

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHING  
OF  
THE VIRGIN MARY'S CO-REDEMPTIVE WORK WITH CHRIST

by  
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The Roman Catholic Church has attributed several prerogatives (special rights) to the Virgin Mary. These combined rights, namely Mary's: divine maternity, immaculate conception, perpetual virginity, assumption, co-redemption and title--mother of the Church form a separate branch of Catholic theology known as Mariology.

In order to understand the development of Mariology it is essential to realize that Catholics place a great value in the importance and the equality of ecclesiastical tradition with divine Scripture. Tradition, rather than Scripture, has given impetus to the growth of Mariology.

Another teaching which the Church deems necessary and lends support to Mariology is the authority and infallibility of the pope. The Church reasons that apostolic succession, originating with Peter, guarantees that when each pope speaks, as head of the Catholic Church, he is incapable of making a mistake in matters of faith and morals. Therefore whatever the pope declares to be true regarding Mary is not debatable. Furthermore, the Church assumes itself to be the protector, interpreter and propagator of God's truth on earth to the exclusion of all other religious bodies.

An understanding of Mary's co-redemptive work with Christ is crucial because of its emphases on Mary's active role with Christ both in the accomplishment of redemption and the present ministry of dispensing graces to the redeemed. Roman Catholic theologians are divided in their opinions of how Mary has cooperated with Christ in the work of redemption. Primarily they see her as having either participated in an objective (the acquisition of graces) or in a subjective (application of these graces to mankind) manner.

The doctrine of Co-redemption is rejected because: (1) there is insufficient evidence from Scripture; (2) there is a misuse of Scripture in comparing Mary with Eve and by wrongly associating Mary with Jesus in the incarnation and at His crucifixion; and (3) there is too much reliance upon tradition for the support of this theory.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AER</u>	<u>American Ecclesiastical Review</u>
<u>BT</u>	<u>Bible Today</u>
<u>CBQ</u>	<u>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</u>
<u>HORIZONS (CTS)</u>	<u>Horizons: Journal of the College Theology Society</u>
<u>ITQ</u>	<u>Irish Theological Quarterly</u>
KJV	King James Version
<u>MARIAN STDS</u>	<u>Marian Studies</u>
NCE	New Catholic Encyclopedia
<u>OSV</u>	<u>Our Sunday Visitor</u>
SM	Sacramentum Mundi
SV	Sacramentum Verbi
<u>THEM</u>	<u>Themelios</u>
TI	Theological Investigations

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

To the Protestant Christian the cult of Mary is disquieting and perplexing. The devout and lowly maiden of Judah has become Queen of Heaven. She through whom the Son of God came to dwell among men in intimate fellowship has become the Mediatrix through whom they are now to approach Him and the Father. Mary in Roman Catholic devotion receives many times the prayers that are addressed to God, or Christ. She is the preferred object of devotion.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that more prayers are offered to Mary than to Christ may be seen in the use of the Rosary. For each time the Lord's Prayer is said, it is followed by ten repetitions of Hail Mary.<sup>2</sup> Why do most Roman Catholics pray to Mary rather than directly to Christ? It is because of their view of Mary's relationship to Christ. Since she is the mother of Jesus, she is considered to have not only

a personal relation to the Son of God, but also a relation to the people who are redeemed by her Son. She is therefore also the mother of the redeemed. . . . As mother of the redeemed, Mary is the chief intercessor for grace before God.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Giovanni Miegge, The Virgin Mary: The Roman Catholic Marian Doctrine trans. from Italian by Waldo Smith. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>John C. McCollister, The Christian Book of Why (New York: Jonathan David Publishers, Inc., 1983), p. 161.

<sup>3</sup>Roland H. A. Seboldt, Christ or Mary? The Co-redemption of Mary in Contemporary Roman Catholic Theology (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), pp. 27-28.

### Statement of Importance

A study of Mariology and especially the prerogative (privilege) of co-redemption is crucial in view of Rome's claim that Mary has a vital part in our salvation. She has not only been called the Mother of God, but is now referred to as the Mother of the Church. The importance of this study is further emphasized by the statement of Pope Paul VI "at the close of the second session of Vatican II: 'Knowledge of the true Catholic doctrine about Mary will always be the key to the exact understanding of the mystery of Christ and of the Church.'"<sup>1</sup>

Since 390 A.D., various claims have been made regarding the Virgin Mary. The progressive development of these assumed rights ascribed to Mary, has been formed into a separate branch of theology in the Roman Catholic Church known as Mariology. Mariology gains its importance through a close association with Christology. The virgin's distinct privileges are derived from her relationship to Jesus. Commenting upon this relationship, Schillebeeckx states:

A true understanding can be achieved only when the mystery of Mary is allowed to develop fully within the

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<sup>1</sup>Adolfo Robleto and John Hepp Jr., Roman Catholic Doctrine in the Light of Vatican II (Vinton, VA: L.I.T. International, 1977), p. 163.



mystery of Christ, as Mariology and Christology clearly do not exist as separate entities, but form a single organic whole.<sup>1</sup>

Some Roman Catholic theologians see Mary's Divine Maternity as "the source from which all of her other prerogatives flow."<sup>2</sup> These prerogatives of Mary are: her Immaculate Conception, Perpetual Virginity, Assumption, Co-redemption, and exalted title--Mother of the Church.

Since Mary is no longer considered simply the mother of Jesus, it is important to understand how and why she has almost been deified by sincere and well-meaning people.

#### Statement of Problem

The specific problem to be examined in this thesis is the Mariological dogma of Mary's co-redemptive work with Christ. Did she have, and/or does she have, an active part in the work of Redemption? In view of Vatican II what changes, if any, has the church made in regards to Mariology?

Nearly three decades ago Catholic theologians were declaring:

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<sup>1</sup>E. Schillebeeckx, Mary, Mother of the Redemption trans. by N.D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas C. Donlan, Francis L. B. Cunningham, and Augustine Rock, Christ and His Sacraments (Dubuque, IA: The Priory Press, 1958), p. 256.

Catholicism in our time feels itself to be living in an age that in devotion to Mary is second to no other, probably not even those great centuries of Mariology, the twelfth and thirteenth.<sup>1</sup>

Today the situation is somewhat different. Definite changes have been made in Catholic thinking since Vatican II. At least outwardly, progressive theologians are beginning to take a closer look at the teachings of their Church. This is partially due to a renewed interest in the study of the New Testament and a desire to eliminate theological barriers to ecumenism.<sup>2</sup>

One well-known Catholic theologian, Avery Dulles, has begun a re-examination of Mariological dogmas in the light of historical criticism. Dulles has suggested "that the anathemas or condemnations against unbelievers be removed from the statements of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption."<sup>3</sup> In response to this change of attitude among various Catholics, Berkouwer questions the possibility of actual change taking place within the Roman Catholic Church.

One can speak about changeability as well as unchangeability. On the one hand there is a historical

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<sup>1</sup>Miegge, The Virgin Mary: The Roman Catholic Marian Doctrine, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and John Reumann, eds., Mary in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), pp. v-vi.

<sup>3</sup>Raymond E. Brown, Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing The Church (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), p. 85.

development of the church, its institutions, and its dogma; there is a process of growth in the course of centuries. At the same time the continuity is extremely strong. And this continuity is not there by accident. It is directly associated with the Roman Catholic idea of the Church of Christ--the single reality of the body of Christ upon earth with doctrinal authority which under the direct presence of the Spirit is endowed with an infallible character. And it is particularly with respect to the infallibility of this doctrinal authority that the question arises from time to time whether it is possible to speak of actual changes within the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup>

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to closely inspect and evaluate the Roman Catholic teaching of the Virgin Mary's co-redemptive work with Christ.

In order to fulfill this objective it is necessary to look at several basic and foundational teachings of the Church. Furthermore, Mariology as a whole must be considered before proceeding with a discussion of Mary's exclusive right as Co-Redemptress.

Stated more concisely, the purpose is: (1) to discover how Mary acquired the title, Mother of God; (2) to understand why Mary has become an object of adoration in the Catholic Church; (3) to discern where the evidence for Mariology originated; and (4) to show why the teaching of

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<sup>1</sup>G. C. Berkouwer, Recent Developments in Roman Catholic Thought (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), p. 7.

Mary's co-redemptive work with Christ in salvation is not in harmony with Sacred Scripture.

Statement of Procedure

The procedure that this thesis will follow is an analysis of four major themes.

- (1) A Theological Analysis of Roman Catholicism.
- (2) A Historical Analysis of Mariology.
- (3) A Biblical Analysis of the Virgin Mary.
- (4) A Critical Analysis of the Virgin Mary's Co-Redemptive work in Salvation.

## CHAPTER II

### A THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM

#### The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church consists of professing Christians who:

are in communion with the pope and that have a hierarchy of priests and bishops under the pope, a liturgy centered in the Mass, and a body of dogma formulated by the church as the sole interpreter of revealed truth.<sup>1</sup>

The name of the Church involves a misnomer in the use of the words "Roman" and "Catholic."

The word Catholicism is used as a synonym for Christianity, and on this ambiguous basis Jesus Christ and His apostles are spoken of as the 'foundations of the Catholic Church.' It is certain that Jesus Christ founded a catholic Church with His apostles, but we understand the word catholic to be a synonym for universal and not a synonym for Roman.<sup>2</sup>

Vos points out that this ambiguity is the first sophism ("an argument apparently correct in form but actually invalid")<sup>3</sup> which Catholics use "to prove the

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1977), p. 1004.

<sup>2</sup>Howard F. Vos, ed., Religions in a Changing World (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), p. 374.

<sup>3</sup>Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, p. 1009.

divine origin and the universal privileges of the Roman Church."<sup>1</sup>

It was not until the beginning of the third century that the Roman Catholic Church began to emerge. Prior to this, local churches functioned independently of any hierarchy or bureaucracy in church government. However, by 200 A.D.:

A trend toward collective control of several churches by an overseer or bishop, emerged. The bishop of the Churches at Jerusalem, Antioch, Carthage, Constantinople and Alexandria received special prominence in this respect.

A new force of Church government was being innovated. A legislative trend rather than the apostolic executive function appeared.<sup>2</sup>

This legislative trend was a violation of democracy in local church government (Acts 6:2-3); and it furthered the spurious logic of a hierarchy which lays claim to supreme authority over all Christians.<sup>3</sup>

Today the Roman Catholic Church claims to be "a perfect society fully equipped with rights and resources, with a hierarchy and powers of jurisdiction, legislation

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<sup>1</sup>Vos, Religions in a Changing World, p. 374.

<sup>2</sup>Wilson Ewin, The Church of Rome (Nashua, NH: Bible Baptist Church, n.d.), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Lorraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 28-29.

and administration."<sup>1</sup> "It embodies Christ's presence for mankind. It is an outward, visible sign of God's grace in history."<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, the Church emphasizes that it is to "be recognized by all men as the only guardian and infallible teacher of the revealed word."<sup>3</sup> It is "a visible Church with a living teaching authority, infallible because the Holy Ghost is with her, preserving her from error."<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, because it claims "to be the kingdom of God on earth and the church, no other authority in the political or religious realm has any right to exist."<sup>5</sup>

#### The Two Sources of Revelation: Tradition and Scripture

According to one Catholic theologian:

It would be true, in a sense, to say that there is but one source of revelation--namely, divine Tradition--understanding thereby the body of revealed truth handed down from the apostles. . . . Nevertheless, since a great and important part of that tradition was committed

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<sup>1</sup>K. Rahner, ed., with C. Ernst and K. Smyth, Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology, Vol. 1 (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), p. 316.

<sup>2</sup>George J. Dyer, ed., An American Catholic Catechism (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>George D. Smith, ed., The Teaching of the Catholic Church, Vol. 1 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 28.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>J. Dwight Pentecost, Romanism in the Light of Scripture (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), pp. 16-17.

to writing and is contained in the inspired books of Holy Scripture, it is the custom of the Church to distinguish two sources of revelation, Tradition and Scripture, the former name being reserved for that body of revealed truth which was not committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, but has been handed down through the living teaching authority of the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup>

Stated in a different manner:

Religious traditions may be divided into two classes: those which rest on the authority of God--which find their validity in revelation--and those which rest in the authority of ancient custom. This division is important; the first is usually called divine or Apostolic tradition; and the second, ecclesiastical tradition.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, for Roman Catholics, ecclesiastical tradition is very important. "Scripture is only one authority, and not the authority. It stands alongside tradition, and together with tradition is subject to the interpretation of the Church."<sup>3</sup>

This is more clearly seen when, during the Middle Ages (500 A.D.-1450 A.D.):

biblical study was completely subordinated to ecclesiastical dogma. The theology of the Bible was used only to reinforce the dogmatic teachings of the church, which were founded upon both the Bible and church tradition. Not the Bible alone, historically under-

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<sup>1</sup>George D. Smith, ed., The Teaching of the Catholic Church, Vol. 1, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>J. D. Conway, What the Church Teaches (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), pp. 79-80.

<sup>3</sup>H. M. Carson, Dawn or Twilight? A Study of Contemporary Roman Catholicism (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, Revised ed., 1976), p. 33.



stood, but the Bible as interpreted by church tradition was the source of dogmatic theology.<sup>1</sup>

The equality of church tradition with the Bible was debated at the Council of Trent (1545-1563 A.D.). At this significant meeting, tradition was officially recognized as being both necessary and equal with the Bible.

Chemnitz, commenting on the outcome of the debate between Scripture and Tradition at the Council of Trent, wrote:

By no means, say they, shall the Scripture be the sole rule and norm of our judgment; but first of all they decree that the unwritten traditions . . . shall be accepted and venerated with the same pious affection and reverence as the Scripture itself.<sup>2</sup>

Chemnitz further explains that the Council of Trent's decision resulted in setting aside:

the difference between the canonical books of the Scriptures and the apocrypha . . . in order that the authority of the canonical books and of the apocrypha may be equal and identical for the confirmation of churchly dogmas.<sup>3</sup>

This declaration of an equality between Tradition and Scripture is observable in Catholic editions of the Bible. Within the format of their Bible, the apocryphal

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<sup>1</sup>George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Chemnitz, Examination of the Council of Trent, Vol. 1. trans. by Fred Kramer. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

books have been interspersed among the canonical books of the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> In this way the impression is given that these non-canonical, books are the Word of God.

The inclusion of the Apocrypha with the text of Scripture did not occur in one of the earliest editions of the Catholic Bible, the Vulgate, until the Middle Ages. Jerome (c. 340-420), who made the translation, did not care much for these writings.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore:

In determining the authenticity of sacred writings, the principles of ecclesiastical tradition and apostolic succession were invoked. This development guaranteed the place of tradition as an essential part of Catholic faith and theology.<sup>3</sup>

Why has the Catholic Church relied so much upon tradition (especially the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings) in the development of Church dogmas? An answer may be found in the statement of Andrada, an apologist of the Church:

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<sup>1</sup>The New American Bible; St. Joseph Medium Size Edition (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1970), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, Introduction to the Bible (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982), pp. 168-169. For further information about the Bible in the Roman Catholic Church from Trent to the Present Day, see: S.L. Greenslade, ed., The Cambridge History of the Bible, vol. 111. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1963), pp. 199-237.

<sup>3</sup>John P. Dolan, Catholicism An Historical Survey (New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1968), p. 13.

When Christ thought it necessary to come to the aid of man's frail memory by means of the written Gospel, He wanted to have so brief a summary committed to writing that the greater part, as the treasure of great price, might be left to tradition, inscribed on the innermost heart of the church. . . . the most precise norm, canon, or rule of faith is not the Scripture but the judgment of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, Bovis concludes that in respect to Scripture, the Lord "nowhere asked his church to have recourse to a written document as the sole criterion of the authentic expression of our faith."<sup>2</sup>

Berkouwer, commenting upon the consequence of this supposition explains:

We are brought face to face with an obvious development. Whenever another source of knowledge is placed alongside Scripture as being of equal value, we observe that eventually Scripture becomes relegated to the background. Whenever people place reason next to the Bible, or emotion, then ultimately one source supplants the other and causes it gradually to fade away. Then we get either rationalism or mysticism. It is true, Scripture is not simply pushed to the side, but it is, as it were in captivity. Since the Council of Trent tradition has advanced further and further into the foreground.

By this same process there eventually came about the decision of the Vatican Council in 1870, when the infallibility of the Pope was promulgated. Holy Scripture was not rejected then either. It continued to be maintained as a source of revelation just as it had been at Trent, but it could not officiate, it could not

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Chemnitz, Examination of the Council of Trent, Vol. 1, pp. 44-45.

<sup>2</sup>Andre de Bovis, The Church: Christ's Mystery and Sacrament (London: Burns & Oates, 1962), p. 102.

unfold its power. The shadow of a competitor had fallen across its place in the church.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the interrelatedness between Scripture and Tradition "in the teaching office of the Roman Catholic Church was raised in the Reformation, debated in the Council of Trent, and recently has again been discussed in Roman Catholic theology."<sup>2</sup>

### The Evolution of Catholic Dogmas

The Catholic Church defines a dogma as the "official belief, binding on all Catholics."<sup>3</sup> Dogmas are assumed to be revealed truths from God. They are "contained in Tradition or in Scripture, or in both, and taught by the Church either in her solemn definitions or in her ordinary teaching."<sup>4</sup> According to Rome, the evolution of a dogma:

is not in conflict with the infallibility of the doctrinal authority, for during the course of the centuries such a development can be quite clearly traced.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>G. C. Berkouwer, Recent Developments in Roman Catholic Thought (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), pp. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup>John L. McKenzie, The Roman Catholic Church (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969), p. 210.

<sup>3</sup>Robbleto and Hepp Jr., Roman Catholic Doctrine in the Light of Vatican II, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, The Teaching of the Catholic Church, Vol. 1, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup>G. C. Berkouwer, Recent Developments in Roman Catholic Thought, p. 33.

Supposedly the development of all dogmas originated from the treasury of revelation. However, the Church affirms:

that the treasury of revelation was closed with the death of the last apostle, and that all development must issue from this treasury, under the direction of the ecclesiastical doctrinal authority.<sup>1</sup>

It further states that now there is no development of new dogmas. Instead, through the centuries, there has been an increase of knowledge and insight as a result of the outgrowth of what was already present in the treasury.<sup>2</sup>

Roman Catholic theology speaks of the continual development of Catholic truth, which in essence is always and forever the same, but which unfolds itself more fully in the souls of the believers. This evolution, Rome maintains, never touches the substance of dogma. In the course of the centuries nothing of the divine revelation becomes lost.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Catholic Church claims that no new dogmas have developed, Vos disagrees and explains that:

Even after the Council of Trent [the Church] continued to add some new essential dogmas for being a Roman Catholic, dogmas which would exclude from the Church the greatest authors, saints, and theologians.

For instance, authors such as Origen and Augustine, who did not recognize the supreme authority of the bishop of Rome . . . have been considered in Roman history as Catholic authors.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Vos, Religions in a Changing World, pp. 373-74.

### The Bishop of Rome

According to the First Vatican Council (1869-70):

the Roman Pontiff, as successor of Peter, enjoys supreme, full, immediate, and universal authority over the care of souls by divine institution . . . a primacy of power over all churches.<sup>1</sup> (Italics mine.)

The word 'pope,' by which the head of the Roman Church is known, and the word 'papacy,' by which is meant the system of ecclesiastical government in which the pope is recognized as the supreme head, are not found in the Bible. The word 'pope' comes from the Latin papa, meaning 'father.'

In Italy the term 'pope' came to be applied to all bishops as a title of honor, and then to the bishop of Rome exclusively as the universal bishop. It was first given to Gregory I by the wicked emperor Phocas, in the year 604. . . . Gregory, however, refused the title, but his second successor, Boniface III (607) assumed the title, and it has been the designation of the bishops of Rome ever since.<sup>2</sup>

Although Scripture is silent regarding the papacy, nevertheless:

The Bible text upon which the Roman Catholic Church rests to prove the existence of a universal pontiff is Matthew 16:18: Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. Roman theologians recognize that this text does not establish the papacy upon Peter but only promises it. . . . But they argue that if He promised it, He had to do it.<sup>3</sup>

Through this kind of reasoning:

The papal system has been in process of development over a long period of time. Romanists claim an unbroken line of succession from the alleged first pope, Peter, to the present pope. . . . But the list is in

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<sup>1</sup>W. M. Abbott and J. Gallagher, eds., The Documents of Vatican II (The American Press, 1966), p. 390.

<sup>2</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup>Vos, Religion in a Changing World, p. 375.

many instances quite doubtful. The list has been revised several times, with a considerable number who formerly were listed as popes now listed as anti-popes.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, in contrast to the Church's claim of papal supremacy:

none of the regional churches attempted to exercise authority over any of the other regional churches. The early ecumenical councils were composed of delegates from various churches who met as equals. . . . The first six hundred years of the Christian era know nothing of any spiritual supremacy on the part of the bishops of Rome. The papacy really began in year 590, with Gregory I, as Gregory the Great, who consolidated the power of the bishopric in Rome and started that church on a new course.<sup>2</sup>

Along with the concept of papal supremacy developed the idea of papal infallibility. A verse commonly cited in favor of papal infallibility is Luke 22:32, "strengthen your brothers." However, none of the Church Fathers "interpreted it as meaning that Peter's successors were infallible."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, their understanding of the text "can have had little connection with the modern doctrine of papal infallibility."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Brian Tierney, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, edited by Heiko A. Oberman. Vol 6: Origins of Papal Infallibility 1150-1350. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Today the Catholic Church states that:

A pope, when he speaks as head of the Catholic Church, is incapable of making a mistake in matters of faith and morals. He cannot err, he cannot make a false or illadvised statement, and what he says is the same as if God Himself had said it.<sup>1</sup>

Berkouwer explains that this does not refer at all to "a personal quality of the pope, or a general infallibility in his personal life."<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, by means of false precepts, the bishops of Rome have captivated the minds of millions over the past centuries. How has the Church managed to keep these people devoted to Rome? Mainly through fear and prohibiting them from reading God's Word. Thus multitudes have blindly followed the Pope. Fear is very real to the Catholic mind because the Pope declares himself to be the mediator between God and men, "with power over the souls in purgatory so that he can release them from further suffering and admit them to heaven, or prolong their suffering indefinitely."<sup>3</sup>

#### The Magisterium

The magisterium is defined as:

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<sup>1</sup>John B. Wilder, The Other Side of Rome (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup>Berkouwer, Recent Developments in Roman Catholic Thought, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, pp. 125-26.



the perennial, authentic, and infallible teaching office committed to the apostles by Christ and possessed and exercised by their legitimate successors, the college of bishops in union with the pope.<sup>1</sup>

The magisterium plays its own unique role in proclaiming the Gospel; no other member or members of the Church community can do what these official teachers do. Although at times the magisterium does have to step in to settle disputes or to point out that someone is expressing views that are not in harmony with this community's tradition, its role is much broader than this. Its on-going task is always to seek out and to make known what the tradition (the Jesus experience) is today--to make Christ alive and present in this community's teaching and living today. It is both a learning magisterium (that studies, dialogues, listens, and shares) and a teaching magisterium (that takes the time and effort to become a good teacher).<sup>2</sup>

According to the Second Vatican Council:

The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. The teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously, and explaining it faithfully by divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit; it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.

It is clear . . . that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church . . . are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 13 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), p. 959.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew F. Kohmescher, Catholicism Today: A Survey of Catholic Belief and Practice (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Abbott and Gallagher, The Documents of Vatican II, pp. 117-118.

### The Saviour

Catholicism depicts the Saviour as one person with a divine and human nature who is separate from the Father and the Holy Spirit. He has the offices of Prophet, Priest and King. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary and lived a sinless life on earth which culminated in His death on a Roman cross. The death of Christ is seen as an absolute necessity in order to propitiate God and make an atonement for the sins of mankind. The Church further believes that His death provides salvation for all people.

The Church also subscribes to a belief in the bodily resurrection and ascension of Christ. Although He is called the Mediator between God and men, Catholic thought brings the Virgin Mary into the picture. She is the one through whom man must approach Christ since He cannot deny the wishes of His mother (John. 2:3-5).

The present ministry of Christ in heaven is seen as continuing through the assistance of His mother in dispensing graces to mankind.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For an excellent treatise on the Person and work of Christ by a Catholic theologian, see: Ludwig Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, trans. from German by Patrick Lynch, 4th ed. (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1955), pp. 125-95. For further recent information see: Walter M. Abbott and Joseph Gallagher, eds., The Documents of Vatican II (The American Press, 1966), pp. 769-90.

### The Virgin Mary

By which title should Mary be called: the Mother of God, or the mother of Jesus? Should this Jewish maiden be worshipped or honored? These and similar questions have been disputed for centuries.

Catholics and Protestants have long disputed about Mary, the mother of our Lord. Their views on her are so different that they form a wall of separation. For Rome's Mary seems quite unlike the Bible's Mary. In fact Rome has an entire theological system, liturgy, and worship centering on Mary which none of the apostles even hinted at.<sup>1</sup>

According to Catholics, the fact that:

Mary is the Mother of God is a revealed fact so closely linked to Christ's salvific plan for men that since the Council of Ephesus in 431 its recognition has been the touchstone of Christian orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup>

As for the Bible, it never refers to Mary as the Mother of God. Instead she is called the mother of Jesus (John 2:1; Acts 1:14). It is right here that the Catholic Church makes a fundamental and fatal error.

Instead of holding to the language of Scripture, Rome indulges a bit of syllogism to arrive at a false title for Mary. Mary is the mother of Jesus. Jesus is God; therefore Mary is the mother of God.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robbleto and Hepp, Jr., Roman Catholic Doctrine in the Light of Vatican II, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup>New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967 ed., Vol. 10. S.V. "Mother of God."

<sup>3</sup>J. C. Macaulay, The Bible and the Roman Church (Chicago: Moody Press, 1946), p. 65.

### The Concept of Salvation

In regards to personal salvation, Rome does not set forth a clear statement.

Though the Catholic Church claims to be God's saving institution, she is unclear about how to be saved. Vatican II called the Catholic Church 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' that is, the visible means for receiving God's saving grace, and spoke of 'all the means of salvation given to her.'<sup>1</sup>

Catholics are taught a view of salvation which is observable in a series of God's divine acts (salvific history). Salvation is considered:

the goal of a long process, which begins when you 'obtain God's grace' and continues as you 'keep God's grace.' In the longest part of the process, keeping God's grace, two things are essential: 1) 'living according to the teachings of Christ,' that is, good works; 2) 'receiving His Sacraments,' that is, the sacraments that the Church administers.<sup>2</sup>

According to the New Catholic Encyclopedia, salvation is:

The most generic term used to describe the divine action of restoring mankind to the state from which it had fallen by the sin of Adam.<sup>3</sup>

In view of the divine action to restore mankind, how are we to understand the axiom: outside the Church there is no salvation? According to Catholic theology, it

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<sup>1</sup>Robbleto and Hepp, Jr., Roman Catholic Doctrine in the Light of Vatican II, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>3</sup>New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 12 (McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976), p. 94.

"is only a way of expressing the ecclesiological truth: the Church is the sacrament of salvation."<sup>1</sup> (Italics mine). From this statement it appears that everyone outside of the Catholic Church is eternally lost. Since Vatican II a different attitude has been taken towards non-Catholics. The Church now states that:

the means of Christian holiness are not confined to the Catholic Church . . . the Body of Christ is larger in scope and extent than the Catholic church by itself.<sup>2</sup>

Rahner explains this contradiction and shows how that one outside of the Church can experience salvation:

A reconciliation between these two contradictory positions was effected through the use of the idea of 'error in good faith'. . . 'For someone to obtain eternal salvation, it is not always required that he be in fact incorporated into the Church as a member, but it is at least required that he be united to it by desire or wish.'<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church states:

Those, who, for one reason or another remain outside of the Church through no grave fault of their own and do not know it is the true Church, can be saved by making use of the graces given them by God. According to Roman Catholic authorities the true doctrine is that a person may be fully convinced of another creed in all sincerity, and may be striving to serve God according to his conscience and to love God with all his heart.

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<sup>1</sup>Rahner, Ernst and Smyth, Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology, Vol. 1, p. 327.

<sup>2</sup>George J. Dyer, ed., An American Catholic Catechism (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Rahner, Ernest and Smyth, Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology, Vol. 1, pp. 326-27.

Such a person is not outside the Roman Catholic Church in the sense of the above axiom, for although not an actual member, he has an implicit desire of the one True Church.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley I. Stuber, Primer on Roman Catholicism for Protestants (New York: Associated Press, 1953), p. 7.

## CHAPTER III

### A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF MARIOLOGY

#### The Definition of Mariology

Mariology is defined as "that part of the science of theology which treats of the Mother of God in her singular mission, prerogatives and cult."<sup>1</sup> More concisely it is:

The study of doctrine concerning the Virgin Mary connected with her person as such and her role in the plan of redemption, with special reference to the Incarnation.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Factors Contributing to the Origin of Mariology

The New Testament has surprisingly little to say about Mary. Her last recorded words were spoken at the marriage in Cana, at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry: 'Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it'--then silence. But the Church of Rome breaks that silence and from sources entirely outside of Scripture builds up a most elaborate system of Mary works and Mary devotions.<sup>3</sup>

There are at least five major factors which contributed to the origin and further development of Mariology.

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<sup>1</sup>Juniper B. Carol, Fundamentals of Mariology (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1956), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>J. D. Douglas, Earle E. Cairns and James E. Ruark, eds., The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), p. 631.

<sup>3</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 132.

Stated briefly, they are: (1) Graeco-Roman Pagan Religions; (2) Apocryphal Literature; (3) Statements of Church Fathers; (4) Heretical Denials of the Incarnation; and (5) Pronouncements of Church Councils.

### Graeco-Roman Pagan Religions

Prior to the birth of Christianity several pagan deities, such as Cybele, Isis and Artemis, had won a place of honor and worship in Athens and Rome. To the inhabitants, in both of these influential cities, the local gods seemed far removed and unconcerned about their personal needs. On the other hand these foreign deities found their place in the market place and gave hope to the people.

The first genuinely Oriental deity to reach Rome . . . was the Great Mother (Cybele). Her coming was the result of the panic which followed the disasters of the Second Punic War in 205 B.C. With the consent of Attalus, King of Pergamum, the stone which was the outward and visible sign of her presence was brought to Italy.<sup>1</sup>

Cybele's homeland was Anatolia. She was brought by Aeneas as he came to establish the City of Rome.

Cybele took shape there as a black stone the size of a fist, probably a meteorite, set as the face of a silver statue. . . . Cybele was duly installed in a temple on the Palatine Hill and worshipped there for over five hundred years.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Elliot-Binns, The Beginnings of Western Christendom (London: Lutterworth Press, 1948), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Joscelyn Godwin, Mystery Religions in the Ancient World (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), p. 110.



The cult of Cybele was well calculated to appeal to a people which was still agrarian, and in course of time it became completely naturalized. It was destined, often in combination with that of other divinities, to prevail until the end of paganism in the West, and who shall dare to affirm that even the collapse of paganism involved her in its ruins, for another Mater Dolorosa continued to claim a like devotion. The fact that as early as Minoan times she is represented as the divine Mother holding up her infant son for adoration was of great significance for the development of Christian doctrine and Christian art.

Another cult which achieved much popularity was that of Isis and Osiris. . . . This cult probably came to the West with Egyptian traders and slaves, and though some of its features were at first regarded as revolting, by the end of the second century it was firmly established. Thenceforward, it spread with amazing rapidity, especially among women.<sup>1</sup>

Isis, having come from Egypt, was the most prominent of the goddesses.

Oldest of the old, she was the goddess from whom all Becoming arose. She was the . . . Mistress of the Two Lands of Egypt, Mistress of Shelter, Mistress of Heaven, Mistress of the House of Life, Mistress of the Word of God. She was the Unique. In all her great and wonderful works she was a wiser magician and more excellent than any other god.<sup>2</sup>

The Egyptians looked to Isis as the source of their life.

From time immemorial Isis was for the Egyptian world goddess of all life. . . . she was identified with every living thing, and . . . she became all things to all men. Isis was the Great Lady, the Queen of Heaven, the Moon-goddess, protectress and mother of

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Elliot-Binns, The Beginnings of Western Christendom, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>R. E. Witt, Isis in the Graeco-Roman World (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 14.

all the pharaohs. . . . the ordinary Egyptian could turn to her in an infinite number of troubles.<sup>1</sup>

Cybele, like Isis, was a Great Mother Goddess who seldom lacked devotees. She appears in many cultures and is compared to the Virgin Mary. She was a never failing source of comfort and help. People appealed to her like a child would to its own mother.

The idea of sexual purity both before and after marriage is seen in Isis and Artemis. "The cult of the virgin Artemis when considered entirely by itself reminds us at once of Catholic devotion to the Panaghia/Madonna in the nunnery."<sup>2</sup>

Thus the paganism of Greece and Rome formed a religious climate which was later to have a great influence upon Christianity.

The spread of Oriental cults in the West was part of a general religious awakening in the centuries immediately following the birth of Christ. It affected all classes. . . . as the various cults advanced side by side, quite inevitably they exerted influence upon each other. Syncretism and eclecticism was in the very air which men breathed, and even in the more sober world of philosophy it was at work. The exponents of one worship would not be slow to borrow features which had proved attractive in its rivals; whilst individual thinkers, despairing of truth in any single system,

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<sup>1</sup>Sharon Kelly Heyob, The Cult of Isis Among Women in the Graeco-Roman World (Leiden, Neth.: E.J. Brill, 1975), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>R. E. Witt, Isis in the Graeco-Roman World, p. 246.

would combine features from each, or even hold different faiths in conjunction.

One very important means by which Oriental religious ideas permeated the West were the mystery religions where they first became popular after the conquests of Alexander.<sup>1</sup>

Boettner informs us that:

the Christian church functioned for at least 150 years without idolizing the name of Mary. . . . But after Constantine's decree making Christianity the preferred religion the Greek-Roman pagan religions with their male gods and female goddesses exerted an increasingly stronger influence upon the church. Thousands of the people who then entered the church brought with them the superstitions and devotions which they had long given to Isis, Ishtar, Diana, Athena, Artemis, Aphrodite, and other goddesses, which were then conveniently transferred to Mary. Statues were dedicated to her, as there had been statues dedicated to Isis, Diana, and others, and before them the people kneeled and prayed as they had been accustomed to do before the statues of the heathen goddesses.<sup>2</sup>

It is not surprising then that:

many of the people who came into the church had no clear distinction in their minds between the Christian practices and those that had been practiced in their heathen religions. . . . The people were allowed to bring into the church those things from their old religions that could be reconciled with the type of Christianity then developing, hence many who bowed down before the images of Mary were in reality worshipping their old gods under a new name.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>L. E. Elliot-Binns, The Beginnings of Western Christendom, pp. 58-59.

<sup>2</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

### Apocryphal Writings

Roman Catholicism insists that Mariology is established by means of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition as both are interpreted by the Magisterium. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes more apparent that the majority of assertions gain their support from ecclesiastical tradition.

Many of these extra-biblical statements regarding Mary can be traced back to certain books which were written after the New Testament canon was closed. These books are known as the Pseudepigraph (the books rejected by all). Catholic theologians have relied upon these writings to support their claims for Mary. During the first few centuries

. . . numerous books of a fanciful and heretical nature arose that are neither genuine nor valuable as a whole. . . . Virtually no orthodox Father, canon or council considered these books to be canonical. . . . at best, these books were revered by some of the cults and referred to by some of the Orthodox Fathers, but they were never considered canonical by the mainstream of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

Three of these writings have had an important influence on Mariology.<sup>2</sup> Each book contains false statements

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<sup>1</sup>Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, A General Introduction to the Bible (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982), p. 199.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

about the Virgin Mary. The Protevangelium of James (second century), is a fanciful story about Mary's birth and parents. In this book her perpetual virginity was first asserted.<sup>1</sup> The Passing of Mary (fourth century), deals with the bodily assumption and advanced stage of Mary worship. The Gospel of Nativity of Mary (sixth century), promotes the worship of Mary.<sup>2</sup>

#### Statements of Church Fathers

The early patristic writings rarely mention Mary and when they do it is usually in conjunction with an analogy between her and Eve.<sup>3</sup>

Justin Martyr and Irenaeus (see p. 40) were the earliest writers who contrasted Mary's obedience with Eve's disobedience.

Justin Martyr, who died in 165, compares Mary and Eve. . . . Irenaeus, who died in 202, says that the disobedience of the 'virgin Eve' was atoned for by the obedience of the 'virgin Mary.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London: University Press, 2nd edition 1974. Reprinted 1978), p. 882.

<sup>2</sup>L. E. Elliot-Binns, The Beginnings of Western Christendom, p. 232. For fuller description note pages 230-45.

<sup>3</sup>F. L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, p. 882.

<sup>4</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 136.

Athanasius, the most noted defender of Trinitarian orthodoxy,<sup>1</sup> made an essential contribution to Mariology through his development of Christology. "Within sixty years of Athanasius's death, his authority would count in the defence of Mary's title, Theotokos"<sup>2</sup> (see p. 41). He also used the term "ever virgin" which Jovinian contested, but the orthodox Fathers, beginning from the 5th century, in both the East and West accepted it.<sup>3</sup>

Basil, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, was likewise a defender of Mary's perpetual virginity based on Matthew 1:25.<sup>4</sup>

Ambrose also believed in the perpetual virginity of Mary. He first used the Latin word sancta, holy, in speaking of Mary. He claimed that she was not from this earth but heaven. Yet he did not deny her humanity. He further spoke of Mary as the first beneficiary of Christ's Redemption.<sup>5</sup> However, Tertullian, a man of culture and one of the greatest authorities in the Church, rejected Mary's

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<sup>1</sup>Robert C. Walton, Chronological and Background Charts of Church History (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), chart 11.

<sup>2</sup>O'Carrol, Theotokos, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup>F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, p. 882.

<sup>4</sup>O'Carrol, Theotokos, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 19.

perpetual virginity. He was a convert from paganism and the first of the Latin Fathers.<sup>1</sup>

Jerome's statement, "By a woman the whole world was saved, and death through Eve, life through Mary,"<sup>2</sup> implies that salvation came through Mary.

It is not exactly clear what Augustine may have meant when he said: "she conceived him first in her mind and then in her body."<sup>3</sup>

A casual reading of the early Church Fathers does not give the reader clear and definite insight into all that they believed. How then, has the Roman Catholic Church gathered so much support from their writings in advocating the dogmas of Mariology? Vos explains that:

The Roman Church has always used a very simple procedure: to take from each author that which favors its doctrines, and to omit from their writings that which is not in accord with the given norms of the Vatican. In this way its history is written.<sup>4</sup>

#### Heretical Denials of the Incarnation

Two great eras of theological controversy have occurred in the history of the church. The earlier period

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 337.

<sup>2</sup>Baker, Fundamentals of Catholicism Vol. 2 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), p. 364.

<sup>3</sup>Baker, Fundamentals of Catholicism, p. 362.

<sup>4</sup>Vos, Religions in a Changing World, p. 374.

occurred between the Council of Nicea (325) and the Council of Chalcedon (425), when universal or ecumenical councils were held by the leaders of the Church in order to resolve conflict. The latter period was during the Reformation (1517-1648), when the great creeds of Protestantism were hammered out.<sup>1</sup>

During the former of these two eras, heresies were born as a result of pagan concepts of the Godhead. All of these heresies of this period were, in one form or another, denials of the Incarnation.<sup>2</sup>

Apollarianism taught that "Christ had no human spirit. The Logos replaced it."<sup>3</sup> Nestorianism claimed that "the Logos indwelt the person of Jesus, making Christ a God-bearing man rather than the God-man. [This] affirmed merely mechanical rather than organic union of the person of Christ."<sup>4</sup> Eutychianism affirmed that "the human nature of Christ was absorbed by the Logos."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cairns, Christianity Through the Centuries, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup>James Hastings, ed., Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VIII. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 476.

<sup>3</sup>Walton, Chronological and Background Charts of Church History, Chart 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



Although there were other Christological heresies such as Monophysitism and Monothelitism, these three contributed most to the origin of Mariology. Thus, when the Fathers met at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. their purpose was not to glorify Mary, but

. . . to emphasize the deity of Christ over against those who denied His equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit. . . . It was therefore only to emphasize the fact the 'person' born to Mary was truly divine that she was called 'the Mother of God'.<sup>1</sup>

However,

. . . the term soon came to be regarded as expressing an exaltation of Mary, and by the sixth century false notions about Mary, originally framed by the Gnostics and a sect known as Collyridians, were taken up by the Church itself, and the way was open for the worship of Mary, which has since grown so greatly, especially in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore,

. . . the term today has come to have a far different meaning from that intended by the early church. It no longer has reference to the orthodox doctrine concerning the person of Christ, but instead is used to exalt Mary to a supernatural status as Queen of Heaven.<sup>3</sup>

#### Pronouncements of Church Councils

The Ecumenical Church Councils, which had an influence on the origin of Mariology, were the Council of Nicaea

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<sup>1</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>Elwell, ed., Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, p. 739.

<sup>3</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 134.

(325), the Council of Constantinople (381), the Council of Ephesus (431), and the Council of Chalcedon (451).

The Council of Nicaea was:

the first general council, held at Nicaea in Asia Minor in 325, at a time when the Church faced the problem of Arianism . . . the Christological heresy of Arius, defined that Christ is true God and true man, and is of the same substance (homo-ousios) as the Father.<sup>1</sup>

The Council of Constantinople:

ratified the teaching of Nicaea about Christ, and asserted that He had an integral human nature. The Council defined that the three divine Persons of the Trinity are eternal and of the same divine nature.<sup>2</sup>

The Council of Ephesus condemned the Christological heresy of Nestorius, and:

defined again the doctrine of the true humanity of Christ, and taught that His mother, the blessed Virgin Mary, is, in virtue of the Incarnation, truly Theotokos, Mother of God.<sup>3</sup>

The Council of Chalcedon "taught that although Jesus Christ is God and man, He is but one Person, that is, one Person in two natures, one divine and one human."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ronald Lawler, Donald Wuerl, Thomas Lawler, eds., The Teaching of Christ, "The General Councils of the Church" (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1976), p. 561. An excellent one-volume account in English of the first twenty general councils in historical perspective is The Church in Crisis: A History of the General Councils, 325-1870, by Philip Hughes (New York: Hanover House, 1961).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 562.

These Councils helped to formulate the doctrine of Christology, but they also implied, that by Mary's association with her Son, she too had an exalted position that was above all other human beings.

### The Development of Mariology

The doctrine of 'Mary, the Mother of God,' as we know it today is the result of centuries of growth, often stimulated by pronouncements of church prelates. And yet the full-fledged system of Mariolatry is a comparatively recent development in Roman Catholic dogma.<sup>1</sup>

Mariology involves several different interrelated privileges that are attributed to Mary. According to the Catholic Church these privileges have always been contained within the original deposit of faith (treasury of revelation), but now they are more clearly understood.

The Divine Maternity is the primary privilege out from which all of the others flow.<sup>2</sup> The remaining privileges are: (1) Perpetual Virginity. The claim that Mary never had sexual intercourse with a man either before or after the birth of Jesus Christ. (2) Immaculate Conception. The teaching that Mary was "immaculta (wholly free from sin) from the instant she was conceived"<sup>3</sup> and even

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<sup>1</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup>M. J. Scheeben, Mariology, Vol. 1. trans. from German. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1946), p.xxv.

<sup>3</sup>Walter A. Elwell, ed., Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 686.

more so, "free from the taint of sin."<sup>1</sup> (3) Assumption. The statement affirming that "the Immaculate Virgin was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory upon the completion of her earthly sojourn."<sup>2</sup> (4) Co-Redemptrix. "A title in recent use to express the co-operation of the Blessed Virgin in the work of Redemption performed by Christ."<sup>3</sup> (5) Mediatrix of All Graces. This term has a two-fold meaning:

1. Mary gave the Redeemer, the Source of all graces, to the world, and in this way she is the channel of all graces. 2. Since Mary's assumption into Heaven no grace is conferred on man without her actual intercessory co-operation.<sup>4</sup>

(6) Mother of the Church. This title was given to Mary by Pope Paul VI in his Papal Brief which closed the Second Vatican Council on December 8, 1965.<sup>5</sup> Officially the appellation Mother of the Church has not been pronounced as a dogma. However, from a practical standpoint, this form

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<sup>1</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup>W. M. Abbott and J. Gallagher, eds., The Documents of Vatican II (The American Press, 1966), p. 90.

<sup>3</sup>Pietro Parente, Antonio Piolanti and Salvatore Garofalo, Dictionary of Dogmatic Theology. trans. from Italian. (Westminister, MD: Christian Classics Inc., 1974), p. 63.

<sup>4</sup>Ludwig Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma (Cork, Ireland: Mercier Press, 1955. This edition 1963), p. 212.

<sup>5</sup>Abbott and Gallagher, eds., The Documents of Vatican II, p. 738.

of address to Mary connotes a motherly honor and position whereby Mary shares with her Son in the nurture and welfare of all the Church's members.

Anyone who has an understanding of the New Testament will readily recognize that the source from which Mary's privileges have developed is non-biblical. The New Testament references, which are few, give us very little information about the Lord's mother. It states that she was a virgin, chosen by God to become the mother of Jesus. She was a woman of faith, who obeyed God, and was given special honor among women.

The remaining facts of Mary's life must be filled in by Tradition which according to Roman Catholics (see p. 11) has equal authority and importance with Scripture.

In the consideration of Mariological development, certain statements of men and councils have directly influenced the growth of the privileges granted to Mary. The discussion covers the Ancient; the Medieval; and the Modern periods of Church History.

#### The Ancient Church Period

The crucial doctrine during this time was the virgin birth of Christ. There was much confusion and dissension between the two major schools of theology in Alexandria and Antioch. In the midst of this was the heretical influence of the Gnostics who claimed to have sole possession of

Christ's revelation. Doceticism was one branch of Gnosticism which stressed that Christ was not a real man but only appeared so. Irenaeus and Tertullian wrote articles to refute this teaching.

In 312 A.D., when Constantine became Emperor of Rome, the Christian religion was given an equal status with other religions in Rome. This was both good and bad. One negative result was the influx of unbelievers into the membership of the Church by baptism. Because of the unbelievers, pagan worship was assimilated into the teaching of the Church.

Foremost in this period (30-590 A.D.) are the writings and purported statements of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria and Epiphanius.

Prominent in the thinking of these men (see p. 31) were three basic concepts: (1) An analogy between Mary and Eve so that Mary was called the New Eve. They viewed the disobedience of Eve as the source of spiritual death and in contrast the obedience of Mary as the remedy and cause of spiritual life or salvation. Justin Martyr, c.100-165, seems to have been the first to comment upon the idea. (2) The Divine Maternity of Mary. It was reasoned that since Jesus is God and Mary is His mother, she is therefore the Mother of God. This title for Mary originated at the

Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. as the deity of Christ was being emphasized. Because of Mary's close relationship with Jesus, special recognition as Theotokos (God-bearer) was given to her. However, the first purpose of the title was "not to glorify the Virgin Mary but to express in a term clear, impressive and popular the real divine humanity of Christ."<sup>1</sup> Cyril of Alexandria (376-444 A.D.) was the chief proponent of the Theotokos in his Christological controversy with Nestorius. A century earlier Athanasius (c. 296-373 A.D.) made a significant contribution to Mariology which lent support to Cyril's advocacy of the Theotokos (see p. 32). Later, this title for Mary was adopted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. (3) The Perpetual Virginity of Mary. Irenaeus, late 2nd century, was credited with the origin of this teaching. The dogma stated "that Mary remained a virgin even when and after bearing Jesus."<sup>2</sup> Among the Church Fathers there were some who held that Mary's virginity was in partu. "The phrase means that in the moment of childbirth Mary, through a special divine action, did not lose, the physical signs of virginity."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Miegge, The Virgin Mary, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Robbleto and Hepp, Jr. Roman Catholic Doctrine in the Light of Vatican II, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup>O'Carroll, Theotokos, p. 361.

Tertullian rejected the idea while about the same time Clement of Alexandria accepted it from the Apocrypha. . . . St. Jerome avoided the subject because it had been treated by the Apocrypha, of which he had a horror . . . Ambrose in his letter to Pope Siricius, set forth the doctrine fully. Augustine asserted it repeatedly.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until the fifth general council, held in 553 A.D., at Constantinople that the perpetual virginity of Mary was defined. This belief had begun about the middle of the second century and was:

based on the growing asceticism which considered the unmarried state as holier than marriage. It was felt that if sexual relations were at all impure, then the Mother of our Lord would have refrained from them all her life, even though legally married. Such ascetic ideas . . . came from Gnostic and Manichean philosophy, which considered matter evil and marriage unclean.<sup>2</sup>

This teaching finally became a dogma of the church, during the Roman bishopric of Martin I, at the Lateran Council in 649 A.D.<sup>3</sup>

These three concepts having been perpetuated early in the history of the church continued to grow and expand throughout the Middle Ages.

#### The Medieval Church Period

This period, (590-1517 A.D.), began with Gregory I (the Great), as "the first pope with papal authority,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Robbleto and Hepp, Jr. Roman Catholic Doctrine in the Light of Vatican II, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup>Miegge, The Virgin Mary, p. 47.



although he never claimed the name."<sup>1</sup> It ended with several spiritual leaders seeking reform within the Roman Catholic Church.

During this era two major teachings: the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, were debated within the Catholic Church. They were not pronounced dogmas until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively.

The first major teaching, the Immaculate Conception, began to emerge in tradition around the fourth century.<sup>2</sup> O'Carroll refers to Augustine as an early supporter of this dogma.<sup>3</sup> However, Augustine in writing to the Pelagian Julian of Ekanum, concerning Mary's immunity to sin was referring to actual sins rather than her original sin.<sup>4</sup> Thus, he said:

She is therefore saved from the common subjection to evil by that very virtue of regeneration that is given to the faithful and not by any privilege of birth.<sup>5</sup>

Augustine did not teach that Mary had an immaculate conception. However, the Catholic Church has taught that she was born without original sin, which is: "the lack of

<sup>1</sup>Cairns, Christianity Through the Centuries, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Miegge, The Virgin Mary, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup>O'Carroll, Theotokos, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup>Miegge, The Virgin Mary, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

God's unmerited grace, a supernatural grace which Adam and Eve had until they lost it through disobedience"<sup>1</sup>

Of all natural--born humans . . . only Mary was born with that supernatural grace and thus without sin. . . . though Mary was included in the death sentence passed to all of Adam's race; yet, in view of her future Son's merits and by God's abundant goodness, she was redeemed before she was born.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Aquinas, the greatest scholastic theologian, rejected the Immaculate Conception. Aquinas reasoned:

If the soul of the blessed Virgin had never been stained with the contagion of original sin, this would have taken from the dignity of Christ in his capacity as the Saviour of all.<sup>3</sup>

In regard to Mary's original sin, Aquinas explained that she "did indeed contract original sin but was cleansed from it, before her birth."<sup>4</sup>

In reply to Aquinas, John Duns Scotus attempted to provide a solution to reconcile Mary's privilege of sinlessness with the universality of Christ's redemption.<sup>5</sup> Scotus advocated that:

the most perfect mediator has the possibility of a most perfect act of mediation in regard to some person for whom he mediates; therefore Christ had, as a possibility, the most perfect degree of mediation in regard to

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<sup>1</sup>Robleto and Hepp, Jr. Roman Catholic Doctrine in the Light of Vatican II, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>O'Carroll, Theotokos, p. 343.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 320.

some person for whom he was a mediator. He had a more excellent degree in regard to no one than to Mary. . . . But this would not have been unless he had merited to preserve her from original sin.<sup>1</sup>

The second major teaching, the Assumption of Mary, is the theory that she "was taken body and soul to heaven"<sup>2</sup>. In the sixth century there were apocryphal traditions of Mary's Assumption. At first they were considered heretical. Then in 594 A.D., Gregory of Tours became the first orthodox writer to accept these stories.<sup>3</sup>

In the seventh century Emperor Maurice of Greece in the East, and Pope Gregory the Great in the West, designated August 15 as the day to celebrate Mary's Assumption.<sup>4</sup>

Another salient teaching which built upon these two dogmas was Mary's cooperation with Christ in the work of Redemption. With this came a new title for Mary.

Starting in the fourteenth century various theologians and preachers coined a new title for her and began to refer to her as the 'coredemptrix' (=Coredemptrix) of the human race.<sup>5</sup>

Boettner, summing up this period of church history, makes the following statements:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 321.

<sup>2</sup>Robbleto and Hepp, Jr. Roman Catholic Doctrine in the Light of Vatican II, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>5</sup>Kenneth Baker, Fundamentals of Catholicism, Vol. 2 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), p. 363.

The spiritual climate of the Middle Ages was favorable to the development of Mary worship. Numerous superstitions crept into the church and centered themselves in the worship of the Virgin and the saints. The art of the Middle Ages represented Mary with the child Jesus, Mary as 'mater dolorosa' at the cross . . . the rosary became popular; poems and hymns were written in honor of the 'god-mother.' Stories of miracles performed by her started in response to prayers addressed to her.

Also during that period arose the custom of looking to 'patron saints,' who in fact were merely Christianized forms of old pagan gods. In polytheism everything had its own god: the sea, war, hunting, merchants, agriculture. . . . After the same fashion there developed the Roman Catholic gallery of 'patron saints' for seamen, soldiers, travelers, hunters, and in modern times, for fliers, divers, cyclists, artillerymen. . . . This kinship with the pagan cults explains why Mary worship developed so rapidly after Constantine made Christianity the official religion.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Modern Church Period

Between the beginning of this period (1517 A.D.) and the present time, two dogmas have been pronounced. These are the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption which were previously mentioned.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563 A.D.) was a most important council in making clear and definite the dogmas of Mary.

The Immaculate Conception was the only teaching which became a dogma during the three hundred years between the Council of Trent and Vatican I. On December 8, 1854,

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<sup>1</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 137.

Pope Pius IX in the Bull 'Ineffabiles' promulgated the following doctrine . . . 'the Most Holy Virgin Mary was, in the first moment of her conception, by a unique gift of grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, preserved free from all stain of original sin.'<sup>1</sup>

From Vatican I (1870 A.D.) to Vatican II (1962-65 A.D.) the slogan, through Mary to Christ, began to regard Mary as a kind of fourth person in the Trinity. She was viewed as co-redeemer with Christ.

Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) expressed the thought, that Mary suffered with her dying Son and had with Him redeemed the human race. Pius XI sanctioned this pronouncement in 1923.<sup>2</sup>

Most important, during this period, was the pronouncement of Mary's Assumption. Although her Assumption was taught for centuries as though it were an ancient doctrine; it was not solemnly defined as a dogma until Pope Pius XII, on November 1, 1950, declared that Mary's body and soul were assumed into heaven.<sup>3</sup> This was then followed with the title Mediatrix of All Graces.

As early as the eighth century, a few testimonies were expressed of Mary's position as the mediatrix of

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<sup>1</sup>Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup>Boettner, Roman Catholicism, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup>Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, p. 208. Also Robleto and Hepp, Jr. Roman Catholic Doctrine in the Light of Vatican II, p. 162.

grace. During the peak period of the middle ages they became more numerous. Finally, in the modern period of church history, the doctrine was advocated by such personalities as: St. Peter Canisius, Suarez, St. Alphonsus Liguori and Scheeben.<sup>1</sup>

Speculatively this doctrine is based on Mary's "co-operation in the Incarnation and the Redemption, as well as on her relationship to the Church."<sup>2</sup>

Presently Mariology is not openly stressed as much as it was in the past. This is primarily due to the influence of Progressive Roman Catholics who see Mariology as a hinderance to establishing a close relationship with Protestants.

### The Influence of Mariology

#### Inside the Roman Catholic Church

For Roman Catholics, Mariology has proven to be a positive and uniting force. It has become a means for Catholics to express their love and devotion to the mother of Christ. The writings of Liguori have greatly influenced excessive devotion. Churches have been built and dedicated to Mary in most major cities of the world. Apparitions of Mary have likewise been reported in various parts of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 214-15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

world and pilgrimages are regularly made to these sites. Religious orders are named after Mary and a multitude of titles have been given to her. She can also be found in many forms of art and prayers are constantly offered to her.

Mary, rather than Christ, has become a prominent focus in Catholic worship. What was once claimed for Mary as special privileges granted to her from the Lord are now proclaimed as indisputable dogmas.

The Mariology of the past, in many ways, has turned into the Mariolatry of the present. Although hyperdulia (special veneration) is reserved for Mary alone, her followers cannot distinguish between the kind of devotion they give to her and, latria, the form that belongs only to God.

#### Outside the Catholic Church

Some Catholics, and most non-Catholics, see Mariology as a stumbling block for ecumenism. "Catholics and Protestants have long disputed about Mary. . . . their views on her are so different that they form a wall of separation."<sup>1</sup>

Protestants, due to the excessive devotion given to Mary by Catholics, have minimized the importance of Mary's

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<sup>1</sup>Robbleto and Hepp, Jr. Roman Catholic Doctrine in the Light of Vatican II, p. 156.

life and the special honor granted to her by God. Although the mother of our Lord must not be worshipped, she definitely should be respected by all believers.



## CHAPTER IV

### A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VIRGIN MARY

In the New Testament, six different women are called Mary although none of them are specifically referred to as the Virgin Mary. This term is used by theologians to describe Mary's uniqueness as the mother of Jesus. The term virgin, however, is biblical as may be seen from Matthew's statement that Mary's conception is a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (7:14) regarding the virgin who "shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son" (Matt 1:16-23).

In addition to the passage in Isaiah, the remaining references to Mary are found in the Four Gospels; Acts 1:14; and Galatians 4:4. There are some commentators (mostly Roman Catholic) who also refer to the woman in Revelation 12 as possibly having a secondary reference to the Virgin Mary.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Prophetic Statement and its Fulfillment

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa 7:14).

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and John Reumann, Mary in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 239.

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal 4:4).

Although Mary's name is not specifically mentioned in this verse, the following references in Matthew's Gospel confirm that the Galatian passage could refer only to the Virgin Mary. Matthew specifies that it was "Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (Matt 1:16). Further elaboration is made by the angel of the Lord to Joseph.

Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us (Matt 1:20b-23).

From these passages of Scripture we are assured that Mary was divinely chosen to bear God's Son through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit.

### The Narrative

Luke begins his narrative with Gabriel's greeting to Mary:

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that are highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at

his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS (Luke 1:26-31).

The immediate context depicts the time of Gabriel's appearance to Mary as the sixth month. This period of time is calculated from his annunciation to Zacharias concerning Elisabeth's conception (Luke 1:11-13). The place of his appearance to Mary was Nazareth. However, we do not know with whom she was living at that time. Some commentators state that she probably was living with her parents, but possibly could have been living with her elder sister (John 19:25),<sup>1</sup> since Joseph had not yet taken Mary to be his wife (Matt 1:24).

Mary's engagement to Joseph "was regarded as a definite promise of mutual fidelity."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore,

the interval between betrothal and marriage was commonly a year, during which the bride lived with her friends. But her property was vested in her future husband, and unfaithfulness on her part was punished, like adultery, with death (Deut. xxii. 23,24).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>H. B. Hackett, ed., Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, (New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1871), p. 1818.

<sup>2</sup>Norval Geldenhuys, "The Gospel of Luke." The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), p. 75.

<sup>3</sup>Alfred Plummer, "Saint Luke." The International Critical Commentary, 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1922), p. 21.

Mary's lineage is not absolutely clear. Grammatically, "the phrase, 'of the house of David' in Luke 1:27 may apply either to 'virgin' or to 'man'."<sup>1</sup> There are some writers who believe that both genealogies (Matt 1:2-16; and Luke 3:23-28) are Joseph's. However, if that is true, then we can not be certain that Mary belonged to the Davidic line.

This degree of uncertainty is reduced by looking outside of the Gospels. Ps 132:11 states: "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." In comparing this verse with the angel's words in Luke 1:32, "The throne of his father David" would at least imply that the early church believed that she was so descended<sup>2</sup>. The apostle Paul likewise emphasized that the Saviour was made of the seed of David according to the flesh (Rom 1:3). This evidence seems to indicate that Mary was a descendant of David. The angel's greeting to Mary, "Hail, thou that are highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28), has been interpreted by Roman Catholic expositors to mean that:

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<sup>1</sup>Merrill C. Tenny, Gen. ed., The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup>George Arthur Buttrick, Dict ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 2 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 290.

Mary is full of gifts of grace and accordingly appears between God and man as mediator to dispense gifts. It is, however, clear from the context that Mary is merely the recipient of the favour of God in that He had chosen her to become the mother of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

This truth about Mary is further observed by the Authorized Version rendering of highly favoured. This translation is "much nearer to the original than the 'gratia plena' of the Vulgate, on which a huge and wholly unsubstantial edifice has been built by Romanist devotional writers."<sup>2</sup>

Mary was troubled at Gabriel's statement, "and cast in her mind what manner of greeting this should be" (Luke 1:29). Without hesitation, Gabriel explained to Mary the fact that God had chosen her to become the mother of His Son. When Mary asked Gabriel how she could give birth to a son since she, being a virgin, was not yet united in marriage to a man, Gabriel said it would be accomplished by the Holy Spirit coming upon her and the power of the Highest would overshadow her. Therefore, that holy One who would be born of her would be called the Son of God (Luke 1:29-35).

Finally, an expression of Mary's faith in the Lord and submission to His will is detected. Her response was:

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<sup>1</sup>Norval Geldenhuys, "The Gospel of Luke." p. 79.

<sup>2</sup>H. B. Hackett, ed., Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, p. 1818.

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). Herein is an important lesson. God has spoken and continues to speak through His Word (Heb 1:1,2). Those who hear should not doubt but implicitly believe and obey the inspired Word of God (Luke 11:27,28).

### The Miraculous Conception of Jesus

The Scripture clearly states that Mary was engaged to Joseph, and before they came together as husband and wife, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:18). There probably was a brief period of time between Gabriel's annunciation to Mary and the actual time of conception. Possibly it occurred prior to her arrival at Elisabeth's house when she said: "be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

### Mary's Three Month Visit With Elisabeth

And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said, my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty

hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.  
 . . . And Mary abode with her about three months, and  
 returned to her own house (Luke 1:39-49,56).

It is important to notice Luke 1:47, "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." In what manner should Mary's reference to my Saviour be understood? Mary, in her thinking, "probably included the notion of eternal and political deliverance, but not to the exclusion of spiritual salvation."<sup>1</sup>

#### The Concern of Joseph For Mary

When Mary returned to Nazareth after having visited Elisabeth, Joseph became aware of her pregnancy. "Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly" (Matt 1:19). Joseph knew that according to the Mosaic Law, Mary's life was in danger if she were to be accused of adultery by the priest.

All of Mary's explaining to Joseph would not have satisfied his dejected spirit. It was God who sent His angel to comfort Joseph by explaining to him the cause and purpose of Mary's pregnancy. Jesus, the Saviour, was to be born of Mary as a result of the Holy Spirit overshadowing her (Matt 1:20,21).

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Plummer, "Saint Luke," p. 32.

### The Response of Joseph to Gabriel

The angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream telling him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. "Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had told him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS" (Matt 1:24,25).

Catholics are vocal in their view of Joseph's physical relationship with Mary. They claim he never had a normal sexual relationship with her either before or after the birth of Jesus. From this unfounded supposition, the Catholic Church has developed the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity.

Tasker, in commenting on Matthew 1:25, stresses some interesting facts.

The prima facie meaning of this verse would seem to be that after Mary's firstborn son was born, Joseph had normal sexual intercourse with her; and, as McNeile points out, the Greek construction used here 'always implies in the New Testament that the negatived action did, or will, take place after the point of time indicated by the particle.'<sup>1</sup>

The real intent of the verse was to emphasize that Mary was a virgin at the time she conceived and that during her nine months of pregnancy Joseph did not sexually touch

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<sup>1</sup>R. V. G. Tasker, The Gospel According to St. Matthew (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), p. 36.



her. Matthew was stressing the virgin birth of Christ rather than the perpetual virginity of Mary.

Furthermore, this theory cannot be substantiated in view of the Bible's reference to the half-brothers and half-sisters of Jesus (Matt 13:55,56; Mark 6:3).

However, Roman Catholics deny the plain teaching of Scripture when it speaks of the Lord's brethren (Matt 12:46,47; 13:55,56; Mark 3:31,32; Luke 8:19,20 and John 2:12). They generally interpret the term "brethren" to refer either: (1) to children which were born to Joseph by a previous marriage;<sup>1</sup> or (2) to those who were cousins of Jesus.

The word 'brethren,' as used in the Bible, has a wider significance than sons of the same mother. The brethren referred to in the Bible are James (afterwards bishop of Jerusalem), Joseph, Simon, and Jude, who were cousins of Jesus. They were the sons of Mary, wife of Cleophas (also called Alphaeus), who was the Blessed Virgin's first cousin.<sup>2</sup>

The apostle Paul evidently believed that Mary had other children because he refers to "James the Lord's brother" (Gal 1:19; Matt 13:55).

However, in their attempt to justify this theory, Catholics reason: "If Mary had brought forth other chil-

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<sup>1</sup>Brown, Donfried, Fitzmyer, and Reumann, eds., Mary in the New Testament, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>David Goldstein, Campaigners For Christ Handbook (Boston, MA: Catholic Campaigners For Christ, 1931), p. 74.

dren besides her 'first born son,' Jesus, dying on the cross, would not have placed His Holy Mother in the care of St. John"<sup>1</sup> (John 19:25-27).

In reply to these statements, we must notice two facts: (1) the claim, that the brethren refers to children of Joseph by a previous marriage, is an argument from silence. (2) Mark, who is called a cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10), was familiar with the term cousin. However, when describing the Lord's brethren (Mark 3:31-32; 6:3), he used the word brothers rather than cousins. This would indicate he recognized them as half-brothers of Jesus.

The fact that Jesus entrusted His mother to John should not be surprising since John was the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23; 19:26). Also at the time of crucifixion our Lord's half-brothers and half-sisters were still unbelieving (John 6:1-4; 7:3-5). These are two possible and valid reasons for Mary going to live with John instead of her own children.

Finally, the absence of having children is certainly no proof of abstinence from sexual intercourse. This act in and of itself would invalidate the theory of Mary's perpetual virginity.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>For further information regarding Mary's perpetual virginity, see: Brown, Donfried, Fitzmyer and Reumann, eds., Mary in the New Testament, pp. 51-72. Note especially the footnote on page 67.

## The Journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem

Humanly speaking the reason for Mary's long journey to Bethlehem was to be taxed.

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the family and descent of David:) to be taxed with Mary his promised wife, being great with child (Luke 2:3-5).

Luke indicates the historical circumstances that brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem.

Caesar Augustus had decreed that all the world, i.e. the whole of the Roman Empire, should be taxed. This Caesar reigned from 30 B.C. to 19th August, A.D. 14. After he had, by political astuteness and military strength, put an end to the terrible civil wars which had raged for many years throughout the Roman world and to all resistance that was offered to him, he reigned for forty-four years as absolute monarch over the Roman Empire. Through a peaceful and mild rule he gave to the world a period of unprecedented outward calm and to his huge empire a permanent organization which afterwards facilitated the spread of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

However, there was another reason for Mary's coming to Bethlehem. According to the prophet Micah, Christ, who was of the lineage of David, would be born in Bethlehem.

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from eternity (Mic 5:2).

And so it was that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him

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<sup>1</sup>Norval Geldenhuys, "The Gospel of Luke." pp. 99-100.

in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn (Luke 2:6,7).

This prophecy was fulfilled some five hundred years after it had been given. The Spirit of God was active in causing Caesar Augustus to make a decree that all the world had to be taxed. There was no way that Mary could escape from her obligation to obey the law of the land. Yet in the midst of this command, all things began to work together for good to Mary and Joseph (Rom 8:28). Scripture was fulfilled and the ruler in Israel, Christ, was born.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6).

#### The Visit of the Shepherds to Bethlehem

These men were watching over their flocks that night when they heard the angel of the Lord speaking about the good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

The shepherds, upon hearing the good news, came to Bethlehem "with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger" (Luke 2:16).

Those who came and saw the babe lying in a manger could not keep quiet. They quickly told others what they

had heard and seen. As Mary witnessed this great event and wondered at those things which were being spoken by the shepherds, she "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

### The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Joseph and Mary in obedience to the Word of God (Lev 12:1-3; and Num 3:13), circumcised their firstborn son when he was eight days old and called his name Jesus. For Mary a total of forty days was necessary before she could be pronounced purified of her uncleanness (Lev 12:2,4). After these forty days of purification were fulfilled, Jesus was brought to Jerusalem by His parents to be presented in the Temple.

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were ended, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons (Luke 2: 21-24).

Geldenhuis carefully explains the significance of the purification and of the circumcision of Jesus.

The circumcision and purification customs after a birth had reference to the state of sin in which each human being is born and to the purification therefrom by blood-sprinkling and sacrifices. Where, therefore, Jesus, the stainless and Holy one, undergoes these things, this is not on His own account, but it serves as a sign that He voluntarily places Himself under the

Law and takes upon Himself the obligations of His people so as to procure their redemption. He takes upon Himself their impurity and guilt and therefore He undergoes circumcision and later on also the baptism by John.<sup>1</sup>

The purification pertained not only to Mary but also to Jesus. Therefore:

The correct reading of the words here is (as in R.V.) 'after the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished.' This refers to the provisions of Leviticus xii. A woman was regarded as ceremonially impure for forty days after the birth of a son. Because her 'impurity' was connected with the birth of a child, the child is also involved in it, and therefore the original reading is 'their purification'.<sup>2</sup>

When Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to do for Him according to the custom of the law:

Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (Luke 2:34,35).

After the presentation of Jesus in the temple, Joseph evidently returned to Bethlehem with Jesus and Mary.

#### The Visit of the Magi

The magi (astrologers) who came from the east to Jerusalem, as a result of the star they had seen in the east, found the young child and mother in Bethlehem.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 117,118.

Having been sent on their way from Jerusalem to Bethlehem by Herod:

The star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh (Matt 2:9-11).

An important fact that must be pointed out from verse 11, is that these wise men fell down and only worshipped Jesus, not Mary. If there had ever been a time when Mary should have been worshipped, it was then. But we note that there is no mention of Mary being worshipped either then or later. Roman Catholics, who insist that Mary is to receive devotion and prayers, must turn to ecclesiastical tradition for their support.

#### The Flight to Egypt

Herod was greatly troubled by the astrologers' visit to Jerusalem, and their inquiry concerning where Christ should be born (Luke 2:4). Out of fear that a rival king had been born and would pose a threat to Herod's kingdom, Herod instituted a plan of liquidating all of the children that were two years old and younger. By this means he felt certain there would be no further opposition from the Christ who should be or had been born. As Tasker states, Herod did not allow the magi:

to leave his presence, before he had first ascertained from them the exact time when they first saw the star. It would seem that he had already decided that if he could not locate the child in question he would embark on the campaign of "liquidation".<sup>1</sup>

When the wise men departed from Bethlehem into their own country,

behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod (Matt 2:13-15a).

Later, after the death of Herod,

an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life (Matt 2:19,20).

Joseph obeyed the angel's voice, but out of fear of Archelaus, the son of Herod, and:

being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth (Matt 2:22,23).

#### The Visit to Jerusalem

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast (Luke 2:41,42).

The visit to Jerusalem was an annual occurrence for Joseph and Mary, but Jesus may not have always gone with

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<sup>1</sup>R. V. G. Tasker, The Gospel According to St. Matthew, p. 37.



them. However, this was a special visit since He was now twelve years old.

Joseph and Mary were accustomed to attend the Passover in Jerusalem every year. Although the Lord had commanded in Exodus 3:17 and Deuteronomy 16:16 that the Israelites should go to the sanctuary for all the three principal festivals, it gradually became a fairly common practice for Jews outside Jerusalem to go only at the Passover.<sup>1</sup>

The reason why Jesus went with His parents to the feast of the passover

was probably in order to be prepared for the ceremony of the following year, when He would be permitted as a young Jewish boy to join the religious community as a responsible member--i.e. as 'son of the commandment' (Bar Mitzpah). The important event takes place when the Jewish boy is thirteen.<sup>2</sup>

When the feast of passover was completed Joseph and Mary began their long journey back to Nazareth.

As they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. . . . And when they saw him, they were amazed; and his mother said unto him, Son, why have you done this to us? behold, thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, 'how is it that ye were looking for me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?' and they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them,

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<sup>1</sup>Norval Geldenhuys, "The Gospel of Luke." p. 126.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart (Luke 2:43-51).

Luke 2:51, is the last reference to Joseph in Scripture.

Joseph was a carpenter and . . . Jesus helped him in his work. During the years after the happenings in the temple and before our Lord's appearance in public, Joseph died; and as far as can be ascertained from the allusions in the Gospels and in the early church fathers Jesus after this took the place of Joseph as provider for His mother and His younger brothers and sisters (Mark 6:3).<sup>1</sup>

#### The Wedding in Cana of Galilee

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.' His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it (John 2:1-5).

Much has been said by Roman Catholic writers regarding Mary's cooperation with her Son in His earthly ministry (John 2:3-5). They assume that since she has merited such favor with God from her earthly labors, He now permits her to have a heavenly ministry of co-redemption with Christ. She in His behalf now dispenses graces to mankind.

This passage does not teach that Mary cooperated with Jesus in His earthly ministry. Neither can it be

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

proven from this text that Jesus can not deny His mother's request. The fact is that Jesus, with all respect to His mother, shows there is a distance between them by His statement: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4).

The use of the term Woman was a sign of respect. "In the Greek tragedians it is constantly used in addressing queens and persons of distinction. . . . But while there is neither harshness nor disrespect, there is distance in the expression."<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Jesus did provide wine for the wedding was due to His concern for the bridegroom's need; not that He was obligated to fulfill His mother's request.

#### The Call for Jesus by Mary and His Brethren

In each of the Synoptics (Matt 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-15; and Luke 8:19-21), reference is made to the occasion when Mary and the brethren of Jesus called for Him. This is the only reference to Mary which is couched between the wedding in John 2 and the crucifixion of Christ in John 19.

The text reads:

While he yet talked to the people, behold his mother and his brethren stood without desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother

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<sup>1</sup>W. Robertson Nicoll, The Expositor's Greek New Testament Vol. I (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), p. 703.

and thy brethren stand outside, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?"

And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, "Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt 12:46-50).

Tasker, speaking in reference to Matthew 12:47, states:

This verse is omitted in the remarkably strong combination of early witnesses to the text, the Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, the MS representing the earliest Latin version, and the ancient Syriac versions. The possibility must therefore be allowed for that it was a later insertion made to smooth out the otherwise awkward transition from verse 46 to verse 48. On the other hand, Matthew is a very lucid writer, and it is equally<sup>1</sup> possible that the verse was omitted accidentally.

The critical apparatus in the Greek New Testament shows that there are several codices which include this verse as well as those which omit.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of this passage lies in the fact that Jesus makes a clear distinction between physical and spiritual relationships. He lets the multitudes as well as His family know:

that He was not prepared to submit to the mistaken judgment of even His mother and nearest blood-

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<sup>1</sup>R. V. G. Tasker, The Gospel According to St. Matthew, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren, eds., The Greek New Testament, 3rd ed. (West Germany: United Bible Societies, 1966), p. 46.

relations. . . . He was in the deepest sense related not to those who, humanly speaking, were the most closely related to Him, but to those who believed and obeyed the word of God brought to them by Him.<sup>1</sup>

### Mary by the Cross of Jesus

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, 'Woman, behold thy son!' Then saith he to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother!' and from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home (John 19:25-27).

From this text (the last recorded appearance of Mary in the presence of Jesus), Roman Catholics have claimed for Mary an act of voluntarily yielding her Son to God. However the Saviour's words, to His mother, here imply that Mary was losing her Son "so far as the filial relation goes, but John will in this respect take my place. And this trust He commits to John."<sup>2</sup>

### The Prayer Meeting in the Upper Room

After the ascension of Christ, the disciples returned

from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of

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<sup>1</sup>Norval Geldenhuys, "The Gospel of Luke." p. 249.

<sup>2</sup>W. Robertson Nicoll, The Expositor's Greek Testament, p. 858.

Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren (Acts 1:12-14).

Acts 1:14 is the final historical New Testament reference to the Virgin Mary. She, along with the eleven disciples and "the women . . . had gone up to Jerusalem from Galilee with Jesus and His followers"<sup>1</sup> to attend a prayer meeting. It is most notable in this verse that the apostles "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus." Furthermore, it is observed that Mary joined the others in praying to God. At the same time it is evident that no one prayed to Mary. In view of the fact that Scripture does not sanction prayers to be offered to anyone except God, what support do Roman Catholics have for their teaching that prayer is to be offered to Mary?

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is unique in that she believed the Word of God and acted in faith. We need not be afraid to talk about Mary just because a majority of professing Christians have overindulged in their praise and actual worship of her.

Throughout the Gospel narrative it is impossible to speak of Mary without observing the abundance of informa-

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<sup>1</sup>F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of the Acts (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), p. 44.

tion regarding Jesus. Only here and there does her name briefly emerge then disappear.

Why is Mary, in contrast to Jesus, mentioned so little in Scripture? Possibly John the Baptist gives us the answer when he spoke of himself in contrast to the Messiah. "He must increase (become more important), but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

## CHAPTER V

### A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VIRGIN MARY'S CO-REDEMPTIVE WORK IN SALVATION

#### The Definition of Mary's Co-Redemption

The doctrine of the coredemption of the Blessed Virgin is one that has evolved through the ages of the Church. No explicit testimony to it is found in Holy Scripture or in the primitive tradition, but, as the Church's understanding . . . has increased, the implicit evidence has become clearer.<sup>1</sup>

Mary's co-redemption is considered to be both objective and subjective. As objective, it has reference to her participation in the acquisition of graces; while the subjective refers to Mary's application of these graces to mankind.

Objective Redemption was the single act completed by the Saviour, valid for all men. The application of its fruits to individual souls constitutes the subjective redemption.<sup>2</sup>

Objective Redemption:

'was accomplished when God, accepting the merits and satisfactions of Christ, per modum unis with His sacrificial death on the Cross, ceased to be angry with

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<sup>1</sup>Mary Nivard Peter, "The Doctrine of the Coredemption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Writings of Selected Contemporary Mariologists" (M.A. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1961), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>O'Carroll, Theotokos, p. 307.



the human race and showed Himself ready to reinstate fallen man into His former friendship. . . . The latter, i.e., the subjective Redemption, takes place when Christ's merits and satisfactions are actually applied to individual souls through the normal means established by God (sacraments, prayer, etc.).'<sup>1</sup>

Catholic theologians are divided about the first, but all agree that Mary cooperated in the latter. In objective redemption they differ between: (1) Mary's co-operating in a remote manner, through her consent to the Incarnation and the redemptive plan outlined in the Annunciation; and (2) Her cooperating in a proximate or immediate manner, through her co-offering with merit of the sacrifice of Calvary.<sup>2</sup> Thus Mary's Co-redemption is defined as: that act whereby she willingly cooperated with God in becoming the mother of the Saviour, and in offering Him back to the Father at the cross.

#### The Problem of Mary's Co-Redemption

The problem of Mary's Co-Redemption came into focus at the Lourdes Congress in 1958.

Three points were especially debated: Mary's part in the objective as well as in the subjective redemption; her immediate or remote cooperation in the former; the ultimate basis of her co-redemption and, consequently, the pattern it follows, Christ-type or Church-type.

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<sup>1</sup>Lawrence J. Riley, "Historical Conspectus of the Doctrine of Mary's Co-Redemption," Marian Studies 2:29 (1951).

<sup>2</sup>O'Carroll, Theotokos, p. 307. For further information, see: J. B. Carol, Mariology, Vol. II. p. 581.

Objective Redemption was the single act completed by the Savior, valid for all men; the application of its fruits to individual souls constitutes the subjective redemption. All Marian theologians agree that Mary cooperates in the second, as does the church. As to her cooperation in the first, two moments are distinguished: remote, through her consent to the Incarnation and the redemptive plan outlined in the Annunciation; proximate or immediate through her co-offering with merit of the sacrifice of Calvary.

This final point is the heart of the problem. Could Mary join in this essential work of Christ? . . . It is urged that to assign a share in the Redemption to Mary compromises either the universality or the sufficiency of Christ's act. Mary was redeemed by Christ and since 'the principle of merit does not fall under merit,' she could not have helped to accomplish that from which she benefited. Defenders of the thesis reply that 'Christ redeems Mary, and her alone, with a preservative Redemption, then together with her, in signo posteriori rationis, He redeems the rest of mankind with a liberative Redemption.'<sup>1</sup>

The dilemma is yet to be resolved. On the one hand, critics maintain that Mary's contribution adds nothing to Christ's and therefore need not be considered or else it does add something and then Christ alone did not redeem us. The proponents reply that God saves us, but His saving act includes our cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. The idea of Christ redeeming Mary with a preservative Redemption is mere human speculation.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Catholics, in speaking of Redemption, often fail to realize who Christ is. He is the only Redeemer. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The virgin Mary and every other human being is excluded from any participation with Christ in the work of Redemption.

Those who differ with the critics have arrived at their conviction as a result of following the teachings of Anselm of Canterbury. Anselm reasoned that: "the primeval sin stripped man of his exceptional gifts of original justice but left intact his natural equipment."<sup>1</sup>

The natural equipment involves an ability for man to cooperate with God in salvation. This reflects the basic idea in Catholicism that good works have an important part in obtaining one's salvation.

#### The Fundamental Principles of Mary's Co-Redemption

Two principles which are fundamental to the establishment of a proposition for Mary's co-redemption are analogy and association.

The prime example of the use of analogy is found in the expression: Mary is the New Eve. "In the context of the new Eve, St. Irenaeus expressed a suggestive idea that Mary was a cause of salvation to herself and all mankind."<sup>2</sup>

Analogy uses equivalent expressions. In the relationship between Eve and Mary, Eve is seen to have disobeyed the Lord while Mary obeyed God. Just as Eve's

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<sup>1</sup>J. P. Kenny, The Meaning of Mary for Modern Man (Richmond, Vic., Australia: Spectrum Publications, 1980), p. 111.

<sup>2</sup>O'Carroll, Theotokos, p. 305.

disobedience brought forth death, so Mary's act of obedience resulted in life.

A second principle which has strengthened the theory of Mary's co-redemption is association. According to Pius XII (ad coeli reginam), it was the decree of God to make Jesus the principle of salvation with Mary as His associate.<sup>1</sup> Mary was associated with God the Father in the Incarnation and with God the Son at the Crucifixion. By means of Mary's willing association with the Saviour, she has merited favor as well as maternal and spiritual rights. She has received the graces of Christ the Source of all grace and now Mary has become the dispenser of those graces to mankind in behalf of her Son. It is supposed, in the words of Father Nichols, that:

the fact that the entire doctrine of the coredemption leads to an association of man with Christ enables us at the same time to put our finger on the positive and revealed source from which we draw it. It is because the Mother of Christ is presented to us by Tradition as the Associate of Christ that we came gradually to consider her as the coredemptrix.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Historical Perspective of Mary's Co-Redemption

According to the Roman Catholic Church:

Devotion to Mary . . . has existed in the Church since the earliest times and is based on a solid foun-

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<sup>1</sup>New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 4, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup>Peter, "The Doctrine of the Coredemption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Writings of Selected Contemporary Mariologists," p. 18.

dation. A study of Mary's position in the divine plan is of tremendous importance if we are to get a clear notion of her role in our redemption and her place in our salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, Catholics claim that:

The idea of Mary's co-operation in our salvation is as old as Christianity and has its dogmatic foundation in the divine maternity, through which both Christ and His work belong, in a certain sense, to Mary, who conceived, bore, and nourished the Redeemer, and in addition offered Him in the Temple and suffered with Him, shared with Him spiritually His martyrlike death on the cross.<sup>2</sup>

These statements set forth the classic and indisputable doctrine (according to Rome) for Mary as Co-redemptrix. An impression is given that Mary's co-redemption has been taught by the Church for a long time and that it is founded upon Scripture. However, there is no warrant whatsoever from Scripture. Instead, tradition has provided the substance for the co-redemption theory.

In seeking to arrive at an understanding of Mary's co-redemption it is helpful to observe the historical development of her association with Christ.

Perhaps the earliest indication of belief that the Blessed Virgin co-operated in the Redemption are found in the works of St. Justin, St. Irenaeus and Tertullian. These indications lie in the very clear and

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas C. Donlan, Francis L. B. Cunningham, and Augustine Rock, Christ and His Sacraments (Dubuque, IA: The Priory Press, 1958), p. 254.

<sup>2</sup>Parente, Piolanti and Garofalo, Dictionary of Dogmatic Theology, p. 63.

forceful antithesis, developed by these writers, between Mary and Eve.<sup>1</sup>

A century later Ambrose, in a more precise term stated that through Mary salvation was given to all except Jesus, who did not need a helper.<sup>2</sup> These statements do not give a clear indication that these men actually believed Mary actively cooperated in Redemption. Rather John the Geometer, in the tenth century, first expressed the decisive view of Mary's part in Redemption.

You (Christ) have not only given yourself as a ransom for us, but, after yourself, have given your mother also as a ransom at every moment, so that indeed you have died for us once, but she died a thousand times in her will, her heart torn for you and also for those for whom she, like the Father, had given her own Son and knew him to be delivered unto death.<sup>3</sup>

Later, Arnold of Bonneval (who died after 1156 A.D.) sought to show the redemptive effect of Mary's suffering at the Crucifixion without sacrificing the dignity of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

By the thirteenth century, the idea of partnership between Jesus and Mary began to be reflected in theological writings. Mary was seen not as a substitute for Christ,

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<sup>1</sup>Lawrence J. Riley, "Historical Conspectus of the Doctrine of Mary's Co-redemption," Marian Studies 2:29-30 (1951).

<sup>2</sup>O'Carroll, Theotokos, p. 305.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 305-06.

but His helper and "associate sharing in his reign as she shared in his sufferings for the human race."<sup>1</sup>

Then in the seventeenth century, "Mary's redemptive role was seen in the closest proximity to that of Jesus."<sup>2</sup> Mary was recognized not only as the mother of Christ, but as His "helper and companion to redeem the human race."<sup>3</sup> At this same time a difference in merit was being made between Christ and Mary. Suarez, by making a distinction between

. . . de condigno, or in strict justice, and de congruo, due to a certain suitability, prepared the way for the theological axiom: 'The Blessed Virgin merited for us de congruo what Christ merited de condigno.' This makes the merit of Mary, in the plan of Redemption, coextensive with that of Christ, though clearly subordinate to it.<sup>4</sup>

In the last century, a noted German Mariologist, M. J. Scheeben likewise argued for Mary's participation in the redemptive work. He saw that her cooperation was

. . . not in order to achieve or complete the intrinsic power of the redeeming work, but only to perfect its beauty and loveliness in all respects, especially its organic connection with mankind to be redeemed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 307.

### The Explanation of Mary's Co-Redemption

The idea of Mary cooperating with Christ in the redemption of mankind comes from the ancient view that she is the Mother of God. Thus her divine maternity forms the basis for her role as Co-redemptrix.<sup>1</sup>

It has been pointed out that Mary, in contrast to Eve who (along with Adam) disobeyed God and plunged the human race into spiritual separation from the Lord, had an active cooperation with Christ in obtaining salvation for all mankind through her obedience to God.

This cooperation was direct because her own merits were accepted by God and had the same effect as Christ's merits, namely the restoration of mankind. Furthermore, she shared actively in making satisfaction for the sins of mankind through her compassion and shared in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross because it was she who freely offered him up to God for the sins of the world. She cooperated indirectly because she was worthy of becoming the mother of the Redeemer; because she, of her free will, consented to this motherhood; and because she gave birth to the Redeemer.<sup>2</sup>

In regards to the value of Mary's merits, there seems to be a conflict between Catholic theologians. As mentioned above, some understand that Mary's merits had the same effect as Christ's merits. There are others though, as the following statement indicates, which believe that

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<sup>1</sup>Valentine Albert Mitchel, The Mariology of Saint John Damascene (Kirkwood, MO: Maryhurst Normal Press, 1930), p. 174.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen Banks, Protestants, Catholics and Mary (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1968), p. 46.



her merits do not intrinsically add to the value of the price Christ paid for our salvation.

This 'semel acquisitum' merit of Mary did not, of course, add intrinsically to the internal value of the price Christ paid for our salvation, nor was it absolutely necessary, except consequently to a decree by which God wanted it added to the work of Christ in order to redeem us by the joint work of a man and a woman, as we had been lost to the slavery of the devil by the combined operation of the first man and the first woman.<sup>1</sup> (*Italics mine.*)

It is furthermore believed by Catholics that:

This human nature, by the design of God, was to participate in its own redemption not solely through the actions of the human nature of Christ, which as united to the work, completed the payment of the price in its essentials; it was to participate in its own Redemption also through the human nature and personality of Mary, whose co-operation was to perfect the work in its integral perfection, by adding to its beauty, and enriching it with humanity.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately we can discern the fallacy inherent in this kind of reasoning. On the one hand, there is no absolute necessity for Mary's participation in the redemption. On the other hand, God decreed that human nature would be actively involved in its own redemption. This kind of reasoning is both extra-biblical and heretical because it is not possible for any human being (including the Virgin Mary) to do anything that could merit favor with God. Mankind, because of sin, is totally cut off from

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<sup>1</sup>Gallagher, "Evaluations of the Arguments in Favor of Mary's Co-Redemption," Marian Studies 2:107 (1951).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

spiritual life and fellowship with God. In the midst of the helpless condition of humanity (Rom 3:23) God commended His love towards the world (John 3:16) and sent Christ to die for the sins of the human race (Rom 5:8).

Professor A. Michel indicates that after all of the discussion about Mary's merits and willingness to cooperate with Christ in Redemption, the real problem is:

not to learn whether Mary was intimately united to Christ by a moral union in those acts by which He immediately brought about the objective Redemption, particularly His passion and death. Nor is the question whether or not the Virgin has made satisfaction or has merited for men. The only question is to ascertain whether or not the Com-Passion of God's Mother, her satisfactory and meritorious acts, have contributed directly, to some extent, to produce those effects which we designate by the expression 'objective Redemption.'<sup>1</sup>

#### The Refutation of Mary's Co-Redemption

There is a basic misunderstanding and an element of distrust between Catholics and non-Catholics regarding each other's religious beliefs. Many from both groups are guilty of holding preconceived ideas about the other's faith and not taking time to understand what they believe.

This study of Mariology and especially the privilege of Mary's co-redemption has been approached with many questions. Books written by both Catholics and non-Catholics have been read with an attempt to be considerate and

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<sup>1</sup>A. Michel, "Mary's Co-Redemption," American Ecclesiastical Review 122, March (1950): 186.

respectful of Catholic sentiments. However it has been most difficult to understand how Catholics, with their various forms of reasoning, can circumvent the Word of God and teach what is a theory about Mary as though it were divine truth.

In approaching the study of Mary's Co-redemption we are immediately faced with a difficult task. This is for several reasons: (1) Sacred Scripture gives us only a limited account of Mary's life; (2) Ecclesiastical Tradition as interpreted by the Magisterium, is the final authority in what is taught and believed about Mary; (3) Catholics often use logic and analogy, inappropriately, to support their statements; and (4) The Bible is both misused and misunderstood by those who attempt to find a valid basis in Scripture to support their speculation of Co-redemption.

In an attempt to refute the Co-redemption theory it is important to understand how Catholics think of Mary and the means by which Mariology has developed.

Roman Catholics view Mary as having a human nature; being superior in every way to other humans; and having an exalted position above them. Thus a special form of adoration, called hyperdulia, is reserved for her.

In what way or manner did Mary acquire the place she has today in the Roman Catholic Church? One thing is

very evident: the privileges or rights granted to her by Catholics have no basis in Scripture. Instead, Ecclesiastical Tradition, which has developed over the centuries, has provided the substance for this theory.

The Tradition is a composite of various thoughts and ideas about Mary, some with a biblical flavor and others far removed from Scripture. These were placed in writing by the Church Fathers, the Doctors of the Church, the Popes and different religious persons. The privilege of her Co-redemption has come into existence by means of synthesizing these writings; by the use of analogies between Mary and Old Testament personalities and by affirming Mary's association with Christ. An important question has been asked by Raymond Brown, a Catholic theologian, in reference to certain dogmas concerning Mary.

How then did the Roman Catholic Church move toward the definition of such doctrines, granted the silence of the N.T.? . . . I would maintain that the doctrines stem from a reflection on the role of Mary in salvific history. The reflection took place in prayer, liturgy, popular imagery, and theology; the underlying role had its roots in the N.T.<sup>1</sup>

Brown goes on to emphasize that even though the New Testament is silent regarding different privileges of Mary, the Spirit has led the Church to penetrate the salvific significance of Mary as the first Christian. This, he

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond E. Brown, Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 43-44.

affirms "is a far safer approach than attempting to find dogmas in N.T. passages where the authors show no consciousness of them."<sup>1</sup>

Thus it must be recognized that any refutation of Mariology or of the dogma of Co-redemption, is not a refutation of Catholic biblical exegesis as much as it is a refutation of Ecclesiastical Tradition.

To begin with, it seems most proper to consider Mary's Divine Maternity. What does this mean, and how did it originate? In essence it means: Jesus is God, Mary is the mother of Jesus, therefore Mary is the Mother of God.

Prior to the fourth century there is no indisputable evidence for giving Mary the title: Mother of God. However, there was a historical reason for the development of the term. Gnostics were attacking the deity of Christ and had to be refuted. Certain individuals such as:

Ignatius and Aristides in the East, Justin and Irenaeus and Tertullian in the West, have a two-edged answer for the Gnostic position. On the one hand, they use expressions that equivalently affirm Mary's divine motherhood. On the other, they trumpet the twin premises for their conclusion: (a) Jesus was genuinely born of Mary; and (b) Jesus born of Mary is God.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 44-45.

<sup>2</sup>Charles J. Dollen, James K. McGowen, James J. Megivern, eds., The Catholic Tradition: The Saviour, Vol. II. "Theotokos: The Mother of God," by Walter J. Burghardt from The Mystery of the Woman, Edward D. O'Conner, ed., (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), p. 200.

What is misconstrued and not emphasized in this quote is the fact that the teaching of Mary's Divine Motherhood though originating out of the Gnostic conflict did not lend support against Gnosticism. It was not until 431 A.D. that the Council of Ephesus officially acclaimed Mary to be the Mother of God. As the result of the Council stressing the deity of Christ, Mary was given a superior position above humanity because of her association with Jesus. How can this half-truth be reconciled with Scripture?

First, it is necessary to acknowledge that Jesus is truly God of very God (John 1:1), and that Mary is His mother (Luke 1:30,31). Secondly, it is imperative to recognize the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. The apostle John states that: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The beginning in this verse refers back, not to the beginning of creation, but to the beginning of the unbeginning.

Before creation took place, the Saviour already existed as the Son of God. This is why Isaiah could refer to the birth of Christ as: "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." (Italics mine.) It is therefore wrong to emphasize partial truth (Mary is the mother of the One who is Deity) at the expense of leaving out the whole concept that Jesus as God had no beginning. He is eternal

and did not as Deity come into existence at the Incarnation. Instead it was God taking upon Himself a human nature (John 1:14). Mary only contributed His human nature and is properly called in Scripture the mother of Jesus (John 2:1).

The next concept to be discussed is the analogy which has taken place between Mary and Eve. Catholics turn to Genesis 3:15<sup>1</sup>, and find animosity between Eve and Satan. They emphasize that Mary, through the act of giving birth to Christ, has cooperated with Him in the defeat of Satan and along with the Saviour has acquired salvation for the human race.<sup>2</sup>

Theologians take two primary and different views of the passage. (1) The Messianic view holds to the idea that the verse foresees the coming birth of Christ and that He will destroy the works of Satan. They point out that Jerome in translating this passage, mistranslated "thou" in the Vulgate. Credit was thereby attributed to Mary rather than to Christ for the final destruction of Satan.<sup>3</sup> (2) The Natural Progeny view limits its interpretation to the

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Boyer, "Thoughts on Mary's Co-Redemption," American Ecclesiastical Review, 122:403, June (1950).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 403.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

immediate context.<sup>1</sup> They see a conflict between the descendants of Eve and the descendants of the serpent. "The curse upon the serpent is a promise of hostility between snakes and mankind until the millennium, with the snake in a more handicapped position."<sup>2</sup>

The first view is held by Catholics. They avow that as Eve was associated with Adam in bringing a curse upon the human race, so Mary as the "New Eve" was associated with Christ in acquiring a blessing for mankind.<sup>3</sup> Involved in this hermeneutical approach is the use of both analogy and association.

In response to this claim for Mary, an observation of Genesis 2 and 3 provides an adequate answer. Who was actually involved in the first act of human sin and whom did God in the final analysis hold responsible? According to Tanquerey, a Catholic theologian; Adam alone caused sin to enter the human race and necessitate redemption.

. . . the Redemption was fitting: because the sin of the human race . . . was caused by Adam's will alone and according to the temptation of the devil.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>David W. Miller, "The Pseudo-Protoevangelium in Genesis 3:15," (Unpublished Master of Divinity Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1975), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>Boyer, "Thoughts on Mary's Co-Redemption," p. 405.

<sup>4</sup>A. Tanquerey, A Manual of Dogmatic Theology, Vol. 2. trans. by John J. Byrnes. (New York: Desclee Company, 1956), p. 91.



This statement is most amazing because Catholics are nearly unanimous in their assertion that Eve was the cause.

Genesis 2:7-9 indicates that God created Adam first and put him in "a garden eastward in Eden" (vs 8) in which two trees: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil were placed in the midst of every tree that was pleasant to see and good to eat (vs 9).

Genesis 2:15-17 further describes God's intention for Adam to cultivate the garden (vs 15) and commanded "the man" (Adam, vs 16) to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (vs 17). (Italics mine.)

When God gave this commandment to Adam, Eve was not yet taken from his side. It was Adam's sin that brought the human race into depravity. Romans 5:12 concurs with this statement. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Verse 15 goes on to state that through the offense of one, death resulted. The whole tenor of the passage through verse 19 continues with an emphasis upon Adam's sin, but no reference is made of Eve.

It is true that Eve first ate of the forbidden tree, but 2 Corinthians 11:3 indicates, that through the

subtlety of the serpent, Eve was beguiled or deceived. Evidently she did not purposely disobey God. However, Adam was not deceived (I Tim 2:14). It is correct to say that Eve was involved in the transgression, but it was Adam's eating the fruit that crystalized the act of sin and brought forth God's judgement (Gen 3:6).

In view of the teaching of Scripture, Eve is seen as the channel by which the fruit was given to Adam. Likewise, if an analogy be proposed between Eve and Mary, Mary could properly be seen as the channel through which the Saviour took upon Himself a human nature. Nothing more can be permitted without twisting the text.

Therefore, the words of Pope Pius IX in the Bull Ineffabilis Deus, regarding the union between Christ and Mary based upon that of Adam and Eve, are false. He stated:

Even as Christ, the mediator of God and man, having assumed human nature blotted out the handwriting of the decree which stood against us . . . so likewise the most holy Virgin, united with Him by a most intimate and indissoluble bond, together with Him and through Him wages a perpetual warfare against the poisonous serpent and, completely triumphing over him, crushed his head with her immaculate foot.<sup>1</sup>

The tenets of Mary's divine maternity and her title as the New Eve have formulated the foundation for and given an the impetus to the theory of Co-redemption.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Boyer, "Thoughts on Mary's Co-Redemption," American Ecclesiastical Review 122:407, June (1950).

The last consideration is the legitimacy of calling Mary the Co-Redemptrix. According to Father Charles Boyer, "Mary will be legitimately styled Co-redemptrix if she has had a real and meritorious part in Christ's sacrifice of Himself."<sup>1</sup>

However, it is hoped that Father Boyer and other Catholic theologians would also be willing to hold just the opposite if Mary did not have a real and meritorious part in the crucifixion of Christ. For then she could not legitimately be called Co-redemptrix.

When explaining Mary's part in Christ's Redemption, Catholics generally distinguish a two-fold co-operation, namely:

remote (or indirect) and proximate (or direct). She co-operated remotely, for example, by meriting some of the circumstances of the Incarnation, and particularly by giving birth to the world's Redeemer. . . . She co-operated proximately [or immediately] by suffering<sup>2</sup> with Him, by offering Him on Calvary for our salvation.

Two main passages of Scripture used to support Mary's cooperation are: Luke 1:28, "thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" and John 19:25, "now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother." From these verses a whole theology of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 401.

<sup>2</sup>Lawrence J. Riley, "Historical Conspectus of the Doctrine of Mary's Co-Redemption," Marian Studies 22:28 (1951).

Mary's cooperation in Redemption has been developed. Luke's narrative centers upon the Incarnation while John's focuses on the Crucifixion.

Catholic theology teaches that God decreed Mary to become the mother of our Lord and that she had an immaculate conception. Neither did she commit any act of sin. Furthermore, Mary's virginity was not altered by childbirth. This was discerned by the Church's intuition and called virginitas in partu. Finally virginitas post partum (perpetual virginity) was declared a dogma.<sup>1</sup>

What bearing does this have upon Mary's Co-redemption? Much, because Catholics believe that:

This co-operation was not merely physical and material . . . but also moral and formal, Mary knowingly and willingly consented to become the Mother of the Redeemer. This fact has led some to call the co-operation proximate and direct.<sup>2</sup>

An observation of Luke 1:28-35 gives no indication that Mary had a choice in the matter. Instead Gabriel said: "thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS" (vs 31). Mary's reply was: "behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (vs. 38). Mary was in submission to

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<sup>1</sup>O'Conner, Theotokos, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup>Riley, "Historical Conspectus of the Doctrine of Mary's Co-Redemption," Marian Studies 2:28 (1951).

the will and word of God, but this was no cause for attributing any kind of special merit to her participation with Christ in Redemption.

John's account of Mary's presence at the crucifixion (19:25) is simply that the mother of Jesus "stood by the cross." It is certainly understandable that her heart might have been filled with anxiety and sorrow, but there is no suggestion that Mary actively cooperated in offering Jesus as a sacrifice for sinners. Once again, neither the Saviour nor His Father consulted Mary to see if she would be willing to surrender her maternal rights over her Son. It was the sovereign plan of God that Christ would be born of a virgin (Isa 7:14; 9:6,7) and that He would save His people from their sins (Matt 1:21).

With all due respect to Mary, the mother of our Saviour, it is wrong to attribute to her the work that was adequately completed by her Son.

Those writers in Catholic theology are mistaken who teach that:

Mary's compassion and oblation had a meritorious and satisfactory value in the sight of God, and they were joined with the merits and satisfactions of Christ to produce or bring about the selfsame effect, namely, the Redemption of mankind.<sup>1</sup>

Without any apology for believing the Bible to be the only absolute and authoritative source of written reve-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

lation from God, it is necessary to observe what it teaches concerning Mary.

She is seen as a young virgin betrothed to Joseph (Luke 1:27). When Gabriel came and greeted her, she was troubled at his saying. There is no indication that Mary already knew that she was going to become the mother of Jesus. There is no mention of her being asked if she would like to participate in the Incarnation. All facts point to the conclusion that God sovereignly chose Mary and bestowed upon her the special honor and privilege among, but not above women, to become the mother of our Lord. Mary would have a very special relationship with God by her obedient attitude to His Word. This is seen in Mary's own words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

The biblical evidence further shows that Mary recognized her own spiritual needs as she acknowledged that God was her Saviour (Luke 1:47). This Jewish maiden was a woman of integrity. She never explicitly stated or insinuated that her relationship to God, as the mother of our Lord, had any basis for or necessity of her immunity from sin. Contrary to tradition, Mary acknowledged her sin and worshipped God as her personal Saviour. Also she knew that the Holy One whom she would give birth to would be protected from all taint of sin by His heavenly Father. Her

exclamation: "For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name" (Luke 1:49) is an indication that there was no need of her Immaculate Conception or pre-redemption by Christ in order for Him to become the sinless Son of God.

When the wise men arrived to worship the newborn King of the Jews they fell down before Him without giving special reverence to Mary (Matt 2:2,11).

The books of John and Acts complete the narrative of her life. Mary was rarely mentioned during Jesus' earthly ministry. The last reference to the mother of Jesus (Acts 1:14) mentions her involvement at a prayer meeting in Jerusalem without any indication from Scripture that she had an active part as co-redeemer with Christ.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

In this thesis four major themes have been analyzed. They are: (1) a theological analysis of Roman Catholicism; (2) a historical analysis of Mariology; (3) a biblical analysis of the virgin Mary; and (4) a critical analysis of the virgin Mary's Co-redemptive work in salvation.

As a result of this study the following conclusion is set forth: the Roman Catholic Church has clearly violated the teaching of Sacred Scripture in regards to Mary's person and ministry. The false premises laid down for her privileges have been compiled primarily from Ecclesiastical Tradition. Furthermore, Roman Catholicism, due to excessive devotion (Mariolatry) and pronounced dogmas concerning Mary, cannot now or ever, extricate itself from the heresy it has attributed to the mother of Jesus.

The theory of Mary's Co-redemption has been built upon false presuppositions; misinterpreted writings of some Church Fathers; a misuse of analogy between Mary and Eve; and Mary's assumed association with Christ in the Incarnation and Crucifixion.



According to the Word of God, Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and men (1 Tim 2:5). He also is the only Redeemer (Rom 5:8). Although His mother was given the privilege of becoming the unique person from whom Jesus received His human nature, she did not cooperate with Him in the work of salvation.

Saint John clearly affirms this truth by his statement that the Bible:

is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life (1 John 5:11-13).

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