arms and hearts as mothers of humanity, which, as in times past, thirsts for God and for his mother. It is you who now must soothe pains, soothe wounds, dry tears. Sing her litanies and strive to mirror yourself in them.⁸⁰

In Chiara Lubich's understanding, it is up to members of the Church to actually take Mary as Mother into their hearts and homes and live with her as John did.⁸¹ In her book, so beautifully entitled *Mary, the Transparency of God*, Chiara's descriptions of the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary illustrate again this new form of Marian devotion, based on living, like Mary, a life of communion with the Triune God. She writes how the Annunciation "begs us to receive the word and be open to God as Mary was"; the Visitation "to show her charity"; the Birth of Christ, to "generate the presence of

⁷⁹ Ibid., 32. Lubich draws here on Gregory the Great, quoted by St. Bede the Venerable in his *Commento al Vangelo di Marco* (Rome, 1970), 1:116–17, and on LG, 65.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 107: "I Want to See Her Again in You" (excerpt from December, 1957).

⁸¹ Ibid., 45.

‘Jesus in the midst’ through love of others”⁸² ; the Presentation, to accept the Cross; and the Loss of Jesus in the Temple, to be seen as the loss of consolation through temptations, in order to teach patience, humility and dependence on the Lord alone.⁸³

The foundress of *Focolare* also notes that the graces that flowed to her and her companions by focusing on Mary are intrinsically connected to being able to live the ecclesiology of communion in a concrete way. The ecclesiology of communion is central to the charism of *Focolare*: to live the charism of unity and community with God and others.⁸⁴ Connecting this to the new interpretation of Marian devotion that encompasses the nuptial dimension of the body, she writes that contemplating Mary enabled members of the movement to “become love” and to live more concretely the charism of unity and communion with God and others. Mary was the mother of “beautiful love,” the one in whom the Church as the model of unity and love was concretized, and in becoming “other Marys” they could do the same.

⁸² Ibid., 57.

⁸³ Ibid., 60.

⁸⁴ See commentary, “Mary the Transparency of God,” accessed April 20, 2014, <http://www.feminine-genius.com/mary-the-transparency-of-god>. As Cardinal Bertone explains: “She (Chiara) inspired people to be love themselves, to live the charism of unity and communion with God and their fellow human beings, to spread love and unity by making themselves, their homes and their work a *focolare*, a hearth in which a blazing love becomes contagious and lights up all that is around it; a mission that everyone can carry out because the Gospel is within everyone’s grasp.”

Like Pope John Paul II in *Redemptoris Mater*, Lubich also recognized Mary as an existential model of faith in God. Similar to the theological reflections of Hans Urs von Balthasar on Mary at the Cross, the *Focolarini* also came to have a great love of “Mary Desolate” at the foot of the Cross, where, in this giving away of her Son, she becomes Mother of the Church.⁸⁵ Such a model of “Mary desolate” provides a modern interpretation of desolation for all members of the Church. Here the experience of the “dark night of the soul” is concretized for *Focolare* members. Through explaining this darkness in terms of Mary’s experience and rooting it in Scripture, it is no longer the esoteric experience of the mystics but is something that can be concretely experienced in the very trials of everyday human living. The contemplation of the triumph of faith through Mary’s desolation provides a fruitful model for all.

7b. The Emmanuel Community

The Emmanuel Community grew out of an experience of a small group of French people who, having heard of the charismatic renewal movement, were inspired to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It has spread internationally and includes married and single people of all ages, priests and consecrated members. The Community takes its name from Scripture: “Behold! The Virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Emmanuel, a name which means ‘God with us’” (Mt 1:23). Its symbol, the Icon

⁸⁵ Lubich, *Mary, the Transparency of God*, 40.

of the “Virgin of the Sign,” reveals (like the Focolare movement) the image of Mary as the one in whom the Triune God dwelt as the model for its members. The image points to the paradox of Mary as Virgin-Mother and the spirituality of the ecclesial person as virgin-Mother, highlighting not only Mary as *Theotokos*, but also recognizing Mary’s spiritual maternity at work in us which calls us to be fruitful by giving birth to Christ in the world.

The emphasis in the spirituality of the Emmanuel Community is on leading a contemplative apostolic style of life and recognizing that God is with them (Emmanuel) in daily life.⁸⁶ Closeness to Mary is seen as a path to closeness to Christ. Pope Benedict XVI, who addressed the community in 2011, recognized that “the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Emmanuel,” has an important place in the Community’s spirituality; he asked the members to take her into their “home,” as the Beloved Disciple did, “so that she may truly be the mother who guides you towards her divine Son and who helps you to stay faithful to him.”⁸⁷ The community recognizes that Marian consecration is an offering of one’s

⁸⁶ Claire Pécout, *Called to the Emmanuel Community*, Locations 4047–4050. Kindle.

⁸⁷ Pope Benedict XVI, “Address to the members of the Emmanuel Community on the Occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the death of their founder, the Servant of God Pierre Goursat,” accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/february/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110203_emmanuel_en.html. See also Claire Pécout, *Called to the Emmanuel Community*, Locations 4177–4179. Kindle.

life to Mary in order to come to Jesus Christ.⁸⁸ The community, inspired by the founder Pierre Goursat, takes the approach of Louis Marie de Montfort to “true devotion,” which “means something quite different from devotional practices.” It means ultimately, like Mary, “to relate everything to God,” to be “completely transparent in relation to God and to Jesus his Son.” It means to allow Mary to form Jesus in us since “Mary is the mold in which one places oneself in order to resemble Jesus, since she formed the Son of God within her.”⁸⁹

7c. Youth 2000

Youth 2000 was founded by Ernest Williams in response to Pope John Paul II’s call to young people, at World Youth Day 1989, to evangelize the world. It is less a New Ecclesial Movement and more a community experienced through retreats and youth prayer groups that are connected to parishes. The Marian aspect of the spirituality emphasizes imitation of Mary in her “complete trust, belief and receptivity to God,” highlighted in her response at the Annunciation. It calls for uniting members more closely to “the love of the Trinity,” in order to follow Mary, the spouse of the Holy Spirit. It also recognizes in Mary a model of the New Evangelization to “proclaim his love to the world” and ponder the mystery of God in their hearts to receive new

⁸⁸ Pécout, *Called to the Emmanuel Community*, Locations 4047–4050, Kindle.

⁸⁹ Ibid. Locations 4063–4065, Kindle.

strength from God.⁹⁰ The Rosary is one of the main devotions of this group, at both prayer groups and retreats, prayed contemplatively as a group and usually with scriptural reflections before the Blessed Sacrament. The contemplative nature of the rosary is experienced as a way of entering into adoration. The group members recognize, as Pope John Paul II did, the “Christo-centric” nature of the rosary, echoing Mary’s prayer and joy in the *Magnificat* for the work of redemption manifested in her.⁹¹ Youth 2000 also capitalizes on the practical nature of the rosary as a tool for prayer. It is an aid for young people to continue in personal prayer beyond group prayer.⁹²

8. Conclusion

We have discussed the nature of Marian devotion today and how its focus is less on devotion to Mary and more on a Marian Spirituality. However, such a spirituality is not so much directed towards her but rather is about entering into her living receptivity to the Triune God at every stage of the journey of life through faith, hope and love. This is made possible for those in the Body, the Church, since it is rooted in the understanding of the relationship of Mary and the work of salvation in Christ and the Church. Embodied in Mary, this spirituality encompasses the whole person,

⁹⁰ Gina Hutchings, *Youth 2000: New Movements and Communities in the Life of the Church* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2001), 20–22.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

receptive in body and soul to God, with a love expressed concretely in charity, outreach, and mission. We have noted how New Ecclesial Movements, such as *Focolare*, the Emmanuel Community and Youth 2000, provide concrete examples of such renewed Marian devotion and a realization of the Trinitarian, Christological, and ecclesial dimensions of a Marian spirituality. Through their understanding of devotion to Mary, members of these movements live with the aim of making the Incarnation present in an ongoing way in the world. They express the nature of an ecclesial life that is a redeemed life, one lived in communion with God and others. Such a life demonstrates that receptivity to the gift of salvation is effective and transformative.

With Mary as its model and through a devotion to her lived as a Marian spirituality, the Church can embody its true identity as sacrament of salvation, sign, and instrument of communion with God and others, drawing from the wellsprings of divine life. This understanding was recognized by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in his final address to the Cardinals on February 28, 2013, where he explains the connection between Mary and the mystery of the Church with reference to Romano Guardini's understanding of the Church as "a living reality." He notes that the experience of greeting the faithful publically for the last time in St. Peter's square reminded him that:

The Church is alive, she grows and is reawakened in souls who—like the Virgin Mary—welcome the Word of God and conceive it through the action of the Holy Spirit; they offer to God their own flesh. It is precisely in their poverty and humility that they become capable of begetting Christ in the world today. Through the Church,

the Mystery of the Incarnation lives on forever. Christ continues to walk through the epochs and in all places.⁹³

Wherever we encounter genuine Marian devotion today, we meet a living Church, through members who give witness to Christ in our homes, Catholic schools, and parishes. It is a reminder to us that Mary continues to lead us to her Son, the source of salvation, and provides the form in which we enter into communion with him in history. The renewal of Marian devotion since the Second Vatican Council is vital for the whole Church, so that Christ continues to take flesh in his body today and so that the Church truly becomes the sacrament of salvation for the whole world.

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⁹³ Pope Benedict XVI, "Farewell Address to the Eminent Cardinals Present in Rome," accessed May 1, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2013/February/document/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20130228_congedo-cardinali_en.html.

Marian profile, Mariology, theological anthropology—are reflected in her numerous publications.

