

THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH
ORDER OF OUR LADY



STUDY GUIDE

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY ~

ROMAN, ORTHODOX & OTHER PERSPECTIVES

The following is an overview of the past and current theological perspectives concerning Our Lady – The Blessed Virgin Mary – as held by the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and other Ecumenical perspectives. There are five sections, which deal solely with the doctrine and theology in regard to Our Lady from other Churches, with Part II being a transcription of Chapter VIII of the official documents of Vatican II. Two further sections have been added, which set out fairly clearly the views regarding the role of women within the respective Roman and Orthodox Churches.

It is important to remember that our Founding Bishops clearly stated that we should never depart from the general outline of Christian thought and worship. They were also quite clear that we followed the general plan of the Roman Liturgy. Hence, the doctrinal and theological points from the Roman perspective, which follow hereafter, are important to our overall understanding. Obviously, there are parts of this doctrine and theology with which many Liberal Catholics would disagree, but that is not the point. We must, in all conscience, consider that doctrine and theology with all due respect before finding any basis of disagreement. It is why the Bishops of the Church consider it vital that all members of the Order of Our Lady are familiar with the differing theologies of other Churches when considering and coming to their own individual conclusions concerning their work within the Order of Our Lady.

✠ Graham
Presiding Bishop

Feast of The Solemnity of Mary
2012

CONTENTS

Part I ~ Marian Theology up to Vatican II

Sr. Thomas Mary, O.P. Our Lady of Grace Monastery

Part II ~ Chapter VIII of The Documents of Vatican II

Part III ~ Behold Your Mother: The Fifth Marian Dogma

by Fr. Peter Damian M. Fehlner, FI, STD

Part IV ~ A Marian Dogma and Ecumenism

By Rev. Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp.

Part V ~ An Orthodox Perspective of Our Lady

By Dr. Alexander Roman.

Part VI ~ The Role of Women in the Eastern Orthodox Church

Fr. Angelo Nicolaidis

Part VII ~ Defining 'Deaconess' from a Roman Catholic Perspective

Taken from New Advent website: Catholic Encyclopaedia.

PART I ~ MARIAN THEOLOGY UP TO VATICAN II

© Sr. Thomas Mary, O.P.
Our Lady of Grace Monastery, 2003

BEFORE VATICAN II

I will begin by painting in broad strokes, within the framework of the past 2000 years, the theological position of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. As we study the figure of Mary we discover not a simple straight line of development but rather one that is complex and varied. However for our purpose here, I offer a very simple approach, remembering all the while that these broad strokes are more a matter of emphases rather than either/or.

I have divided the past 2000 years into two major blocks of time. The first 1000 years of Church history, from the time of Jesus up to the XI century could be described, according to Jean Leclercq noted historian and Benedictine, as a Marian period of "*extreme sobriety*." [1] During this period the theological study of Mary threw light on the mystery of Christ in the great Christological controversies of the early Church. And secondly, the theme of Mary as image of the Church grew and developed in the writings of the early Fathers, especially in St. Augustine who is the most famous for the identification of Mary with the Church.

The most important Marian truth that emerged in this first historical bloc of time was that Mary is the Mother of God, i.e. she is our *Theotokos*, literally translated as "*God bearer*." This truth of Mary as God's mother safeguards the integrity of Christ as truly God and truly human — a truth we are inclined to take for granted but the early Church had to struggle with these realities.

From possibly as early as the 3rd century there has now been discovered a fragment of a prayer to the Mother of God, the Sub Tuum, with which most of us are familiar in one form or another:

We fly to your protection O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities but deliver us from all dangers, ever glorious and blessed Virgin.

It is good to remember in our ecumenical age that this early Mariology originated primarily in the Eastern Church and from there expanded into the West in the course of the 4th century. But in the 9th and 10th centuries, with a lessening of contact between East and West, there was also a lessening of Marian devotion in the West. And so we come to a close of this first period of sober Marian theology with its outstanding contributions: Mary acknowledged as Mother of God; Mary as bringing clarity to the early Christological controversies; Mary as image of the Church.

The second great Marian period is termed by Leclercq a period of religious exuberance. [2] It began in the 11th century together with a general awakening and renewal of the Church. Marian study and devotion assumed a more expressive approach as people began to honour Mary's privileges: her immaculate conception, her assumption, and the power of her intercession. Marian homilies, Marian hymns and poetry abounded; theological treatises were many; Marian pilgrimages and shrines were multiplied; many Churches were dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Mary's Feasts: her conception, her nativity, her purification and assumption appear more regularly in the Liturgy. The practice of the Saturday votive Mass and Office of the BVM becomes more and more regular. During this period we have the development of the Immaculate Conception which was subsequently defined by Pius IX in 1854 and crowned by the apparitions at Lourdes in 1858 where Mary herself said: *I am the Immaculate Conception* — a Feast which has been incorporated into the Liturgy of the Church.

With a reopening of relations between East and West, Marian icons and Marian statues spread everywhere. Thus Marian art became a means of drawing people closer to Mary as their great intercessor with God. And in this drawing closer to the Mother of God we have the beginning of the awareness of Mary's presence in our midst. Throughout this second period there was much theological study of Mary's role in the redemptive work of Christ and of Mary's intercession as Mediatrix of All Grace. In 1950 we have the solemn definition of Mary's Assumption by Pius XII bringing this second period to an all time high.

Twelve years later, the second Vatican Council opened on the then celebrated Feast of Our Lady's Motherhood, October 11, 1962 but after the Council this second great period of Marian devotion fell into sharp decline.

WHAT HAPPENED AT VATICAN II

The Marian preparatory theological commission which had been set up by John XXIII in 1960 had as its original preference to incorporate the conciliar teaching on Our Lady in a separate document, that is, to give Mary her own document. [3] However in October of 1960, the commission had a change of mind and the majority voted to integrate the treatise on Mary into the Constitution on the Church.

Then after much work and the consideration of several drafts, the idea of a separate schema for Mary re-emerged. By January of 1962, the commission decided once again that the Marian schema should be independent and stand on its own. This independent schema was given to John XXIII who approved it on November 10, 1962. It was given to the Council Fathers thirteen days later on November 23.

A year intervened between the bishops receiving this schema and its discussion on the floor. This gave time for thought. In September of 1963, change was again in the air when seven of the Council Fathers returned to the idea that the Marian schema be integrated into the Constitution on the Church.

In October arguments were presented on the Council floor, both for and against the proposal to make the schema on Our Blessed Mother a part of the Constitution on the Church. These arguments brought out the fact that there was no real disagreement among the bishops about Mary's role in the Church or about the honour that we owe to her. No one at Vatican II was lacking in devotion to Mary. The question under discussion concerned solely, as Cardinal Santos of the Philippines put it, "the place and manner of more suitably treating the doctrine about Mary." [4]

Cardinal Santos represented the opinion that because of Mary's great dignity and unique

role in the Church, the Council should award her a separate schema so that her singular pre-eminence and dignity might be more apparent but at the same time, this ought to be done in very close connection with the schema on the Church. However his preference was for a separate schema in order to give the faithful, as he put it, a more complete doctrine on Mary and secondly, because Mariology has close bonds both with Christology and with soteriology, as well as with ecclesiology. He foresaw the danger of misleading the faithful by seeming to refuse Mary the dignity of a distinct document.

Cardinal Koenig, representing the other side of the question, thought that a separate document would create the false impression that Vatican II intended to define a new Marian dogma. He saw a distinct advantage in treating of Mary as both pre-eminent member of the Church as well as archetype of the Church in one document, namely: the overcoming of theological and devotional excesses and deviations which resulted from unduly isolating Mary from the mystery of Christ and the Church. Finally, he foresaw that having Mary and the Church in one document would have the ecumenical value of making Mary more recognizable and acceptable to other Christian churches. At the conclusion of the discussion the Fathers were asked to make the final decision by voting[5].

The vote of the Council Fathers was extremely close:

1114 - in favour of integrating the Marian schema into the Constitution on the Church.

1074 - in favour of a separate schema.

Only 17 votes gave the needed majority

This was by far the narrowest majority in the history of Vatican II. This decision did seem to create a false impression that somehow the council wanted to reduce Marian devotion, an impression that had been foreseen by Cardinal Santos. The news media exploited the situation. The Council was made to seem divided on the subject of Our Lady, when in reality, the question was over the more suitable place of treating of Our Lady. Thirty years later the Church is still trying to dispel these false impressions.

On the other side, many Protestants are taking a new look at Mary as predicted by Cardinal Koenig. A good number of bishops came to the Council expecting the doctrine and title of Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace, to be finally defined by the Church. Instead, principally for ecumenical reasons, the title of Mediatrix was submerged in a list of other titles and a special emphasis was placed on Christ as the one mediator and Mary's role as being subordinate to Christ. That Mary's role is subordinate to Christ has always been the teaching of the Church but our Protestant brothers and sisters have received a different impression. Therefore, the Council bent over backwards, as it were, in their desire to bring a corrective to this situation.

If we look carefully at the document we will see that nothing essential of the past 2000 years has been lost, but rather, that a pruning has taken place. And pruning has for its purpose that a more abundant and fuller growth might spring up.

AFTER VATICAN II

The principle pruning of Mariology has been a shift away from honouring the privileges and splendours of Mary for their own sake in what has often been called an 'isolated Mariology'

to an emphasis on Mary as one with us. We are being called to contemplate the Gospel mysteries of her life in relation to the mysteries of our own life and to imitate her perfect response of faith.

While the Council strongly urges us to continue to exalt Mary who "*far surpasses all other creatures in heaven and on earth*" (LG #54) and to pray to Mary whose intercession and protection the Church "*continually experiences*" (LG #62), the Council also asks us to focus explicitly on Mary as a type of the Church. This is a pruning because it is often easier to honour Mary than to probe her mystery, to exalt Mary than to make our own life like hers: a total faith response to God.

As a help in this direction Mary is presented in Lumen Gentium in Biblical terms. This is a new development in Church documents. The Scriptures are our purest source of the knowledge of Mary. Mary herself was steeped in the living waters of the Old Testament. These waters continue to bear life for our contemporary times. In speaking of the Old Testament, Chapter VIII of Lumen Gentium is very explicit in saying that the Old Testament is to be "*understood in the light of further and full revelation*" (LG #55). Commenting on this passage, mariologist James O'Connor explains that

"in the light of the fullness of revelation we are not 'reading back into' the documents something which is not really there, but something which is truly there but only fully understood when read in the perspective of the completed work." [6]

That is, we read the New Testament in the light of the Old Testament and the Old in the light of the New. Scripture scholars call this the "*sensus plenior*" — that additional deeper meaning intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author. Scripture interpreters of all times have considered the *sensus plenior* as a valid inspired meaning of Scripture intended by God. [7]

Here we can barely touch on Mary in Scripture, so vast is the ocean. Thomas Merton has written that unless

"we find her [Mary] living in the midst of Scripture, and unless we find her, also hidden in Scripture wherever and in whatever promises contain her Son, we shall not fully know the life that is in Scripture." [8]

I will take a brief look at three texts and share some simple thoughts as starting points for further development. In order to pursue a true picture of Mary it is good to begin with the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 which all of Tradition has applied to Mary, the Mother of our Saviour:

*I will put enmity between you and the woman,
between your seed and her seed;
He will strike your head
and you will strike his heel.*

This passage signifies the battle which continues to take place between good and evil,

wherein Mary stands as our hope.

Turning to the history of the Jewish people, we find a long line of women who are considered types of Mary. We can think of Sara, wife of Abraham, so marvellously fruitful with Isaac in her old age; of Miriam who guarded the infant Moses who would eventually free Israel from Egyptian oppression.

We think of those heroines who saved their people from ruin — types of Mary in her spiritual collaboration with Christ's redeeming work. In the time of the Judges it was Deborah who led her countrymen to victory (Judge 4:6-10). Jael crushed the head of Sisara and brought defeat to the enemy (Judge 4:21). The valiant Judith cut off the head of Holofernes and thus saved her people (Jdt 13). On Marian feasts the Church in her Liturgy honours Mary by praying from the book of Judith:

*O daughter, you are blessed by the most high God
above all women on earth;
and blessed is the Lord God (Jdt 13:18).*

How similar to what we read in Luke 1:42 and pray over and over again in the Hail Mary:

*Blessed are you among women
and blessed is the fruit of your womb.*

A parallel which implies a double identification: between Judith and Mary and between the Lord God and Jesus.[9]

Considering Judith as a type or symbol of Mary we are helped to appreciate the enormous courage and initiative that Mary exercised in her life. As Paul VI expressed in *Marialis Cultus*, Mary was invited by God

*"not to the solution of a contingent problem, but to that 'event of world importance', as the Incarnation of the Word has been rightly called".
God entered into dialogue with Mary and waited upon her active and responsible consent (MC #37).*

Looking at Mary in this way we can see her as an archetype for contemporary women in their legitimate desires to be more intensely involved in the mission of the Church and in the healing of societal wounds. Women of today can look to Mary as one who fully and responsibly heard the word of God and acted upon it.

*You are the glory of Jerusalem;
you are the joy of Israel;
you are the highest honour of our race (Jdt 15:9-10).*

Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium* singles out the Daughter of Zion theme from the Old Testament and sees Mary as the "*outstanding Daughter of Zion*" (LG #55). [10] In Micah this expression refers to a section of Jerusalem filled with poor disabled people to whom the

prophet addresses words of hope:

*O Daughter of Zion...you shall be rescued...
the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies (4:10).
Arise...O Daughter of Zion (4:13).*

These were the remnant, destitute refugees for whom all earthly hope was lost and whose only refuge was in God. The Daughter of Zion theme is intrinsically linked with the notion of the remnant and the poor. Mary who sings in the Magnificat that God has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid "*stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord*" (LG #55), as Vatican II teaches.

Gradually the Old Testament theme took on a deeper religious meaning and began to stand for the whole city of Jerusalem where the presence of Yahweh dwelt. In the prophet Zephaniah we read:

*Sing aloud, O Daughter of Zion,
Shout for joy, O Israel.
Rejoice and exult with all your heart
O Daughter of Jerusalem...
The King of Israel, Yahweh, is in your midst;
you shall fear evil no more (Zeph 3:14-15).*

The theme continued to develop and it became linked with the post-exilic theme of Zion as the Mother of a new people (Is 54:1; 66:6-14), and Mother of all nations (Ps 87). As Mother of Jesus, Mary summarizes in her person the long preparation of the Old Testament which preceded the appearance of the Messiah. She brings the past to an end and inaugurates the new creation.

There is an extraordinary parallel between the prophecies to the Daughter of Zion and their fulfilment in the Lucan portrait of Mary in the infancy narratives. Many Protestant and Catholic scholars are in agreement with this parallel and in regarding Mary as "*the outstanding Daughter of Zion*" (LG #55).

As Mary summed up and personified Israel, she also personifies and expresses the deepest nature and meaning of the Church — a Church which is both contemplative and missionary. Mary is the model contemplative and the first missionary. Immediately after the Annunciation, Mary impelled by the Holy Spirit, rose up and carried the Son of God to her cousin Elizabeth. Elizabeth recognized and welcomed the one sent: *who am I that the Mother of my Lord should come to me* (Lk 1:43)?

Mary presented Jesus to the lowly shepherds in Bethlehem (Lk 2:15), and to the Magi who came from the East to adore (Mt 2:11). She placed the Child in old Simeon's arms who embraced him as the Light of all nations (Lk 2:28).

At the wedding feast of Cana (Jn 2: 1-11), it was Mary who noticed the plight of the newly married couple. They were expected to provide wine for the invited guests who came from

all parts of the surrounding locale during the weeklong celebration. Wine is an indispensable element of Jewish rejoicing so the couple must have been very poor indeed if they were unable to provide in ample measure this very necessary ingredient. Their failure would put them in an embarrassing situation. Without being asked Mary quickly reaches out to them in their predicament. We call Our Lady Comforter of the afflicted in her Litany. And her example invites us, in our turn, to bring comfort to the afflicted and to those less fortunate than ourselves.

There are many levels of meaning in the Cana story. We see Mary beginning her intercessory role which she continues to exercise in our behalf today bringing us needed help in our problems and difficulties. In the Memorare we pray:

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided.

By her intervention, Mary initiated Jesus' public messianic mission which culminated in the pouring out of the nuptial wine of the New Covenant — his precious Blood. Mary reaches out to all peoples of all times in our innate spiritual poverty so that we might receive the new wine of the Eucharist. As she told the waiters at Cana, Do whatever He tells you, so she says the same to each of us in our heart.

Mary alone carried the faith of the newly born Church as she stood by the cross of Jesus and awaited the promised resurrection. She implored the gift of the Holy Spirit for the apostles at Pentecost (Acts 1:14), a gift she had already received in the annunciation. As Chapter VIII teaches, Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, brought forth Christ and she continues to bring forth

"the faithful, in whose generation and education she cooperates with maternal love. The Church, in turn, contemplating her mysterious holiness, imitating her charity, and faithfully fulfilling the Father's will, herself becomes mother by faithfully receiving the word of God: for by preaching and baptism she brings forth to new and immortal life children conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of God" (LG #63, 64).

Mary's whole purpose, as is the Church's, is to manifest Christ, to bring all people to her Son. We come to Mary only to find our way more surely to him.

Mary is both our Mother and our model. As our Mother she nurtures and intercedes for us drawing us to the Sacrifice of Christ. As our model she shows us how to live the Christian mysteries as we contemplate the Scriptures. She enlightens us to discover the same mysteries in our own life and to respond in total faith. As John Paul II reminds us in his Marian encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, which is really a commentary on Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*, we are called to the same heights of faith and holiness that Mary was. John Paul II highlights Ephesians:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
who has blest us in Christ
with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph 1:3).*

This passage, our holy Father tells us, reveals "*the eternal design of God the Father...It is a universal plan which concerns all men and women created in the image and likeness of God*" (RM #7).

*We have been chosen in Christ,
before the foundation of the world,
that we should be holy and blameless before him.
He destined us in love to be his sons and daughters
through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,
to the praise of his glorious grace
which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved (Eph 1:4-6).*

This spiritual blessing of grace, the Pope says, while it "*refers to Mary in a special and exceptional degree...is meant for all people(RM #8)...This election is more powerful than any experience of evil and of sin, than all that 'enmity' (foretold in Genesis) which marks the history of humankind. In this history Mary remains a sign of sure hope*" (RM #11).

CONCLUSION: A PROPOSED FUTURE FOR MARIAN THEOLOGY

In summary, it is now thirty years since Vatican II and we have all experienced to some degree the radical pruning of Mariology. But as I have attempted to clarify, nothing essential has been lost. The roots remain vital and vibrant with life. In the first thousand years of "extreme sobriety," Mary played a major role in the formation of Christology. In the second thousand years, a period of Marian exuberance, the pre-eminence and glory of Mary shone forth with particular brilliance:

*Who is this that comes forth as the morning rising,
fair as the moon and bright as the sun,
resplendent as an army set in battle array (Sg 6:10).*

But in this second period there can be found a multiplicity of devotions and titles without always, perhaps, a corresponding engagement in the spiritual discipline of connecting these Marian devotions with our existential lives and the real life of the Church.

Now after all this pruning begun by Vatican II, what kind of more abundant and fuller growth should we look for?

In a nutshell, I would suggest that the Holy Spirit, working through the decision of Vatican II to include the Marian schema within the Constitution on the Church, is guiding us to focus on Mary as model and type of the Church, that is, on her exemplarity and closeness to us. And already seedlings are popping up — I have already mentioned a few:

I - MARY IN SCRIPTURE - Contemporary women can find in Mary - contemplated through the focus of Scripture - inspiration and confirmation as they seek to serve the Church and society with the fullness of their gifts.

II - MARY AND THE CONTEMPLATIVE - Each of us is called to the same faith response as Mary — to ponder the Word that the Holy Spirit speaks in our heart. *Blessed is she who has believed* (Lk 1:45).

III - MARY AND THE MISSIONER - How totally Mary's life is an icon for the missioner — from her first missionary journey to her cousin Elizabeth until her ardent prayer in the Cenacle in the midst of the disciples as they awaited Pentecost, her whole life was devoted to the work of her Son.

IV - MARY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT - This is a fertile field waiting to be cultivated. Throughout her life Mary responded to the action of the Holy Spirit and became an icon of the living flame of Divine Love.

IV - MARY AND A FEMININE CHURCH - The Swiss theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, has put it this way:

It should give a woman a feeling of exaltation to know that she — particularly in the virgin-mother Mary — is the privileged place where God can and wishes to be received in the world. Between the first Incarnation of the Word of God in Mary and its ever-new arrival in the receiving Church, there exists an inner continuity. This and only this is the decisive Christian event, and insofar as men are in the Church, they must participate — whether they have office or not — in this comprehensive femininity of the Marian Church . . . [that is], by learning to express and live better the fiat that Mary addressed to God one and triune. [11]

Mary's fiat is at the heart of the Church. In her we find the example of what it means to say "yes" to God and the courage to carry out the mission of Christ that has been entrusted to each of us in a unique and personal way.

Von Balthasar has said:

From the cross the Son hands his mother over into the Church of the apostles, from now on her place is there. In a hidden manner her virginal motherhood holds sway throughout the whole sphere of the Church, gives it light, warmth, protection; her cloak makes the Church into a protective cloak. It requires no special gesture from her to show that we should look at the Son and not at her. Her very nature as handmaid reveals him. [12]

It is Mary who can show all of us, called as we are according to our vocation to be servants of her Son, how we can be both wholly effective presence and wholly self-effacing servants of the good and perfect gift of Divine Love which comes down from the Father of lights in whom there is no change or shadow of alteration (Ja 1:17).

ENDNOTES

1. Jean Leclercq, "Grandeur et Misere de la Dévotion Mariale au Moyen-Age" *La Maison - dieu* 38(2) 1954: 122. (Typewritten translation) For a discussion of the history of Marian devotion see entire article pp. 122-135 and to which I am indebted for the initial approach taken in this paper.

2. Ibid., p.122.

3. I am indebted to the following principal sources for the discussion of the factors leading up to and surrounding the insertion of Chapter 8 in *Lumen Gentium*: Frederick Jelly, "The Theological Context of and Introduction to Chapter 8 of Lumen

Gentium, "Marian Studies 37(1986): 43-61; Michael O'Carroll, Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, Inc., Revised Edition with Supplement, 1983), s.v. "Vatican II", pp. 351-356.

4. Jelly, "The Theological Context of and Introduction to Chapter 8 of Lumen Gentium", p. 51.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

6. James O'Connor, "Lumen Gentium", 55 to 59, Marian Studies 37(1986): 80. For a detailed discussion of the application of Scripture texts to the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Council see entire article pp. 74-95.

7. Eric E. May, "The Problems of a Biblical Mariology," Marian Studies 11(1960): 47.

8. Thomas Merton, New Seeds of Contemplation, 2nd ed. (New York: New Directions, 1972), p. 175.

9. Lucien Deiss, Mary, Daughter of Sion, trans. by Barbara T. Blair (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1972), p. 96.

10. For a scriptural study of the theme of Mary, Daughter of Sion, see John Mc Hugh, The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament (New York: Doubleday, 1975), pp. 29-55; for a study of the "Daughter of Sion" in the Old Testament see pp. 438-444.

11. Hans Urs von Balthasar, L'Osservatore Romano, 24 February 1977, p. 7, quoted in Review for Religious (July 1977): 524.

12. Hans Urs von Balthasar, Elucidations, trans. by John Riches (London: S.P.C.K., 1975), p. 72. Originally published as Klarstellungen: zur Prufung der Geister (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder KG, 1971)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Braun, F. M. Mother of God's People. Translated by John Clarke, O.C.D. Staten Island: Alba House, 1967. Originally published as La Mere des Fidelis (Tournai: Casterman, 1954).

Carroll, Eamon R. Understanding the Mother of Jesus. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1979.

Documents of Vatican II. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium). Edited by Walter M. Abbot, S.J. New York: The American Press, 1966.

Flanagan, Donal. The Theology of Mary. Theology Today Series, no. 30. Edward Yarnold, S.J., gen. ed. Hales Corner: Clergy Book Service, 1976.

Garrigou-Lagrange, Reginald. The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life. Translated by Bernard J. Kelly, C.S.Sp. St. Louis: Herder Book Co., 1949; reprint ed., 1953.

John Paul II. Redemptoris Mater (Mother of the Redeemer) in Mary: God's Yes to Man. Introduction by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. Commentary by Hans Urs von Balthasar. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988. Originally published as Maria: Gottes Ja zum Menschen (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 1987).

Laurentin, Rene. Our Lady and the Mass. Translated by Dom Francis McHenry, O.S.B. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1959. Originally published as Notre dame et la Messe. (Desclee de Brouwer, 1954).

_____. Queen of Heaven. Translated by Gordon Smith. Dublin: Clonmore & Reynolds Ltd., 1956. Originally published as Courte Traite de Theologie Mariale.

Miguens, M. Mary. The Servant of the Lord. Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1978.

O'Carroll, Michael. Theotokos, A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Revised 1983 ed., s.v. "Mediation, Mary Mediatrix"; s.v. "Mother of the Church"; s.v. "Mother of Divine Grace". Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1982.

O'Meara, Thomas A. Mary in Protestant and Catholic Theology. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966.

Scheeben, M. J. Mariology. 2 Vols. Translated by Rev. T. L. M. J. Geukers. St. Louis: Herder Book Co., 1946-47.

Schillebeeckx, Edward. Mary. Mother of the Redemption, 3rd ed. Translated by N. D. Smith. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964. Originally published as Maria, Moeder van de verlossing (Antwerp: Uitgeverij Apostolaat van de Rozenkrans, 1954).

Semmelroth, Otto. Mary, Archetype of the Church. Translated by Maria von Eroes and John Devlin. Introduction by

PART II ~ CHAPTER VIII OF THE DOCUMENTS OF VATICAN II

Our Lady

I. Introduction

Wishing in his supreme goodness and wisdom to effect the redemption of the world, "when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman... that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4;4). "He for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnated by the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary." This divine mystery of salvation is revealed to us and continued in the Church, which the Lord established as his body. Joined to Christ the head and in communion with all his saints, the faithful must in the first place reverence the memory "of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Virgin Mary, who at the message of the angel received the Word of God in her heart and in her body and gave Life to the world, is acknowledged and honoured as being truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer. Redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason the merits of her Son, and united to him by a close and indissoluble tie, she is endowed with the high office and dignity of the Mother of the Son of God, and therefore she is also the beloved daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven and on earth. But, being of the race of Adam, she is at the same time also united to all those who are to be saved; indeed, "she is clearly the mother of the members of Christ... since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head." Wherefore she is hailed as pre-eminent and as a wholly unique member of the Church, and as its type and outstanding model in faith and charity. The Catholic Church taught by the Holy Spirit, honours her with filial affection and devotion as a most beloved mother.

Wherefore this sacred symbol, while expounding the doctrine on the Church, in which the divine Redeemer brings about our salvation, intends to set forth painstakingly both the role of the Blessed Virgin in the mystery of the Incarnate Word and the Mystical Body, and the duties of the redeemed towards the Mother of God, who is mother of Christ and mother of men, and most of all those who believe. It does not, however, intend to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not fully clarified. Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and also closest to us.

II. The Function of the Blessed Virgin in the Plan of Salvation

The sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments, as well as venerable tradition, show the role of the Mother of the Saviour in the plan of salvation in an ever clearer light and call our attention to it. The books of the Old testament describe the history of salvation, by which the coming of Christ into the world was slowly prepared. The earliest documents, as they are read in the Church and are understood in the light of a further and full revelation, bring the figure of a woman, Mother of the Redeemer, into a gradually clearer light.

Considered in this light, she is already prophetically foreshadowed in the promise of victory over the serpent which was given to our first parents after their fall into sin (cf. Gen. 3:15). Likewise she is the virgin who shall conceive and bear a son, whose name shall be called Emmanuel (cf. Is. 8:14; Mic. 5:2-3; Mt. 1:22-23). She stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from him. After a long period the times are fulfilled in her, the exalted Daughter of Sion and the new plan of salvation is established, when the Son of God has taken human nature from her, that he might in the mysteries of his flesh free man from sin.

The Father of mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the predestined mother, so that just as a woman had a share in bringing about death, so also a woman should contribute to life. This is pre-eminently true of the Mother of Jesus, who gave to the world the Life that renews all things, and who was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role. It is no wonder then that it was customary for the Fathers (of the Church - +GW) to refer to the Mother of God as all holy and free from every stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature. Enriched from the first instant of her conception with the splendour of an entirely unique holiness, the virgin of Nazareth is hailed by the heralding angel, by divine command, as "full of grace" (cf. Lk. 1:28), and to the heavenly messenger she replies: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word" (Lk. 1:38). Thus the daughter of Adam, Mary, consenting to the word of God, became the Mother of Jesus. Committing herself wholeheartedly and impeded by no sin to God's saving will, she devoted herself totally, as a handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of the redemption, by the grace of Almighty God. Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely co-operating in the work of man's salvation through faith and obedience. For, as St. Irenaeus says, she "being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race." Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert with him in their preaching: "the knot of Eve's disobedience was united with Mary's obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith." Comparing Mary with Eve, they call her "Mother of the living," and frequently claim: "death through Eve, life through Mary."

This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death; first when Mary, arising in haste to go to visit Elizabeth, is greeted by her as blessed because of her belief in the promise of salvation and the precursor leaped with joy in the womb of his mother (cf. Lk. 1:41-45); then also at the birth of Our Lord, who did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it, the Mother of God joyfully showed her firstborn son to the shepherds and the Magi; when she presented him to the Lord in the temple, making the offering of the poor, she heard Simon foretelling at the same time that her Son would be a sign of contradiction and that a sword would pierce the mother's soul, that out of many hearts thoughts might be revealed (cf. Lk. 2:34-35); when the child Jesus was lost and they had sought him sorrowing, his parents found him in the temple, engaged in the things that were his Father's, and they did not understand the words of their Son. His mother, however, kept all these things to be pondered in her heart (cf. Lk. 2:41-51).

In the public life of Jesus Mary appears prominently; at the very beginning when at the marriage feast of Cana, moved with pity, she brought about by her intercession the beginning of miracles of Jesus the Messiah (cf. Jn. 2:1-11). In the course of her Son's preaching she received the words whereby, in extolling a kingdom beyond the concerns and ties of flesh and blood, she declared blessed those who heard and kept the word of God (cf. Mk. 3:35; par. Lk. 11:27) as she was faithfully doing (cf. Lk. 2:19;51). Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which was born of her. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross as a mother to his disciple, with these words: "Woman, behold thy son" (Jn. 19:26-27).

But since it had pleased God not to manifest solemnly the mystery of the salvation of the human race before he would pour forth the Spirit promised by Christ, we see the apostles before the day of Pentecost "persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14), and we also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation. Finally, the Immaculate Virgin preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when her earthly life was over, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords, (cf. Apoc 19:16) and conqueror of sin and death.

III. The Blessed Virgin and the Church

In the words of the apostle, there is but one mediator; "for there is but one God and one mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as redemption for all" (1 Tim. 2:5-6). But Mary's function as mother of men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. But the Blessed Virgin's salutary influence on men originates not in any inner necessity but in the disposition of God. It flows forth from the super-abundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. It does not hinder in any way the immediate union of the faithful with Christ, but, on the contrary, fosters it.

The predestination of the Blessed Virgin as Mother of God was associated with the incarnation of the divine word; in the designs of divine Providence she was the gracious mother of the divine Redeemer here on earth, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the temple, shared her Son's sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she co-operated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Saviour in restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace.

This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfilment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son,

who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into their blessed home. Therefore, the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix. This, however, is so understood that it neither takes away anything from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficacy of Christ the one Mediator.

No creature could ever be counted along with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer; but just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by his ministers and the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is radiated in different ways among his creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold co-operation which is but a sharing in this one source.

The Church does not hesitate to profess this subordinate role of Mary, which it constantly experiences and recommends to the heartfelt attention of the faithful, so that encouraged by this maternal help they may the more closely adhere to the Mediator and Redeemer.

By the reason of the gift and role of her divine motherhood, by which she is united with her Son, the Redeemer, and with her unique graces and functions, the Blessed Virgin is also intimately united to the Church. As St. Ambrose taught, the Mother of God is a type of the Church in the order of faith, charity, and perfect union with Christ. For in the mystery of the Church, which is itself rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar both of virgin and mother. Through her faith and obedience she gave birth on earth to the very Son of the Father, not through the knowledge of man but by the over-shadowing of the Holy Spirit, in the manner of a new Eve who placed her faith, not in the serpent of old but in God's messenger without wavering in doubt. The Son whom she brought forth is he whom God placed as the first born among many brethren (Rom. 8:29), that is, the faithful, in whose generation and formation she co-operates with a mother's love.

The Church indeed contemplating her hidden sanctity, imitating her charity and faithfully fulfilling the Father's will, by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By preaching and baptism she brings forth sons, who are conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of God, to a new and immortal life. She herself is a virgin, who keeps in its entirety and purity the faith she pledged to her spouse. Imitating the mother of her Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she keeps intact faith, firm hope and sincere charity.

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. And so they turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues. Devoutly meditating on her and contemplating her in the light of the Word made man, the Church reverently penetrates more deeply into the great mystery of the Incarnation and becomes more and more like her spouse. Having entered deeply into the history of salvation, Mary, in a way, unites in her person and re-echoes the most important doctrines of the faith; and when she is the subject of preaching and worship she prompts the faithful to come to her Son, to his sacrifice and to the love of the Father. Seeking after the glory of Christ, the Church becomes more like her lofty type, and continually progresses in faith, hope and charity,

seeking and doing the will of God in all things. The Church, therefore, in her apostolic work too, rightly looks to her who gave birth to Christ, who was thus conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, in order that through the Church he could be born and increase in the hearts of the faithful. In her life the Virgin has been a model of that motherly love with which all who join in the Church's apostolic mission for the regeneration of mankind should be animated.

IV. The Cult of the Blessed Virgin in the Church

Mary has by grace been exalted above all angels and men to a place second only to her Son, as the most holy mother of God who was involved in the mysteries of Christ; she is rightly honoured by a special cult in the Church. From earliest times the Blessed Virgin is honoured under the title of Mother of God, whose protection the faithful take refuge together in prayer in all their perils and needs. Accordingly, following the Council of Ephesus, there was a remarkable growth in the cult of the People of God towards Mary, in veneration and love, in invocation and imitation, according to her own prophetic words: "All generations shall call me blessed, because he that is mighty hath done great things to me." (Lk. 1:48). This cult, as it has always existed in the Church, for all its uniqueness, differs essentially from the cult of adoration, which is offered equally to the Incarnate Word and to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, and it is most favourable to it. The various forms of piety towards the Mother of God, which the Church has approved within the limits of sound and orthodox doctrine, according to the dispositions and understanding of the faithful, ensure that while the mother is honoured, the Son through whom all things have their being (cf. Col. 1:15-16) and in whom it has pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell (cf. Col. 1:19), is rightly known, loved and glorified and his commandments are observed.

The sacred synod teaches this Catholic doctrine advisedly and at the same time admonishes the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered, and that the practices and exercises of devotion towards her, recommended by the teaching authority of the Church in the course of centuries be highly esteemed, and that those decrees, which were given in the early days regarding the cult images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, be religiously observed. But it strongly urges theologians and preachers of the Word of God to be careful to refrain as much from all false exaggeration as from too summary an attitude in considering the special dignity of the Mother of God. Following the study of Sacred Scripture, the Fathers, the doctors and liturgy of the Church's magisterium, let them rightly illustrate the duties and privileges of the Blessed Virgin which always refer to Christ, the source of all truth, sanctity, and devotion. Let them carefully refrain from whatever might by word or deed lead the separated brethren or any others whatsoever into error about the true doctrine of the Church. Let the faithful remember moreover that true devotion consists neither in sterile or transitory affection, nor in a certain vain credulity, but proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to recognise the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love towards our mother and to the imitation of her virtues.

V. Mary, sign of true hope and comfort for the pilgrim People of God

In the meantime, the mother of Jesus in the glory which she possesses in body and soul in heaven is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to

come. Likewise, she shines forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10), a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God.

It gives great joy and comfort to this sacred synod that among the separated brethren too there are those who give due honour to the Mother of Our Lord and Saviour, especially among the Easterns, who with devout mind and fervent impulse give honour to the Mother of God, ever virgin. The entire body of the faithful pours forth urgent supplications to the Mother of God and of men that she, who aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers, may now, exalted as she is above all the angels and the saints, until all families of people, whether they still do not know the Saviour, may be happily gathered together in peace and harmony into one People of God, for the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.

PART III ~ Behold Your Mother: The Fifth Marian Dogma

by Fr. Peter Damian M. Fehlner, FI, STD

When our Lord just before dying and consummating His redemptive sacrifice on the Cross addressed these words (cf. Jn 19, 25-27) to the beloved disciple John (and through him to all of us) and told John (and through him also every one of us) to take her into our homes-hearts, He was also telling us to behold, contemplate her as His compassionate Mother and ours, viz., as the WOMAN, the IMMACULATE COREDEMPTRIX.

A great deal has been said and written in recent years concerning the possibility and need to define dogmatically the Marian titles of Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate, a "fifth" Marian dogma: divine Maternity, perpetual Virginity, Immaculate Conception, Assumption being the first four, with that of the Co-redemption, etc., said by some to be the "final" Marian dogma in the sense that such a definition would, with the preceding four Marian dogmas, round out and render definitive the Marian synthesis in part sketched in chapter 8 of the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II.

In many academic circles, including the theological, such proposals have not met with favour, indeed often enough with rather decided and occasionally violent opposition. Such proposals are seen in those circles, not as an integration of the doctrine of Vatican II, but as a reversion to an outmoded way of theologising about the Mother of God with unmistakable signs of a devotionism or Marian maximalism incompatible with and embarrassing to the ecumenism sponsored by Vatican II and promoted by the present Holy Father.

Were the issue only one of devotional practice (a type of orthopraxis), the critics of the movement might have a case. Devotion qua actus humanus admits of too much and of too little. As even the critics implicitly admit, however, rather than moderation in the exercise of Marian devotion, the primary issue is the nature of orthopraxis itself as guided by dogmatic faith, indeed as encapsulating that faith at its heart. To the person who does not believe in the divine, virginal maternity any form of hyperdulia is too much by definition. Whereas for someone who does accept and believe in the dogma of Ephesus any devotion of his in practice seems too little in contrast with the devotion God's own Son in fact has given and continues to give to His Mother in observing the fourth commandment.

The point might be put in the form of a question thus: what is the measure of too much (maximalism) or of too little (minimalism) devotion to Our Lady? De Maria numquam satis! From a purely pragmatic standpoint the old axiom guiding the Marian piety so many Saints east and west is simply indefensible. From a dogmatic standpoint it may well be the only acceptable guideline. St. Bonaventure says (Sermo I de purificatione) that he had never heard of a Saint without devotion to Mary or a great Saint without great, viz., maximal, devotion to the Virgin Mother.

What in principle defines maximal Marian devotion? Obviously the title Theotokos – Dei Genitrix. But like the NAME Jesus – Jahweh or He Who Is -, the actual honour due those NAMES is proximately defined in virtue of their roles in the great sacrificial work on Calvary, continued in the mystery of the Eucharist in the Church. St. Paul writes to the Philippians, ch. 2, v. 9: “For which reason – namely Jesus’ sacrificial obedience – God (viz., the Father) has given Him a NAME above every other name, before which every knee in heaven, on earth and under the earth (the trina mundi machina) must bend and every tongue proclaim Jesus is in the glory of God the Father.” Rendering such honour has always been recognized in the liturgy to include in some way the Mother of the Saviour before and above all others. The *Communicantes et memoriam venerantes in primis beatae et semper gloriosae Virginis Mariae Matris Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi...* of the Roman Canon puts it concisely. The ancient Marian hymn *Quem terra, pontus, aeterna* alludes to this in referring to Mary as the one who bore the *trinam regentem machinam*.

Granted, a rejoinder might be: how important is such a doctrinal consideration? After all do not questions of Mariology occupy a rather decidedly subordinate and lower rung of the *veritatum hierarchia*, on the margin rather than at the core of theological discussion, particularly today?

To this the supporters of a definition reply in the negative. Questions of Mariology, particularly that of the co-redemption and its corollaries: the universal maternal mediation and advocacy of Mary in the Church unique to her, directly touch upon the central question of our theology and spirituality, the wisdom of the Cross and the meaning of the Pauline phrase: one God (the Father) and one Mediator of all the man-God Jesus, sole Redeemer (cf. I Tim. 2, 5-6). Is the famous dictum *Christus solus Redemptor* based on this passage of St. Paul exclusive or inclusive of Mary?

This is in the final analysis what the debate over the title Co-redemptrix is about and why it is the central debate of contemporary theology – as indeed it was clearly that on the eve of Vatican II. Those tending to accent the importance of Marian devotion in the life of the Church and of its members, indeed of all men, were known as “christotypologists”, viz., those who stressed the uniqueness of Mary in pertaining to “the order of the hypostatic union” and so her unique place in the Church as “pre-eminent” member of the Church; whereas those who tended to downplay such devotion and not differentiate it specifically from the veneration or *dulia* paid the other saints and from their intercessory role were known as “ecclesiotypologists”.

The first group insisted on the active, though subordinate role of the Virgin in the great sacrificial act whereby the Redeemer effected our ransom. The second group would not

concede to Mary on Calvary more than a mere “passive” exemplarity vis-à-vis the Church. As in every other great Christological controversy of the past two millennia the resolution of the Marian issue determines how in theory and practice the Christological issue is resolved.

And in the past, without exception, affirming the Marian not only as close to but as inseparable from the core of Christian theology: no Christ without Mary, no Christian theology without also being Marian theology, has been the condition for a maximal recognition of the NAME; denying that has been the prelude to banalizing the NAME. *A priori* we may logically expect in virtue of this principle Card. Newman formulated so concisely (cf. the sermon entitled “The Glories of Mary for the Sake of Her Son” in Discourse to Mixed Congregations (London 1899) pp. 342-359) that the “christotypical” approach to the question of the Co-redemption rather than the ecclesiotypical is the one calculated to give the maximal glory to the NAME of Redeemer, and that such glory will be given by every tongue by merging with Mary’s: *Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo Salvatori meo* (or *salutari meo*). This is what the NAME Jesus means as translated by St. Jerome – God is my Saviour (or my Salvation). Only by venerating Mary under the title COREDEMPTRESS can we harmonize our praise of the Saviour for the redemption which He has wrought for us.

Dogmatic definitions do indeed impact on theology and theologians, but they do so because first of all they are doxological acts of the entire Church, acts which have always involved the Mother of the Church, *Mater et Magistra Apostolorum* (St. Bonaventure).

Now it is true that Vatican II did not choose to employ the title Co-redemptress, and only sparingly used that of Mediatrix. But neither did the Council forbid their use as critics of the proposed definition never cease to repeat. The Council for pastoral reasons abstained from deciding the doctrinal question then debated and still debated. But the Council did not forbid the study of this question, indeed the Church encourages such study. And any fair reading of chapter 8 of Lumen Gentium indicates that promotion of those titles matches exactly the thrust both of tradition and of Vatican II.

Another way of formulating the central issue of modern theology is this: joint predestination of Jesus and Mary as the centrepiece of the economy of salvation, or Christ alone. The genius of Luther, apart from whether one likes or dislikes him, agrees or disagrees with him, was to have formulated the question in that way: a spirituality whose primary mode is either Marian or not, a theology of the cross whose primary mode is defined with or without the Co-redemptress. Luther unfortunately chose the “without Co-redemptress” option, despite himself thereby underscoring the Marian dimension of “our theology” (Bl. John Duns Scotus) and every major theological question to be the key to its resolution.

The Catholic reply has always been: by the eternal counsels of God the “Christ alone” includes Mary without confusion of persons, indeed as a means to identifying and worshiping her Son as God and Saviour. For her inclusion thus is the divinely appointed instrument of His Incarnation, of His redemptive work and of its application. Whence Marian devotion, as St. Bonaventure insists in commenting the purification-presentation of

Jesus and Mary, is the primary, fundamental, distinctive feature of all Christian life, thought, sanctity, joy. It is not possible in virtue of the only divine salvific dispensation to be Christ-like without being Mary-like (Paul VI, at the sanctuary of Bonaria in Sardinia, 1970), for the simple reason that God became like us in becoming like Mary, viz., her Son.

Extensive research, in the past and currently, has amply demonstrated that the doctrine now known in theology as the co-redemption is no mere theological opinion, whose content at least has been explicitly asserted by the Magisterium, on occasion with the use of this title as with Pope Pius XI and Pope John Paul II. Hence there can be no question of its truth, only of the opportuneness of a definition, either because of insufficiently precise articulation, and/or because the best moment for such a definition to be maximally beneficial for the Church and the salvation of souls has not arrived.

In the light of this the major objections to the doctrine: whether these are taken to refer to its truth or to the opportuneness of its dogmatic definition, take on quite a different colour. Rather than demonstrate the promoters of the definition to be "maximalists", they serve quite effectively to rivet attention on the central place of the mystery of Mary at the foot of the cross and aside the altar in the life and thought of the Church.

The objections are many, but in great part reducible to three types or categories. The first might be dubbed the generic, in the sense that support of a definition of the co-redemption rests on a concept of theology rendered obsolete by Vatican II. But how could such an assumption tirelessly repeated by the critics be true? It would invalidate Vatican II. And the complementary proposition, that Vatican II in launching a "new style" in theology "more biblically, ecumenically, pastorally sensitive" forbade the use of terminology and methods characteristic of the pre-Conciliar Mariology and indispensable to a defence of the co-redemptive thesis, appears nowhere in the documents of Vatican II. The "pre-Conciliar" Mariology was not "unbiblical, anti-ecumenical, pastorally insensitive". Dogmatic Mariology as traditionally practiced in the Church, nowhere more so than when focusing on the co-redemption, is the only kind of theology which can aspire to being profoundly biblical, ecumenical and pastorally sensitive.

The second type of objection might be dubbed the ecumenical because the objectors claim co-redemption poses an insurmountable obstacle to ecumenism to which the Church is now committed. Objections of this type from non-Catholics are made to demonstrate the impossibility of the doctrine; by Catholics to prove why a definition is inopportune. One version of the objection will claim that affirming the co-redemption detracts from the unique, distinctive role of Jesus as Redeemer. The simplest, most telling exposure of what is wrong with the argument is to retort it: if this is so, then the title Mother of God is even more a detraction. The fact is the affirmation of the divine, virginal Maternity affirms and reveals the distinct divine person of the Child of Mary. The affirmation of the maternal Co-redemption affirms and reveals the distinct character of her Child's redemptive work.

The other version touches on the pneumatological. To proclaim Mary as Co-redemptrix is to put her in the place of the Holy Spirit. In reply: not to proclaim Mary as Co-redemptrix is to revive the old Joachimism, to divorce in practice the mission of the Holy Spirit from that of the Son, the canonical or institutional aspects of the Church from the charismatic, and in

the end to permit the evil spirit to occupy the place of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation. Both theoretically and practically resolution of key issues touching the bases of a Christian spirituality revolves about the relation of the Virgin to the Holy Spirit: is she in the words of St. Francis Spouse of the Holy Spirit and therefore Mother of God? Is she in the words of St. Maximilian the created Immaculate Conception because the Holy Spirit is the uncreated Immaculate Conception, therefore Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix of all graces?

The traditional Catholic affirmative in response to such questions helps us to deal with the third type of objection: cultural irrelevance of the traditional approach in Mariology which converges on the mystery of the Co-redemption today. It is just this affirmative which enables us to grasp the mythical character of the generation gap and cultural gulf. No such gap-gulf exists requiring a radical departure from the traditional dogmatic Mariology, precisely and above all because of the IMMACULATE WOMAN of Genesis 3: 15, who is the Virgin Mother and victorious Co-redemptrix.

The third International Symposium on Marian Co-redemption was held at Downside Abbey, August 20-26, 2002. The conferences presented at the first two symposia, both held in England, in 2000 and 2001, have been published in two volumes: *Mary at the Foot of the Cross* (New Bedford, MA, Academy of the Immaculate). For those who participated in the past symposia, these volumes will provide ample illustration of how the doctrine can be studied in depth and presented in a way at once traditional and contemporary, while taking account of the various cultural dimensions of this mystery touching the very centre of a theology and spirituality of the cross.

PART IV ~ A MARIAN DOGMA AND ECUMENISM

By Rev. Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp.

Fr. O'Carroll has written widely on theological and ecumenical topics and is an internationally known Mariologist. He is a member of the Pontifical Marian Academy, the French Society for Marian Studies, and an Associate of the Bollandistes.

If one extends the scope of this title to take in the world religions we get a theological panorama truly worthy of the one whose destiny concerns us. Let us begin with a brief survey of personalities. Because Catholic doctrine and devotion centred on Our Lady are known to cause problems for our separated brethren in the West, one would expect Catholics committed to ecumenism to show a faint or muted interest in Marian theology, and to avoid altogether such ideas as Mary's mediation. With some highly committed and gifted individuals it has been the exact opposite.

The first important ecumenical initiative since the Reformation was the Malines conversations between Lord Halifax and Cardinal Mercier. They ended in an official vacuum, but they remain exemplary. Mercier was the one who launched a campaign to obtain a dogmatic definition of Mary's universal mediation: he did secure a Mass and Office with this title and the establishment of three commissions to study the matter. His successor in the See of Malines-Brussels, Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens, was in his mould. In two works, *The Theology of the Apostolate and Mary, Mother of God*, he defended the doctrine of mediation; he was a principal support to the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed

Virgin Mary, as of the Charismatic Renewal Movement. His great moment was at Pentecost, 1975; he was patron to the International Charismatic Congress and Papal Legate to the International Marian Congress running concurrently.

Frank Duff, founder of the Legion of Mary, whose prayer is directed to Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces, was one of those who initiated the first inter-faith society in Ireland since the Reformation, named The Mercier Society. Despite a prestigious membership, enthusiasm and erudition abounding, it was suppressed. When the Archbishop of Dublin sought instruction from the Holy Office he was told that one condition would have to be that the Protestants should not be allowed to defend their opinions. Society members were without bitterness then and triumphalism later when Vatican II fully endorsed the project. Friendships remained, for me among many, that with Bishop Richard Hanson, one of the greatest of recent patrologists, whose opus magnum, *The Search for the Christian God*, published after his death, was dedicated to a French Jesuit, Fr. Crouzel. To the names of the Catholic Marian and ecumenical specialists, should be added that of a great Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg, Marius Besson. His beautiful book on Our Lady had been preceded by two ecumenical works, which have been shamefully neglected, *La Route Aplanie* and *Après Quatre Cents Ans*. He was the first bishop in Europe who ordered use of the words "*nos frères séparés*" in regard to Protestants. Looking beyond the Catholic communion, one should consider Sergius Bulgakov, ornament of the St. Serge Institute in Paris; of him we shall discuss later.

To address the main subject of this paper let us draw attention first to the materials available. Fr. Karl Balic, O.F.M., trained in scholarly research, as his edition of the works of Duns Scotus shows, first President of the Pontifical Marian Academy, edited before the Second Vatican Council, a massive work on Mariology and Ecumenism. It is invaluable. With it one should consult the reports of the round table conferences, which marked the meetings of the International Mariological Congresses from Zagreb to Huelva (1971-1992). The excellent Claretian review, *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, brought out in 1992 a special issue on Mariology in Ecumenical Dialogue.

Let us begin with the Orthodox. There are two interesting references to Mary's mediation. The Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, on whose life and writings I am preparing a book, with his authorization, paid an official visit to the French hierarchy assembled in Lourdes. In the sermon on Our Lady, which he preached, he spoke of her mediation, as between us and the perfect mediation of Christ. The second reference pertains to an account of the apparitions of Our Lady at Zeitoun in Egypt, which were evaluated by the Coptic Patriarch. In the booklet relating the happenings, issued with his approval, is found a reference to our Lady's mediation. No inhibition here, as it was taken for granted.

This is true to a great tradition. There are those in the West who think that the exponents of Our Lady's mediation have been St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort and St. Alphonsus de Ligouri, with little thought of the Oriental Churches. From these the evidence is clear, overwhelming. Thanks to the work of the late, regretted John Meyendorff, we have been enlightened on the teaching of St. Gregory Palamas (d. 1359) and the others of his time who are generally characterized as the Palamite theologians. Some quotation from Gregory is apposite. He saw Mary as central, with her divine Son, in the whole of creation:

Mary is the cause of what had gone before her, the pioneer of what has come after her; she distributes eternal goods; she is the thought of the prophets, the head of the Apostles, the support of martyrs, the certainty of doctors. She is the glory of earth, the joy of heaven, the ornament of all creation. She is the principle, the source and the root of ineffable good things. She is the summit and the fulfilment of all that is holy.

Gregory's idea of Mary's mediation is not open to doubt or question. It is implicit in his theory of her destiny, her place in creation. It is made explicit:

No divine gifts can reach either angels or men, save through her mediation. As one cannot enjoy the light of a lamp... save through the medium of this lamp, so every movement towards God, every impulse towards good coming from him, is unrealisable save through the mediation of the Virgin. She does not cease to spread benefits on all creatures, not only on us men, but on the celestial, incorporeal ranks.

Let us look at the other members of the Palamite quartet. Isidore Glabas (d.c. 1397) carried Byzantine praise of Mary to its loftiest peak—beyond the permissible limit, his critics would say. For him Mary was at the centre of the universe. He thought that all that was and is and will be came into being because of her. With his daring exaltation of her went naturally an affirmation of her important role in our salvation: "And truly the Virgin, without doubt was for all a cause of restoration to a better state." Because of her, God freed the human race from the sentence of condemnation, and man reached the likeness of God. Through her our regeneration is accomplished. No one approaches the Father save by the new Offspring; no one approaches him save through his Mother.

The Mariology of Nicholas Cabasilas (b.c. 1320, d.c. 1396) is known to us since the great Orientalist, Martin Jugie, A.A., published his relevant homilies in 1926; he has been esteemed as a theologian of the Eucharist. He assumed the central tenets of the Palamites: all creation is centred on the Incarnation. Mary he thought of as the "saint of saints" and said, "she opened the door of holiness to others, being excellently prepared to receive the Saviour." His comment of the Annunciation is very forceful:

The incarnation of the Word was not only the work of the Father, of his power and of his Spirit, but was also the work of the will and faith of the Virgin; without the consent of the Immaculate One, without the contribution of her faith, this was as unrealisable as without the intervention of three divine Persons themselves.

Eve, Cabasilas thought, helped Adam, but Mary helped God. She was his most suitable co-operator. "Being assumed as a helper, not simply to contribute something as one of those moved by another, but that she should give herself and become the fellow-worker (sunergos) of God in providing for the human race, so that with him she should be an associate and sharer in the glory which would come from it." He makes it clear that the partnership should be "in all the sufferings and affliction. He, bound on the Cross, received the lance in his side; the sword, as divinely inspired Simeon foretold, pierced her heart."

Cabasilas says that Mary was our Advocate with God before the Paraclete came. He ends the third homily with an epilogue, which glorifies her as salvation of men, light of the world, way to the Redeemer, co-cause with Christ, the cause of our sanctification.

We now come to the greatest of the Palamites in regard to Our Lady's mediation, Theophanes of Nicaea (d. 1381). Fr. Martin Jugie, who introduced him to the scholarly world by publishing his *Sermo in Sanctissimam Deiparam*, thought him the greatest exponent of Mary's mediation. He distinguishes two moments in creation, being in itself and well-being. The second, to which the first is designed, is achieved through divinisation and of this the source is the Incarnation. Through the divine motherhood Mary is intrinsically bound with the entire reality. The first receptacle of the divine fullness is the assumed nature of the Saviour, all the fullness of the divinity. "But the living tabernacle which brought him forth is acknowledged as the second receptacle, that is, receiving immediately from the first receptacle, the assumed nature of the Saviour, all the fullness of divinity."

Mary's mediation thus rooted in the order of things is universal. "It cannot happen that anyone, of angels or of men, may come otherwise, in any way whatsoever, to participation in the divine gifts flowing from what has been divinely assumed, from the Son of God, save through his Mother." Theophanes emphasizes the Trinitarian perspective, studying Mary in relation to each of the divine Persons: with the Father, whose mirror image and all-fair Spouse she is, she is linked by their common Son. While repeating that Mary and her divine Son each retain their identity, Theophanes elaborates powerfully the astonishing union between them, closer than any association described by western authors.

Born of sterile parents she was "from the origin of her existence united to the Spirit, the author of life...participation in the Spirit was for her participation in being and her conception was the image and type of the conception of her Son."

Theophanes surprisingly uses an image found in the West—Mary as the neck of the Mystical Body of Christ. "Since then," he writes, "the Head of every principality and power and of our Church is the only way that leads to the Father, so that sacred neck is the only way leading to the Head of all." As the fountain, the beginning of life "she receives wholly the hidden grace of the Spirit and amply distributes it and shares it with others, thus manifesting it." All things were created for her and are governed through her. No one attains the fullness and goal of life in Christ "without her cooperation or without the Spirit's help."

Theophanes links the doctrine with that of the spiritual motherhood:

The Mother of him who through his unspeakable goodness willed to be called our brother is the dispenser and distributor of all the wondrous gifts of the divine Spirit, which make us Christ's brother and co-heirs, not only because she is granting the gifts of her natural Son to his brothers in grace, but also because she is bestowing them on these as her own true sons, though not by ties of nature but of grace.

Germanus in the East before him, Bernard, Bernardine or Grignon de Montfort in the West, have not been anymore explicit than this on Mary's universal mediation. Political

vicissitudes would affect continuity of doctrine in the Orthodox East. In the fifteenth century, however, one name stood out, that of George Scholarios (d. after 1472), a student of western theologians, involved in the conciliar search for unity. On the question of Mary's mediation we may quote such words as these:

How should you not be blessed, you who not only completely escaped the iniquities of the first curse, but will deliver others from these iniquities.... And as the same of the curse taking its origin from a woman brought ruin to human nature, in the same way now through you the treasure of blessing will be shared with others and you will become the seed of a new life and the beginning of men truly worthy of the name.

Scholarios says "she cooperated with God in giving us eternal life, filling the role of an appropriate instrument."

What of modern Orthodox teaching? Officially things hardened in regard to the dogmas, especially of the Immaculate Conception; about the Assumption, mostly supported by eastern testimonies from the early centuries, there was dissatisfaction with the refusal to affirm the death of Our Lady, as well as a certain irritation at Catholic dogmatic pronouncements.

To find Orthodox theologians committed to Marian theology one should look at the teachers of the St. Serge Institute in Paris. Let us briefly look to a giant among them, Sergius Bulgakov (d. 1944) and take note of an Orthodox theologian in Romania. It is important to note that liturgical and personal prayer to the Theotokos have never waned, do not depend on systematic theology, nor does one have to recall the immense role of the Icons.

Bulgakov linked his theology of Mary with his sophiological outlook and sees with it her special relationship with the Holy Spirit:

The Annunciation was a complete and therefore hypostatic descent of the Holy Spirit and his entry to the Virgin Mary...By his coming into the Virgin Mary the Holy Spirit identifies himself in a way with her through her God-motherhood...He does not at all leave her after the birth of Christ, but remains forever with her in the full force of the Annunciation.

In one work he is almost carried away and thinks that the limits of the creature are passed in the deification of Mary; her life of grace is the hypostatic life of the Holy Spirit. In *The Wisdom of God* however, he rejects the idea of an incarnation of the Holy Spirit and says: "He abides, however, in the ever-Virgin Mary as in a holy temple, while her human personality seems to become transparent to him and to provide him with a human countenance."

The Russian expatriate sees Mary as our Mediatrix: "Living in heaven in a state of glory the Virgin remains the Mother of the human race for which she prays and intercedes. She covers the world with her veil, praying, weeping for the sins of the world; at the Last Judgment she will intercede before her Son and ask pardon from him." All this derives its value "from her Fiat, repeated on Calvary and from her unique relationship with the Spirit."

A committed ecumenist, member of Faith and Order, Bulgakov insisted on the importance of thinking on Our Lady.

Protestantism differs in almost equal measure from both Orthodoxy and Catholicism. Love and veneration for the Virgin is the soul of Orthodox piety, its heart, that which warms and animates its entire body. A faith in Christ which does not include his virgin birth and the veneration of his Mother is another faith from that of the Orthodox Church.

He saw the Old Testament as a preparation for "a holy humanity worthy to receive the Holy Spirit, that is worthy of the Annunciation in the person of the Virgin."

A little more recently than Bulgakov a nonagenarian Romanian theologian, Professor D. Staniloae expounded the mediation of Our Lady, giving her also the title Praying One. We are faced in the Orthodox world with a dislike of dogmatic statements, a large question which we can scarcely deal with here.

With the massive Orthodox testimony which I have briefly reviewed, it is deeply regrettable that the drafting commission of Chapter VIII, *Lumen Gentium* ignored it. When the great Orientalist, Antoine Wenger, A.A., submitted a memo on the importance of the mediation in the Eastern Church, he was "called to moderation" by the secretary, Ch. Moeller. All this is doubly regrettable since the rapprochement with Rome was initiated by Athenagoras and continued by his successors, Dimitrios and Bartholomaios, in the ecumenical patriarchate. We are sister Churches since the lifting of the excommunication and anathemas in 1965; John Paul II is making gigantic effort to achieve unity, hoping that in the third millennium the Church (he uses the singular) will breathe with its two lungs.

Ecumenism must also take account of the Christians in the West separated from us since the sixteenth century. What is the hope of a sympathetic reception from their official and theological representatives for a dogma on Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate? I speak from long experience of dialogue with Protestants, as well from Protestant family relations. There are extremes to avoid. One is doctrinal compromise. This was responsible for the regrettable silence of Vatican II on St. Joseph; though not strictly relevant to many problems on the conciliar agenda—the theology of work, the dignity of marriage, the call to holiness, the Church and the Jews and especially the vocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Under the influence of some periti the great Saint was ignored. In the 100,000 words of conciliar documents his name occurs once, in a quotation from the Roman Canon, Eucharistic Prayer I.

Were Protestants impressed? Let us look to two not insignificant sources. Karl Barth was asked did he have the same reservations about St. Joseph as about Our Lady. "Not at all" he replied; "I love St. Joseph. I rejoiced when John XIII inserted his name in the Roman Canon. I intend to ask Paul VI to give him prominence," and then a memorable word, "He protected the Child; he will protect the Church." More radically direct was the very sharp criticism of the Marian text by J.J. von Almen of Neuchatel University, Pastor of the Swiss Reformed Church, who held that the Council had no right to eliminate St. Joseph. He was the guarantor before Israel of the messianic tradition and he is the model of male sanctity as is Our Lady of female holiness.

No, compromise does not win support. Yet this other extreme has to be avoided as well: a kind of ruthless disregard for the religious traditions and sensitivity of Protestants. This calls for patience, honesty and humility. Five Catholic theologians, including this author, were invited to investigate and report on doctrinal and devotional attitudes towards Our Lady in the different Christian communions in Ireland; we were to work with five ministers from the separated Churches. It was found that total honesty was possible with increasing trust and friendship. Invocation of Mary, based on the assumption of her intercession was the difficulty, as was the *Unus Mediator* text. This difficulty also occurred in the round-table meetings at the International Mariological Congresses.

What can be done? Emphasis must be given to the teaching of Vatican II which in dealing with Mary's mediation insists on its inner harmony with that of Christ: "the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise among creatures to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this unique source."

Much of the polemics in regard to biblical Marian texts is conditioned by a) a lack of a sense of mystery which leads to ultra-literal interpretation, and b) a legalistic tendency towards limitation, rigid categories. The phrase "*Per Mariam ad Jesum*" is feared by some as if Mary were an intruder, an obstacle on the way to Jesus.

The Orientals have been free from these restrictions. They do not interpret the work of salvation in a legalistic sense, but insist on divinisation as its core. One would hope that in the years ahead the influence of the Orthodox would be felt in the separated communions of the West. It would benefit all of us for two reasons. The Orthodox have remained steadfast in their traditions and they are profoundly attentive to the Holy Spirit. One notices that in Orthodox sanctuaries there has not been the ejection of the icons, as we have witnessed in regard to images and statues of Our Lady in Catholic churches.

Secondly, we should hope that the Orthodox would stimulate still more profound awareness of the Holy Spirit and greater fidelity to his inspiration and impulse. Notice how as by instinct Theophanes linked Mary's mediation with the Holy Spirit, how Sergius Bulgakov sought to probe the mystery of the Spirit and Mary. As the fourth session of Vatican II was approaching, a Greek theologian, Nikos Nissiotis, issued a challenge to the assembly. In a resounding article he said in summary: if you do not teach more about the Holy Spirit, your documents will have little or no impact in the Orthodox world. Attempts were made in the fourth session to remedy things, but after the Council Paul VI appealed to preachers and theologians to add a theology of the Holy Spirit to the theology of the Church and theology of Our Lady as elaborated by Vatican II.

At the International Mariological Congress in Huelva in 1992 Fr. Ignace de la Potterie, S.J. said that the Catholic Church had gone through a "decade without Mary," a touch of hyperbole, he most likely would admit. It is reasonable to assume he was thinking of the lean years from the end of the Council to *Marialis Cultus* from Paul VI, 1974. But in that decade the search for enlightened devotion to the Holy Spirit was afoot. What could have been expected happened. Entry into the mystery of the Holy Spirit confronts us with

mystery of Mary. Were this author asked to suggest a theme from which this congress would move forward, it would be the theme of the Holy Spirit.

Let us delay on this proposal. We are on the threshold of a mighty manifestation of the Spirit of God. Theology is being renewed and the devotional life of the faithful deepened under his inspiration and influence. It is not necessary here to enter into details about the Charismatic Renewal Movement, nor to survey the numerous apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary currently reported, some of them already evaluated favourably. They are not evidence that Our Lady is taking over the Church; they are essentially evidence of charisms bestowed by the Spirit. Note that the one who, in the wake of Vatican II, emphatically teaches the doctrine of charisms, insisting that they are especially found among the laity in our time, is John Paul II; this he has done in *Christifideles Laici* and in several public discourses, on one occasion urging acceptance of these "special graces" among members of the other Christian churches. It is a fact that John Paul is, in teaching and practice, a Pope of the Holy Spirit. He has published more on the Third Divine Person than all his predecessors taken together. A revealing fact pertinent to the dogma in relation to ecumenism is this: Pius XI's Encyclical, *Mortalium Animos*, 1928, on this subject has not one single reference to the Holy Spirit; John Paul II's *Ut Unum Sint*, speaks of the Holy Spirit twenty one times.

The present Pope has also fully espoused the interpretation of the life and mission of Jesus Christ as a masterpiece of the Spirit: what Cardinal Congar once said. "There is no Christology without pneumatology; no pneumatology without Christology." The "Forgotten Paraclete" spoken of by Mgr. Landrieux in 1921, was forgotten even in the theology of Jesus Christ. We fortunately are enlightened.

We should also be enlightened in regard to Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate by penetrating the meaning of each in the light of the Holy Spirit. I would hope that this would help to break down barriers between us and the Churches of the Reformation. It would help to dissolve a mind-set; it would lift the whole problem out of a polemical hardened enclosure, focusing attention on God, and possibly satisfying the Protestant demand, *Deus solus, Christus solus, Fides sola*. Nor must it be forgotten that change does occur. Hans Asmussen was one of the few Protestant theologians to write on Our Lady (with Max Thurian and Neville Ward among a few others). He expressed his readiness to accept Mary's mediation "in Christ." The great patrologist, Richard Hanson, gave a rather conservative Protestant lecture at the International Congress of the ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Dublin, 1984. He was received with the utmost courtesy and sensitivity, and leaving the Hall he said to me, "You've given me food for thought." This he put in writing later.

In dealing with the separated Churches of the Reformation we should not neglect history. Not many people know that Luther wrote a book on the Magnificat that the Caroline divines kept Marian ideas alive during the seventeenth century. Finally it is important to conduct dialogue on the interpretation of Sacred Scripture, along the lines for example of the joint work, *Mary in the New Testament*, the work of American biblical scholars.

The idea of co-redemption does not occur explicitly in Orthodox writing, still less so in Anglican or Lutheran theology. It is widely known that the big task is to convince Anglicans, Lutherans, Calvinists, and some Orthodox, that we do not mean equality by the prefix, "Co.". It has been this author's experience in pastoral work with Anglicans, that it is difficult to convince them that honour to Mary does not take something from Jesus. Most Protestants also do not accept the idea of consecration to Our Lady.

It would be well to enlarge the perspective of this paper to include the world religions. Vatican II gave us an example in this matter. It is fair to say that before the meetings in Rome no one would have foreseen the Declaration on the Church and the World Religions, nor on the sequel, the Pontifical Council headed by Cardinal Arinze. Allow me to offer some suggestions as the subject is vast and yet of prime importance. Our efforts to secure official recognition for Mary's titles of Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate should not isolate us, in a kind of narrow theological ghetto apart from the genuine religious intuitions and trends throughout the world.

Let us begin with the most obvious call, that of the Jewish people. We are living through an unusual experience in the world of Catholic scholarship. We have discovered after two thousand years the most obvious thing about Jesus Christ: he was a Jew. At the inaugural address some years ago the American Catholic Biblical Association spoke of the Jewishness of Jesus as a challenge. There is a growing literature on the subject. But if we can now write, as I have done, "God became a Jew," how shall we interpret the life story and destiny of his Mother in strictly Jewish terms? It must have a relevance, even to this subject matter.

Then there is Islam. It may or may not be known that there are many exciting things in the sacred book, the Koran, on Mary. Vatican II stated that the Muslims "honour, the Virgin Mother of Jesus and at times they call on her with devotion." It may be known that a sentence in the Koran taken with a famous Hadith seems to imply the Immaculate Conception: "Every newly-born son of Adam is touched by Satan, save the Son of Mary and his Mother." This continues to be open to further research.

Those who wish to pursue the theme of Mary in comparative religion have an excellent guide in Jean (later Cardinal) Danielou's study, which appeared in the first volume of Hubert du Manoir's encyclopaedic work, *Maria*. He deals with a delicate subject: to what extent the cult of mother-goddesses prepared the way for Mary's sublime role. It is certain that the most meaningful title of Mary, *Theotokos*, originated in Egypt. And here Christian thinking and verbal composition was influenced by the existence of the title Mother of God for Isis in regard to Orus; the adaptation was possibly first made in Coptic. The differences between Mary and Isis were well clarified: she was the "the handmaid of the Lord," the chaste Virgin whose Son was true God and true man, whereas Isis was seen as a goddess, one who conceived her Son in passion, entirely removed from the mysterious destiny of the Incarnation.

This certainly represents a light sketching of subjects, which demand a vast canvas. I do want to suggest strongly that we must open out the perspective in which we contemplate the Marian dogma; we must give it cosmic dimensions to show the validity of the words "all graces" and the relevance of the Council's statement: "She was exalted by the Lord as

Queen of all, in order that she might be more thoroughly conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords (cf. Apoc 19:16), and the conqueror of sin and death."

In facing honestly the ecumenical situation I would like to say that I retain strong hope for this very reason. It was St. Augustine who first used the title "Mother of Unity" (Mater Unitatis) in regard to Our Lady. There are signs of change in the separated churches of the West; in a church in a Scandinavian country, probably for the first time, a statue of Our Lady was set in place. Walsingham, the English shrine of Our Lady is ecumenical in character. Feminism of the authentic type will orient thought towards the model of female greatness and virtue. It was a nineteenth-century rationalist, W.E. Lecky, who saw Our Lady as the one who significantly moulded medieval culture in its greatest moment. One of the two most beautiful pieces of sculpture in London is "The Mother and Child," in Cavendish Square, work of the Jewish sculptor, Jacob Epstein. Fr. Rene Laurentin has published, years after the war, the magnificent tribute to the Mother of God composed in a prison camp for Catholic priests by Jean Paul Sartre, known as an atheist, Sartre allowed the publication. I have utter confidence that the "Woman adorned with the Sun" will manifest her dignity and especially her power to our friends in the other communions.

PART V ~ AN ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE OF OUR LADY

By Dr. Alexander Roman.

There are two sides to this matter. One is the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the other is the way in which it impacts the veneration of the Mother of God in the Church. The Immaculate Conception is a Roman Catholic dogma that was proclaimed in the nineteenth century by the Pope of Rome. It states that, from the moment of Her Conception in the womb of St. Anne, the Mother of God was preserved free of the "stain of Original Sin." The Orthodox Catholic Church of the East does not hold this doctrine.

This does not mean that the Orthodox East believes that the Mother of God, who was chosen by God to give Flesh to His Son and our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, was, at any time, somehow stained by sin. No, not at all!

The difference between the Roman and Orthodox Churches on the subject of the Immaculate Conception relates to their differences on the issue of Original Sin.

The Roman West, following Blessed Augustine of Hippo, came to the conclusion that original sin is the actual sin of Adam that is transmitted to all humanity. This means that when you and I were conceived, we had Adam's sin on our souls. The Orthodox Church of the East and of the West, North and South teaches that Adam's sin is not transmitted to us, but the CONSEQUENCES of that sin i.e. death and a morally weakened human nature etc. Also, how may other people share in a sin that I commit and am personally responsible for?

Until the pope decided the matter in the nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic church was divided into two theological camps on the issue of original sin and the Mother of God. Thomas Aquinas and others were against the Immaculate Conception of our Lady which meant that Christ did not allow His Mother to be tainted with any sin, including the sin of Adam. Others were in favour of the Immaculate Conception, especially as set out by the Roman theologian John Duns Scotus Eriugena, and spread veneration to it. As we saw, the Immaculate Conception developed as a theological and devotional need in Roman Catholics who believed it to be inconceivable that the Mother of God could be said to ever have been in sin.

The same need did not exist in the Orthodox Church due to its different theology of Original Sin as we have seen. It is clear from the great liturgical heritage of the Orthodox Church that the Most Holy Mother of God has always been given the highest possible veneration owing to Her position in our salvation. In other words, unlike in the Roman Catholic church where the view that She had Adam's sin on Her Soul was allowed until recently, the Orthodox Church lauds Her as "Most Immaculate" and "Ever-Immaculate."

The Nativity or Birth of our Lady is celebrated by the Orthodox Church which means that She was born full of the Holy Spirit and great Divine Grace as only feast days of Saints are allowed to be observed. Our tradition has also says that John the Baptist was filled with the Grace of the Holy Spirit while in the womb of his mother and so His Nativity is also celebrated.

The Orthodox Church's devotion to the Most Holy Mother of God is second to none! The liturgical offices are of extreme beauty, the *akathists*, canons and prayers to our Lady are superb and magnificent. There are literally hundreds of Miraculous Icons of our Lady, as you know from your own Greek tradition: *Tinos*, *Koukouzelissa*, *Portaitissa*, etc., each of which has its feasts and offices. The recitation of the Hail Mary on our prayer ropes is also a tradition in Orthodoxy as it is in the West.

You have come into contact with some western religious literature and I don't believe there is anything wrong with that. You should know that Our Lady of Lourdes has long been venerated by Russian Orthodox people in France, that there is an Orthodox Icon of Our Lady of Fatima and that the saints you mention are popular as private devotions in the homes of some Orthodox.

I think you should guard against any proselytistic tendencies that sometimes appear in that literature. For example, the Fatima devotion is used by Roman Catholics who believe Our Lady's prophecies about revivifying Christianity in Russia is about bringing the Orthodox to Rome.

As an Orthodox Christian, you can show the western people the high beauty and holiness of the Orthodox Church's rich devotional treasury of veneration for the Mother of God, summed up by that beautiful prayer in the Divine Liturgy following the Epiclesis: "Especially for the Most Holy, Most Pure, Most Blessed, our Glorious Lady the *Theotokos* and Ever-Virgin Mary!" We need to grow and develop in our liturgical spirituality and prayer and deepening our devotion to our Lady in this way is an excellent way of doing this. The Orthodox Church prays more frequently to the Mother of God, with more beautiful and theologically sound devotions than in the West.

Even the current Pope of Rome, John Paul II is recommending to Roman Catholics the *Akathist* hymn and other Eastern liturgical prayers. Let's remember that the Pope's favourite Icon, Our Lady of Czestochowa, is a Ukrainian Icon in the Byzantine style taken to Poland by Vladislav Opolski from Western Ukraine. It is said to have been written by St. Luke himself.

The Virgin and Child on it are black and many people wonder why this is so. The East has a wonderful theology of Our Lady being the "Mother of Light" as we find in the Matins service. To show this iconographically, some Icons of the Mother of God present Her with dark skin. When we place an object in front of the sun, it becomes black and this is the artistic reasoning behind this style honouring the "Mother of Light." So, you see what a highly mystical theology of the Mother of God the Orthodox Church has. May She keep you under Her Protective Mantle always!

PART VI ~ THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Fr. Angelo Nicolaides ©

Rev Angelo Nicolaides, a Greek Cypriot South African presbyter, holds three doctorates from South African Universities in Philosophy, Theology and International Relations. He currently lectures at Witwatersrand Technikon in Johannesburg. He is the author of two recent books, Issues of Faith in Orthodoxy and Devotions for Orthodox Christians.

Abstract:

The Christian world is currently divided, as it has been since the institution of the Church, on the issue of women serving in the Church and the extent to which they should serve. Certain denominations allow the ordination of women while others, relying on Holy Tradition, are resolute in their stance that only men should be ordained into the ministry. This article attempts to provide insights into, and is an exposition and analysis of what the Eastern Orthodox Church has to say on this somewhat delicate subject and what the image of women was in the Early Church.

Priesthood is an area which was previously the domain of only men. It is now an area of "equal opportunity" in many Christian Churches. The Eastern Orthodox Church or *Ekklesia* however, remains resolute in its stance on the issue of priesthood and allows only males to become ordained as per its interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and Holy Traditions. The Holy Scriptures which were Divinely inspired writings and Holy Tradition which was an oral transmission of Divine Truth, are for the adherents of Eastern Orthodoxy and the *Ekklesia*, nothing less than the Revelation of the Triune Godhead.

The *Ekklesia* is an institution which is "Catholic" in that it is universal and promotes unity and freedom. It is an instrument of God's which helps to control, direct and purify mankind. The Orthodox Church is a conservative *Ekklesia* and yet offers her adherents enormous freedom which is embedded in the Holy Scriptures and Holy Tradition which serve as her guides. She is guided by the Paraclete or Holy Spirit. She has a definite outlook on life and clearly understands the interdependence of men and women whose relations with the Triune Godhead can never be seen in isolation from their relationships in society (Zernov 1947: 68-70). The *Ekklesia* embodies Divine Sofia or wisdom and is the conscience of her adherents. Men and women are embraced equally by her, but it is only men who may become ordained as priests. Why is this so given that women were also deaconesses for a couple of centuries?

The Apostles who were endowed with the *charis* (Gifts) of the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete (Comforter), were able to continue the redemptive work of Jesus Christ through their priesthood which they obtained from Him. Jesus led them to "glory" (Hebrews 2 :10) and they became "the fathers in Christ Jesus through the Gospel" (1 Corinthians 4: 14-15) of all those who received their teachings. They established the early communities of the Church and spoke with authority which was God-given. Paul explains that the Apostles are the spiritual fathers of all believers. The Apostles were unable to deal with everything in their lives and thus entrusted many of their pastoral duties to *Presbyteroi* who acted on their behalf. These men were appointed by ordination and were responsible for worship and administration but gradually allowed women to help them in the latter regard.

The *Ekklesia* as it spread in the Greco-Roman world and indeed today, is a body made up of separate and unique individuals each of whom has a particular talent that can be utilized for the benefit of the entire ecclesiastical community irrespective of the race, nationality or socio-economic standing in society of its individual members.

No one person is considered to be superior to another or have a greater role or function to fulfil. In 1 Corinthians 12: 25, we see the reason for the *Ekklesia* : "*that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another*". Even Jesus Christ as the Head of the *Ekklesia* which is His body serves: "*I am among you as one who serves*" (Luke 22: 27). Every believer has to mould his/her life to conform with God's Word and must work out his/her "*own salvation with fear and trembling*" (Philippians 2: 12). God desires that mankind including both men and women must be saved and to this end: "*you are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Galatians 3: 28). Men and women have very distinct responsibilities within the *Ekklesia*. Contrary to what many believe, the woman's role and function is no less than the man's but it is clearly different. Men are called to lead worship according to Paul: "*I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling*" (1 Timothy 2: 8). Women on the other hand are ordered to keep silent and are not permitted to have authority over men or to teach (1 Timothy 2: 9 – 12). The *Ekklesia* has faithfully maintained this tradition in terms of priesthood and it is attested to in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. Christ clearly chose those whom He willed (Mark 3: 13 – 14; John 6:70). He did so in conjunction with the Paraclete and God the Father (Acts 1:2) after intense prayer (Luke 6:12). Male priests became intimately associated with the mission of Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Logos (Mark 16: 14 – 15). The Apostles also prayed before selecting and appointing their assistants (1 Timothy 3: 1 – 13; 2 Timothy 1: 6).

Consequently modern-day priests, as the successors of the Apostles, share in the priestly office and not women. No women were among the Twelve Apostles or amongst their successors. This was a contrast to what was occurring in other early religions however, where the idea of priestesses was not uncommon in the Levant. In Rome one would come into contact with the Vestal Virgins while in Delphi there was an oracle served by priestesses. In the early Church women were not denied priesthood because of sexism or chauvinism but by the plan of the Triune Godhead.

Divine priesthood is a "*functional imaging of the divine priesthood of God the Father through Jesus Christ*" (Voulgaris 1996: 35). It can thus only be imaged by man who is connected to the imaging of divine fatherhood. A woman's role differs in that she images functionally the role of the Paraclete who is the assistant of Jesus Christ in His work in the *Ekklesia*. Both men and women are considered in Orthodoxy, to be harmonious and mature persons with a sense of great personal responsibility. Each of the sexes has a deep gnosis or knowledge of their total dependence on the Triune Godhead for their salvation by the Grace of God the Father. Holy Scripture teaches us that Salvation is the task of the entire Triune Godhead. The Father wills that certain things happen. The Son fulfils the will of the Father and the will is then perfected in each individual believer by the Paraclete. This is the foundation upon which the teachings of the early Church were based concerning priesthood as a specifically masculine function. Men and women thus have distinct roles and functions within the

Church. There is expected to be synergy in what men and women do in the Church in the same way that Jesus Christ and the Paraclete co-operate.

In analysing this typological reference, it becomes clear that the *Theotokos* (Mother of God), because of her total commitment to God becomes the cause of the salvation of mankind. It was through the Theotokos that the Paraclete was able to creatively incarnate the Son of God. The Theotokos, of all the people ever born is the person closest to God as she became the Mother of the Incarnate Saviour of mankind. Jesus was able to become the "first" Adam again, and also the "last" Adam and thus made the salvation of mankind possible. Mary was thus "the Mother of all creation", a "second Eve who repaired the fault of the first woman"(Zernov 1947 : 60). Her special function in relation to the work of the Paraclete proved that she was indeed *kecharitomeni* (the most gifted of women) (Voulgaris 1996 : 34-36). The fact that the Theotokos was not a priestess shows that even if women are not ordained as priestesses this by no means suggests any sexism or chauvinism, neither are they to be construed as having lesser dignity than men.

Both the Church and the Virgin Mary the Theotokos receive the Paraclete whose *energeia* (energy) is able to bring forth Jesus Christ. In the same way, believers are born into the *Ekklesia* as a revitalized and saved community. The typology of women is thus *pneumatocentric* as it is they who receive distinct gifts from the Paraclete. Men on the other hand have a *Christocentric* typology. It is men who receive the three offices of Jesus Christ including priesthood. Women on the other hand have a function corresponding to the Paraclete. Neither man nor woman, however, lose their consubstantiality as equal "images" of the Triune Godhead. Where women are thus accepted as priests, there is a reversal of the roles and functions taking place in which Pneumatology and Christology are altered .

Women were therefore only invested with the duty of *diakonissa* or deaconess as an innovation in caring for other women who were infirmed or to assist in the baptizing of women in the *Ekklesia*. Even this was not without some measure of difficulty for example a woman who was recently widowed had to be *dokimazein* or placed on probation before being appointed as a deaconess. By the third century widows became an order of the *Ekklesia* and became part and parcel of the hierarchy of the Church. The Church Father Origen, stated in his commentary on Romans 16: 1 that: "*with the authority of the Apostle that even women*" are made deaconesses (PG 14, 1278 A-C).

The *Didascalia Apostolorum* which was written in Syria in the first half of the first century as an Apostolic Constitution (Bartlet 1917: 301-303) emphasised that the office of deaconess was a valuable position to have in assisting male priests. This *Didascalia* also suggested that there should be an "order of widows" (ibid 314). Widows had to spend their time praying for those who gave charity for the church (ibid 337). By the fourth century women deaconesses could welcome other women at the doors of the church but they were by no means part of the clergy. By the start of the fifth century women were ordained as deaconesses but only if they were virgins or widowed of one husband and at least forty years of age. Deaconesses were not allowed to marry if they were widows. John Chrysostom believed that certain women had *ton to axioma tes diakonias echouson* "dignity of the diaconate" (PG 62, 553 , Homily 1 Timothy).

Orthodox theologians concentrate on 1 Corinthians 11: 2-16, where Paul warns women against teaching in the *Ekklesia* during worship because woman is created in man's image and not in God's image. This reasoning is flawed as there is an ontological unity between male and female and Jesus and His *Ekklesia* that cannot be accepted if one believes that man and woman were created in different "*images*". In any event, it is only Paul who reiterates what is stated in Genesis 1: 26-27 i.e. God "*from the beginning made them male and female*".

Why is it that Paul objects then to women teaching in the *Ekklesia*? What is more important to Paul in the function and role of men and women in the divine Economy is that men and women possess peculiar and unique qualities and thus are suited to distinct roles and functions. Each has a "*unique talent*" (Ashton 2003: 2). The Roman Catholic Church believes that the Apostles transmitted to their successors, the priests and Bishops, the fullness of the priesthood. This implies an uninterrupted chain of succession in ordinations from the time of the Apostles. Some Protestant churches on the other hand repudiate this doctrine. They remain convinced that either men or women obtain a call to serve in the ministry directly from God. In the Eastern Orthodox *Ekklesia*, the Bishop has no power to create priests. He simply sanctions an ordination of a priest performed by the work of the Paraclete who works in a mysterious way through the unanimous decision of a local *Ekklesia* which thus greatly values its bond of love or agape with the early Church of the Apostles.

Jesus was accompanied by a number of women while going out to preach. This was not well received by the Jews many of whom accused Jesus of making women neglect Jewish purification rights (Luke 23:2). In fact *Epiphanius of Salamis* explains that Jesus was leading women and children astray. He tells us in *Adversus Haereses* 42 that: "*kai apostrephonta tas gynaikas kai ta tekna...*".

Mark tells us that after Christ went to cities or villages and preached he was accompanied by Mary Magdalene and Susanna, and Joanna amongst many others (Luke 8: 1 –3). Furthermore, when Jesus was crucified there were women looking on from "*afar*". (Mark 15: 40 –41). That the names of women are mentioned at all demonstrates that women played an important role in the community. It was women who discovered the tomb of the resurrected Christ on the Easter morning and met the resurrected Christ first. Clearly women were enthralled just as much as the men by the sight of Jesus performing miracles. Our Lord bucked the trend of His milieu and deliberately had a different attitude towards women than was expected. He conversed in public with the Samaritan woman (John 4: 27) and allowed a sinful woman to approach Him in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7: 37). More importantly, He affirmed the equal status of the rights and duties of married couples (Matthew 19: 3 – 9).

When people waited and prayed for the coming of the Paraclete after the Ascension, there were undoubtedly women amongst them (Acts 1 : 14) but on the day of Pentecost, the Paraclete filled them all, both men and women (Acts 2: 1; 1-14). And yet it was only "*Peter and the Eleven*" who proclaimed the fulfilment of the Prophecies in Jesus (Acts 2: 14). According to Acts 12: 12, it was Mary the mother of John-Mark who allowed gatherings of Christians to take place in her home. In Romans 16: 1-2 Paul commends a woman by the

name of Phoebe. He says: "*I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a diakonos (minister) of the church at Cenchreae, that you may have received her in the Lord as befits the saints*". The masculine noun *diakonos* in Hellenistic Greek is preceded by a feminine article and can thus be given a female usage as well irrespective of noun or the context. In the third century the formal position of deaconess appeared (*diakonos*) with that special reference to Phoebe. The order of deaconess thus appears to go back to the time of the Apostles (Leipoldt 1954: 133). A wife of a deacon also called a 'deaconess' because of the status of her husband. In First Corinthians we read of a certain *Stephanas* and his household who were the first converts to Christianity in Achaia who: "*eis diakonian tois hagiois etaxan heautous*" (1 Corinthians 16:15). The word 'deaconess' as used as in the case of Phoebe demonstrates that she: "*has been a helper of many*". Phoebe clearly gave support to the less fortunate in her community where there was great sorrow and distress. In Romans we also read about Aquilla and Prisca whom Paul describes as: "*tous synergous mou en Christo lesou*". This description indicates that Phoebe's charismatic role as an assistant is gradually becoming an official position (Oepke in TDNT- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, pp.787). Interestingly Paul uses the same description in speaking about Timothy (Romans 16: 21), Titus (2 Corinthians 8: 23) and others in the Epistle to Philemon (1: 24). In Philippians, Paul speaks of Euodia and Syntyche, who "*have laboured side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers*" (Philippians 4: 2-3). Mary the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12) and Lydia (Acts 16: 14 – 15) did not have a ceremonial function as deaconesses. Their roles and functions were purely administrative.

The role of a *diakonos* evolved into more than an administrative function and as it did so, so too did the roles and functions of male and female deacons. The masculine role became distinctly a liturgical one. From the fourth century onwards, deaconesses assumed the role and function of pastoral care givers and administration.

In terms of prophesying, both men and women prophesied under the inspiration of the Paraclete as was the case in Corinth. But women had to cover their head when prophesying, unlike men who had no need of a head covering (1 Corinthians 11: 4 – 5). Although men and women were equal in God's eyes, a man was a man and a woman should thus remain a woman. Each of the sexes had a specific function to fulfil in terms of God's plan. Women had to wear a veil so as not to dishonour their head who is man. Furthermore, according to 1 Corinthians 14: 1 - 40, Paul insists that order must be maintained during worship and that "*the woman should keep silence in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak (lalein)*" but rather "*keep silence*" (*sigan*), (vs. 34 – 35). If women wish to know anything they should ask their husbands at home. This probably arises due to the habit of women to ask questions of those who were functioning in the Gifts which resulted in worship being disturbed and disrupted. Timothy backs this up in Timothy 2: 11, where he asserts "*let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness*". In both 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 11, we see that male and female have distinct divinely appointed places in the order of Creation. This mode of thinking was very much in line with the Jewish mentality which according to Mosaic Law did not give great value to the witness of women in terms of religious issues.

In 1 Corinthians 1, 2 – 16, Paul refers to the appropriate behaviour in worship (Conzelmann 1975: 182). God is the model of the sexes who are created in His image (Genesis 1, 26-27).

In Greek custom, women attended worship without a veil on the head and with short hair and men attended with long hair (Chrysostom, in Homily XXVI on 1 Corinthians). Paul according to Theodoret's Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11: 11-35, undoubtedly frowned on this as it was an affront to the order of creation.

As women were not allowed to teach or have authority over men they were unable to become an *episkopos* or presbyter who would instruct a community of believers (1 Timothy 3: 2 – 5). Just as the order of the Triune Godhead and their mutual relationship cannot be altered, so too cannot be altered the order of humanity and the mutual relationship of women and men in the order of creation which is restored in the *Ekklesia* (Voulgaris 1996 : 40). If male and female reverse their exclusive roles then they are also reversing their personal qualities and therefore also their mutual relationship. This is intolerable for Paul who recognizes the specific role and function of each of the sexes just as each of the members of the Triune Godhead have a specific role and function. On a human level, man "*reflects what God is on the divine level*" (Ibid. 40-42). The order of Creation goes back to God the Father (Ephesians 3: 14 – 15) who is the source of all existence. Man's ascendancy over women goes back to Creation where man was created first (1 Corinthians 11:8). Furthermore, woman was created for man as a helper (Genesis 2:18). Nonetheless, woman is of the same *ousia* (nature) as man as she originates from him just as by analogy, Jesus Christ and the Paraclete emanate from God the Father: "*God the Father is Christ's head as his generator and projector and is homoousios; man is woman's head because he, too, is her generator and projector and homoousios with her. The analogy is consequent and proper...*" (Photius in Cramer, ed., CGP, Vol..V : 208).

A deaconess had far less to do in her role than her male counterpart and she was thus far less important than a male deacon although her pastoral care and administrative abilities were greatly valued by the communities in which they served. Despite this, adherents were acutely aware that Jesus Christ did not authorize women to preach His Word with any apostolic authority. The Eastern Orthodox Church is thus faithful to the example set by Jesus concerning only male priesthood. It was the main task of the Apostles to preach the gospel, kerygma and Didache: "*in public and from house to house*" (Acts 20: 18 -1). Paul asked Timothy: "*what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*" (2 Timothy 2 :2).

In the *Didascalia Apostolorum* we also encounter a description of a deaconess as a woman who is appointed to minister to women. She was expected to take communion to the ill and anoint women (the nudity of women should not be seen by men) but was not allowed to invoke Divine names in the water as this was the function of a male *diakonos*. Deaconesses were also to take a vow of continence if widowed and pray dutifully (Didasc. 3, 1, 1-2). A male deacon on the other hand had to perform: "*a number of things that are necessary*" (ibid). A male *diakonos* was the "*right arm of the bishop*" (Didasc.2, 28, 6) whereas a woman was not. Tertullian in *De Prescriptione Haereticorum* and Irenaeus in his *Adversus Haereses* demonstrate great disapproval of a Gnostic practice to allow women to serve as priests (Theodoros 1954: 576 – 601).

By the end of the fourth century the Apostolic Constitutions dictated that women no longer baptize as this was now considered the function of a priest. Deaconesses would serve as a

go-between, intermediating between other women and officials of the *Ekklesia*. Deaconesses served as 'ushers' for the women's section of the *Ekklesia* (this was usually on the left side of the centre aisle in the Church building). By the ninth century, both male and female deacons wore a stole. There was however a marked difference in that the type of stole worn by each sex. The male *diakonos* wore an *orarion* which went around one shoulder and under the other shoulder and later wore an *epitrachelion* or priestly stole which covered his entire back. The deaconess on the other hand wore an *orarion* which only went around her neck and hung in front occasionally with tassels dangling down. The role of the male was also very distinctly liturgical. It is clear that the New Testament provides much evidence as to the essential and important role and function of women in the *Ekklesia*. Women have been and are true disciples of Jesus Christ. They witness to Christ in their families and in society at large and are mothers of children. They bear witness to their faith and pass on the faith of the *Ekklesia* and its Holy Tradition and observe Holy Scripture. Women played and do play a decisive role in the life of the *Ekklesia* but priesthood cannot be validly conferred on them. They do however have a great mission in the renewal of society. The Eastern Orthodox Church may appear to be archaic in its interpretations but is true to the Holy Scripture and to her unbroken Holy Tradition in ordaining only men into the priesthood.

If the Holy Eucharist were conducted by a woman there would be no resemblance between Christ and His minister and it would be thus difficult to see the image of Christ in the minister as Christ was a man. In any case the Incarnation of the Logos took place according to the masculine gender and this fact can in no way be separated from the Economy of salvation. Christ is the 'groom' of His bride who is the *Ekklesia* and in this lies the Mystery and revelation of the Triune Godhead. The Priest represents the entire *Ekklesia* and offers sacrifice for her and prays for her in her entirety.

The priest becomes a sign in a sacramental sense and is a sign of Christ or *mimema Christou*. Priesthood is a special office set by the Triune Godhead in the context of the plan of God the Father. A plan of salvation which aims at restoring His own image and likeness in mankind which became distorted by the Fall. God the Father is thus the source of the priesthood. It is from Him "*from whom are all things*" (1 Corinthians 8: 6). Jesus Christ obtained His *Vasileion Ierateuma* (Royal Priesthood) "*not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life*" (Hebrews 7:7) through His Passion, death and Resurrection. Christ's priesthood is thus inherent in His *ousia*. His office is eternal and perfect unlike that of Moses (PG 68, 805), who's office was imperfect and directed towards purifying the flesh (Hebrews 9 : 13).

Despite the many qualities needed to serve as priests existing in women, they were not mandated by Jesus Christ to preach with any Apostolic authority. Deaconesses did not receive *cheirotonia* (Holy Orders) upon their ordination as in the case of men. In the final analysis, When Christ returns His work will be seen in all the earth. His servants the *iereis* (priests) will share with Him in bringing the world to a full gnosis (knowledge) of God's ways: "*They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with Him a thousand years*" (Revelation 20: 6). In those days all, male and female alike will be "*a Chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation (laos), God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light*" (1 Peter 2 : 9).

References :

- Ashton, M. 2003. Women Priests? The Bible Answer to the Current Debate. United Kingdom
- Bartlet, J.V. 1917 "Fragments of the Didascalia Apostolorum in Greek" in JTS- (Journal of Theological Studies), XVIII
- Conzelmann, A. 1975. Commentary on the First epistle to the Corinthians, Philadelphia
- Cramer, J.A. (ed.) 1967. Catenae Graecorum Patrum, Vol, V, Hildesheim
- Holy Bible – Revised Standard Version
-- Greek Orthodox Study Bible
- Leipoldt, J. 1959. Der Frau in der antiken Welt und im Urchristentum. Leipzig
- Oepke, A. 1933. "Gyne," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, I
- Patrologiae Graeca - Migne, (PG)
PG 14, 1278 Origen – Commentary on Romans
PG 62, 553 Chrysostom - Homily on I Timothy
PG 31, 1, Adversus Haereses - Epiphanius of Salamis
PG 68, 805, Cyril of Alexandria
- Theodoros, E.D. 1954. "He Cheirotonia e cheirothesia ton diakonisson", in Theologia, XXV. Thessalonica
- Theodoret, Interpretation of 1 Corinthians II (pamphlet- 1979).
- Voulgaris, C. 1996. The Sacrament of Priesthood in Holy Scripture, Athens
- Zernov, N. 1947. The Church of the Eastern Christians, New York

PART VII ~ DEFINING 'DEACONESS' FROM A ROMAN CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

Taken from New Advent website: Catholic Encyclopaedia.

We cannot be sure that any formal recognition of deaconesses as an institution of consecrated women aiding the clergy is to be found in the New Testament. There is indeed the mention of Phoebe (Romans 16:1), who is called *diakonos*, but this may simply mean, as the Vulgate renders it, that she was "in the ministry [i.e. service] of the Church", without implying any official status. Again, it is not improbable that the "widows" who are spoken of at large in I Timothy 5:3-10, may really have been deaconesses, but here again we have nothing conclusive. That some such functionaries were appointed at an early date seems probable from Pliny's letter to Trajan concerning the Christians of Bithynia (Ep. X, 97, AD 112) There he speaks of obtaining information by torture from two *ancillae quae ministrae dicebantur*, where a technical use of words seems to be implied. In any case there can be no question that before the middle of the fourth century women were permitted to exercise certain definite functions in the Church and were known by the special name of *diakonoi* or *diakonissai*.

History and Consecration

Most Catholic scholars incline to the view that it is not always possible to draw a clear distinction in the early Church between deaconesses and widows (*cherai*). The Didascalia, Apostolic Constitutions and kindred documents undoubtedly recognize them as separate classes and they prefer the deaconess to the widow in the duty of assisting the clergy. Indeed, the Apostolic Constitutions (III, 6) enjoin the widows to be obedient to the deaconesses. It is probable also that in the earlier period it was only a widow who could become a deaconess, but undoubtedly the strict limits of age, sixty years, which were at first prescribed for widows, were relaxed, at least at certain periods and in certain localities, in the case of those to be appointed to be deaconesses; for example, the Council of Trullo in

692 fixed the age at forty. Tertullian speaks with reprobation of a girl of twenty *in viduatu ab episcopo collocatam*, by which he seems to mean ordained as a deaconess. There can again be no question that the deaconesses in the fourth and fifth centuries had a distinct ecclesiastical standing, though there are traces of much variety of custom. According to the newly discovered "Testament of Our Lord" (c. 400), widows had a place in the sanctuary during the celebration of the liturgy, they stood at the anaphora behind the presbyters, they communicated after the deacons, and before the readers and Subdeacons, and strange to say they had a charge of, or superintendence over the deaconesses. Further it is certain that a ritual was in use for the ordination of deaconesses by the laying on of hands, which was closely modelled on the ritual for the ordination of a deacon. For example, the Apostolic Constitutions say:

"Concerning a deaconess, I, Bartholomew enjoin O Bishop, thou shalt lay thy hands upon her with all the Presbytery and the Deacons and the Deaconesses and thou shalt say: Eternal God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the creator of man and woman, that didst fill with the Spirit Mary and Deborah, and Anna and Huldah, that didst not disdain that thine only begotten Son should be born of a woman; Thou that in the tabernacle of witness and in the temple didst appoint women guardians of thy holy gates: Do thou now look on this thy handmaid, who is appointed unto the office of a Deaconess and grant unto her the Holy Spirit, and cleanse her from all pollution of the flesh and of the spirit, that she may worthily accomplish the work committed unto her, to thy glory and the praise of thy Christ."

Comparing this form with that given in the same work with that for the ordination of deacons we may notice that the reference to the outpouring of Holy Ghost in the latter case is much more strongly worded: "fill him with the spirit and with power as thou didst fill Stephen the martyr and follower of the sufferings of thy Christ". Moreover, in the case of the deacon, prayer is made that he "may be counted worthy of a higher standing", a clause which not improbably has reference to the possibility of advance to a higher ecclesiastical dignity as priest or bishop, no such praise being used in the case of the deaconess.

The subject of the precise status of the deaconess is confessedly obscure and confused, but two or three points at any rate seem worth insisting on. In the first place there were no doubt influences at work at one time or another, which tended to exaggerate the position of these women-helpers. This tendency has found expression in certain documents, which have come down to us and of which it is difficult to gauge the value. Still there is no more reason to attach importance to these pretensions than there is to regard seriously the spasmodic attempts of certain deacons to exceed their powers and to claim, for example, authority to consecrate. Both in the one and the other case the voice of the Church made itself heard in conciliar decrees and the abuse in the end was repressed without difficulty. Such restrictive measures seem to be found in the rather obscure 11th canon of Laodicea, and in the more explicit 19th canon of the Council of Nicaea, which last distinctly lays down that deaconesses are to be accounted as lay persons and that they receive no ordination properly so called (Hefele-LeClercq, Conciles, I, 618). In the West there seems always to have been considerable reluctance to accept the deaconesses, at any rate under that name, as a recognized institution of the Church. The Council of Nismes in 394 reprobated in general the assumption of the Levitical ministry by women, and other decrees, notably that of Orange in 411 (can. 26) forbid the ordaining of deaconesses altogether. It follows from what

has been said that the Church as a whole repudiated the idea that women could in any proper sense be recipients of the Sacrament of Order. None the less in the East, and among the Syrians and Nestorians much more than among the Greeks (Hefele-LeClercq, Conciles, II, 448), the ecclesiastical status of deaconesses was greatly exaggerated.

Another source of confusion has always been introduced by those who have interpreted the word *diaconissae*, on the analogy of *presbyterae* and *presbytides*, *episcopae* and *episcopissae*, as the wives of deacons who, living apart from their husbands, acquired *ipso facto* an ecclesiastical character. No doubt such matrons who generously accepted this separation from their husbands were treated with special distinction and were supported by the Church, but if they became deaconesses, as in some cases they did, they had, like other women to fulfil certain conditions and to receive a special consecration. With regard to the duration of the order of deaconesses we note that when adult baptism became uncommon, this institution, which seems primarily to have been devised for the needs of women catechumens, gradually waned and in the end died out altogether. In the time of Justinian (d. 565) the deaconesses still held a position of importance. At the church of St. Sophia in Constantinople the staff consisted of sixty priests, one hundred deacons, forty deaconesses, and ninety Subdeacons; but Balsamon, Patriarch of Antioch about A.D. 1070 states that deaconesses in any proper sense had ceased to exist in the Church though the title was borne by certain nuns (Robinson, Ministry of Deaconesses, p. 93), while Matthew Blastares declared of the tenth century that the civil legislation concerning deaconesses, which ranked them rather among the clergy than the laity had then been abandoned or forgotten (Migne, P.G., CXIX, 1272). In the West in spite of the hostile decrees of several councils of Gaul in the fifth and sixth centuries, we still find mention of deaconesses considerably after that date, though it is difficult to say whether the title was more than an honorific name attributed to consecrated virgins and widows. Thus we read in Fortunatus that St. Radegund was "ordained deaconess" by St. Medard (about A.D. 540 -- Migne, P.L., LXXXVIII, 502) So also the ninth Ordo Romanus mentions, as forming part of the papal procession, the "*feminae diaconissae et presbyterissae quae eodem die benedicantur*" and *diaconissae* are mentioned in the procession of Leo III in the ninth century (Duchesne, Lib. Pont., II, 6) Further the Anglo-Saxon Leofric missal in the eleventh century still retained a prayer *ad diaconissam faciendam* which appears in the form *Exaudi Domine*, common to both deacons and deaconesses. The only surviving relic of the ordination of deaconesses in the West seems to be the delivery by the bishop of a stole and maniple to Carthusian nuns in the ceremony of their profession.

Functions of Deaconesses

There can be no doubt that in their first institution the deaconesses were intended to discharge those same charitable offices, connected with the temporal well being of their poorer fellow Christians, which were performed for the men by the deacons. But in one particular, viz., the instruction and baptism of catechumens, their duties involved service of a more spiritual kind. The universal prevalence of baptism by immersion and the anointing of the whole body, which preceded it, rendered it a matter of propriety that in this ceremony the functions of the deacons should be discharged by women. The Didascalia Apostolorum (III, 12; see Funk, Didascalia, etc., I, 208) explicitly directs that the deaconesses are to perform this function. It is probable that this was the starting point for the intervention of women in many other ritual observances even in the sanctuary. The

Apostolic Constitutions expressly attribute to them the duty of guarding the doors and maintaining order amongst those of their own sex in the church, and they also (II, c. 26) assign to them the office of acting as intermediaries between the clergy and the women of the congregation; but on the other hand, it is laid down (Const. Apost., VIII, 27) that "the deaconess gives no blessing, she fulfils no function of priest or deacon", and there can be no doubt that the extravagances permitted in some places, especially in the churches of Syria and Asia, were in contravention of the canons generally accepted. We hear of them presiding over assemblies of women, reading the Epistle and Gospel, distributing the Blessed Eucharist to nuns, lighting the candles, burning incense in the thurible, adorning the sanctuary, and anointing the sick (see Hefele-LeClercq, II, 448). All these things must be regarded as abuses which ecclesiastical legislation was not long in repressing.

Deaconesses in Protestant Communions

Outside the Catholic Church the name of deaconesses has been adopted for a modern revival, which has had great vogue in Germany and to some extent in the United States. It was begun in 1833 by the Lutheran pastor Fliedner at Kaiserswerth near Düsseldorf. His first inspiration is said to have been derived from the Quakeress Elizabeth Fry, and though the celebrated Miss Florence Nightingale, who organized a staff of nurses in the Crimean War and who had previously been trained at Kaiserswerth, the revival at a later date attracted a good deal of attention in England. The main work of deaconesses is the tending of the sick and poor, instruction and district visiting, but with more subordination to parish needs than is usually compatible with the life of an Anglican sisterhood. In the United States more particularly, community life is usually not insisted upon, but a good deal of attention is given to training and intellectual development. Both in the Anglican Church and in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and Methodist Episcopal Church of America, deaconesses are "admitted" in solemn form by the bishop with benediction and the laying on of hands. In Germany the movement has taken such hold that the Kaiserswerth organization alone claims to number over 16,000 sisters, but it is curious that relatively to the population the institution is more popular in Catholic districts, where probably the familiar spectacle of Catholic nuns has accustomed the people to the idea of a community life for women.