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MARY, MOTHER OF THE MISSIONARY CHURCH

James H. Kroeger, M.M.

Four decades ago, on November 21, 1964, in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome a special liturgy was celebrated to close the Third Session of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. The occasion marked the solemn promulgation of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, and two lesser decrees on Ecumenism and the Eastern Catholic Churches. In his concluding address, Pope Paul VI noted that *Lumen Gentium*, because of its comprehensive nature and richness of thought, was certain to become a pivotal document of the Council; with evident joy, he declared: "We do not hesitate, with God's help, to promulgate this Constitution on the Church."[1]

Paul VI went on to note that the Church can further understand her mystical union with Christ if she possesses a true and broad Catholic teaching on Mary. The pope asserted that this solid theological vision is to be found in the final chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, a chapter which is the "crowning point" of the document, because it expresses "the

[1]Paul VI, "Exploring the Mystery of the Church," *The Pope Speaks* 10:2 (1964), 133.

Catholic doctrine on the place that should be accorded to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of Christ and of the Church."[2]

The pope continued and explained that he was acceding to "requests that the maternal role that the Blessed Virgin Mary fulfills with regard to the Christian people be proclaimed at this Council in explicit terms." Then, he formally noted: "And so, for the glory of the Blessed Virgin and our own consolation, We declare Mary Most Holy to be the Mother of the Church, that is of the whole Christian people.... We decree that from now on the Christian people should use this sweetest of names."[3] The pope noted how Mary would lend her "maternal aid to the Church... [as she strives] to carry out her salvific mission with renewed zeal." The Church finds "the definitive model for the perfect imitation of Christ in the Virgin Mother of God."[4]

The Second Vatican Council, in another pivotal decree *Ad Gentes*, goes on to note the inherently missionary identity of the Church: "The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.... She strives to proclaim the Gospel to all people" (AG 1-2). Again, Paul VI reinforces the insights of the Council when he later writes: "... evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church.... Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize" (EN 14).

An important conclusion can be drawn from these significant words of Pope Paul VI and the Second Vatican Council: Mary is now known as "Mother of the Church," a community of faith that is inherently and innately missionary. Therefore, without reserve, the Catholic faithful can know and address Mary as "Mother of the Missionary Church." She

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[2]Paul VI, "Exploring the Mystery of the Church," 137-138.

[3]Paul VI, "Exploring the Mystery of the Church," 138.

[4]Paul VI, "Exploring the Mystery of the Church," 139.

can serve as a *model of missionary activity* for all members of the Church. In the life and attitudes of Mary, all baptized Christians can find an example for their own diverse apostolic activities. Catholics—all Christians—can implore their mother: "Mary, Mother of the Church-in-mission, pray for us."

A Vision of Evangelization. This modest essay seeks to develop the intimate links between Mary and the Missionary Church by exploring several principal elements of the Church's evangelizing mission and by showing how these elements are manifested in the life and attitudes of the Virgin Mary. A simple logic is followed: if Mary is mother of this missionary faith-community, the Church, then one should be able to identify the various dimensions of mission within Mary's own life and example.

Evangelization, for many Catholics, is a generally unfamiliar and relatively new term. The Second Vatican Council as well as recent popes have placed evangelization at the center of the Church's identity and mission. A brief, workable definition of evangelization is found in a 1975 document written by Pope Paul VI, himself a great evangelizer. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) the pope notes: "For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new" (EN 18). For the Church, evangelization is her central mission. As noted above, "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize" (EN 14).

Note that the pope says that *all strata* of humanity are to be transformed by the light and power of the Gospel. This means that the Church today has adopted a wide and comprehensive vision of evangelization; many facets comprise the Church's evangelizing mission. One can identify several of the "principal elements" of evangelization: **(I)** Christian Presence and Witness of Life; **(II)** Service of Humanity through Development and Human Liberation; **(III)** Interreligious Dialogue with the Followers of Other Faiths; **(IV)** Explicit Gospel Proclamation and Catechesis; **(V)** Prayer, Contemplation, and Liturgical-Sacramental Life. In a word, the one evangelizing mission

of the Church is comprised of several component elements and authentic forms. This integral or holistic vision, promoted by recent popes, has emerged in the Church over the past decades, especially since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).[5]

Viewing evangelization through five of its essential dimensions results in clarity, insight, and proper integration; this integral approach is a contemporary Catholic vision of evangelization. As this presentation unfolds, readers will observe that each of these five dimensions of the Church's evangelizing mission is first explored and then subsequently linked into the life-witness of Mary, who is "Mother of the Missionary Church."

I. Christian Presence and Witness of Life

For Paul VI, *Christian Presence and Witness of Life* form the "initial act of evangelization" (EN 21). Daily activities, living together in harmony, lives as individuals of integrity, duties in the community—all these are to be a basic "faith-witness" that demonstrates how Christian living is shaped by Christian faith and values. Through this wordless witness, "Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live" (EN 21); through their lives Christians are to give their neighbors a clear and powerful example of faith and integrity.

In today's world, people desire and respect authentic witnesses; as Pope Paul VI noted: "Modern people listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" (EN 41; cf. EA 42; RM 11, 42). For example, the late Mother Teresa of Calcutta, declared "Blessed" on October 19, 2003, was known worldwide for her loving and selfless care of the poorest of the poor; she is an "icon" of Christian presence, life, and service (EA 7d).

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[5]James Kroeger, "To Live is to Evangelize: Recent Popes and Integral Evangelization," *Landas* 16 (2002), 100-104.

The Blessed Virgin Mary gives the Church a marvelous example through her witness of life. In the narrative of the Annunciation (Lk. 1:26-38) the angel Gabriel is sent on a mission to Mary. Being completely human, Mary is bewildered and "deeply disturbed" by Gabriel's message; she is troubled and afraid. Encouraged by Gabriel, Mary submits to God's designs. She knows that "nothing is impossible to God" (Lk. 1:36). "I am the handmaid [servant, slave] of the Lord... *fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*" (Lk. 1:37-38).

What richness is included in that simple word: *fiat.* It is Mary's response to God's marvelous design unfolding in her daily life. Mary had to walk the road of faith; she advanced as a pilgrim on a faith-journey. Saint Augustine poetically captures Mary's profound faith when he writes: "*Maria concepit Christum in corde [mente] priusquam in carne [ventre].*"[6] Yes, Mary's conception *in her faith* precedes the conception *in her flesh.*

Mary's witness of a deep faith-life was a constant challenge, not only a once-and-for-all response during the Annunciation. Imagine the challenge to her faith when Mary was misunderstood as a pregnant, unmarried woman, when there was no place in Bethlehem for her to give birth, when the holy family had to flee as refugees into Egypt, when Jesus was lost in the temple, when she stood under the cross of her Son at Calvary. Mary was not spared the uncertainties, struggles, and sufferings of human life; she, as did her Son, "submitted so humbly" and "learned to obey through suffering" (Heb. 5:7-8). She deeply lived into the mystery of God's design of salvation; thus, she has become a source of eternal blessing for the human race.

Christians who look to Mary as a model can appreciate that their very presence and witness of life in today's complex world is already a positive contribution to the Church's evangelizing mission. Dedicated parents, upright businessmen, selfless educators, idealistic

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[6]Frederick Jelly, "Characteristics of Contemporary Mariology," *Chicago Studies* 27 (1988), 71.

youth, generous religious—all share in the Church's task of bringing the light and power of the Gospel into the world. This task is already accomplished through one's ordinary, daily activities. Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, following the "little way" of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, her namesake, helped ordinary people understand the importance of presence and life witness: "Little things are indeed little, but to be faithful in little things is a great thing." "It is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the doing. It is not how much we give, but how much love we put in the giving."[7]

II. Service of Humanity through Development and Human Liberation

A second dimension of an integral vision of evangelization is centered on commitment to *Service of Humanity through Development and Human Liberation,* to genuine service of neighbor. This means serving the most unfortunate, witnessing to justice, defending the integrity of creation; this dimension of evangelization includes the whole area of social concerns, ranging from peace-building, education and health services, to promoting family life and good government. This area of human development or human promotion is a vast area of the Church's evangelizing mission (cf. EA 32-41; EN 18-19, 29-33; RM 58-60). Love must be put into action through concrete deeds of service; faith without good works is dead.

The life of the Blessed Mother manifests several concrete instances where she put her faith into concrete deeds of service. One clear example is Mary's service to her cousin Elizabeth, narrated by Luke in the Visitation story (Lk. 1:39-45, 56). Note that the visitation scene immediately follows the annunciation narrative in Luke's Gospel. Mary did not cling to her privilege as God's mother; upon learning that Elizabeth was pregnant (Lk. 1:36), Mary immediately went "in haste"

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[7] *Catholic News* (Singapore) 53 (October 26, 2003), 12-13.

(Lk. 1:39) to be of service to her elderly kinswoman. Mary herself was pregnant, but, setting aside her own needs, she traveled "to a town in the hill country of Judah" (Lk. 1:39) and served "about three months" (Lk. 1:56) before returning home to Nazareth.

Mary's wonderful hymn of proclamation, the Magnificat (Lk. 1: 46-55) is sung daily in the Church during vesper prayer. This Spirit-inspired song of gratitude is a profound synopsis of how God's plan of salvation unfolds: lowly servants like Mary play important roles in God's design; God does great deeds for his faithful people; mercy and compassion extend from age to age; the world's secular values are subverted and inverted; the poor and hungry are satisfied and God's justice reigns.[8]

Pope John Paul II's Marian encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (37) has profound insights into Mary's servant song: "The Church's *love of preference for the poor* is wonderfully inscribed in Mary's *Magnificat*.... Mary is deeply imbued with the spirit of the 'poor of Yahweh'." Thus, "drawing from Mary's heart, from the depth of her faith expressed in the words of the *Magnificat*, the Church renews ever more effectively in herself the awareness that *the truth about God who saves*, the truth about God who is the source of every gift, *cannot be separated from the manifestation of his love of preference for the poor and humble.*" The entire missionary Church looks to Mary "as Mother and Model ... in order to understand in its completeness the meaning of her own mission."

The narrative of the wedding at Cana (Jn. 2:1-11) also manifests Mary's servant orientation. Mary, woman of compassion, asks her Son to intervene at a difficult moment; her personal solicitude for the other enables her to *see* human need and to *act* to remedy it. The Church's mission of evangelization is comprehensive and needs to address both individual and social needs; it definitely includes bringing the

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[8]Additional insights on Mary's *Magnificat* can be gleaned from Thomas Thompson (ed.), *Magnificat: Remembrance and Praise*, published as *Marian Studies* 50 (1999), 1-138.

Gospel into *all levels* of human life—including politics, economics, and social-cultural realities. Christians need a deepened appreciation of the social teachings of the Church. If the Church's commitment to social services and effective programs to promote justice are on the wane, a renewed commitment to this dimension of holistic evangelization is needed—following the life and example of Mary, woman and model of service.

III. Interreligious Dialogue with the Followers of Other Faiths

Turning to a third aspect of the Church's mission of integral evangelization, one seeks to explore the relationship of Mary to *Interreligious Dialogue with the Followers of Other Faiths,* with believers of the world's great religious traditions. To express this dimension of evangelization, this author turns to the vision of the Second Vatican Council and recent popes as well as to the role of Mary in the Islamic tradition. These sources show how Mary, who lived among people of another faith tradition during the sojourn of the Holy Family in Egypt, can serve as a model for dialogue and a bridge-builder between religious traditions.[9]

The Council's document on religions (*Nostra Aetate*) has this exhortation for Catholics in their relations with believers of other faiths: "prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these people, as well as the values in their society and culture" (NA 2). Twenty-five years later (1990) in his mission encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* (RM), Pope John Paul II asserts:

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[9]The role of Mary in interfaith dialogue was explored in the 1996 annual gathering of the Mariological Society of America; fine articles are found in Thomas Thompson (ed.), *Marian Spirituality and the Interreligious Dialogue,* published as *Marian Studies* 47 (1996), 1-101.

"Interreligious dialogue is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission" (RM 55; cf. EA 31a).

The Council also proclaimed: "Upon the Muslims, too, the Church looks with esteem" (NA 3). *Nostra Aetate* then goes on to list several reasons why the Church respects Islam; it shows parallels between Islamic belief and Christian faith.[10] Among these many common elements, Mary is clearly mentioned: "They also honor Mary, His [Jesus'] virgin mother; at times they call on her, too, with devotion" (NA 3).

How does Islam present Mary? In the Qur'an, Mary's name (*Maryam*) appears explicitly thirty-four times; in twenty-four of these references, she is identified as the mother of Jesus (*Isa*). Mary is mentioned more often by name in the Muslim scripture than in the Christian New Testament.[11] One chapter of the Qur'an (*Sura* 19) is in fact entitled "Mary" and it narrates the events of the annunciation of Jesus' birth: Mary is chosen by God and given divine favors; she is immaculately consecrated to God from her mother's womb; an angel appears to her and announces the miraculous virgin birth of a child; Mary accepts, conceives *Isa* and gives birth to him.[12]

In addition, Muslims call Mary *"Sitti Maryam,"* (*Sitti* is a term of endearment), because of her privileged role as the mother of the prophet *Isa.* Mary is reverenced for her great faith and submission (*Islam*) to the will and designs of God (*Allah*); she is also devout and prayerful. Muhammad's attitude towards Mary was reverential and respectful. He spoke of her as a sign (*ayat*) for all creation and a model

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[10]Thomas Michel, "Do Muslims and Christians really Worship the Same God?" *Sunday Examiner* 57 (September 14, 2003), 16; John Esposito, "Islam: FAQs," *Saudi Aramco World* 54:5 (2003), 20-28.

[11]John Renard, *Responses to 101 Questions on Islam* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 109-110.

[12]R.J. McCarthy, "Mary in Islam," *Mary's Place in Christian Dialogue*, ed. Alberic Stacpoole (Slough, England: St. Paul Publications, 1982), 208-211.

(*mathal*) for all believers. It has been noted that "Apart from Luke, Mary has no warmer and more colorful artist than Muhammad."[13]

How then is Mary an exemplar for the Church as she engages in interfaith dialogue? Authentic dialogue demands those same virtues and attitudes manifested in Mary's life: she was an ordinary mortal, yet a woman of deep faith; she acted from a profound "God-experience" at the basis of her life; she submitted to the design of God and his plan of salvation; she was a woman of service, prayer and devotion; she was keenly attentive to the Word of God. Genuine interreligious dialogue prospers only when rooted in authentic faith—as beautifully manifested in the life and witness of Mary.[14] Appropriately, one can also recall the example of Mother Teresa of Calcutta; most of her work was with Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists—persons who did not believe in Christianity.

IV. Explicit Gospel Proclamation and Catechesis

In evangelization today one necessarily affirms the role of *Explicit Gospel Proclamation and Catechesis.* This dimension of evangelization includes preaching and teaching, catechesis on Christian life, communicating the content of the faith; in a word, this means "telling the story of Jesus and the Church." As the Holy Spirit opens the door and the time is opportune, Christians do tell the Jesus story, giving explicit witness and testimony to the faith. Others are invited, in freedom of conscience, to follow, to come to know Jesus. Through explicit Gospel proclamation Christians themselves are further instructed in their faith; this is the process through which the Christian faith is communicated to the next generation of believers (cf. EN 22, 27, 42; RM 44-51; EA 19-20, 23).

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[13]James Kroeger, "Mary for Catholics and Muslims," *African Ecclesial Review* 30 (1988), 182-183.

[14]Paul VI, "Exploring the Mystery of the Church," 139.

Mary is a model and servant of proclamation; "my being proclaims the greatness of the Lord" (Lk. 1:46). Mary is *Theotokos*, the bearer of God to the waiting world. Her entire life is a constant proclamation and epiphany of Jesus to a variety of people: to the shepherds (Lk. 2:8-20), to the magi (Mt. 2:1-12), to the joyful, elderly Simeon (Lk. 2: 22-35), to the prophetess Anna (Lk. 2:36-38), to the wedding guests at Cana (Jn. 2:1-12), to the followers of her crucified Son (Jn. 19:25-27), to the Church in prayer at Pentecost (Acts 1:14-2:13).[15]

Probably the most common portrayal of Mary and the child Jesus in Christian art shows Mary in a "presenting-mode"; she holds the child Jesus who is turned, not toward his mother Mary's face, but toward the viewer, the beholder. Mary is presenting, giving, proclaiming Jesus to all who will look at her and the child. The touching scene depicted in the *Pietá* again portrays Mary presenting her Son to the world as its crucified redeemer. In the traditional prayer, "Hail, Holy Queen," Catholics implore Mary: "Show unto us, the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus."

Pope Paul VI in his inspiring apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, gave Mary the title "Star of Evangelization" and proposed that she be the model for all evangelizers.[16] He wrote: "On the morning of Pentecost she watched over with her prayer the beginning of evangelization prompted by the Holy Spirit: may she be the Star of the evangelization ever renewed which the Church, docile to her Lord's command, must promote and accomplish, especially in these times which are difficult but full of hope" (EN 82).

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[15]J. Armand Robichaud, "Mary and the Missions Today," *Marian Studies* 38 (1987), 78-136.

[16]See the 1988 Message of John Paul II for World Mission Day on the theme "The Presence of Mary in the Universal Mission of the Church," *African Ecclesial Review* 30 (1988), 257-261; in addition, the 2003 Message of John Paul II for World Mission Day bore the title "Mary and the Mission of the Church in the Year of the Rosary," *Omnis Terra* (English) 37:337 (2003), 179-182.

V. Prayer, Contemplation, and Liturgical-Sacramental Life

Finally, integral evangelization necessarily includes *Prayer, Contemplation, and Liturgical-Sacramental Life.* No one can effectively be engaged in the Church's mission without a strong faith and prayer-life. Evangelization needs holy men and women who are themselves on fire with the love of Christ. Spreading the fire of the Gospel will be accomplished only by those already burning with an experience of Christ; a fire can only be lit by something that is itself on fire (EA 18c, 19a, 23b). Holiness is an irreplaceable condition for evangelizers. The "God-experience" achieved in prayer and contemplation, in sacramental and liturgical life, will illumine and transform all other dimensions of evangelization (cf. EN 23, 43-44, 47; RM 46-49, 87-92; EA 23).

Mary is presented in the scripture as a woman of prayer and contemplation. The traditional image of Mary during the Annunciation is that of a woman at prayer (Lk. 1:26-38). Luke also portrays Mary as a woman of constant reflection. In three instances, he focuses on Mary's "response of the heart." As the shepherds depart, Luke writes: "As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Lk. 2:19). Simeon in the temple predicts that "the secret thoughts of many hearts [including Mary's] will be laid bare" (Lk. 2: 34-35). When the Holy Family returned to Nazareth after Jesus was found in the temple, "his mother stored up all these things in her heart" (Lk. 2:51). In addition, out of her own rich prayer experience, Mary would have taught the boy Jesus how to pray to a loving God. Thus, Mary's contemplative "response of the heart" is instructive for contemporary evangelizers.[17]

Mary is among the disciples listening to the Word of God and discerning God's will, as well as seeking to integrate them into daily life (cf. Mt. 12:46-50; Mk. 3:31-35; Lk. 8:19-21, 11:27-28). Only deep

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[17]James Kroeger, "The Spirit and Mary Unfold God's Loving Design," *Boletin Eclesiastico de Filpinas* 74:809 (1998), 837.

contemplation could sustain a mother experiencing the death of a beloved Son (Jn. 19:25-27). Mary is at the heart of the Church at prayer (*ecclesia orans*) (Acts 1:14), awaiting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Mary's prayer and contemplation were constants in her life. They equipped her to insightfully read the deep meaning of the salvific events unfolding in her life; she contemplated the wonders and mysteries of God—from Nazareth and Bethlehem to Calvary and Pentecost. Prayer, contemplation, praise and worship constantly kept Mary open to the action of the Spirit in her life.[18] Christian evangelizers can look to the Mother of the Church to see how prayer and worship serve to integrate all dimensions of the Church's holistic vision of evangelization.

Conclusion. This presentation has sought to link the inherently missionary nature of the Church with the role of Mary as Mother of the Church, viewing Mary as "Mother of the Missionary Church." A simple schema was presented, linking the Church's mission of integral evangelization into the life and witness of Mary. Although additional elements and insights might have been included,[19] this author trusts that

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[18]Olegario Dominguez, "Mary, Model of Missionary Spirituality in the Church," presented as Lesson Six of the 1979 Correspondence Course for Mission Animators, sponsored by the Pontifical Missionary Union International Secretariat (June, 1979), 1-17.

[19]Six important studies, listed alphabetically by author, are: Dwight Campbell, "The Doctrine of Mary, Mother of the Church, in the Magisteria of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II," *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 53 (2003), 225-240; Cahal Daly, "Mary and the Church," *Mary in the Church*, ed. John Hyland (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1989), 131-141; John Paul II, "The Blessed Mother Is Mother of the Church" (General Audience of September 17, 1997), *Theotókos: Woman, Mother, Disciple* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2000), 233-235; Theodore Koehler, "Mary's Spiritual Maternity after the Second Vatican Council," *Marian Studies* 23 (1972), 39-68; George Maloney, "Mary and the Church," in *Mary, The Womb of God* (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1976), 140-155; George Shea, "Pope Paul VI and the 'Mother of the Church'," *Marian Studies* 16 (1965), 21-28.

sufficient material has been presented to show how Mary can truly be seen as a model for missionaries and evangelizers today. It is a fact that many Catholics are instinctively drawn to the Church through Mary; thus, viewing Mary as the Star of Evangelization in the missionary faith-community of the Church can serve as an impetus for Catholics to become more engaged as evangelizers.

Permit some final remarks on the pivotal importance of Mary and evangelization for the Church today. It is obvious that the five dimensions of integral evangelization presented here complement and reinforce each other. In speaking of the complexity of the Church's evangelizing action, Paul VI gave a timely admonition: "Any partial and fragmentary definition which attempts to render the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism does so only at the risk of impoverishing it and even of distorting it." He continued: "It is impossible to grasp the concept of evangelization unless one tries to keep in view all its essential elements" (EN 17).

In adopting this integral vision, the Church has set aside an older concept of her mission. No longer are the elements of social justice, interfaith dialogue, peace-building, education and health care, life-witness, ecology, etc. simply "preparatory" to evangelization [*praeparatio evangelica*]; all five "principal elements" presented here with a Marian perspective are constitutive of a holistic and integral understanding. Paul VI and John Paul II have expanded the horizons of evangelization; an older, more restrictive view, which held that only explicit Gospel proclamation as well as prayer and sacramental life constituted evangelization, has been superseded.

Concomitant with this expanded vision of evangelization, one finds a renewed emphasis on the missionary nature of the *entire* Church (cf. AG 2). Every baptized member of the Church is an evangelizer, whether layperson, ordained, or religious. Previously, when evangelization was linked more exclusively with explicit Gospel proclamation and sacramental life, laity often found it difficult to appreciate how they were to be evangelizers. Today, Catholic evangelization engages the entire Church (from top to bottom; especially, all the local Churches and communities), all states of life (lay, religious, ordained, married,

single), all apostolic activities and forms of witness (the five principal elements). Yes, the totality of Christian evangelization, with Mary as the Star of Evangelization, embraces all these aspects.

The panoramic overview of a Catholic vision of evangelization presented here could easily be expanded with additional material. However, when many words have been uttered, when much ink has been spilt, when definitions and categories have been clarified, and when one more presentation has been completed, Catholics must step back and radically affirm that: *All mission and evangelization is God's project. The Holy Spirit is always the principal agent of evangelization.* For evangelizers, missionaries, catechists, clergy, religious and laity alike, the mission of evangelization necessarily means trying to find out what God wills and what he is doing. Then, in imitation of Mary, the authentic evangelizer bends his/her will to God's will, joyfully surrenders to God's loving plan, and expends all efforts and energy to become a worthy instrument that enables God's design to unfold. Evangelization, at heart and center, "is an issue of faith" (RM 11). For a Christian, to live is to evangelize!

When Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964 during the Eucharistic celebration concluding the Third Session of the Second Vatican Council declared Our Lady "Mother of the Church," he intended that Catholics worldwide would give greater honor to the Mother of God under this most loving title. As some selected studies illustrate, the Council debate on this Marian title has been extensive.[20] Paul VI played an important role and continued to encourage the use of the title; during the closing ceremonies of the Council (December 8, 1965)

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[20]The following works, listed alphabetically by author, present an overview regarding the use of the title of Mary as "Mother of the Church": *Council Daybook: Vatican II, Session 3,* ed. Floyd Anderson (Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1965), 50-53, 299-300; Arnaldo Crisostomo, "The Title: 'Mary, Mother of the Church'," *Mary and the Church in the Documents of Pope Paul VI: A Study of Post-Conciliar Mariology* (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 2004), 204-282; Joseph Komonchak, "Chapter VIII [of *Lumen Gentium*]," special section (52-62) within "Toward an Ecclesiology of Communion" (1-93) in

he blessed the cornerstone for a church to be erected in Rome as a memorial to the Council, to be called "Mary, Mother of the Church."[21] In the post-Council period, many local Churches and religious families began to venerate the Blessed Virgin, using her newly proclaimed title: "Mother of the Church." This title appears in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC); the Mariology section of the CCC is entitled: "Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church" (963-975).[22]

In 1974, to encourage Marian celebrations during the Holy Year of Reconciliation (1975), a new Mass formula was composed, complete with prayers, readings, and a special preface; it bears the title: "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Image and Mother of the Church." It has now been officially inserted in the second *editio typica* edition of the Roman Missal among the Votive Masses in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.[23]

Both the opening and closing prayers of this special votive Mass emphasize the Church's missionary nature and Mary's role in the

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History of Vatican II, Volume IV, eds. G. Alberigo and J. Komonchak (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003); Otto Semmelroth, "The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church" in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Volume I,* ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 285-296; Luis A. Tagle, "Mary as Mother of the Church," special section (445-448) within "The 'Black Week' of Vatican II" (387-452) in *History of Vatican II, Volume IV,* eds. G. Alberigo and J. Komonchak (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003); Ralph Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber: A History of Vatican II* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1967), 90-95, 153-159, 239-243, 284.

[21]Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber,* 284.

[22]United States Catholic Conference, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, Missouri: Ligouri Publications, 1994), 251-254.

[23]International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1988), Vol. 1, 39-42; Vol. 2, 83.

Church. These two prayers serve as an appropriate closing invocation to this presentation on "Mary, Mother of the Missionary Church."

God of Mercies,
your only Son, while hanging on the cross
appointed the Blessed Virgin Mary, his mother,
to be our mother also.
Like her, and under her loving care,
may your Church grow day by day,
rejoice in the holiness of its children,
and so attract to itself all the peoples of the earth.
[Opening Prayer]

Lord, we have received the foretaste and promise
of the fullness of redemption.
We pray that your Church,
through the intercession of the Virgin Mother,
may proclaim the Gospel to all nations
and by the power of the Spirit
reach to the ends of the earth.
[Prayer after Communion]

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

AG - *Ad Gentes* (II Vatican Council - December 7, 1965)
EA - *Ecclesia in Asia* (John Paul II - November 6, 1999)
EN - *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Paul VI - December 8, 1975)
RM - *Redemptoris Missio* (John Paul II - December 7, 1990)