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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Devotion to the Mother of God is strong in the Philippines, the "land of Mary." And, as this issue of *Landas* takes shape, the country is in the midst of a Marian year celebration. During the July 2003 Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, the local bishops decreed the holding of a Marian Year, scheduled to last from August 15, 2004 to December 8, 2005. The previous National Marian Year extended from December 8, 1984-1985; it was designed to mark the bimillenia of the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The current commemoration recalls the 150th anniversary of the papal definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (1854), the Principal Patroness of the Philippines.

However, on the Feast of Corpus Christi in 2004, Pope John Paul II announced an International Year of the Eucharist from October 2004 to October 2005. The Philippine bishops' response was to celebrate a *Eucharistic and Marian Year,* combining two pillars of the faith. They determined that the "National Eucharistic Marian Year" would have as its theme: "Celebrating the Eucharist with Mary." Appropriate prayers were prepared; catechetical materials were readied; a special pastoral guide-book was published. The celebration continues to unfold nation-wide.

This year the Loyola School of Theology (LST) in Manila, home of *Landas,* celebrates its fortieth year of existence (1965-2005). As a theological center located in the "land of Mary," it promotes a deepening of the Church's teaching on Mary in both Philippine

and Asian contexts. In March of 2001 the school established the "Jaime Cardinal Sin Professorial Chair for Philippine Marian Studies." Graduate courses, scholarly lectures, symposia and publications on Mary in Catholic and Christian life and history have now become regular features of LST.

The volume you are holding is the fruit of diverse Marian initiatives at LST. Some items were first given as public lectures; others were presented at the student-sponsored theological hours; still others emerged from the creative pen of LST faculty members. All pieces have a direct LST linkage; *Landas* is most pleased to publish them, knowing similar Marian items will be completed in the coming months and years.

The first presentation by Columban Missionary Kathleen Coyle, herself a Marian author (*Mary in the Christian Tradition*), centers on a Lukan scriptural foundation for Marian theology—in fidelity to Pope Paul VI's challenge in *Marialis Cultus.* Another missionary, a *Mary*knoller, James Kroeger, presents Mary as a model for mission, understood within the contemporary framework of an integral approach to evangelization.

Three historical presentations follow. Kathleen Coyle outlines a chronological development in Marian thought from Gospel and Patristic times up to the Second Vatican Council. Jesuit Antonio de Castro provides an extensive, engaging overview of a unique Marian shrine in southern Philippines; this sacred place becomes a *locus* for interreligious dialogue between Muslims and Christians. Dominican Rolando de la Rosa provides a detailed history of the rosary, concluding with the new initiative of Pope John Paul II to add the *Mysteries of Light.*

Three specialized studies complete this Marian issue of *Landas.* Jesuit René Javellana traces the gradual "divinization" of Mary through a creative analysis of the iconography of the Virgin Mary. Diocesan priest and mariologist Sabino Vengco brings readers to three continents and demonstrates how Mary in each place and

time identifies with the local people in their unique situation and religiosity. Finally, James Kroeger explores one of multiple themes found in the mariology of Pope John Paul II; using a wide range of literature, Kroeger reflects, focusing on specific events, upon the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Mary.

This issue of *Landas* is humbly dedicated to our recent Holy Father, Pope John Paul II; his suggestive coat-of-arms is included on the front cover. Without doubt, he can truly be called a "Marian Pope"; his life abounds with devotion to his Mother Mary. His own mother died when he was only a boy; however, he found true solace and support in his deep devotion to the Mother of God. Perhaps, it is the pope's own transforming relationship to his mother Mary that propels him to invite all Christians to cultivate a similar devotion to our Blessed Mother.

As you peruse and then read in depth these eight Marian pieces, may your love for Mary grow and become deeply personal. In recent years, Filipinos have taken to calling Mary, "Mama Mary." The expression may sound strange to your ears, but it reflects, in the Philippine context, a deep love and devotion to God's own Mother, a love that must characterize every disciple of Jesus.

Finally, I with to thank Miguel Lambino, S.J., *Landas* editor, for the invitation to serve as guest editor for this special Marian issue.

James H. Kroeger, M.M.
Landas Guest Editor
Special Marian Issue

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TOWARDS A SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION FOR A THEOLOGY OF MARY:
A Lukan Perspective

Kathleen Coyle, S.S.C.

This presentation centers on a scriptural foundation for a theology of Mary. It is offered as an initial response to a concern of Pope Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Marialis Cultus* (MC) in 1974, published ten years after the conclusion of Vatican II. The Pope says that "certain aspects of the image of Mary found in popular writings ... are not connected with the Gospel image of Mary" (MC 36). This work is divided into three parts: first, the invitation of Paul VI in *Marialis Cultus* to develop a biblical foundation for Marian devotion and to reflect on the harmony between that devotion and the sacred liturgy; second, a scriptural foundation for a theology of Mary, limited to the Gospel of Luke, focusing on Mary's cooperation in the Incarnation and paying special attention to the Annunciation and Magnificat narratives; third, a caution that a selective reading of Luke's Annunciation narrative may moralistically present Mary as a model of passive obedience, someone to be imitated. How can the message of the Magnificat be heard in the Christian community that tries to redefine itself in the face of today's depressing realities? Christians are called to explore the treasured tradition of the Lukan narratives from the perspective of the marginalized poor who live in degrading poverty and in situations of violence and fractured peace.

Paul VI and *Marialis Cultus*

Both the Second Vatican Council and Paul VI's *Marialis Cultus* challenged mariology to enter into a creative dialogue with the cultural changes; from being a system turned in on itself, the Christian community should break out of its isolation and establish links with the great theological themes.

By moving along this road it was hoped that mariology would change from being an over-systematized, over-speculative, devotionally-propelled, inward-turned and isolated segment of theology into what it had once been, a crossover point for the great themes of Christian theology—creation, sin, redemption, eschatology.[1]

Marialis Cultus stressed that devotion to Mary must find "its origin and effectiveness from Christ, find its complete expression in Christ and leads through Christ in the Spirit to the Father" (MC Introduction). Paul VI began by saying that devotion to Mary was problematic for many because it reflected outdated ideas from the Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation period of the Church, and also because Mary was presented as timidly submissive, an image that is repugnant to women today. The exhortation recognized that while there is strong evidence that Mary is still important in the imagination of Christians and that she is a religious symbol of enduring power in the Catholic tradition, she remains an ambiguous symbol especially for women, for the passive virtues of submission, humility, and docility have been projected onto her.

However, *Marialis Cultus* did not make the hoped-for impact; it failed to overcome the apathy consequent to the Council. The focus of John Paul II's *Redemptoris Mater* (RMa) in 1987, thirteen years later, took up other issues still left open by the Council. It stressed the "singularity and uniqueness of her [Mary's] place in the mystery of Christ," (RMa 9) and her "active and exemplary presence in the life of

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[1]Donal Flanagan, "The Sign of the Virgin," *Doctrine & Life* 44 (1994), 271.

the Church" (RMa 1). By comparison, it was the liberation theologians of the seventies and eighties who found in Mary of the Magnificat a powerful symbol of the liberating intent of God who stands on the side of the poor and powerless of society.

Very little is known about Miriam of Nazareth, the first-century Jewish woman, the mother of Jesus, as an actual historical person. History has no record of her life except through the documents of faith, the Gospels of the New Testament. And the account in the New Testament is tantalizingly brief. Paul doesn't mention her name. Luke and Matthew mention her, but it is mostly in the Infancy Narratives, and these are meditations on Old Testament themes rather than historical accounts of the early life of Jesus. The fourth Gospel gives prominence to Mary. However, this gospel is a theological reflection rather than a narrative of historical events. The *Didache*, the so-called teaching of the twelve apostles, does not mention her either. Contemporary theologians like Elizabeth Johnson[2] and Charlene Spretnak[3] are searching for a more meaningful theology for today and that theology needs a scriptural foundation. This essay hopes to offer the beginnings of such a scriptural foundation. While it focuses in particular on the Lukan story of the Incarnation, it pays special attention to the commitment of Mary in the Annunciation and Magnificat narratives (Lk. 1:26-38; 39-56).

Scriptural Foundations

The third Gospel, whose author is popularly known as Luke, is usually dated around 85 AD. This would indicate that his message is addressed to third generation Christians. Luke himself, though not

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[2]Elizabeth Johnson, *Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints* (New York: Continuum, 2003).

[3]Charlene Spretnak, *Missing Mary: The Reemergence of the Queen of Heaven* (New York: Palgrave, 2004).

necessarily a Greek, is most probably a Gentile convert who came to know about Jesus at Antioch in Syria where he notes that the term "Christian" was first used (Acts 11:26). His Gospel is studied together with its sequel, the Acts of the Apostles, which shows how Jesus' followers continued his message and mission in the Churches which were first formed in Judea, then Samaria and throughout the Mediterranean world. The foundation of Luke's portrayal of Mary as mother and disciple is laid in his Gospel's infancy narrative. His Annunciation story is a message of revelation phrased in post-resurrection language. He gives enough information about Mary to form a definite portrait and allows her to speak for herself. To grasp her importance, she must be placed in a first-century context. She has no social standing because of her youth, her poor family background and female gender. In Luke's presentation "Mary who seemed to measure low in any ranking ... turns out to be the one favored by God, the one who finds her status and identity in her obedience to God and participation in his salvific will."[4]

In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke places Mary with Jesus' followers in the upper room in Jerusalem praying and awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit with the rest of the post-Easter community: "All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers" (Lk. 1:14). Before the risen Christ "withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven" (Lk. 24:51), he said to his disciples: "And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay in the city, until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49). In Acts 1:14 Mary is found with the members of the Jerusalem community, gathered together and awaiting this *power from on high*, the gift of the promised Spirit at Pentecost. For Luke, this last appearance of Mary in the New Testament after the death of Jesus is important. It was at Pentecost

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[4]Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 92.

that the Spirit descended upon them, inspiring boldness to preach the Gospel, thus initiating a movement that would witness to Jesus' message of unselfish love. A commitment to this Jesus movement meant centering one's life in Christ and his mysteries, and choosing the values of God's kingdom for which he lived and died. Mary is the figure standing between the two testaments, sharing and savoring the new liberating experience of her Son's movement which offers equal discipleship to men and women. Gebara and Bingemer note:

> Together with the other women at the church's beginnings, she is the bearer of a new hope ... she is the legitimate representative of the people of Israel, the symbol of faithful Sion. Equally she is the bearer of the new Israel, the new people, the new covenant God makes with humanity.[5]

Mary's Cooperation in the Mystery of the Incarnation (Lk. 1: 26-38). The Annunciation story is a prophetic vocation story modelled on the call of Moses at the burning bush.[6] The pattern of the angel's announcement of the birth of Jesus has clear antecedents in the births of Isaac and Samson. It is probable that this tradition was already in the community before Luke wrote the birth narrative. The angelic message in Lk. 1:26-35 is a rephrasing of the Old Testament promise of Nathan to the House of David (2 Sam. 7:8-16). The angel's words to Mary re-echo what the early Church has said about Jesus after his resurrection. Raymond Brown points out that the angel's message, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy, he will be called Son of God" (Lk. 1:35), is an application to Jesus' conception of statements that Christians had already applied to his

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[5]Ivone Gebara and Maria Clara Bingemer, "Mary," in *Mysterium Liberationis,* eds. Ignacio Ellacuria and Jon Sobrino (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 168.

[6]Elizabeth Johnson, "Mary of Nazareth: Friend of God and Prophet," *America* 182 (June 17-24, 2000), 13.

resurrection: "*Designated Son of God* in *power* according to a *Holy Spirit* [Spirit of Holiness] by resurrection from [of] the dead (Rom 1:4)."[7]

Mary responds to the news of Jesus' conception with the words "Here I am, the servant of the Lord, be it done with me according to your word" (Lk. 1:38). To appreciate Luke's message, one has to see it in the context of another Lukan passage, Lk. 8:19-21. This passage is a positive interpretation by Luke of the Markan account in Mk. 3: 31-35 where Jesus' mother and brothers are calling for him. "Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.' But he said to them, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it'" (Lk. 8:19-21). Raymond Brown proposes that these words are a careful Lukan composition from earlier material. In the Annunciation story Luke simply transposes these words to the first person and affirms that Jesus' mother heard the word of God and gave her faithful response to that word during her life. Luke is suggesting that before Jesus was born, Mary had her own relationship with God that was not focused on Jesus. What was unique in Mary was her hearing the word of God and keeping it. In the words "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it" (Lk. 8:21), Luke shows that what Mary does at this moment is consistent with her lifelong courageous faith and strength of commitment. She walks by faith through a difficult life.

A Message of Empowerment. "Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Lk. 1:38). Mary refers to herself as God's slave girl (*doules autou*). She is chosen as God's partner because of her low status in society. Luke in 1:26 says that God's word came to a virgin (as yet an unproductive woman), in Nazareth (an insignificant city) in Galilee (a despised province). The qualification for divine election was lowliness (*tapeinosis*). This lowly

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[7]Raymond Brown, *Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 92. Emphasis and brackets found in original text.

social status is so internalized as to generate humility. In the Magnificat this lowly one will be called blessed because God has done great things for her precisely because of her lowliness.

However, Mary's response often has been unfortunately interpreted as an unreflective reaction to the message of the angel, a passive submission to the will of God, or a childish dependence on God's initiative. Mary, sweet, submissive, silent and subordinate, has been praised for living at less than full capacity: "I will do whatever you say"! Her reply often has been understood as a passive dependence on God's initiative and has been held up as a model of holiness especially for women. Mariology with a liberation perspective takes a fresh look at Mary from the viewpoint of today's time and needs. Mary is remembered prophetically and a rereading of the Marian texts focuses not on the chronicle of events but on their significance for today. The rereading is fresh with new meanings.[8] It challenges women to become conscious of their oppression and of their conniving submission over the centuries to oppressive religious and social structures. By contrast, Joan Chittister remarks that the Church needs, not the ecclesiastically docile or the morally flawless, but models of people who fire the soul of their culture, swim against it and offer resistance where it is needed. The problem noted by Chittister is that "the bland, the safe and the compliant [have become], in large part, the stuff of sanctity."[9] Traditional images of Mary as docile and flawless, timid and taking directions from others, have become "the stuff of sanctity" and have often been used as tools to legitimate rather than challenge women's subordination and to keep them oppressed. The Mary of the Annunciation, however, is not paralyzed by timidity. Anne Carr challenges this androcentric bias: "Thus her theological portrayal as one who is completely passive, obedient ... is unacceptable today. Rather

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[8]J. Severino Croatto, *Exodus: A Hermeneutics of Freedom* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981), 14.

[9]Joan Chittister, 'Saints for Today," *The Tablet* (November 1, 1997), 1397-1398.

we must say that Mary, like the other disciples, received faith in the *active* obedience that is the *receptivity* of Christian faith."[10]

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you" (Lk. 1:35). God's Spirit comes on Mary as it did upon the community in Acts as an "overshadowing" cloud, an image that points to the *Shekinah*, God's presence, recalling the Spirit of God hovering over the waters in Gen. 1:2, suggesting a new creation. According to Luke, what was experienced as the Spirit's overpowering in the upper room in Jerusalem had already begun thirty years earlier in Nazareth. Gubler notes: "As long as 'the power of the Most High' is not 'enfleshed' in the frailty, transitoriness and concreteness of human history, it is 'in exile'."[11] Mary allows herself to be moved by the "power of the Most High" that wants to be the living breath in all flesh (cf. Num. 27:16). And it was "the power of the Most High," the Spirit, that preserved her radically from sin down to the roots of her existence.

The Annunciation story therefore is not about acquiescence but about empowerment. It is all about a young woman in a patriarchal society carrying and bringing her child into the world: "The Lord is with you ... you have found favor with God, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son ... the Son of the Most High ... and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Lk. 1:28-33). It is not a story about a passively perfect woman overwhelmed by divine duty, but about a "self-possessed, self-focused and self-conscious"[12] poor woman who finds favor with God and is willing to co-operate with a wild plan of salvation. It is about a woman strong enough to risk believing something incredible about herself: "the Lord is with you." An exegesis of the Lukan texts leaves no room for an escape into immature piety. It gives Mary back her concrete history. She accompanies him and

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[10]Anne Carr, "Mary, Model of Faith," in *Mary, Woman of Nazareth: Biblical and Theological Perspectives,* ed. Doris Donnelly (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 16.

[11]Marie-Louise Gubler, "Luke's Portrait of Mary," *Theology Digest* 36 (1989), 21.

[12]Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Faith, Feminism and the Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 123.

his father Joseph to the feasts in Jerusalem. Again, she follows him to Capernaum when his opponents and some of his relatives believed he was out of his mind (Mk. 3:31; Lk. 8:19) and she must have been also aware of the conflict between him and his relatives and neighbors long before it climaxed in the confrontation in Nazareth (Lk. 4:28-30). In his early writings, Edward Schillebeeckx emphasized Mary's role in rearing and educating Jesus:

> His human qualities and character were formed and influenced by his mother's virtues.... Mary's function in the Incarnation was not completed when Jesus was born. It was a continuous task, involving the human formation of the young man, as he grew up from infancy to childhood and from childhood to adulthood.[13]

She must be envisioned then as an autonomous person, responsive and receptive, courageous and creative, intelligent and apostolic. She cannot be separated from those women and men who placed their hope in Jesus and whose journey ended at the foot of the cross.

The story of the Annunciation is often told as if Mary was suddenly surprised by the angel's visit. The overshadowing of God's presence, the *Shekinah* and God's Spirit on this occasion, is more likely the culmination of Mary's constant fidelity to the grace of the Holy Spirit. Finally, the Spirit leads her to freely give her consent to the Incarnation, which came to fruition in her giving birth to Jesus. This is the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham and Sarah. God is no longer to be sought in the clouds as the men of Galilee thought (Acts 1:10), but here in the flesh, in a birth, in a grave, in the daily encounters of women and men. In Mary's co-operation with God's plan of salvation, God's compassion becomes flesh in the world. She has made possible this union of God in Christ with all of humankind in the Incarnation. Therefore, no area of human existence, whether physiological or psychological, is left untouched or unaffected by God's grace.

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[13]Edward Schillebeeckx, *Mary, Mother of the Redemption* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), 144-145.

Ivone Gebara and Maria Bingemer state that the Incarnation "is the beginning, of a new state of things in which God takes human flesh and a human face within history, in the midst of a people, of which the woman Mary is the faithful figure."[14] Jesus' birth in history is the salvific event which enables all, both Jew and Gentile, to become heirs of that inheritance promised to Abraham. From the moment God's word took flesh in Mary, human beings have become God's dwelling place on earth. The figure of a Jewish woman giving birth to the Messiah under the law of Judaism is the sign that God's kingdom has arrived. Because the word has become a human person, all of reality is touched by Christ's presence and Mary by her consent at the Incarnation has made this mystery possible. Although she did not always understand Jesus' mission, like the wise scribe she ponders (cf. Sir. 39:1-3) and treasures all these things in her heart (Lk. 2:51), in the core and depth of her being (Lk. 2:19).

Excursus: Incarnation, Central Axis of History. The mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God is the central axis of history and it is Mary who forms of her own flesh and blood "the flesh and blood that will be recognized as the person of God's very self walking on the paths of history."[15] Sally Cuneen sees her as the woman at the center of the mystery linking God to life on the planet.[16] Mary collaborated decisively, and her choice not only changed the whole of her life, but that of humanity as well, because the Incarnation celebrates the union of the divine and the human in Jesus. The significance of the Incarnation extends beyond human salvation and human history. It extends back to the origin of time, to the origins of the universe which has been weaving itself into a world of beauty for 13.5 billion years. Scientific knowledge asserts that the evolutionary journey of the

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[14]Ivone Gebara and Maria Clara Bingemer, *Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 55.

[15]Gebara and Bingemer, *Mary, Mother of God,* 56.

[16]Sally Cuneen, *In Search of Mary: The Woman and the Symbol* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 337-338.

cosmos that began with that initial burst of energy has culminated in a human person. And, God in Jesus Christ has become a human person. This Jesus, the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being (Heb. 1:3) is the meeting place of heaven and earth.

Jesus did not enter a vacuum. Millions of years before he entered history, God's divine indwelling was already present in the universe. Gradually, as he came to realize that he and the divine indwelling are one, he opened up a whole new understanding of human destiny. This was an extraordinary breakthrough for the universe and for all of us. The mystical inter-relatedness of all creatures and all matter has no boundaries. Human nature has been raised to heaven itself because God chose to breathe in Jesus through Mary. It is as if heaven and earth are united together by an umbilical cord. The liturgy of Christmas Day remembers that she gave birth to Jesus, "the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command" (Heb. 1:1-6). In the words of Eamonn Duffy:

> She was the intimate source of the human identity of God, giving to God incarnate all that a mother gives to her children—blood, bone, nerve and personality. In her conceiving and childbearing heaven and earth were wedded beyond any possibility of divorce: a stupendous miracle has occurred which raised human nature to heaven itself.[17]

Such contemplative realization of God's presence helps humans appreciate that all are living in the mystery of God. An experience of mystery does not lead to a withdrawal from the world but rather challenges all as it did Mary towards participation in the work of bringing about the kingdom of God and making the union of God in Christ with all of humankind a reality in the world. Belief in the mystery of the Incarnation challenges all to give an energized response to the Gospel and to give birth to God by allowing all to be fully alive. People are not "poor banished children of Eve." Rather, they have been made divine and are bound together in both origin and in destiny,

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[17] Eamonn Duffy, "True and False Madonnas," *The Tablet* (February 6, 1991), 171.

for what happened to Jesus of Nazareth has happened to all. Mary is profoundly and reflectively involved in the interpretation of the Incarnation event. She speaks of divinity present in humanity, of the Word that continually becomes flesh in human flesh, the flesh of men and women. She calls all to be strong and creative in responding to the sacred potentialities of life. She is open to salvation and responds to it, committed to the saving work of God made manifest in Jesus.

Mary of the Magnificat: Lk. 1:46-55. Luke found it fitting to attribute the Magnificat to Mary because she provided a compelling model of discipleship for his community. He portrays her as a woman of action, leaving at once to visit her cousin Elizabeth. This pericope is commonly called the "'Visitation" for it describes the meeting of two women who share the grace of being pregnant with children who will have special missions in God's plan of salvation. This is probably one of the most exciting meetings in all of salvation history. Donald Senior writes: "It is the only scene in the entire gospel where two women meet and hold center stage."[18] A little imagination will help to fill out the details of Luke's summary of events. Obviously, Mary did not compose this prayer in a spontaneous burst of inspiration, so one need not imagine Mary bursting forth in prophetic praise as she finally arrived breathless and weary on Elizabeth's doorstep. It is more probable that after an animated welcome and the initial excitement of meeting, Elizabeth would sensibly have offered her pregnant and road-weary cousin a meal and a bed. Mary's haste and Elizabeth's loud cry of praise show the exuberant joy of these two expectant mothers. Both women must have been very conscious of the part they were playing in the history of salvation: Mary preparing to give birth to the Messiah, Elizabeth to the prophet who would prepare the way for that same Messiah. In the ensuing weeks both women would have shared their pregnancy experiences and supported each other's journeys in faith as well as their concerns for Israel. The tradition of Luke's community

[18]Donald Senior, "Gospel Portrait of Mary: Images and Symbols from the Synoptic Tradition," in Donnelly, *Mary Woman of Nazareth,* 104.

recalled the meeting of these two women who had heard the word of God and continued to keep it.

As Mary and Elizabeth grew together in intimacy with their God and in inexhaustible compassion for their people, one can imagine that at a heightened moment of prayer, Mary would have made her own the sentiments and concerns of Hannah after the birth of Samuel (1 Sam. 2:1-10), and sang of these in grateful song. Luke captures these sentiments in the Magnificat which he places as a prelude to Jesus' announcement of his own mission to liberate the poor and marginalized (Lk. 4:18-19). Like the prophet Miriam (Ex. 15:20-21), Mary sang a victory song in praise of God's awesome accomplishments. Unfortunately, centuries of rote recitation have obscured the boldness of its affirmations and its social implications. The prophetic message of the Magnificat characterizes God's coming as compassion, the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham and Sarah. It demands faith and Luke says that Mary believed "that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord" (Lk. 1:45). Speaking for the *anawim*, Mary sings a song of the oppressed in which she and Elizabeth express their concerns for the Israel of their day. They offer a perspective for perseverance and set a definite agenda of what has to change: the world must be turned upside down. In prayer Mary and Elizabeth expressed their hope of changing the unjust structures of their society. This could only be achieved by putting down the powerful, raising up the lowly, the poor and the marginalized of their world, and filling the hungry with good things (Lk. 1:52-53). Mary lived in solidarity with God's plan to bring about the reign of God, whose intent was to heal, redeem and liberate. Herman Hendrickx suggests that keeping Luke's audience in mind, he was most likely referring to the urban poor of the city where his community was situated.[19] *They* now become the recipients of Jesus' good news.

Scholars agree that the Magnificat is a pre-Lukan hymn into which Luke inserts verse 48: "for he has looked with favor on the lowliness

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[19]Herman Hendrickx, *A Key to the Gospel of Luke* (Quezon City, Philippines: Maryhill School of Theology/Claretian Publications, 1992), 35.

(*tapeinosin*) of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed." In addition to the brief discussion of *tapeinosis* above, Helen Graham adds that the *tapeinoi* are those without hope, without a foreseeable future.[20] She adds that J.T. Forestell pointed out over thirty-five years ago that *tapeinosis* is central to an understanding of the Magnificat.[21] The *tapeinoi* are the lowly, the sick, the poor, the down trodden, the widows and orphans, but God looked upon their distress and misery and "lifted them up." The word appears again in verse 52b (NRSV translation): "He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the *lowly*." Raymond Brown adds:

> Luke's peculiar and emphatic castigation of wealth (6:24-26; 12:19-20; 16:25; 21:1-4) points to the existence of many poor in the communities to be served by Luke's gospel. And so vv. 51-53 of the Magnificat would resonate among such groups; for them the Christian good news meant that the ultimately blessed were not the mighty and the rich who tyrannized them.[22]

Verse 48 of the Magnificat, "for he has looked with favor on the lowliness (*tapeinosin*) of his servant," clearly harks back to 2 Sam. 1-10. This verse evokes the image of Hannah in 1 Sam. 1:11 praying for a son where *tapeinosis* translates the Hebrew *'oni* (which carries the meaning of poor, humble, afflicted) and also alludes to Leah (Gen. 29-30), who also experienced harassment from a second wife (her maid Zilpah who bore Jacob a son), and who now celebrates the occasion of the birth of her own son (Gen. 30:13). Lk. 1:52 re-echoes 2 Sam. 2:8: "He raises up the lowly from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor."

Hannah the barren and oppressed woman gives birth to Samuel. When Luke wants to offer the poor, the sick, the widows and orphans,

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[20]Helen Graham, "Mary of Nazareth: Spokesperson of the Anawim in the Gospel of Luke" (Manila: Unpublished paper, 1993), 1.

[21]J.T. Forestell, "Old Testament Background of the Magnificat," *Marian Studies* 12 (1961), 211. Cited in Graham, *Mary of Nazareth*, 1.

[22]Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, (New York: Image Books, 1979), 351.

the oppressed of his community a message of hope, he chooses the song of Hannah in 1 Sam. 2:1-10 as a model. This song is in the long tradition of Miriam, Deborah and Judith who sang dangerous songs of liberation.

The Magnificat: "A Text that Lingers, a Word that Explodes." Walter Brueggemann, in a very creative and imaginative article entitled "Texts that Linger, Words that Explode,"[23] explains that in the moment a scriptural text is spoken by the speaker (reader) and received by the listener in different times and communities, that text lingers on through time and erupts into new usage. The text is "recharged" with fresh meanings by successive readings. When it is reflected upon and spoken again it becomes a moment of revelation. It is in the intimate relationship between the text and the reader where the timeless word appears, bearing with it revelation for the day.[24] Its meaning is explored from the perspective of new situations and it discloses, Brueggemann says, "something about that moment that would, without this utterance, not be known, seen, heard, or made available"; he emphasizes that when the scriptural message is re-uttered and the community comes to know or receive it afresh, "the present is freshly illuminated, reality is irreversibly transformed."[25] The Magnificat is an excellent illustration of the lingering of a treasured tradition which is reflected upon and "recharged" with fresh meanings,[26] and explodes into new usage in different historical contexts. The song of praise that was spoken by Hannah erupted with new usage and remarkable imagination as it was spoken again to the poor and afflicted, the *anawim* of Luke's community.

Mary's Magnificat: A Text that Lingers, a Word that Explodes Again. Today the message of liberation lingers on in the words of the

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[23]Walter Brueggemann, "Texts that Linger, Words that Explode," *Theology Today* 54 (1997), 180-199.

[24]Bill Moyers, *Genesis: A Living Conversation* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), xv.

[25]Brueggemann, "Texts that Linger, Words that Explode," 180.

[26]Croatto, *Exodus,* 14.

Magnificat which has become a symbol of liberation for the peoples of Latin America. It erupts with new meaning to offer hope to the marginalized poor who live in degrading poverty. The 1979 Puebla Conference (No. 297) notes that Mary is a model for all those "who refuse passively to accept the adverse circumstances of their personal and social life, who refuse to be victims of 'alienation'."

In this context Gustavo Gutierrez advises that a spirituality of liberation will have as its basis the spirituality of the *anawim*.[27] When read amid such suffering, the song of the Magnificat explodes with fresh meaning, lingers on and explodes anew with a challenging message for all who are caught in the web of the present economic system.[28] It explodes amid the efforts of communities and movements to redefine themselves in the face of globalization, amid the horrors of constantly reopened wounds in such places as Palestine, the Sudan, and Iraq. It explodes amid the uprootedness of twenty million political refugees, a churning of peoples and cultures unprecedented in world history. Rosemary Haughton notes that everyone is "enmeshed in and dependent on the evil systems that feed us, educate us, and even subsidize our efforts to mitigate their destructive effects."[29] The historical figure of Mary must always enter into dialogue with the time, space, culture, problems, and actual people who relate to her. Gebara and Bingemer note: "It is life today that gives life to Mary's life yesterday."[30] She speaks to all of God and the kingdom in words that explode with new meaning.

Incarnational spirituality requires that everyone ask what embodied holiness might consist of in the specific, concrete circumstances of

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[27]Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973), 208.

[28]Cf. Robert Schreiter, "Reconciliation as a Model of Mission," *New Theology Review* 10 (1997), 7.

[29]Rosemary Haughton, in a lecture given at the Liturgy and Social Justice Forum (St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota: July, 1991).

[30]Gebara and Bingemer, *Mary, Mother of God,* 166.

life and how one, like Hannah, Mary and Elizabeth, might re-embody in particular times and places the love and justice of God. It is in the midst of today's present, depressing realities that Mary's prophetic voice needs to be heard in the world. If one wants to set people free from the power of sin and death, then like Mary, one must work to bring down the powerful from their thrones and lift up the lowly (Lk. 1:52). To do this one needs to understand the present structures of the "mammon economy"[31] that dominate people's lives.

The Mammon Economy

How can Christians love God in a world dominated by mammon is *the* life and death question for most people on this planet and the planet itself. Franz Hinkelammert argues that since the downfall of socialism in 1989/1990, capitalism has become a one-world system.[32] In this system the first world needs the resources of the so-called third world, but not its people. There is a world-wide split between a more or less small upper class profiting from the world market, a vast majority of impoverished and excluded people, and a middle class, most of whom are losing out more and more. A homogeneous culture of consumerism and love of money is created by which people define themselves and choose their life styles. Hinkelammert argues that within the structures of globalized capital markets growth is killing jobs. There is a need therefore to analyze the globalized market system.

When Mary consented to the Incarnation she was willing to co-operate with God's wild plan of salvation. She collaborated decisively and her choice not only changed the whole of her life but that of humanity as well. In the midst of today's "mammon economy" with its

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[31]Ulrich Duchrow, "God or Mammon: Economics in Conflict," *Mission Studies* 13 (1996), 33.

[32]Franz Hinkelammert, "Changes in the Relationships between Third World Countries and First World Countries," *Mission Studies* 12 (1995), 133ff.

global structures of oppression, Christians need to be responsive and receptive, courageous and creative. Like the handmaid or servant of the Lord (Lk. 1:38) and like the servant of Isaiah 42 whom she would have pondered in prayer, all are called to establish justice on earth. And one's life, having been spent in bringing justice to the nations, may one day culminate like that of the servant of Yahweh in suffering and death. The invitation to hear the Word of God and live out that Word in compassionate action is as urgent today as it was in first century Galilee (Lk. 1:38). The call to bring down the powerful and lift up the lowly lingers on and explodes with new meaning amid the unjust structures of the world. This can only be achieved by raising up the lowly and the marginalized, the "surplus people" of the world.

Conclusion. The treasured Marian tradition of Luke's infancy narratives lingers on. The angel's message, intended for all the lowly and the miserable and first proclaimed to Mary at the Annunciation, as well as her prophetic Magnificat song, anticipating the Gospel proclamation of the reversal of all values, explode with ever greater urgency today as all try to form a community that pours itself out for justice, peace and for an appreciation of creation. Jewish spirituality's insightful inspiration is that everyone leaves some energy in this world and that what is done on earth is reflected in heaven. To leave some personal energy, all need the inspiration of Miriam of Nazareth who is "so full of God, yet so much ours."

Landas 19:1 (2005) 19-35

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)

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MARY, EMBODIMENT OF GOD'S LOVE:
A Historical Perspective

Kathleen Coyle, S.C.C.

History has no record of Mary or Miriam of Nazareth except through the documents of faith, and the account of her in these documents is brief. Paul does not even mention her name. Luke and Matthew mention her, mostly in the Infancy narratives. The fourth Gospel gives her prominence. The *Didache* does not mention her either.[1]

Mary was not a rabbi and she did not write a book of scripture, but her theological voice has given the Church its most sung hymn of praise and thanksgiving. The contrast between the little biblical evidence about her and the persistent interest in her two thousand years after her death is striking. From meager biblical evidence has grown a complex and sometimes extravagant history of Marian devotion in the Church. The symbolic truth that the Marian tradition reveals about God, ourselves and the Church far exceeds the limited historical information available. Mary is honored in paintings and poetry, hymns and devotions, cathedrals and churches, religious orders and elaborate feasts. She has inspired some of the loftiest architecture, some of

[1]These details were presented at greater length in my previous article, published in this same issue of *Landas*.

the most moving poetry and some of the most beautiful paintings in the world; she has stirred men and women to the noblest emotions of love and awe.[2] And every age has unconsciously formed its image of her according to its own ideal of holiness and discipleship. That image, largely shaped by the imaginations of many generations of Christians, has adapted itself to the religious needs of the faithful. While there is strong evidence that Mary is still a religious symbol of enduring power in the Catholic tradition, she remains an ambiguous one, especially for women, for the passive docility has been projected on to her. Statues often present her as deferential and demure, submissive and timid, with eyes downcast and resigned expression; traditional theology has presented a sort of "dehydrated Mary." She needs to be liberated from some of the images into which she has been formed. How can one distinguish the Mary of the Gospels from the Mary of some popular devotions? This piece focuses on the devotions of generations of Christians as they largely shaped their own image of Mary as she embodied God's love. She has been the Church's model in re-embodying the love of God in various times and cultures and the Church has constantly turned to her to meet the ever-changing aspects of Christian discipleship.

Because times and cultures vary, the demands of the radical living of the Gospel also vary and can never be rigidly prescribed. There has always been a strong mutual influence between prayer and belief, and the development of popular piety reflected the people's traditional belief in Mary's powerful intercession. While the beginnings of the Marian cult are obscure, devotion to Mary from earliest times found expression within the liturgy. A prayer of petition to her, *Sub Tuum Praesidium* ("Under your protection O Holy Mother of God..."), is attested from the late third or fourth century.[3] This prayer, which was

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[2]Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary.* (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), 338.

[3]Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion Vol. I.* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1963), 48.

adopted into the Byzantine, Coptic, Ethiopian and Latin Churches, shows the early development of belief in Mary's power of intercession being expressed in prayer.

In the Constantinian period, when the Christian religion was officially tolerated and was subsequently adopted as the official state religion, the threat of martyrdom had passed and the ideal of carrying one's cross found expression in asceticism. Mary, Queen of Virgins, became the patroness of ascetics and celibates. She was the model of women withdrawing to the Egyptian desert to lead a hermetic life.[4] Documents from this period describe her as a perfect Egyptian nun, eating and sleeping only when her body demanded it. She avoided her relatives and other women who spoke of the things of this world, and made progress every day. She was perceived as a solitary, consorting only with angels and leading the life of the most exemplary austerity.

During the fourth century, there was an upsurge in popular devotion to Mary. She also became the ideal of the consecrated virgin who stayed at home and prayed (by contrast, the Mary of the Gospels did not hesitate to visit her cousin Elizabeth and attend the Temple feasts). Since the fourth century, Marian hymns have been sung and churches have been named after her. In the fifth century, the Church Fathers spoke of Mary as taking a vow of virginity. Gradually the practice of taking a formal vow became an established custom in the Church. It then seemed only fitting that she, the prototype of virgins, would have been the first to make such a promise to God. The imitation of Mary became an established way of life. A widening split between the Fathers' views of an idealized Mary and other women lies at the root of the representation of Mary in Western art, where she is never portrayed as a sexual being. She is fully clothed while Eve, on the other hand, is frequently portrayed as naked. Such images leave lasting impressions on fertile imaginations.

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[4]Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion Vol. I*, 50-55.

Marian Devotion after Ephesus

It is probably safe to say that the real impetus for the Marian cult began when the Council of Ephesus in 431 defined Mary's unique role as the *Theotokos,* the Godbearer, the one who gives birth to the one who is God. To call Mary God-bearer is to assert that she is the intimate source of the human identity of God himself, giving to God incarnate all that a mother gives to her children—blood, bone, nerve and personality. In her conceiving and child-bearing, heaven and earth were wedded beyond any possibility of divorce; a stupendous miracle has occurred which raised human nature to heaven itself.[5]

It was also at Ephesus that Cyril of Alexandria presented before the Fathers of the Council what some regard as the greatest Marian sermon in the whole of antiquity. After Ephesus, the divine Mother became a unique title of honor and glory for she is the mother of the incarnate word. This dogma concentrates attention on the glory of God shining on the mother of Jesus. Mary's divine motherhood has deep and solid roots in Scripture where she is called by that title twenty-five times. Mary is the human being who most resembles the perfect image of God, the incarnate Word. In her, the divine image can be contemplated. She was praised as the great *Theotokos.* She has reached the final glorification toward which the Church aspires. Mary's divine motherhood is the key to interpreting the mystery of the incarnation. This mystery invites Christians to become God-bearers and to bear God in the world today. Theological reflection on Mary did not give rise to her veneration. This veneration sprang from the liturgy and gradually revealed the unique place of Christ's Mother in the economy of salvation. After Ephesus, her feasts multiplied, devotions became more fervent. Her purity, which had been praised in such glowing terms, led to questions about the decomposition of her

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[5]Eamon Duffy, "Madonnas that Maim?" *Christianity and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Aquinas Lecture at Glasgow, 1998).

body in death. In fact, death seemed no longer compatible with the dignity of the Mother of God. She was the awe-inspiring *Theotokos* in whom the very transcendence of the creator was reflected. Poets and hymn writers used a variety of Old Testament typology to describe her: Mountain of God; bush unconsumed by fire; Aaron's rod which blossomed; ark of imperishable wood; lampstand of pure gold which bears the lamp which burns forever; jar of gold which concealed the manna; Jacob's ladder by which Jesus came down to earth; queen who stands at the king's right hand.[6]

Patristic Period

It may be a surprise to discover that, as late as the time of Augustine, there is no mention of hymns, prayers or Marian feasts in the West. Only in the fifth century does one have the first hymn directly saluting Mary. Her name was not inserted into the Roman Canon until the sixth century. The titles "Mother of Mercy" and "Mater Dolorosa" were applied to her in the sixth century. The feasts of her annunciation, "dormition" and purification were not adopted in the West until the seventh century. By the end of the Patristic period, the main doctrinal and devotional lines had been traced. Mariology, as well as Marian liturgy and Marian poetry, had reached a far more advanced stage in the East than in the West, where the language about Mary was for more restrained. The context for devotion and praise was both doctrinal and liturgical. Under the influence of Tertullian (d. 225) and Augustine (d. 430), and with theology's preoccupation with original sin, Mary's grace-filled figure was contemplated as a type of the Church itself. Her intimate relationship with the Church was affirmed by Ambrose (d. 397), who may be called the father of western Mariology, and by Augustine. The question of whether Mary was exempt from original sin appears not to have been asked at this stage. Her assumption seems to have been accepted only in Gaul. Her queenship and power of

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[6]Cited in Archimandrite Ephrem, "Mary in Eastern Church Literature," *The Month* 22 (1989), 315 ff.

intercession are treated much more soberly, and there is no question yet of her mediation.

Early Middle Ages

In the eighth century in the West, one finds the influence of the Greeks on Latin Mariology. This was due to the fact that many of the Greek monks had settled down in Sicily to escape the persecution of the emperors. They blended the splendor of the Byzantine image of the glorious queen, mistress of heaven and earth, interceding on behalf of everyone, with that of the tender mother, giving her maternal love and tenderness to all. In the later Byzantine period, the first author to have attempted a life of Mary was Epiphanus the Monk (d. c. 800). He made use of much apocryphal material as well as New Testament data, and presented her according to the Byzantine ideal of beauty. He described her grave, dignified bearing with light brown hair and eyes, black eyebrows, a straight nose, a long face and long hands and fingers.

The first aspect of medieval Marian devotion arose from sheer delight in what God had done for her, how she embodied God's love for the people and helped to realize God's designs in the world. Central to this devotion was the graciousness of Mary's *fiat* at the Annunciation. It was especially in the monasteries that an almost mystical form of Marian piety flourished. There were statues of the Virgin in the chapel, refectory, the garden. There were writings about Mary in the library. The monks prayed the little office of the Blessed Virgin daily and gave the Song of Songs a Marian interpretation. Virginity as the subject of meditation had a particular significance. To quote Elizabeth Johnson, "Living, enfleshed women, fallen and dangerous to the monastic vocation, had been left outside the monastery; in the Virgin, the monk found the heavenly ideal of woman, which could solace and uplift his heart."[7]

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[7]Elizabeth Johnson, "Marian Devotion in the Western Church," *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest*, ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 392-414.

High Middle Ages

As European culture revived, the cult of Mary began to grow. Crowds flocked to attend the monastery festivals connected with the Marian feasts. Together with the monks, the faithful contemplated the beauty and the glory of the Virgin Mary. A flourishing trade led to the rebirth of towns and the rise of a new merchant class. Glorious Gothic cathedrals were built, usually dedicated to Mary, and sophisticated schools of theology sprang up. By the twelfth century, devotion to her was widespread. In fact, this century was known as the golden age of Mariology. Theological reflection on Mary was chiefly developed by the Cistercians, especially Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard fostered a form of meditative writing which expressed an intense devotion to her.

This was the age of the Crusades, of feudalism, and of courtly love. These developments also had their influence on Marian doctrine and devotion. Mary was hailed in chivalrous terms as the fair lady of the knights. She was addressed as "Our Lady" and "Madonna," respectful titles given to feudal aristocrats. These were both symbols of chaste love. Mary, a simple Palestinian housewife, could not meet the needs of the aristocratic ladies. Before they could venerate her they had to make her one of themselves. From the simple maiden of Nazareth she became the great Queen of Heaven, assigned a place above the Church, between God and the highest angels.

Among the Latin preachers and theologians, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception became the topic of discussion and theological debate. Discussed were such questions as: Did Mary have to struggle against sin? Was she conceived and sanctified by the Spirit from her mother's womb? The Augustinian doctrine of original sin played a decisive part in this controversy. On the other hand, popular religious literature embellished the biblical and apocryphal stories about Christ and his mother. Feasts in her honor became even more elaborate; some were preceded by a vigil, others even by a two-week fast (in the sixteenth century, this exaggerated cult of the Virgin would be stamped out by the Reformers in all Protestant countries). The intensification

of interest in Mary in the medieval period, as well as the emphasis on her exalted role in human salvation, provided a "feminizing" element in an otherwise wholly male-dominated religion. It has been suggested that she replaced the mother goddess Christianity lacked; at the level of popular devotion, she occupied the place left vacant by Isis, Cybele, and the other goddesses.[8] However, her theological isolation from all other women prevented her from functioning psychologically as a model for women.[9]

Consciousness of sin and fear of judgment were characteristics of the conscience of this era. The awesome figure of God the Father as stern king and just judge was difficult to approach. A high Christology too, tended to distance Christ from ordinary people. Like the distant feudal kings, he was too threatening to be approached directly. God, it was thought, could not forgive sin without demanding satisfaction, and sinful people experienced the temptations of Satan and the dangers of eternal torment in hell as very real. Divine mercy, however, found its expression in the mother of Jesus, who, like a kind-hearted, feudal noblewoman, could plead with her son for those who sought her intercession. She embodied God's love for the people. Consequently, the enormous veneration poured out toward Mary expressed itself in the multiplication of prayers, relics, shrines, feasts and narrations of miraculous cures. In the process, Mary often outshone Jesus and, occasionally, even God the Father. The handmaid of the Lord, as she is described in Luke's Magnificat, now becomes "Our Lady," a woman actively concerned about the person seeking salvation. There was also a shift from a liturgical perspective to a personal one, and this was expressed in the proliferation of new devotions. As the embodiment of God's love, she even substituted for God as the acting subject of

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[8]See Theodore Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends: Politics and Transcendence in Post-Industrial Society* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1973).

[9]Eleanor McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Woman in Medieval Theology," *Religion and Sexism,* ed. Rosemary R. Ruether (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 246.

divine deeds and the recipient of divine glory and praise, as found in the medieval version of the standard prayer, the *Te Deum:*

> We praise thee, O Mother of God; we confess thee, Mary ever Virgin.... Thee all angels and archangels, thrones and principalities serve. Thee all powers and virtues in heaven and all dominations obey. Before thee all the angelic choirs, the cherubim and seraphim, exulting, stand. With unceasing voice every angelic creature proclaims thee: Holy, holy, holy, Mary Virgin Mother of God.

Thirteenth Century

The ferment of intellectual life associated with the new universities began to change the social structures of monastic-centered Christianity. A new generation of people emerged, anxious to live the Gospel outside the traditional monastic structure. The ministry of preaching to the laity was undertaken by the new mendicant orders like the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Servites. They focused on Jesus in the poverty of his humanity; in scenes of the crib and the cross, Mary was always present in a human role. At the same time, scholastic theology was developing an understanding of redemption that emphasized the need to make satisfaction for sin. The awe-inspiring Virgin Mother of Christ now becomes the Mother of Mercy who mediates between Christ and sinners. While the development of theological thought was now taking place outside the monasteries, the rigor of scholastic theology with its emphasis on the faculty of reason had little room for affectivity or imagination. Compounding the problem was the fact that the language of scholarly discourse and liturgy was Latin. Latin liturgy and scholastic theology became ever more remote from the ordinary experience of people, at a time when life was hard and often dangerous.

The Immaculate Conception continued to evoke theological discussion. Don Scotus initiated a new way of looking at this mystery. He asserted that Mary was equally dependent on Christ, whether Christ's grace preserved her from sin or sanctified her in the womb (the more common opinion at that time). Beyond this controversy,

Mary appeared only in the great *Summas,* and then only in relation to questions about the Incarnation.

The people loved the Virgin, so it is natural to expect that other strains of Marian piety and ways of venerating Mary continued to come from the popular religious imagination of the people. The meditative writings, known as *Mirrors* of the Blessed Virgin Mary and initiated earlier by Saint Bernard, provided an opportunity to express an intense devotion to her and it appealed to a wider and more popular audience. For example, one Psalter contains the following:

> Sing to Our Lady a new song: for she hath done wonderful things. In the sight of the nations she had revealed her mercy; her name is heard even to the ends of the earth.
>
> Be mindful, O Lady, of the poor and wretched, and support them by the help of thy holy refreshment. For you, O Lady, art sweet and true, exceedingly patient and full of compassion (Ps. 96/97).

One must be slow, however, to make superficial or hasty judgments about Marian devotions, either in their popular preaching or devotional expressions, however bizarre some of these expressions may seem today. The simpler Catholic faithful, especially the poor and the deprived, have sought in Mary a strength which enabled them to interpret life, to experience the love of God in their lives, to feel accompanied and not abandoned, and to continue to hope, no matter how bad the circumstances and tragedies of their lives.

Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

The earlier spirituality that focused on Mary's person now shifted from contemplation to a popular imagination that was less critical. In the imagination of the people, there was intense reverence toward her. With her maternal influence over God, she mediated God's grace to unworthy sinners. She functioned as a merciful and tender mother caring for her spiritual children. There were, however, lots of abuses prevalent in the Mariology of this late medieval period. Focus on the mystery of the Incarnation was now replaced by a magical idea of Mary

as mother who could solve all problems. Rene Laurentin comments on the fourteenth century:

> Repelled by desiccated intellectualism, people sought life on the imaginative and sentimental plane. Throughout this period of decadence popular enthusiasm for the Blessed Virgin never faltered, but the adulterated fodder it was nourished on consisted of trumpery miracles, ambiguous slogans, and inconsistent maundering.[10]

Because of such natural disasters as the Great Plague, the experiences of the Hundred Years' War, the Great Western Schism and the insecurities in a harsh world, people prayed to Mary, Mother of Mercy, for her protection from dangers pressing from every side. When one fifth of the population of Europe was wiped out by plagues, people sought consolation in the image of the sorrowing mother at the foot of the cross. For Christians who could not afford to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the Franciscans encouraged them to follow the Via Dolorosa, to journey with Mary to the cross. This was a way of sharing in the sufferings of Mary and her son.

At times Mary's ability to rescue the sinner became the focus of devotion so that she often functioned independently of God or Jesus. Jesus appeared more and more distant in the theology of the period as well as in popular imagination, and was often viewed as harsh king and judge. Mary became the gentle intercessor, able to change her Son's mind, sometimes even manipulative in the process. She became a mediator between sinful humankind and a distant and sometimes vengeful Christ. No excellence was too great to attribute to her; all beauty, goodness and virtue were in her possession. Her idealized image provided a welcome contrast to the often ugly and dangerous world of everyday life.

Popular preaching designated her Queen of Heaven and Refuge

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[10]Cited in Elizabeth Johnson, "Marian Devotion in the Western Church," *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest,* ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 411.

of Sinners, and placed her at the center of the process of personal salvation. Some even understood such titles as Queen of Heaven to be the re-emergence of the suppressed mother goddess of prehistoric times. While theologians today may interpret her usurpation of the role of Christ as a deterioration of Mariology, anthropologists, on the other hand, analyze it as an appreciation of what has traditionally been termed "the feminine element" in the world. This feminine figure which embodies the attributes of tenderness and compassion grieves with the sorrowful rather than punishing them for their offences. Devotion to the compassionate Mother of Mercy who embodied God's love expressed a need for a religious experience of the feminine in the divine, an experience not available through the understanding of God at the time. Feminist writers also argue that the projection of the patriarchal family structure into heaven, with the harsh authority figure of the father being tempered by the intercession of the mother who is concerned about the wayward child, was done at women's expense. Fashioning an image of woman according to androcentric perceptions left the situation of women unaffected by the glorification of one woman, Mary.

Because of an underdeveloped pneumatology—which to quote Elizabeth Johnson remained in an embryonic state—the figure of Mary assumed the caring qualities of the divine. In a much-quoted article, "Mary and the Protestant Mind," Elsie Gibson observes that when she began to study Catholic theology, every place she expected to find an exposition of the Holy Spirit, she found Mary, and she adds, "What Protestants universally attribute to the action of the Holy Spirit was attributed to Mary."[11] Catholic piety tended to view her as spiritually present to guide and inspire, to console and intercede—all actions which, in the Scriptures, belong to the Spirit (Jn 14:16; 15:26).

While Marian doctrine and devotion developed considerably between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries in the West, they remained

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[11]Elsie Gibson, "Mary and the Protestant Mind," *Review for Religious* 24 (1965), 397.

more static in the East. This was due to the fact that the influences of both the Augustinian doctrine of original sin, as well as that of scholastic theology, were absent there. In the West too, the doctrine of original sin played a decisive part in the controversy about the Immaculate Conception.

Sixteenth Century

The first challenge to the abuses and distortions of the late medieval Church, as well as to the popular cult of Mary, came with the Reformation. Erasmus, who honored the Virgin, called for a correction of distortions in devotion to her, a combination that will appear again and again in subsequent history. He was concerned that her devotees ignored God, believed that Christ reigning in heaven was subject to his mother and that candles, images and chants to Mary substituted for an ethical Christian life. By the time of the Reformation, something like a purgation was long overdue. The Protestant reformers deplored the lack of trust in God's grace and mercy communicated through Christ alone. Protestant and Catholic thinkers alike objected to the excesses of popular belief. The magical and healing powers of relics, for example, led to their becoming objects of devotion. Luther himself showed a tender devotion to the Virgin, especially in his early sermons. In his commentary on the *Magnificat,* he described Mary as a woman of faith, and a model of God's grace for the world. He retained a remarkable amount of Catholic teaching which was only dismissed by his successors. However, he equated the exaggerations of Catholic devotion to Mary with the cult of Baal, which was denounced by the prophets.[12] Luther stressed that the true basis of Mary's dignity was as a believer, and any special blessings given to her were through the merits of Christ and not due to her own special merits.

The Reformers did not turn against Mary in herself. They rejected

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[12]Cited in Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion Vol. II,* 10.

her veneration on Christological grounds. Luther's polemic was aimed essentially at what seemed to him to be the false honor given to Mary. The Reformers felt that praying to Mary and asking for favors detracted from Christ as the sole mediator between God and human beings. Charles Dickson notes that contemporary Protestant writers are prepared to contend that Protestantism has made a serious mistake in its opposition to the Virgin:

> Ignoring the place of the Blessed Virgin in the Incarnation and the whole process of salvation has given Protestantism a harsh thoroughly masculine emphasis.... The absence of ... [tenderness and affection] in Protestantism has led to an overemphasis on a harsh prophetic picture of God with its attending preoccupation with judgment.... The development of a mature Mariology in Protestant thinking could do much to temper the harsh portrayal of the God of judgment and provide it with a healthy ... concept of a God of mercy.[13]

In the polemical post-reformation period, Mary was almost eliminated from the Protestant traditions. If anything, Protestant criticisms of Marian devotions increased Catholic enthusiasm for it. Catholics multiplied their efforts to preserve her exalted status. This exalted image stands in stark contrast to that of the Virgin of Guadalupe, who took the form of a simple Indian peasant woman when she appeared to Juan Diego in Mexico in 1531, and affirmed the indigenous people over and against the Spanish *conquistadores.*

Seventeenth Century

In the seventeenth century, a hundred years after the Reformation, Marian devotions reached a second peak, especially in France, which emerged as the spiritual leader of Western Christendom. The vision of the French school of spirituality, whose doctrinal foundations stemmed from Pierre de Berulle, the founder of the French Oratory,

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[13]Charles Dickson, "Mariology: A Protestant Reconsideration," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 168 (1974), 306-307.

passed almost unchallenged down to the twentieth century. Their Marian spirituality, obviously a product of wider theological and cultural trends of the time, now appears often sentimental and exaggerated. The French school was the matrix of the Jansenist error and devotional excess. Some French Catholics believed that it sufficed to be devoted to Mary alone in order to be saved. Pierre de Berulle (d. 1629), the founder of a society of priests known as the French Oratory, even went so far as to say that Mary's *fiat* in assenting to the Incarnation is "much more powerful in its issue and effect than the word that God pronounced when creating the universe."[14] With Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort (d. 1716), the French school reached its peak of Marian devotion. De Montfort has been called the master *par excellence* of Marian devotion. His best known work is *The True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.*[15] He believed that it was more perfect not to approach God directly, but to go more humbly through a mediator. This was a rather Jansenist attitude, although the Jansenists themselves were certainly opposed to de Montfort. Small tokens of love for the Blessed Virgin, he said, were not sufficient for salvation. He therefore demanded a complete interior surrender to her so as to be entirely formed by her.

Such devotional teaching and practices were often very dubious. Confraternities of the "slaves of Mary" bound themselves in spiritual slavery to Mary, wearing small chains about their necks or wrists as a sign of their bondage.[16] Some took a vow, even to martyrdom, to defend belief in the Immaculate Conception (which was not yet official Catholic doctrine). Popular manuals of devotion for an increasing literate population were often filled with bizarre piety about Mary. This piety included such stories as that of Mary renewing her vows of victim

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[14]Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion Vol. II,* 32.

[15]Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion Vol. II,* 57, [Emphasis added].

[16]Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion Vol. II,* 34.

and servant at age three,[17] or enjoying the angelic light that showed her all the actions of Jesus' soul while he was still in her womb.[18]

Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth century Enlightenment was a philosophical movement that rejected extrinsic authority in favor of the authority of reason. This movement—emphasizing freedom of inquiry, freedom of decision, and freedom of action—posed a serious crisis for the Church, which, until then, had the sole authority to determine what was true and what was not. Few Enlightenment thinkers had much use for what they saw to be extravagant superstitions of religion. Their emphasis on rationalism provided little support for the romantic and sentimental devotion of the previous period. Led by the popular writings of Voltaire, they dismissed apparitions as gullible offenses against reason. Even the Church, increasingly restrained by secular power, and tempted by Enlightenment rationalism, lost interest in promoting the cult. Marian feasts were stricken from local Church calendars, shrines fell into ruin, and excessive devotions were discouraged. During the French Revolution, some churches removed their statues of Mary, and the statue of the goddess of reason was enthroned in Notre Dame cathedral in Paris. Marian literature ceased to exist, although popular devotion was catered for by sermons and by pamphlets put out by congregations particularly devoted to Mary. The Jesuits, promoters of the Marian cult, were disbanded.

From the Nineteenth Century to Vatican II

The nineteenth century marked the beginning of the "Age of Mary." The republican ideals of the Revolution had failed in France.

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[17]Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion Vol. II,* 35.

[18]Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion Vol. II,* 33.

Romanticism—an attitude of mind favorable to irrational influences and to emotional, as well as mystical, experiences and which rejected the Enlightenment program—had failed. Marian teaching and devotion benefited from this new mood, and Catholic revival, under the long-lived Pius IX, signaled the rebirth of the Marian cult. Alphonsus Ligouri's book, *The Glories of Mary,* was one of his most popular works on Marian devotions. For Ligouri, Mary's role in this world was to raise up souls that had fallen from divine grace and to reconcile them to God, a role traditionally given to Christ. If God is angry with a sinner, he says, "Mary takes him under her protection, [and] withholds the avenging arm of her Son, and saves him."[19] The growing demand to have the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception officially defined signaled the need for official recognition of Mary. While it was first defined at the Council of Basel in 1439, it was not proclaimed as a dogma of the universal Church until 1854.

By the mid-century, apparitions of Mary were recorded all over Europe, especially in France: Paris in 1830; Rome in 1842; La Salette in 1846; Lourdes in 1858; Normandy in 1871; Knock, Ireland, in 1879. Both in popular preaching and in theological discussion, Mary had become a more and more autonomous figure. She was no longer seen in the Trinitarian, Christological or ecclesial contexts within which the early Christians had seen her. High on a pedestal, she represented a privatized world of beauty and harmony far removed from the gross world of everyday life. There was an exaggerated emphasis given to human dependence on her. Certain interpretations of the devotion promulgated by Louis Grignon de Montfort became popular once more with the revival of a spirituality that had declined in the age of the Enlightenment. De Montfort's emphasis on "To Jesus through Mary" is a case in point here. Little attention was paid to Mary's own dependence on Christ.

The nineteenth century may have been the age of the suppressed woman, but Rosemary Haughton reminds all that the wilting and

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[19]Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion Vol. II,* 75.

submissive Victorian lady on whom Mary was modeled was really the last desperate effort of a lost cause.[20] It was also an age of very strong women. The Women's Suffrage Movement was a symbol of a changed consciousness and expectations that would continue to ask disturbing questions about gender privilege. Ivone Gebara and Maria Clara Bingemer add:

> At each new historical moment for Christians, the mystery of Mary unveils a different facet, one that can deeply touch the needs of the poor and believing people ... and places women in active participation on an equal basis with men.... This perspective is not yet something achieved in our era, but it is being announced strongly and vigorously, and it brings life for the future.[21]

The first sixty years of the twentieth century saw the continued importance of Marian enthusiasm. Further apparitions were recorded at Fatima in Portugal in 1917, and at Beauraing, Belgium, in 1932. Lay groups designed to carry out a Marian-oriented apostolate led to the blossoming of confraternities and movements, strangely enough with a distinctly militant flavor. The Legion of Mary founded in 1921 and the Blue Army in 1947 are examples of such movements. The Legion of Mary was organized on the model of an army, its members promising to serve in this warfare, which is perpetually waged by the Church against the world and its evil powers. Inspired by the spirituality of Grignon de Montfort, the legionary becomes a slave of Mary, committing absolutely everything to her.

In 1950, the promulgation of the dogma of the Assumption marked another jewel in Mary's crown. Piety and theology kept pace with these official documents. It was held that "never enough honor can be given to Mary." Rosemary Haughton, comparing present and medieval images of Mary, writes:

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[20]Rosemary Haughton, "Hope for a Tree" (Unpublished paper), 14.

[21]Ivone Gebara and Maria Clara Bingemer, *Mary: Mother of God, Mother of the Poor* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 25.

> The crowned and superb Queen of the older images, and even gentle, vital and confident young Mother of medieval iconography, gave way to a meek, melancholy, and scarcely adult virgin, who during the nineteenth century, was allowed less and less bosom and no crown at all. Even Bernadette's vision at Lourdes of an irrepressibly lively and young but regal "Lady" was modified to meet the current requirement: tilted head, wilting body, resigned expression; and women, and most especially "religious" women, were required to identify with this model. Many did so, internalizing to such an extent that no other way of being devout could be imagined.[22]

In this century too, Mary has stood between heaven and earth, a quasi-divine being, and was often exalted as the "Mediatrix of all Graces," "Co-redemptrix," and "Mother of the Church." Catholic spirituality came close to divinizing Mary as a co-principle of redemption. The confusions and exaggerations about Mary—conceptual and imaginative—reached their peak in the 1950s. Such was the situation on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, and it was the task of the Council to bring Marian devotion within the limits of sound theology and practice.

Conclusion

The Council's choice to include its teaching on Mary in *Lumen Gentium 8—within* the doctrine of the church, thus connecting her again to the community of saints—signals a new point of departure. However, it is feminist theology that offers the greatest critique of traditional Marian images. It argues that patriarchal Mariology idealizes one woman to the detriment of all others. "Alone of all her sex," she stands pure and blessed by God.[23] Setting Mary apart from the rest

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[22]Haughton, "Hope for a Tree," 15.

[23]Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1983), xvii: "The title of the book is taken from Caelius Sedulius' verse: 'But alone of all her sex she pleased the Lord'."

of women suggests that she is acceptable because she did not share the corruption that was inevitably attached to the female condition. Feminists also argue that elements oppressive to women pervade the Marian tradition, and that Marian devotions and certain interpretations of Marian doctrines are detrimental to women and continue to impede their liberation. The image of Mary as the perfect model of submission, they argue, is a construct of the patriarchal mind which hails submission as the most commendable virtue of women.

However, the Marian tradition has had liberating effects on both men and women. She has kept the image of woman central to the process of salvation. Secondly, the centrality of her image in Catholicism points to a deep intuition that God cannot be adequately portrayed in images that describe God's activities only as creating, redeeming, and administering justice.[24] The tendency to apply quasi-divine attributes such as "co-redemptrix" to Mary is in itself a critique of this persistently controlling imaging of God in Christianity. Through the long history of the Christian tradition, no one single image of Mary emerged, but rather *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary,* to quote the apt title of George Tavard's book.[25] It is in folk piety rather than in scholarly reflection that the multiplication of Mary's faces and the diversification of images of Mary has taken place. She has been treated in folk piety as a mirror of the divine attributes of boundless compassion and of healing power, for she reflects the benevolent God who is supreme power and goodness.[26] The cult of Mary, which nourished the popular religious imagination with its candles, lights and pilgrimages, developed a far richer tapestry of devotion compared to

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[24]See Ann Carr, *Transforming Grace* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 134-214. See also Sally McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 98-101.

[25]George Tavard, *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996).

[26]Tavard, *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary,* 248.

what the theology of the Word or a catechetical course has ever been able to do.

She is at once a pervasive presence and a many-sided symbol. Because words are often too thin to echo experience, Christians need more than words to bring the inner mystery to expression. Mary incarnates dimensions of meaning that cannot simply be put into words, meanings that arise from the deepest feelings of the human heart as faith, hope and love stir within us. "In Mary, the earth has opened to bud forth a savior. She is the splendid icon of the Living God, the icon of Trinitarian love." Through her the Church inhales and breathes forth the Holy Breath of the Father and Son. She sensitizes all to the immensity of the divine mystery of mercy into which they have been drawn. As a final word, one can cite a Marian phrase frequently used by Bishop Casaldáliga of Brazil: she is "So Full of God, Yet So Much Ours." As Irenaeus of Lyon has said: "God himself it was who gave us the sign of the Virgin."

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LA VIRGEN DEL PILAR:
Defamiliarizing Mary and the Challenge of Interreligious Dialogue

Antonio F.B. de Castro, S.J.

The Shrine of *La Virgen del Pilar* in Zamboanga City, southern Philippines, attracts thousands of people, particularly on the feast of Our Lady of the Pillar celebrated every October 12. It is the one instance in this country of a Marian shrine that is visited by both Christians and Muslims. In the seemingly never-ending conflict and violence in Mindanao this becomes an important topic of discussion.

In this context and on a personal note, allow me a few introductory, background remarks. I was born in Jolo, Sulu and spent the first sixteen years of my life living among Muslims; my family migrated to Zamboanga in the 1980s. Although I myself did not have devotion to Mary under her title as Our Lady of the Pillar, my personal status as one born and growing up in the "deep south" does, in fact, make me an interested party. Because of this, I have however taken the liberty of precisely situating my consideration of devotion to Mary as *Virgen del Pilar* within the concern to promote interreligious dialogue in Zamboanga, particularly between the Catholic and Muslim communities.

This presentation is divided into three parts: **(I)** Devotion to *Nuestra Señora, La Virgen del Pilar;* **(II)** Defamiliarizing Mary; and,

(III) Marian Devotion and the Challenge of Interreligious Dialogue. In addition, it is really a work in progress, both in terms of history and of theology. Much more remains to be done, for example, in the matter of conducting interviews among the Christian and Muslim devotees of *La Virgen del Pilar.*

There are several presuppositions underlying this piece: first, *anthropological presuppositions*, because the reality is a profoundly human reality; second, *ecclesiological presuppositions*, because the reality has to do with what it means to be Church today in Mindanao and Zamboanga; and third, *mariological presuppositions*, because, after all, the reality is all about Mary and what she means for people.

First, the subject has profound anthropological significance. It concerns devotion to a particular person who is considered holy and therefore iconic of the divine presence and dispenser of divine favors; this mystery-filled and symbol-laden person is identified as Mary.

The discussion speaks of a holy place, a place identified as sacred from which emanates a certain power that has its source beyond the earthly and the temporal, the power, for example, of healing and mercy, the power of protecting and safeguarding the population from all sorts of calamities, both natural and man-made; this holy place is identified as the Shrine to Our Lady of the Pillar. The Taosug Muslims have a term for it: the piece of land where the Shrine stands is *tampat.*

The Shrine also serves a community-making purpose; every October 12, the feast of *Nuestra Señora, La Virgen del Pilar* draws participants from everywhere in order to celebrate, even if only for a period, the fact that they are one people, one humanity out of diverse ethnic groups and social classes, with different religious creeds. All are swept as it were within the mantle of *La Virgen del Pilar*, on a piece of land that abuts the sea. Set against a long history of violence in the region, it is nothing short of remarkable to find a feast that draws and unites all sorts of people; it is nothing short of a miracle to find a devotion shared by adherents of different religions, the Christians and Muslims of Zamboanga City. Yet, this community-creating event is today under

threat from several sources. Shrines, after all, can degenerate as well into socially divisive and violence-inducive places.

Secondly, this presentation emerges from some ecclesiological presuppositions; it flows from an understanding of what it means to be Church today, particularly in a place like Mindanao. The experience of what it means to be Church in Mindanao has shapes and colors that cannot be found in other parts of the Philippines. In an essay on the mission of the Church to minorities,[1] Bishop Tagle isolates three priorities that he thinks should characterize this aspect of the Church's mission. Bishop Tagle probably did not have Muslim communities particularly in mind when he wrote this article. Nevertheless, what he says applies not only to the Church's relations with indigenous cultural communities but, *mutatis mutandis*, also with Muslim communities themselves.

Solidarity and Communion. This priority has both a negative and a positive aspect. Negatively, being Church today means

> breaking the prevailing hermeneutic of defining ourselves by withdrawing from "the others" or in the words of [the German theologian J. B.] Metz, defining "ourselves exclusively with our backs to such faces." Among the manifestations of this prevailing hermeneutic are the tendencies toward mental isolationism, tactical provincialism, existential distance, privatization of lives and the voyeuristic approach of onlookers—all contributory to the suffering of many in the world.[2]

Positively, being Church today requires a calm and joyful recognition and integration of other systems of meaning or cultures, allowing them to build up the whole. In the concrete, Tagle thinks that solidarity and communion are served when the Church realizes that she

> cannot fall back on the inadequate responses of institutionalized *diakonia* performed by social action centers and diocesan offices that somehow

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[1]Luis Antonio Tagle, "The Church's Mission Towards Minorities," *Landas* 14 (2000), 129-139.

[2]Tagle, "The Church's Mission Towards Minorities," 133.

> absolves Christians from effective *koinonia* [communion] with the real men and women who inhabit the minority world.... Solidarity demands of the Church vulnerability and sensitivity to the transforming influence of the world of the minorities.[3]

Mutuality and Complementarity. To be Church today, Bishop Tagle thinks that a relationship of mutuality and complementarity between Christian and cultural communities must be forged. Founded on respect for human dignity and presupposing a fundamental sense of equality among peoples, mutuality affirms that

> we are and become what we are, not in spite of, but because of "the others." Other-ness is rooted in a deeper communion of equals from which differences or manifestations of otherness spring. This communion is not lessened or threatened by otherness because it is precisely other-ness that makes the whole what it is. Other-ness is assumed within a more fundamental unity by making that unity depend on the mutuality of those who are "other." Mission towards minorities attempts to make mutuality a pillar on which human relationships in the world and in the Church should stand.[4]

Mutuality and complementarity therefore highlight the mutual gift that different communities can and must be for each other. Here Tagle quotes the 1991 Second Plenary Council of the Philippines: " 'In the Church, nobody is so poor as to have nothing to give, and nobody is so rich as to have nothing to receive' (PCP-II, 98)."[5] This rings true as well for communities and not just for individuals.

Prophetic Witness to Eschatological Hope. To be Church today, all are called to be "bearers of hope." This "hope" is not, in Tagle's words,

> a false optimism that denies the cries of sorrow and mourning arising from the bowels of history and the earth. Hope rather assumes the ambiguities of human situations, the pains of victims, the degradation

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[3]Tagle, "The Church's Mission Towards Minorities," 134.

[4]Tagle, "The Church's Mission Towards Minorities," 135.

[5]Tagle, "The Church's Mission Towards Minorities," 135.

of "the others" and from within them continues to believe in a future firmly held out to us.[6]

In brief, Christians must hope that a different, God-filled future lies ahead, not just for the community of Christian believers, but for all those who belong to the one family of humanity under God.

Solidarity and communion, mutuality and complementarity, and prophetic witness to eschatological hope: these are the signs of what it means to be a Church alive to its concrete situation in a place like Mindanao; these are the pillars on which stand a Church conscious of the multi-religious context in which she finds herself, a Church, therefore, that takes to heart the call to engage in interreligious dialogue and cooperation.[7]

Finally, there are some mariological presuppositions. Given Catholics' devotion to Mary, one may inquire how they approach Mary and relate to this woman. In some ways, it is disconcerting that Mary appears all too often as a waxen figure, like those found in Madame Tussaud's museum, frozen beyond time and space, or fixed

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[6]Tagle, "The Church's Mission Towards Minorities," 136.

[7]The role of the local Church in this task of interreligious dialogue and cooperation is highlighted in William LaRousse, *Walking Together Seeking Peace: The Local Church of Mindanao-Sulu Journeying in Dialogue with the Muslim Community (1965-2000)* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2001). In the Introduction, LaRousse summarizes the aim of his book: "Dialogue with Muslims and Christian Filipinos might be considered as a matter of life and death. The present situation in Mindanao calls for an end to violence, and for reconciliation and peace through dialogue and understanding. While the situation may provide an impetus for dialogue, the foundation of interreligious dialogue is not found in the temporary scene. The theological roots of dialogue are found in the nature of the Church as icon of the Trinity who has begun the dialogue of salvation with all humanity. This inquiry is about the local Church's commitment to interreligious dialogue with Muslims and an evaluation of the development of its identity as Church in a situation of living with Muslims, a situation that has been and is marred by violence." For a briefer account, see also William LaRousse, "Is Dialogue Possible? Muslims and Christians in Mindanao," *Landas* 16 (2002), 273-296.

within certain all too conventional boundaries. She becomes someone quite different from the dramatic character that she is in scripture, a theological person engaged in a dramatic encounter with the God of Israel and a dramatic relationship with her Son and his mission.[8]

Within God's salvific intentions, Mary is a woman endowed with graced freedom, who appears as she sees fit to whomever she chooses, whether it is at Tepeyac or Lourdes or Fatima. Within the Spirit-scripted role and liberating mission given her by God through Jesus Christ, there lies a divinely guaranteed freedom to gather the nations, to accompany them in their earthly pilgrimage, and to mark out the ways that lead to God. It is this that the author wishes to accentuate: Mary's graced freedom in her present state before God and before the world. The question remains: Is Mary allowed this freedom, to move and to act in the Church and in the world? Do Christians continue to set her on a pedestal according to what they narrowly determine to be her proper place? If she is granted her freedom which is hers from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit, then all should be set on that path of solidarity and communion, mutuality and complementarity, and prophetic witness to eschatological hope. The Church needs to traverse these paths which, in fact, are elements found in the life of Mary herself: Mary in solidarity and communion with God and humanity, Mary in mutuality and complementarity with

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[8]Hans Urs von Balthasar notes: "Mary is a dramatic character because her existence lies between the various states of human nature. Not only does she belong to the Old Covenant, to the time of Christ and to the time of the Church; her horizon is even wider: she is located between a paradisal (supralapsarian) existence and human life in its fallen state; eschatologically, she exists between the latter state [of fallenness] and the final fulfillment. Nowhere does she seem to be really at home; except in her Son, who endures and overcomes the same tensions; or, ultimately, in a Church that *should* endure them but for the most part is reluctant. Understandably enough, this synthesis of all the various *status* in Mary has created huge difficulties for theology; and even the binding formulations laboriously arrived at do not give us a final glimpse of how this synthesis is achieved in her." Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-drama: Theological Dramatic Theory, Vol. III: The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 318-319.

God and humans, Mary as embodiment of this prophetic witness to the eschatological hope that all shall be reconciled and brought to perfection in God and through God.[9]

It is within this schema framed by these anthropological, ecclesiological and mariological presuppositions that this presentation addresses the matter at hand: *La Virgen del Pilar* of Zamboanga.

I. Devotion to *Nuestra Señora, La Virgen del Pilar*

Historical Background. In considering the historical background of the devotion to Our Lady, the Virgin of the Pillar, three points need attention: first, the origin of this devotion in Spain; second, Fort Pilar in Zamboanga; and third, the shrine that is dedicated to Our Lady of the Pillar and located within the premises of the fort that bears the same name.

Zaragoza, Spain.[10] How is it that Christians in Zamboanga City have a devotion to Mary under her title *La Virgen del Pilar?* And, how is it that today there is a shrine that is precisely dedicated to *Nuestra Señora del Pilar?* A hint is already given by the *bas-relief* that is found on the façade of the wall of the Shrine itself.

The *basso-rilievo*, which in old pictures of the Shrine was a painting,

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[9]The 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops expressed the ecclesiology of communion as the central and basic idea of the Second Vatican Council's documents. The summary formula for the conciliar vision of the Church is mystery-communion-mission." Breandán Leahy, *The Marian Principle in the Church according to Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Frankfurt am Main, et al.: Peter Lang, 1996), 269. Following von Balthasar, Leahy summarizes Mary's theodramatic role in terms of virginal openness, bridal responsiveness, and maternal fruitfulness (cf. 27, 222-224).

[10]For data and bibliography on the devotion to *Nuestra Señora La Virgen del Pilar de Zaragoza* and her shrine, cf. *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España, Tomo IV*, dirs. Q. Aldea Vaquero, T. Marín Martínez and J. Vives Gatell (Madrid: Instituto Enrique Florez [CSIC], 1975), 2316-2317. For data on the Diocese of Zaragoza, see 2806-2809.

shows Saint James with a staff gazing at Our Lady; she is standing on a pillar. This image recalls Zaragoza, Spain.[11]

The story is told by Father Max Rodriguez, a Spanish Claretian missionary who worked in Zamboanga for many years and who has produced a book on Our Lady of the Pillar. The story concerns

> the apostle James the Elder, one of Jesus' selected Twelve, who went to Spain to spread the good news after the Resurrection of our Lord. One day he was praying on the bank of Ebro River, rather depressed at the scarce success of his missionary activity among the people of Spain. To his great surprise and wonderment, he saw the angels transporting the Virgin from Palestine and reverently placing her on a pillar. Upon looking up, he saw Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in mortal flesh standing on that pillar. Hence the name of Our Lady of the Pillar (*Nuestra Señora del Pilar*). Mary comforted and encouraged James the Elder to continue his work of evangelization and requested that a church be built in her honor in that very place. Today there stands a magnificent church, built to her memory and in fulfillment of her request, at the very site of her personal appearance in Zaragoza.[12]

There are several things to be noted about this tradition.[13] First, it concerns an apparition or, better, a visitation of Our Lady when she was still living in the flesh. The story as told is about Mary being

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[11]The word "Zaragoza" was derived from the old Latin name of the Roman colony inhabiting the place: "*Caesaraugusta.*" A Christian community existed in Zaragoza as early as the third century. During the time of Mozarabic rule in Spain, the place was known as *"Saraqusta."* On December 18, 1118, King Alfonso I of Aragón succeeded in liberating Zaragoza from the Moors; it became the capital of the Kingdom of Aragón. The Church of Zaragoza, which was a suffragan of the Metropolitan Church of Tarragona, was raised to the dignity of an archdiocese in 1318.

[12]Max Rodriguez, *Our Lady of Pilar: Heritage of Zamboanga* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1995), 14. See also Emigdio Alvarez Enriquez, "Of Fiestas and Their Wherefores," in *Zamboanga Hermosa: Memories of the Old Town,* ed. Antonio Orendain II (Makati City: Filipinas Foundation, Inc., 1984), 189-201.

[13]This presentation does not enter into the question of the historicity of the story as told. The important point to consider is that the story is what gives the devotion to Our Lady of the Pillar its foundational meaning and significance.

bodily transported from Palestine in order to encourage one of Jesus' original twelve apostles. Second, the chapel or shrine constructed by Saint James would, in effect, be the first such building constructed in honor of Our Lady. And third, there is a strict link between the shrine at Zaragoza and that other major Spanish shrine: *Santiago de Compostela.* These three points mark the peculiarity of this Marian devotion.

Secure historical documentation for the existence of a church dedicated to Mary is to be had however only in the ninth century. Aimon, a monk of Saint Germain de Paris, wrote in the year 855 that *"la iglesia de la Virgen Maria de Zaragoza es la Madre de todas las iglesias de la ciudad."* The designation of the church as *Santa Maria del Pilar* arises only however from the thirteenth century. And, it is toward the end of this same century that one finds the first secure historical documentation of the story about Our Lady and Saint James.

Devotion to Our Lady of the Pillar became quite diffused in Spain through the centuries. Kings like Juan II de Aragón y Navarra (mid-fifteenth century) and Fernando el Catolico (late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries) took her as their personal guardian and named her protectress of the kingdom. Popes of the sixteenth century like Clement VII (1529), Paul IV (1558) and Sixtus V (1588) approved the devotion to *Nuestra Señora, La Virgen del Pilar de Zaragoza.*

It was however in the seventeenth century that a new impetus was given to its development. On March 29, 1640, the Virgin of the Pillar was declared responsible for *"uno de los milagros más grandes de la hagiografía moderna,"* the restoration of the leg of Juan Pellicer. This miracle-working character of the shrine would explain the great popularity of this particular devotion throughout Spain.

In 1678, the Spanish Cortes or parliament chose *Nuestra Señora, La Virgen del Pilar de Zaragoza* as patroness of the entire kingdom and its overseas possessions. Note that October 12, feast of Our Lady of the Pillar, was the day in 1492 when Cristobal Colon first set foot in those lands which would later be named America; this established the historical and psychological link between devotion to *La Virgen del Pilar* and *el día de la hispanidad.* October 12 is celebrated in Spain today as a

religious and secular feast to honor Our Lady and to commemorate the diffusion of the Spanish spirit abroad.

In late seventeenth century, the Spanish monarch, Carlos II, and his brother, Juan de Austria, both of whom had a deep devotion to *La Virgen del Pilar de Zaragoza*, decided to dismantle the old church and build a new one. The present Basilica and Shrine of *La Virgen del Pilar de Zaragoza* was started in 1681 following the baroque style and was completed only in 1872. It therefore took almost two hundred years to complete the massive structure. Within the church is to be found *la Santa Capilla* where the miraculous statue of Mary is venerated. This small statue, which goes back to the fourteenth century, is made of wood and stands on a silver- and bronze-plated marble pillar.

Today the Basilica and Shrine of *Nuestra Señora, La Virgen del Pilar de Zaragoza* continues to attract pilgrims and devotees from everywhere in the world.

Fort Pilar. The Jesuits were the ones who conceived the idea of building a fort in Zamboanga.[14] After a lot of hesitation on the part of the Spanish authorities, Juan Cerezo de Salamanca, governor-general of the Islands, ordered the fort to be built. He designated Juan de Chaves to head an expedition of 300 Spaniards and 1,000 *indios* from Cebu in order to begin the enterprise, and the first stone was put in place on June 23, 1635 according to plans drawn up by the Jesuit Melchor de Vera.[15] The fort was named *Fuerza de San José.* The aim was to contain the Moros of Mindanao and thereby to preserve the Christian missions in that area. It is probable as well that the fort was meant to secure control of one of the most important trade routes in Southeast Asia, the trade route that connected China, the Philippines

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[14]Maria Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo Spínola, *Arquitectura Española en Filipinas (1565-1800)* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1959), 362-375.

[15]Horacio de la Costa, *Jesuits in the Philippines 1581-1768* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 325-327.

and the Moluccas. That trade route passed through the narrow channel separating Zamboanga from the island of Basilan.

In 1662, however, then governor-general Sabiniano Manrique de Lara ordered that the military detachments assigned to the forts in Zamboanga, Iligan, the Calamianes, and the Moluccas be recalled to Manila in order to neutralize the threat posed by Koxinga to Manila and Cavite. In 1666, the Jesuits would petition the *Consejo de Indias* to reopen the fort. No action was taken. And so it happened that the *Fuerza de San José* would remain abandoned for 57 years, falling into disrepair.

In 1672, a royal decree ordered the restoration of the fort in Zamboanga. But it was only on November 24, 1718 however that Fernando Manuel de Bustillo, then governor-general, was able to personally organize an expedition to Mindanao which set out from Cavite. On April 5, 1719, he and his men entered the dilapidated *Fuerza de San José, "arbolando en ella la santa cruz y el estandarte y armas reales."* The governor-general then designated Gregorio de Padilla y Escalante to oversee the restoration of the fort, with the aging Juan de Ciscara as chief engineer of the whole project. In the instructions given to these men by the governor-general, the name of the fort was changed from *Fuerza de San José* to *Fuerza de Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza*; this decision was most probably inspired by the choice of *La Virgen del Pilar de Zaragoza* as the patroness of Spain and all her overseas dominions in 1678. Furthermore, three of its four bulwarks or bastions were given the names of *San Felipe, San Fernando, San Luis* in honor of the royal sons, while the fourth bulwark was given the name *San Francisco Javier*, whom common and conventional wisdom then erroneously believed to have been in Mindanao. From this time on, the fort would never be abandoned again.

The fort has undergone various metamorphoses. In the nineteenth century, one finds this report from the Jesuit missionary Pablo Banqué:

> The fort of Zamboanga is a regular square with bastions at the four corners. It is called the Fort of Our Lady of the Pillar because the Blessed Virgin, under this title, is the patroness. According to some

historians, it was erected at the beginning of the eighteenth century. If true it must have undergone various modifications, like, for example, the removal of six bastions and the lookout tower, the disappearance of the church and the hospital which Mr. Sonnerat, Subcommisary of the French Marines, described and painted in 1769 when on his way to New Guinea.[16] Perhaps those who assert it was constructed during the governorship of Folgueras in the first third of this century are correct.[17] If so, the fort of Zamboanga has already been abandoned twice and rebuilt also twice, but not according to the original plan drawn up by our Fr. Melchor de Vera who in his time was much esteemed by experts in construction. Besides, the first one was erected close to the mouth of the river, where the ditch debouches according to the account by Fr. Murillo,[18] who visited it in 1637. The present one is close to the city. I visited it in the company of Fr. Carreras, and with Mr. Caudras, mayor of the plaza, I took a walk along its walls. Inside, the garrison is lodged in respectable rooms of the precinct. The mayor called our attention to the phenomenon of the land elevation towards the northeast, where there used to be a small bay, but is now filled with layers of sand and dirt teeming with mollusks of the genus *oliva, mitr, conus, neritach, strombus, ciperaea, trous haliotis, arca oricata, lucinaa, circe,* but in a bad state, with white coral and pieces of red coral eaten away, like much of the beach and the low land of this district.[19]

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[16]This reference is to Pierre Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes orientales et à la Chine..., depuis 1774 jusqu'en 1781: dans lequel on traite de moeurs, de la religion, des sciences & des arts des Indiens ..., les Philippines & les Moluques, & de recherches sur l'histoire naturelle de ces pays,* 2 Vols. (Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1782).

[17]Arcilla says that Mariano Fernandez de Folgueras was interim governor-general of the Philippines from 1806-1810 and 1816-1822. See the letter of Pablo Banqué, SJ, Zamboanga, on April 10, 1994, to Hermenegildo Jacas, SJ, in *Jesuit Missionary Letters from Mindanao, Vol. II: The Zamboanga-Basilan-Jolo Mission,* ed., tr., and an. Jose S. Arcilla (Quezon City: U.P. Press, 2000).

[18]This refers to Pedro Murillo Velarde, SJ, who wrote a history of the Jesuit missions in the Philippines. See the letter of Pablo Banqué, SJ, Zamboanga, on April 10, 1994, to Hermenegildo Jacas, SJ, in *Jesuit Missionary Letters from Mindanao, Vol. II: The Zamboanga-Basilan-Jolo Mission.*

[19]Letter of Pablo Banqué, SJ, Zamboanga, 10 April 1994, to Hermenegildo Jacas, SJ, in *Jesuit Missionary Letters from Mindanao, Vol. II: The Zamboanga-Basilan-Jolo Mission,* 40-41.

All throughout its history, the fort became the scene of various bloody conflicts. Adolfo Navarro has written:

> In 1720, the king of Bulig, Dalasi, together with 3,000 Moros, stormed the fort. In 1798, it was bombarded by the British and became the scene of a mutiny in 1872. Later events saw the fort captured by American expeditionary forces in 1899, surrendered to Japanese forces in 1942, and recaptured by American liberation troops in March, 1945. The historic fort was finally turned over to the government of the Republic of the Philippines on July 4, 1946, upon the withdrawal of American sovereignty from the islands.[20]

All through these years, the community around the fort grew. The Jesuits built a church and a school. There was a hospital as well, and various other buildings. The town expanded toward the west and the north of the fort, and Zamboanga became one of the most important centers of Spanish power and culture.

During the American regime, Fort Pilar was "occupied by the offices and warehouses of the Quartermaster, Finance, Ordnance, Signal and Engineer Department."[21] Though not based on reliable data, some suppose it was during the American period when the northeast gate was sealed off and the area took on its present configuration.

Today, the fort houses a museum. But its most important feature is the outdoor Shrine of *Nuestra Señora, La Virgen del Pilar*, located on the external façade of its northeastern wall.

The Shrine. Initially the image of Our Lady was placed in a chapel within the fort itself. It is not known when the image of Our Lady was put on the space above the northeastern gate leading into the fort. It could be that this took place sometime in January 1734. There are two inscriptions on this façade, the first located at the base of the pillar,[22]

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[20]Adolfo C. Navarro, "Miracle at the Fort," in *Zamboanga Hermosa*, 197.

[21]"Fort Pillar *(Fuerto del Pilar)*," *Archives: Philippine Province, Society of Jesus* (APPSJ) XIV-23-101, a brief account of the Fort and the Shrine written probably in 1935.

[22]The first of two frontispiece inscriptions on the northeastern wall, which is

the second at the top.[23] In any case, given the lacuna in the data about the Shrine, the following points need to be considered.

To be noted is the different image of Our Lady as it appears on the wall, different, that is, from the original and canonical image of Our Lady of the Pillar of Zaragoza. First, note that the original image is a statue; what Zamboanga has is a rather crude *basso-rilievo*. Second, the image of the *basso-rilievo* does not correspond to the image of the original.[24] The artist of the *basso-rilievo* is not known. But it is interesting to note that the embossed image of Our Lady is dressed in what appears to be a *malong* or a *patadyong*. It is perhaps a local version of an inculturated image of Mary, less elegant than Our Lady of Guadalupe to be sure, but clearly native enough to merit attention.

A story, narrated by Emigdio Enriquez, is often told that

> when the Church was constructed, the Lady of the Pillar was chosen as its patroness. An image of the Lady was ordered from Spain. But

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located right below the pillar and in fact is its base, reads: *"Regiendo las Españas la Catholica magestad de Don Phelipe V emperador del nuevo mundo americano y governando estas islas philipinas el muy ilustre señor Mariscal de campo Don Fernando Bustillo y Rueda Governador y Capitan General se establecio y readifico esta real fuerza de Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza lo que hizo el ilustre General Don Gregorio Padilla y Escalante Abril del año de 1719."*

[23]The second of two frontispiece inscriptions on the wall of the fort, which today is located directly above the pillar and under the image of Our Lady, reads: *"Governando esta fortaleza el Señor Don Antonio de la Torre Bustamante se hizo este prontispicio por henero de 1734 AÑOS."* It is not absolutely clear to this writer what *prontispicio* refers to; does it refer to the image as well? If so, then the image would date to 1734. If not, then it still is not known when the image of Our Lady was put on the wall.

[24]This author does not agree therefore with Ronaldo Bautista when he wrote that "(i)n 1734, the image of the Virgin of the Pillar was brought over from Zaragoza, Spain, and embossed on the eastern wall of the fortress...." (Ronaldo Bautista, "Zamboanga through Legend and History: Proud Heritage, Glorious Past," in *Zamboanga Hermosa,* 87). How can an existing image (a statue) be embossed on a wall? Apart from the fact that the image stands on a pillar, it is just plain different from the image of Our Lady of the Pillar in Zaragoza. In any case, see the otherwise excellent historical account in Bautista, "Zamboanga through Legend and History: Proud Heritage, Glorious Past," in *Zamboanga Hermosa,* 81-103.

> the image was long in coming and the church authorities, anxious to inaugurate the holy edifice, decided to install an available image of the Immaculate Conception in its place. When the image of the Lady of the Pillar finally arrived, the authorities had to pack it back in its crate and send it away to Dipolog where the church did not yet have a patron saint on the altar. However, when the crate reached Dipolog, the image was gone. It was presumed to have been stolen.[25]

Note that it was a church that was being constructed, not a shrine. But this story surely gives a hint on why the Cathedral church of the city is dedicated to Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception. It must also be noted that the Jesuits, the primary evangelizers of the region, were promoters of the cult of the Immaculate Conception in the country. However, it must be said that it was around the title of *La Virgen del Pilar* that Marian devotion in Zamboanga primarily revolved. This phenomenon could be explained by the fact that it was *La Virgen del Pilar* who was identified as the miracle-worker; the Immaculate Conception was perhaps just a bit too cerebral a mystery to appeal to the common imagination.

In any case, the image of Our Lady on the wall certainly does not correspond to the original image in Zaragoza. It is not known for sure when her image was put up there, or who the artist was. The sure thing is that people flock to this shrine to pay respect to her image identified as *La Virgen del Pilar*.[26] Though not an exact replica of the original *Nuestra Señora, La Virgen del Pilar de Zaragoza, La Virgen del Pilar de Zamboanga* serves as the city's protectress, guardian, and source of inspiration.

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[25]Emigdio Alvarez Enriquez, "Of Fiestas and Their Wherefores," 189.

[26]The Jesuit missionaries assigned to Zamboanga refer to celebrations of Our Lady's various feasts in their letters. Thus, Juan Carreras, SJ, wrote on November 11, 1880 to the Mission Superior in Manila: "In the important feasts, no less than 150 persons approach to purify their conscience in the holy tribunal of penance, and in the principal feasts of the Blessed Virgin, such as those of Carmel, Pilar, Rosary, Immaculate Conception, attendance goes up to more than 200." *Jesuit Missionary Letters from Mindanao, Vol. II: The Zamboanga-Basilan-Jolo Mission,* 3.

The practice used to be that people would go to the Shrine every Saturday, light candles, and offer prayers of supplication and thanksgiving. It was also common for families to congregate at the Shrine in the late afternoon of the day. During her feast day, Our Lady of the Pillar draws pilgrims from all the surrounding areas, including Taosugs, Yakans, and Samals from as far as the islands of the Sulu archipelago, and Subanons from their villages in the provinces of Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga del Norte.

Previously, the area was an open-space shrine. Today, various improvements have been made. The space has been enclosed with a fence on which stand various statues. The stations of the *via crucis* are represented in the niches on the posts and walls of this fence. There are three main kiosks within the enclosed space: the first is a chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved; the second is a place where Shrine personnel hold office; and the third, which is built against the wall, houses several statues and images of Our Lady. The main altar is now under a canopy. On the main wall itself, a niche contains a freestanding crucifix. Around this open-air sanctuary one finds cement benches. To the left of the sanctuary, along the fortress wall, space is provided for candles lit by devotees. In the middle of this space stands a huge white cross. The place is well kept; plants and flowers add color to the environment. On the whole, one gets the impression that the city has done well in making the holy place a site of prayer and devotion.

Contemporary Context: Zamboanga. One cannot prescind from the fact that the Shrine of *Nuestra Señora, La Virgen del Pilar* is located in Zamboanga City.[27] By force of historical circumstance,

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[27]Zamboanga became a chartered city on October 12, 1936, the Feast of Our Lady of the Pillar. It covers a huge territory, second only to Davao City in extension: 142,099.99 hectares or 1,420.99 square kilometers, divided into 61 barangays. The population of the city stands at 596,695 (2000 census: cf. http://zamboanga.net/CityBarangays.htm). There is a move to divide Zamboanga City into two civil districts: the first would be a down-sized Zamboanga City, the other would be a separate province composed of various *barangays* stretching from the east to the west.

the city has always been a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious urban center.[28] In 2002, it counted 600,127 inhabitants, 76% of whom are Catholics (456,096). Non-Catholics therefore make up 24% of the population; one can safely assume that the great majority of this 24% is Muslim.[29] Zamboanga, which became a diocese in 1910 and elevated to an archdiocese in 1958, has been under the pastoral care of Archbishop Carmelo D. F. Morelos (since March 7, 1995). The archdiocese has 72 priests and 72 religious sisters. The city's scattered 61 barangays are divided into 23 parishes.

Presumably, Protestants, Muslims, Buddhists, and others comprise the 24% non-Catholic population of the city, with the Muslims taking the lion's share. But, if one looks at the region as a whole and not just Zamboanga, then the picture radically changes. According to the *2002 Catholic Directory of the Philippines,* the Prelature of Ipil, lying just north of Zamboanga, has a Catholic population that is 68% of the total (384,581 out of 564,730). To the south of Zamboanga, the Prelature of Isabela, which includes the big island of Basilan, the Catholic population accounts for only 27% of the total population (82,258 out of 303,023). And farther to the south, the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo, which covers the Sulu and Tawi-Tawi provinces, has a Catholic population of only 2.5% of the total (23,300 out of

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[28]Subanons, Taosugs, Yakans, Samals and Badjaus mingle with Visayans of all kinds (Cebuanos, Boholanos, Ilongos, Negrenses, etc.) and with the descendants of Spaniards, Portuguese, Irish, Dutch, Americans, Germans, English, Indians, Chinese, Malaysians and Indonesians.

[29]These figures are taken from *The 2002 Catholic Directory of the Philippines* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2002), 263-266. The Catholic percentage share of Zamboanga's population has been steadily declining, not because the Catholic population is declining but because Muslim migration into the City has been rising, probably due to the armed conflict in predominantly Muslim provinces like Basilan and Sulu, and in Zamboanga del Sur, which has a sizable Muslim minority. In 1995, Catholics accounted for 86% (427,236) of the total population of 496,786. In 1999, they accounted for 84% (448,937) of the total population of 535,074. Today, this share has precipitously fallen to 76%. All these figures are taken from the annual directories issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

913,750). Given these figures, the Catholic population in the region composed of the Prelature of Ipil, the Archdiocese of Zamboanga, the Prelature of Isabela and the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo would account for 40% of the total population (946,235 Catholics out of 2,381,630). This leaves 1,435,395 non-Catholics, which is 60% of the total population of the region. It should be safe to assume that the Muslim population accounts for the majority of this 60%. Roughly, therefore, there is a near parity in Catholic and Muslim populations in the region. This writer would estimate: 50-55% Muslim, 40% Catholic, and 5-10% Protestant, Buddhist, Animist, and others. What these figures reveal is that, in the region which includes half the province of Zamboanga del Sur, Sibuguey, Zamboanga City, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, interreligious dialogue and cooperation are not options; rather, they are imperatives.

Devotion to *Nuestra Señora, La Virgen del Pilar.* Particular interest in this devotion is determined by the multi-religious context of its location and its followers. This is a rather rare phenomenon in the world. Examples usually given are the following.[30]

At Algiers, capital of Algeria in North Africa, there is a shrine to *Notre Dame d'Afrique* that is under the care of the White Fathers.[31] This shrine is visited by both Christian and Muslim sailors who venerate an image of Our Lady there. It seems that she is held to be primarily the protectress of sailors who are exposed to possible distress at sea.

There is a shrine in Turkey which is called "the house of the Virgin Mary" or "Maryam Ana."[32] The shrine recalls the story of how Mary

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[30]Material drawn from the lecture notes of Sr. Lillian Curaming, FMM, which carry the title "Mary in Islam." She has graciously provided a mimeographed copy of these notes. Her notes will be used again in detailing the presence of Mary in the *Qur'an* and in Islamic tradition.

[31]For greater detail on the Basilica and the Shrine of *Notre Dame d'Afrique*, which is found in the capital city of Algiers, Algeria, visit the site: http://perso.wanadoo.fr/bernard.venis/Alger/notre_dame_afrique/notre_dame_afrique.htm

[32]Material accessed at: http://www.ephesusguide.com/ephesusmap.html

lived her final years in the city of Ephesus under the care of Saint John the Evangelist. Again, this shrine is visited by both Christian and Muslim pilgrims.

Finally, Jesuits from India note that several Marian shrines in the Asian sub-continent are visited not just by Catholics but also by Muslims and Hindus.[33] At least four of them can be named: Our Lady of Good Health Shrine at Vailankanni, Chennai,[34] Our Lady, Mother of Divine Grace at Mokameh,[35] the Holy Rosary Shrine at Bandel, Kolkata,[36] and Our Lady of the Mount Shrine at Bandra.[37]

The Shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar in Zamboanga belongs to this group of Marian shrines. But, what makes it even more peculiar is the fact that it leans against the wall of a military fort! Father Max Rodriguez expresses the peculiarity of this shrine in an excellent manner.

> The shrine has been carved into the wall of a "fortress," a contradictory symbol in itself. A fortress normally evokes memories of invasions, wars, hatred, divisions. It was so with Fort Pilar. The history of Southern Philippines, and of Zamboanga in particular, has been a rather violent one and in some ways, still is. So much blood was spilled on the very wall where Our Lady stands now as the patron saint of Zamboanga. Undoubtedly, in the minds of the rude Spanish soldiers that guarded the garrison of the Fort in the past, the Virgin of Pilar was "on their side," a shield against their "enemies." But the Virgin of the Pillar

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[33]A good general internet resource on Mary is to be found on the website managed by Johan Roten of the University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio. Though far from complete, the site provides addresses of several shrines. Please see: http://www.udayton.edu/mary/main.html

[34]See: http://www.chennaionline.com/toursntravel/placesofworship/vailankanni.asp

[35]See: http://www.petersnet.net/research/retrieve.cfm?RecNum=3175

[36]See: http://www.logincalcutta.com/tours/hooghlyOthers1.html#top

[37]See: http://theory.tifr.res.in/bombay/physical/geo/bandra.html

> patiently changed it all. With the passage of time, she has transformed "her Fort" from a bastion of war into a symbol of peace, reconciliation and dialogue. It is the greatest miracle performed by Our Lady of Pilar in this city. The very location of the Fort speaks for itself. It stands at the frontier of Muslim and Christian communities. In a sense, she belongs to both communities, for she is respected by all and praised in the sacred books of both great religions, the Qur'an and the Bible.
>
> At a time where dialogue between the different religions of the earth is of paramount importance for peace, the Shrine of Fort Pilar is a place where religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians becomes daily routine, a fact of everyday life.[38]

Many stories have been told by both Christians and Muslims about the solicitude that Our Lady, or *Sayyida* in Arabic, has always exercised over Zamboanga and her people. Two particular occurrences of a natural calamity serve as the backdrop to Marian miracles. On September 21, 1897, a massive earthquake shook the land and unleashed a tsunami.[39] Our Lady was then seen "standing in mid-air over the Basilan Strait," and those who witnessed the apparition testified that Mary "had her right hand raised to signal the onrushing waves to stop." The city was spared death and destruction. Again, at midnight, August 16, 1976, there was another tsunami-creating earthquake, and Mary was once again seen over the sea, protecting the city from disaster. This second earthquake killed over 8,000 people and laid the coastal communities of the Moro Gulf to waste. For communities, both Christian and Muslim, Mary is seen as protectress of the city, as one

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[38]Cited in the yearbook *Archdiocese of Zamboanga: 90th Anniversary 1910-2000* (Zamboanga City, 2000); cf. Rodriguez, *Our Lady of Pilar*, 17.

[39]Extreme damage would have been reported to the Jesuit Mission Superior in Manila. Instead, what one has is a rather laconic account of a meeting held on October 10, 1897: *"Preguntó el R. P. Vice Superior si convendría hacer algo con ocasión de los terremotos de Zamboanga. Pareció a todos que habiendo tomado la iniciativa el coronel Real nosotros no debíamos hacer cosa alguna oficialmente. En cuanto a los N.N. que se aguardara á que expusieran sus necesidades."* "463: Consulta del 10 Octubre 1897," *APPSJ* IV (1884).

therefore who has power to prevent death and destruction and to preserve life and community.

Finally, one should not forget the many stories told about assistance of one kind or the other extended by Our Lady to people. This is one area where a wider and deeper kind of research can be done. Although this writer has not been able to personally document cases of miraculous cures attributed to Our Lady of the Pillar, he would like nevertheless to focus attention on one such cure. Though not through the mediation of Our Lady of the Pillar, nevertheless the important point to consider is that it was through Our Lady of Carmel that a Muslim woman claimed she was miraculously cured of her cancer in 1997. The Muslim woman's name is Karatul A. Silbin, probably 60 years old now, married and mother of five children. The last bit of news of her is that she continues to reside with her family in Jolo, Sulu.[40]

II. Defamiliarizing Mary

In this section of the presentation "defamiliarizing Mary" is used in two senses: an objective sense and a subjective sense.

Objective Sense: Recuperating Mary's Otherness. If there is anything that characterizes Marian devotion, it is that quality of the familiar that comes to mind. She is familiar not just in the vague sense of somebody who seems to be an acquaintance from the past; she is familiar in the sense of belonging to the family. She is familiar because everything about her is familial. She is also familiar in the sense of someone who is present; Mary is there, always there. And because she is there, one can always turn to her in moments of need and distress.

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[40]Data was taken from photocopied notes of Karatul A. Silbin, with medical records attached. I wish to thank Vicente Marasigan, SJ, for making these notes available to me. They are one more testimony to the multi-religious appeal of Mary such that, where the common *tao* (person) is concerned, it does not matter whether she is to be located in a Christian place or not.

This explains why her most familiar title therefore is that of Mother. This is the reason why she appeals to everyone; Filipinos have even taken to calling her in a familiar way: "Mama Mary."

In what sense then does one speak of the need to defamiliarize Mary in an objective way? It is in no other sense but to break whatever restrictions the familiar imposes on her person and her role. One cannot attempt an extended and detailed discussion of this point here. Suffice it to say that what the author has in mind is to recuperate a healthy sense of the analogical language that is used in order to make sense of Christian commitments and beliefs, in this case, of devotion to "Our Lady." Mary is virgin, but she is more than a virgin as this term is usually understood. Mary is bride, but she is more than a bride as one usually understands this word. Mary is mother, but she is more than a mother as people usually understand this familiar word. The objective sense therefore of defamiliarizing Mary points to this more, and nothing else.

How does one go about recuperating that otherness of Mary that is more than what is familiar? This writer proposes that one look at her as Muslims understand her.

Mary in Islam. A caveat needs to be mentioned right at the beginning of this treatment of Mary in Islam. There is a sense to saying that, in Islam, as compared to Christianity, Mary is in fact "less"; Islamic Mariology is a "low Mariology." Here, a divide separates Christians from their Muslim brothers and sisters; a Christian understanding of Mary is tied to an understanding of Jesus Christ and the Trinitarian doctrine of God, and Jesus Christ holds a surplus of meaning that he does not have for Muslims. Nevertheless, although Mary seems "less" in Islam than in Christianity, Christians from their vantage point must say that Mary is the *Mother of all Muslims* as well, the Mother of all those who surrender their lives to the will of God, the Mother of all who submit to Allah. And because Christians believe this to be true, they are invited to listen to what Muslims have to say about Mary.

Mary in the Qur'an. It might surprise many to find out that Mary is mentioned 34 times in the *Qur'an*, certainly much more than in the

New Testament of the Bible.[41] A whole chapter, *Surah 19*, is named after her. Another chapter, *Surah 3*, carries the title "The House of *'Imran*," "*'Imran*" being the Arabic word for Joaquim, the father of Mary. Note that, for Muslims, the Holy *Qur'an* is the highest religious authority they have. In functional terms, the Holy *Qur'an* is for the Muslim what Jesus Christ is for the Christian. In doctrinal terms, the *Holy Qur'an* is the *Word of God made Script*, just as for Christians Jesus Christ is the *Word of God made Human.* What data about Mary, then, is found in these *Qur'anic* chapters?

> First, one finds narratives of Mary's birth, life, and election as the mother of the prophet Isa, or Jesus, all episodes demonstrating that she is the most exalted woman in Islam.[42] Like her son, "she was showered with God's blessings." "In her mother's womb she was already consecrated to God, in order to dedicate her life especially to God's service."[43] She was "the chosen one among all women."[44] According to Islamic experts, the name "Mary" signifies "servant-adorer." The *Qur'an*, with a certain abandon that contrasts markedly with the reticence of the Bible, revels in stories of Mary's childhood and her infancy years. As a child, she grew up in the temple precincts under the care of Zakariya:

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[41]This text is taken from a videoconference by Father Stuart Bate, OMI, on "Mariology from Vatican Council II until Today," organized by the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy and disseminated by the Catholic news agency Zenit.org on June 1, 2002.

[42]"O Mary! God has chosen you and purified you—chosen you above the women of all nations" (3:42).

[43]"Behold! A woman of *'Imran* said: 'O my Lord! I do dedicate unto you what is in my womb for your special service'" (3:35).

[44]"When she was delivered, she said: 'O my Lord! Behold! I am delivered of a female child!' And God knew best what she brought forth. And no wise is the male like the female. I have named her Mary. And I commend her and her offspring to your protection, from the Evil one, the Rejected" (3:36).

Right graciously did her Lord accept her.
He made her grow in purity and beauty.
To the care of Zakariya was she assigned.
Every time he entered her chamber to see her,
he found her supplied with sustenance.
He said, "O Mary! Whence comes this to you?"
She said: "From God: for God provides sustenance
to whom he pleases, without measure." (3:37)[45]

According to Sister Lillian Curaming, Muslim mystics love to "meditate on this life of Mary as one enclosed in the Temple, praying and receiving her (spiritual) food from God." In this way, Mary herself has become an exemplar of the mystical life.

Mary of course figures in the *Qur'an* in the narratives of the annunciation. "Mary was chosen among all women to be the mother of a holy son ... [a message] announced to her through God's messenger who is identified by commentators as the angel Gabriel."[46] In the *Qur'anic* account of this episode in Mary's life, she is "frightened," whereas Lk. 1:29 portrays Mary as "deeply troubled by his words, and wondered what his greeting meant." And though Islam does not accept Jesus to be of divine paternity, nevertheless the *Qur'an* testifies to the miraculous nature of his virgin birth.[47] Muslims accept that Jesus had no human father, although they draw a different theological conclusion from this than Christians do. Mary also experienced ostracism because of the circumstances of her birth; her relatives "were angered" because

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[45]The apocryphal writing, *Pseudo-Matthew*, in chapters 4-6, contains related material on the life of Mary.

[46]"Then we sent to her an angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects" (19:17).

[47]"So she conceived him. And retired with him to a remote place" (19:22).

she had brought disgrace to her family.[48] "To this calumny and slander of her relatives, Mary's response was silence. She left Jesus to defend her. And her son was kind to her" (19:29-34).

Mary's Privileges and Virtues. In summary fashion, one can enumerate Mary's privileges and virtues in the *Qur'an* under various headings. First, *Mary is the elected and purified one.* In this one hears echoes of the Catholic doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception, although Islam has quite a different understanding of sin. In any case, Islam counts her in many instances as first in rank among several holy women (Khadijah, the Prophet Muhammad's wife; Aisha, wife of Pharaoh and foster mother of Moses; and Fatima, Muhammad's daughter).[49]

Second, *Mary is the Virgin par excellence.* The *Qur'an* states: *"And remember her who guarded her chastity: We breathed into her of Our Spirit, and We made her and her Son a sign for all people"* (21:91).

Third, *Mary is a faithful believer.* Mary is therefore a model of faith in *Allah.* She is, in other words, an exemplar of what it means to be a Muslim in the first place: the one who surrenders his or her will to God. She is also portrayed in the *Qur'an* as testifying to that faith; this corresponds to the Gospel's account of her *fiat: "And Mary the daughter*

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[48]"At length she brought the babe to her people, carrying him in her arms. They said: 'O Mary! Truly an amazing thing have you brought'"! (19:27); "O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a man of evil, nor your mother a woman unchaste"! (19:28).

[49]"Ath-Tha'labî relates a tradition that the four best women in the history of the world are Mary, the mother of Jesus, Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh, Khadîja, the first wife of Muhammad, and Fâima, his daughter. Bukhârî, author of the foremost collection of tradition *(adîth),* explains that Mary was the best woman in her time, while Khadîja was the best woman of her own time. No comparisons are made except when speaking of Fâima, who is called 'the first lady (*sayyida*) of the women of Paradise.' Ibn-Athîr, Amad ibn-anbal and Abû-Ja'far a-abarî, other collectors of *adîth,* add the qualification: Fâima is the 'first lady of the women of Paradise, after Mary daughter of 'Imrân.' Yet other *adîth* give the preponderance of honour to Fâima." Joseph Kenny, *Jesus and Mary in Islam* (Lagos: Dominican Publications, 2002). This data was retrieved from Dominican Publications Website, Lagos.

of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into her body of our Spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and of his Revelations and was one of the devout servants" (66:12).

Fourth, *Mary is devout and prayerful.* In her young life, she grew up within the temple precincts. The *Qur'an* exhorts her: "O Mary! Worship your Lord devoutly. Prostrate yourself, and bow down in prayer with those who bow down" (3:43).

Finally, *Mary is the Mother of Jesus.* "*Ibn Maryam*" ("Son of Mary") is the oldest name of Jesus in the *Qur'an.* This title of Jesus appears 24 times in Islam's holy book. Compare this to the one instance this is true in the Gospels (Mk. 6:3). The important point to consider however is that Jesus and Mary are together considered to be "a single sign to the nations" (23:50 and also 21:91).

Mary in Islamic Tradition. The *Hadith* is the second highest religious authority in Islam. The *Hadith* is for the Muslim what the Bible is for the Christian. The *Hadith* is Islam's collection of traditions that came to be written down. Although they do not have the same authority as the *Qur'an*, nevertheless they derive inspiration from it and seek to explicate it. As Lilian Curaming notes, "A *hadith* says 'that no child is born without being touched by Satan.' The newborn baby cries because of this touch. But Mary and her son were the only ones preserved from this evil touch of Satan." Another *hadith* goes further by saying that "Mary and Jesus have not sinned like the rest of mankind. So Islam believes that Mary and Jesus never sinned."[50]

Other *hadith* narrate stories of Mary as *fianceé* of Joseph the carpenter, who is acknowledged to be her cousin and becomes her *"quasi epoux,"* "quasi husband." These stories tell of the flight to Egypt, and Egyptians love to point to the spot on the banks of the Nile River where *Maryam* bathed her child. Still other stories tell of the coming of the Magi, the massacre of the Innocents, and the miracle at Cana. They also tell of how Jesus appeared to his mother after he was "lifted

[50]Lilian Curaming, "Mary in Islam" (Unpublished lecture notes), 5.

up to heaven," clearly a reference to Jesus' resurrection/ascension; here one finds an Islamic account of the *Salubong* [Encounter] between Mary and the Resurrected Jesus that Filipinos celebrate on Easter morning. Finally, Muslims believe that, "6 to 8 years after her son's apparition, Mary died at the age of 51 years old."

Mary in Islamic Devotional Practice. It has already been pointed out that, in several places, Muslims do not feel any embarrassment in frequenting Marian shrines. Perhaps this could be explained by a story told about Muhammad:

> Islam is generally opposed to any human images, particularly in connection with worship. Yet, according to al-Azraqî, who wrote a biography of Muhammad around 830, when Muhammad conquered Mecca, "he ordered that all the idols which were around the Ka'ba should be collected, smashed and burned. The Meccans had put pictures in the Ka'ba, including two of Jesus, son of Mary, and Mary. A Ghassân woman joined the pilgrimage of the Arabs and when she saw the picture of Mary in the Ka'ba said, 'My father and my mother be your ransom! You are surely an Arab woman!' The Messenger of God [i.e., Muhammad] ordered all the pictures to be erased except those of Jesus and Mary."[51]

This story corresponds it seems to the experience of many overseas Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia. Bibles and statues and rosaries are confiscated by Saudi Customs officials; but, pictures or *estampitas* of Our Lady and the child Jesus are allowed.

Another story establishes a link between one of Our Lady's titles, Our Lady of Fatima, and the Muslim world. Fatima was the name of the daughter of the last Muslim ruler of Portugal. She chose to remain behind when the Muslims were constrained to leave Portugal. Her husband, who was Catholic, decided to change the name of their town to Fatima. Fatima of course was the name of Muhammad's favorite daughter. Sister Lilian Curaming quotes Bishop Fulton Sheen:

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[51]Kenny, *Jesus and Mary in Islam.* Retrieved from Dominican Publications Website, Lagos.

"I believe that the Blessed Virgin chose to be known as 'Our Lady of Fatima' as a pledge and sign of hope to the Muslim people."[52]

Subjective Sense: Mary Defamiliarizes Us. Every Christian Marian devotee must surely hold that Mary partakes of the mystery of God and her son Jesus Christ and of the world of humanity. Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar recognized the difficulty of arriving at a final synthesis of who Mary is. In constructing a Mariology, he acknowledged that

> Mary is a dramatic character because her existence lies between the various states of human nature. Not only does she belong to the Old Covenant, to the time of Christ and to the time of the Church; her horizon is even wider: she is located between a paradisal (supralapsarian) existence and human life in its fallen state; eschatologically, she exists between the latter state [of fallenness] and the final fulfillment. Nowhere does she seem to be really at home; except in her Son, who endures and overcomes the same tensions; or, ultimately, in a Church that should endure them but for the most part is reluctant. Understandably enough, this synthesis of all the various states in Mary has created huge difficulties for theology; and even the binding formulations laboriously arrived at do not give us a final glimpse of how this synthesis is achieved in her.[53]

"Nowhere does she seem to be really at home; except in her Son...." If this is the case, then everyone's task is to allow Mary to orient them about herself and her son. This means that the final measure of devotion to Mary is no other than Mary herself. Mary is the best critic of all Marian devotions and Marian practices. And this means that Mary is not there to be owned; rather, she defamiliarizes all about herself and her son; she challenges and leads, beyond the usual comfort zones, to, in Saint Paul's words, those "things which

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[52]Curaming, *Mary in Islam,* 6, cited in James Kroeger, *Living Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 124.

[53]Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-drama: Theological Dramatic Theory, Vol. III: The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 318-319.

eye has not seen, which ear has not heard and which have not entered into the human heart, all these God has prepared for those that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

It is in the context of interreligious dialogue that the force of John Paul II's writings on Mary are manifested. If Marian spirituality is the spirituality of spiritualities, then every Christian must attend in the Spirit to Mary in prayer and contemplation, so that, following John Paul II in his apostolic letter on the Rosary, with Mary they may remember Christ, from Mary they may learn about Christ, and with Mary they may be conformed to Christ.[54] How this relates to the imperative of interreligious dialogue is the concern of the next section.

III. Marian Devotion and Interreligious Dialogue

Marian Matrix of Interreligious Dialogue. There are two references to Mary in *Nostra Aetate* (NA), Vatican II's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. One refers to the Jewishness of Mary. The other refers to the fact that Muslims "also honor Mary, his virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion" (NA 3).

On December 8, 1995, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the American Muslim Council awarded Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore its "Mahmoud Abu Saud Excellence Award." In his address that dealt with Muslim-Christian dialogue and Mary, the Cardinal of Baltimore said:

> What a propitious moment it is, therefore, that finds Christians and Muslims together on a major feast of the Virgin Mary to celebrate the mutual esteem for one another which befits men and women in the faith tradition of Abraham, "God's friend" (Is. 41:8; Jas. 2:23; "Women" IV: 125). It is certainly true that in her very person there is a meeting point, or at least a stepping stone, between Christianity and Islam. Indeed, as the Qur'an itself says: "To those who believe, God has set an example

[54]John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae,* 13-17.

(*mathalan*) ... in Mary, who preserved her chastity ... who put her trust in the words of her Lord and his scriptures and was one of the truly devout" ("Prohibition" LXVI:12).[55]

The Cardinal then went on to say:

> It is true, of course, that for all of the esteem and honor which Muslims and Christians have for Mary, the mother of Jesus, in her role in our separate ways of prayer, she is also the symbol of what radically divides us and what challenges us to dialogue. For Christians she is the all-holy *Theotokos,* the mother of God, the mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate. For Muslims she is the mother of Jesus, the Messiah, "who was no more than God's apostle and his Word, which he cast to Mary: a spirit from him" ("Women" IV:171). While this radical difference in faith forever separates us, it paradoxically also holds us forever in conversation with one another. And this conversation can, and should be, as the Second Vatican Council taught Catholics, a *jihad,* a "striving for mutual understanding." And the council fathers went on to say of the Christians and Muslims together, "On behalf of all peoples, let them make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace and freedom" (*Nostra Aetate,* 3).[56]

Reading this testimony from an American Cardinal, one cannot help but notice how strange it is therefore not to find any reference to Mary at all in another important Vatican document on interreligious dialogue: "Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."[57] For, in the Cardinal's words, it is indeed Mary who holds Christians and Muslims "forever in conversation with one another."

Indeed, at least where Christian and Muslim interreligious dialogue is concerned, *Mary is already there as someone loved and shared.*

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[55]Cf. http://www.nccbuscc.org/seia/keeler.htm

[56]Cf. http://www.nccbuscc.org/seia/keeler.htm

[57]This document was jointly published on Pentecost 1991 by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. *Bulletin: Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* 77 (1991), 210-250.

In Zamboanga City, it is Mary, *Nuestra Señora del Pilar*, who brings Christians and Muslims together, for "she already belongs to both communities." In the words of Claretian Max Rodriguez, "At a time where dialogue between the different religions of the earth is of paramount importance for peace, the Shrine of Fort Pilar is a place where religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians becomes daily routine, a fact of everyday life."[58]

In short, Christian and Muslim interreligious dialogue and cooperation already has a Marian matrix as a foundation. The challenge is to bring this to the fore not only in the consciousness of the people of both communities but also in their concrete actions. Yet, here is where one finds certain problematic issues.

Obstacles to Interreligious Dialogue. The Vatican document "Dialogue and Proclamation" lists eleven important obstacles to interreligious dialogue and cooperation. They are:

1. Insufficient grounding in one's own faith.

2. Insufficient knowledge and understanding of the belief and practices of other religions, leading to a lack of appreciation for their significance and even at times to misrepresentation.

3. Cultural differences, arising from different levels of instruction, or from the use of different languages.

4. Socio-political factors or some burdens of the past.

5. Wrong understanding of the meaning of terms such as conversion, baptism, dialogue, etc.

6. Self-sufficiency, lack of openness leading to defensive or aggressive attitudes.

7. A lack of conviction with regard to the value of interreligious dialogue, which some may see as a task reserved to specialists, and others as a sign of weakness or even a betrayal of the faith.

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[58]Rodriguez, *Our Lady of Pilar*, 17.

8. Suspicion about the other's motives in dialogue.

9. A polemical spirit when expressing religious convictions.

10. Intolerance, which is often aggravated by association with political, economic, racial and ethnic factors, a lack of reciprocity in a dialogue that can lead to frustration.

11. Certain features of the present religious climate, e.g., growing materialism, religious indifference, and the multiplication of religious sects, which creates confusion and raises new problems.[59]

In one form or another, these obstacles are also present among the members of the multi-religious communities of Zamboanga City. These obstacles must be overcome, with patience and perseverance, given the particular character of the city and the crying need for peace in the region.

Two challenges are being posed to Christian-Muslim Marian devotion as exemplified in the Shrine of *La Virgen del Pilar.* The first challenge comes, ironically, from the Christian majority. The second comes from a few Muslim fundamentalists. Both challenges have to do with the reported *fall in the number of Muslim visitors* to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar.[60]

Christian Challenge: Overcoming Exclusionary Ignorance. The Christian challenge, given Christian-Muslim devotion to Mary and the imperative of interreligious dialogue, is to overcome a certain insensitivity *vis-a-vis* Muslims, an insensitivity that has its roots in a profound (even if inculpable) ignorance of Islam. This writer would like to think that the Christians of Zamboanga City have been acting

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[59]"Dialogue and Proclamation," 52.

[60]The word "reported" is used because this is obviously an issue that can only be resolved by empirical investigation. To a certain extent, it does not really matter whether this is the case or not; the fact remains that the Shrine has been "over-Christianized" and that poses a lot of questions with regard to the seriousness of the Church in her commitment to interreligious dialogue with Muslims.

in good faith through the years in their efforts to make the Shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar a place of pilgrimage and prayer that is worthy of Mary. Unwittingly however, it is this laudable attempt to honor Mary that has perhaps disastrously transformed the Shrine into a kind of exclusionary space. What meaning do these words carry?

First, the Shrine, beautiful as it is today, unwittingly excludes Muslims through *the proliferation of other Christian symbols within its space.* These symbols are primarily statues, not just of Mary, but also of Christian saints. Islamic prohibition of images in worship makes it difficult for Muslims to connect with Our Lady when the place seems to be staked out as exclusively Christian through the multiplication of statues.

Second, the Shrine unwittingly excludes Muslims through *the insertion of the Stations of the Cross in the niches of the fence posts.* The Cross is a negative symbol for Muslims. They may be able to accept the presence of one Cross, but to multiply them through the insertion of the stations of the *via crucis* along the fence is to Christianize the Shrine in an exclusionary way.

Third, the Shrine unwittingly excludes Muslims through *the building of a Blessed Sacrament chapel in the premises.* Muslims do not understand Christian Eucharistic theology and would be horrified to witness practices such as Eucharistic adoration.

Fourth, the Shrine unwittingly excludes Muslims through *the absolute absence of any Islamic symbol.* Islamic art is principally tied to Arabic texts of the *Qur'an*; no such texts are found embossed anywhere in the premises of the Shrine.

Muslim Challenge: Overcoming Uncritical Arabization. The Muslim challenge, given Christian-Muslim devotion to Mary and the imperative of interreligious dialogue, is to hold fast to their native forms of devotional practice and not to allow an uncritical Arabization of their Islamic faith. It seems that some (though not all) religious *ulama* (singular: *aleem*) and *tablighi* (singular: *tabliq*), i.e., "itinerant Muslim teachers who belong to a worldwide movement for the propagation of the Islamic faith and dedicate their whole lives to convince people

to return to the purity of Islam as found in the Holy *Qur'an*,"[61] have been preaching that any Muslim who enters the Shrine has committed the worst possible sin in Islam: the sin of *apostasy*. Marian devotion as manifested through the lighting of candles is considered un-Islamic. In some ways, the Islam of these *ulama* and *tablighi* is analogous to the Christianity of certain fundamentalist and iconoclastic Protestant/ Evangelical congregations.

It is of course difficult to convince Muslims under the sway of these religious *ulama* and *tablighi* that the Shrine is open to them as well, given what has been observed regarding the pervasive Christianization of the shrine's space itself. And, given the socio-political climate in the region, there is every reason to fear that the good will that is still there may be irreversibly dissipated.

Tentative Proposals. These two challenges to Christian-Muslim devotion to Mary and for the need for interreligious dialogue and cooperation between the two religious communities could be met through various ways. Where the Shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar itself is concerned, this author suggests at least several steps that hopefully are not too naive, too difficult, or too late.

First, progressively decrease the number of statues in the area; the first to go should be the statues of the saints. At the very least, they could perhaps be transferred to a section of the shrine so that they do not form what appears to be an exclusionary ring around the shrine itself.

Second, relegate the stations of the *via crucis* to a more restricted space; perhaps the space to the right of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel could be used for this.

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[61]Gerard Rixhon, "The Changing Face of Islam in Sulu: Reflections from an Anthropological Perspective," (draft of an article currently considered for publication). All await the publication of this article in a book which is supposedly going to be edited by Eric Casiño, a professor of Anthropology at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

Third, move the big white Cross into this same general area where another place for the lighting of candles can also be set up.

Fourth, convert the office, which is to the left of the altar, into a small Muslim prayer room, with an orientation to Mecca clearly etched on its wall.

Fifth, convert the space where the big white Cross now stands into a place where *Qur'anic* texts on Mary could be artistically displayed. The place for candles could continue where it is now.

Sixth, set up a group of interreligiously sensitive and responsible Christians and Muslims who can act as a consultative body regarding the organization and use of the shrine's space.

These are some initial thoughts, presented as proposals.[62] They are placed under this question: What would Mary, *La Virgen del Pilar*, Mother of Christians and Muslims, say?

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[62]An alternative proposal has been suggested by Mr. Luis Olivares, who attended a lecture on *La Virgen del Pilar* given by this writer. He suggests that, instead of touching the present Shrine, an interreligious shrine could be set up right next to Fort Pilar; it could incorporate Christian and Muslim symbols. In such a shrine, *Qur'anic* texts about Mary could be artistically displayed. There are several reservations about this idea; shrines have a tradition behind them and are not just built because they are expedient in some way. However, it certainly is an idea worth considering.

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HISTORY OF THE ROSARY

Rolando V. de la Rosa, O.P.

Until the early part of the seventeenth century, it was widely believed that Saint Dominic, the founder of the Order of Preachers (commonly known as the Dominican Order) received the rosary from the Blessed Virgin Mary herself. Although many present-day devotional paintings, pictures, calendars, and altar pieces still attest to this belief, historians generally agree that the rosary, as a form of prayer, is a product of centuries of evolution which began long before the time of Saint Dominic.

What the world owes to Saint Dominic and the Dominicans is not the rosary as a formula for praying, but as a devotion with lingering popularity and as an instrument of preaching the Catholic faith. Biographers of Saint Dominic (1170-1221) are one in saying that he had a great love for the Blessed Mother. His preaching was interspersed with Marian invocations and meditations on the mysteries of Jesus. Many Dominicans after him formed confraternities of lay people whose devout and regular recitation of *Hail Marys* closely resembled the present-day communal recitation of the rosary. Richard Gribble, a Holy Cross priest, writes: "It would *not* be *inaccurate* to call the Dominicans the principal promoters and defenders of the rosary through history."

The evolution of the rosary is rooted in every believer's desire to link oneself with the Divine. Prayer is at the heart of every religion.

Whether ritualized or spontaneous, communal or individual, vocal or mental, prayer serves as an effective link between the human person and the Divine. Through it, a believer not only expresses praise, worship, supplication, reparation, or intercession, but also an insatiable thirst to pierce through the sublime mystery of the Divine. Since the mystery remains impenetrable, the repetition of prayers becomes necessary. The repetition is like a persistent "knocking at the door" of meaning and understanding. Authentic prayer occurs when understanding, however imperfect, somehow grasps the meaning of the Divine, delighting in it in an overpowering moment of mystical communion.

Saint Paul urges the Christians of first century Thessalonica to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:1). In his letter to Rome, the Apostle instructs the Christian community there to "be constant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12). He not only demands unceasing prayer of the Christians in his care, but practices it himself as well. In his letter to the Thessalonian community, he writes, "We constantly thank God for you," (1 Thess. 2:13) and he comforts Timothy, his "true child in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2) with the words "Always I remember you in my prayers" (2 Tim. 1:3). In fact, whenever Saint Paul speaks of prayer in his letters, two Greek words repeatedly appear: *pantote,* which means *always,* and *adialeptos,* meaning *without interruption* or *unceasingly.* Prayer is then not merely a part of life which one can conveniently lay aside if something deemed more important comes up; *prayer is all of life.* Prayer is essential to life as is breathing.

This raises some important questions. How can anyone be expected to pray all the time? People are very busy. Work, family, children, and school all place heavy demands upon available time. How can anyone fit more time for prayer into an already overcrowded life? These questions and many others like them which could be asked set up a false dichotomy in the Christian life. To pray does not mean to think about God in contrast to thinking about other things or to spend time with God in contrast to spending time with family and friends. Rather, *to pray means to think and live one's entire life in the Presence of God.* Prayer formulas, like the Rosary, are ways of enkindling this awareness.

Prefigurations of the Rosary

Spontaneous or ritualized prayer formulas repeated incessantly have been characteristic of world religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, and even Islam. Prayer counters such as rocks, sticks, notches in wood, and even knots and beads, were used to keep track of the number of prayers uttered. The idea of using a string of beads to facilitate prayer and meditation is not exclusive to Christianity.

As early as the nineteenth century B.C., Hindus were already using prayer beads in worshipping their gods. Today, devotees of Shiva use a rosary of 32 or 64 beads, while those who worship Vishnu use a prayer counter of 108 beads. In contemporary Korea, Buddhists use a rosary of 110 beads, while Japanese Buddhists use a very complex rosary that requires them to recite over 36,000 prayers. Two hundred years after the death of the prophet Muhammad, Muslims pray using 99 beads, each one corresponding to a name and attribute of Allah. Christianity is perhaps the last world religion to use a rosary in its worship. How did this come about?

Before the psalms in the Old Testament became the main body of the liturgical prayer of the Church, there were formulas or invocations that Christians uttered repeatedly. The early Christian monks who went out into the desert to live and pray in the second through the fourth centuries had a preference for short, repetitious prayer ("monological prayer"). The Orthodox Church has looked to these Desert Fathers as a major source of spiritual wisdom. A favorite repetitious prayer of these monks was *Kyrie eleison* ("Lord, have mercy"). By the sixth century, the statement of the tax collector in Lk. 18:13 became the basis of the prayer "God, have pity on me, a sinner." This later evolved into what is now known as the *Jesus Prayer:* "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have pity on me, a sinner." It was hoped that a Christian could move from vocal prayer to meditation and finally to contemplation by repeating this invocation. Also called the *Prayer of the Heart,* the Jesus Prayer disposes the Christian to pray as regularly as the heartbeat.

Our Father. With the establishment of monasteries, monks

and nuns recited the 150 psalms in the Old Testament as an essential element of their religious obligation (the *Divine Office*). Aside from being scriptural, the psalms are beautiful songs of worship, repentance, thanksgiving, and supplication—the four aspects of authentic prayer. Later, the daily recitation of the Psalms became the focal point within which the daily life of monks and nuns revolved. They would practically recite the entire 150 psalms every single day, distributed equally among their dawn, morning, midday, and evening prayer schedule.

This arrangement was good for the monks and nuns, and later for the clergy, but the laity was greatly disadvantaged by it. Majority of the laity could hardly read, and they did not have copies of the Bible. Shortly after the beginning of the twelfth century, lay people (in Ireland, some historians say), found a way of participating in the *Divine Office* that was performed in monasteries and convents by reciting the Lord's Prayer *(Pater Noster)* 150 times, lifted verbatim from the Gospel of Matthew. They would count their *Pater Nosters* by using pebbles. This practice became so popular that instead of pebbles, the laity would get a large rope and tie 150 knots in it. Every knot corresponded with one *Pater Noster.* This long rope was later shortened to one with 50 knots, which they used three times a day. It can be said that the first form of the Rosary appeared as the recitation of the 150 *Pater Nosters*, also called the *Psalter of Jesus.*

Hail Mary. Toward the end of the twelfth century, the invocation "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb" took on an importance equal to that of the *Pater Noster.* This Marian invocation, taken from Lk. 1:28 and Lk. 1:42, is a combination of the greeting to Mary by the angel Gabriel and Elizabeth's exultant salutation to Mary. In 1198, the *Hail Mary* was listed, along with the Apostles' Creed and the *Pater Noster,* as official Church prayer. The importance given to the *Hail Mary* logically arose from the Church's affirmation of the Blessed Mother's crucial role in the life and mission of Jesus. The 150 *Hail Marys* which soon took the place of the 150 *Pater Nosters*–which, in turn, were used in place of the 150 psalms–constituted what was called "Mary's Psalter." The name Jesus was believed to have been added

to the *Hail Mary* as early as 1261 by Pope Urban IV, but the addition came into popular usage only 200 years later.

Holy Mary. The phrase "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen" was believed to have been added to the Rosary during the sixteenth century. This phrase, however, was first used in the document of the Council of Ephesus (431), which defined as a dogma of faith *Mary as the Mother of God (Theotokos).* In 1495, the Dominican reformer Girolamo Savoranola wrote in a preface for one of his numerous writings an invocation that is practically the same as the modern prayer: *"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."* Finally, in the Catechism issued by the Council of Trent in the first half of the sixteenth century, the definitive form of the invocation was fixed. It went as such: *"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."* In 1568, the complete prayer, *"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen,"* came with the publication of the Roman Breviary.

Glory Be. The doxology *"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit..."* recited at the conclusion of each decade of the Rosary originated from the popular Jewish doxology *"God be praised!"* From the third century, the doxology was used to conclude the recitation of each of the 150 psalms, both in the Western and Eastern Catholic Churches. In 529, the Second Council of Vaison declared that all territories beyond the Alps must pray the doxology in this way: *"Glory be to the Father and to the Son and the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."* History has shown, however, that the doxology was never officially included among the Rosary prayers. In fact, as late as 1882, when Pope Leo XIII issued his first encyclical on the Rosary, he never mentioned the *Glory be.* Nor did Pius XI mention it in his encyclical published in 1937. Regardless of these facts, the doxology became a popular part of the recitation of the Rosary.

Creed and *Salve Regina*. The praying of the Creed as part of

the Rosary was first mentioned in a book entitled *Libellus Perutilis,* published in 1495. The author of this work suggested that the *Hail Marys,* together with the *Pater Noster* formed, as it were, a garland of flowers connected around a hoop which is the *Creed.* The most celebrated Marian hymn, the *Salve Regina,* became a popular prayer throughout the Latin Church. In the twelfth century, it was used as an antiphon during the recitation or chanting of Mary's *Magnificat* and as a processional chant among many monastic and religious orders. By the seventeenth century and through popular practice, this beautiful hymn, containing many relevant medieval themes and titles of the Blessed Mother, capped the recitation of the Rosary.

"O my Jesus ..." By popular practice, this short invocation is now said between each mystery of the Rosary. At Fatima, on June 13, 1917, in one of the apparitions of Our Lady to Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco, she instructed them to "Say the Rosary, inserting between the mysteries the following prayer: 'O my Jesus, forgive us. Save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls into Heaven, especially those who are in most need'." At Lourdes, Mary had appeared to Bernadette Soubiros with a rosary wrapped in her hands, but her message to Bernadette did not mention the Rosary. At Fatima, however, the Blessed Virgin acknowledged herself as the Lady of the Rosary. Her message was simple and direct: "Pray the Rosary each day for world peace."

The Mysteries: *Rosaria*

The essence of the Rosary devotion, however, lies not in the mere recitation of the various prayers included in it. The central focus of this devotion is the meditation on the mysteries in the life of Jesus, and Mary's unique role in His life and mission.

In the early fifteenth century, a Carthusian monk, Dominic of Prussia, developed a way of reciting the Rosary with 50 *Hail Marys* and linked these with 50 meditative phrases about Jesus and Mary. These meditative phrases (called *clausulae*) were actually brief summaries of some aspects of the life and work of Jesus. These phrases would later be known as the mysteries of the Rosary. Originally, 14 dealt with the

hidden life of Jesus, 6 dealt with His public life, 22 were about His passion, and 8 dealt with the glorification of Jesus and the coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It was also in this century that the word *Rosarium* (rose garden) was applied to the recitation of the 50 *Hail Marys.* At about the same time, another Carthusian, Henry Kalkar, contributed further to the development of the Rosary by dividing the 50 *Hail Marys* into groups of ten, forming five decades with a *Pater Noster* before each decade.

At the latter part of the fifteenth century, the 50 mysteries had been reduced to 15 mysteries, one for each decade of the *Hail Marys.* In 1470, the Dominican Alan de la Roche (Alan de Rupe) founded the *Confraternity of the Psalter of Jesus and Mary* (which later evolved into the *Confraternity of the Holy Rosary*), contributing enormously to the Rosary's popularity. In 1483, a book about the Rosary entitled *Our Dear Lady's Psalter* was written by a Dominican in which he enumerated the 15 mysteries of the Rosary, which are the same as the modern-day mysteries except for the final two glorious mysteries. In the version of this anonymous Dominican, the fourth glorious mystery is the Assumption and Coronation of Mary, while the fifth mystery is the Last Judgement. In 1573, another Dominican set the typical division of the mysteries into the joyful, sorrowful and glorious.

In 1569, Pope Saint Pius V definitively fixed the formula for praying the Rosary, taking into consideration the many modifications through history. He also officially affirmed the Rosary as an efficacious individual and communal prayer, and assured its many devotees graces and indulgences. Pope Gregory XIII established in 1571 the feast of the Holy Rosary, celebrated every October 7. The concluding prayer of the Rosary is taken from the Mass for this Feast: *"In meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, we ask that we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise through Christ our Lord."*

Popes and the Rosary

The universal appeal of the Rosary among the faithful and their

spontaneous attachment to it are proof that the Blessed Mother always has a place in the hearts of the faithful. It is interesting to note that the Rosary was born out of the simple Catholics' desire to participate in the official prayer of the Church. The phenomenal popularity and persistence of this devotion is an instance of the *sensus fidei,* a proof that the Holy Spirit works among the faithful in ways that the official teaching office of the Church—and those who hold it—cannot always anticipate.

To their credit, many popes were not wanting in showing support for the propagation of the Rosary. Among the notable ones were Popes Leo X, Gregory XII, Sixtus V, Clement VII, Alexander VII, Blessed Innocent XI, Clement XI, Innocent XIII, and Pope Benedict XIV. In the nineteenth century, the golden season of the Rosary began with Leo XIII, rightly called the *Pope of the Rosary.* He issued numerous documents in praise of this devotion and urged the formation of what he called an "army of contemplatives" who would recite this prayer daily as a weapon against society's evils. Probably the most significant comment on the Rosary made by a modern-day pope came from Pius XII. He stressed the inseparable link between the Rosary and the family. For him, the Rosary is a family prayer, "a most efficacious means to transform the family into an earthly abode of sanctity, a sacred temple, a school of Christian discipline and Christian virtue."

Following Pius XII's lead, Father Patrick Peyton, a Holy Cross priest internationally known as *The Rosary Priest,* popularized the saying "The family that prays together, stays together."

The apparitions of Our Lady and the numerous victories of Christian armies and naval fleets against their enemies also gave impetus to the official Church's support of the Rosary. In all of these special events, Mary asked all Christians to pray the Rosary as a sure way to obtain peace and combat the devastating effects of materialism and false ideologies.

A Logic of Love

Pope Pius XI in his encyclical letter on September 20, 1937,

described the Rosary as a prayer governed by "a logic of love." He wrote that it is characteristic of those in love to repeat many, many times the same words of affection to their beloved. Yet such repetitions are not futile or vicious because, to both the lover and the beloved, the same words always express something new and life-giving.

Pope Paul VI, in his apostolic exhortation *Marialis Cultus,* promulgated on February 2, 1974, calls the Rosary "a compendium of the Gospel" and a Gospel prayer. Despite this magisterial support for the Rosary, many lay faithful, theologians, religious, and even seminarians, perhaps influenced by the prevailing skepticism and liberalism of the post-Vatican II period, looked at the Rosary as a pious practice that has outlived its usefulness. Beginning in the West, the communal recitation of the Rosary gradually disappeared in the prayer schedule of many convents and religious houses. The tradition of praying the Rosary in the family also suffered because of the hectic pace of modern living, the preponderance of communication, information, and entertainment media, and the unmitigated upsurge of materialism and secularism.

A vibrant hope for the future of the Rosary was born on October 16, 2002, when Pope John Paul II issued the document *Rosarium Virginis Mariae,* the apostolic letter which he considers as the Marian crowning of his other significant apostolic letter, *Novo millennio ineunte.* Focusing on the Christological dimension of the prayer and contemplating what has long been lacking in the meditation on the life of Christ, the Pope added the *Mysteries of Light,* five mysteries corresponding to the public life of Jesus; he stressed that the Rosary remains, as ever, an important instrument for evangelization. He also reminds all Catholics that the Rosary is an effective tool for ecumenism and promoting world peace. The pope writes: "The Rosary is, by its nature, a prayer for peace, since it consists in the contemplation of Christ, the giver of Peace."

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THE "DIVINIZATION" OF MARY OF NAZARETH IN CHRISTIAN IMAGINATION:
The Iconography of the Virgin Mary

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The term *iconography,* from the Greek *ikon* (image) and *graphein* (to write), has two broad meanings: *first,* as a creative act of producing an image of a sacred figure, whether as painting, sculpture, metal craft or textile, and *second,* as the act of decoding, interpreting, analyzing and understanding such an image.

This essay will concern itself more with the latter meaning. The starting point for analysis shall be some key images, the fruits of creative action.

Philippine Icons of Mary

Two strands in the iconography of Mary are found in the Philippines. These are best exemplified by two principal and early images of the Virgin introduced in the Philippines early in its history: the *Inmaculada* and the *Santo Rosario.* With the establishment of the Manila diocese in 1581 came the decision to adopt Mary under the title of *Inmaculada Concepcion* as the patroness of the diocese. The diocese then encompassed the whole Philippines; therefore, operationally and for all practical purposes, the *Inmaculada* was patroness of the whole

archipelago. The second image is the *Santo Rosario,* the most famous, carved of ivory in 1593. In both instances, Mary is depicted in queenly array, and in the latter, she holds the Christ-child and displays the rosary. The *Inmaculada* and the *Santo Rosario* took on many sobriquets, but the iconography of each remained distinct. The *Inmaculada* was known as *Birhen ng Antipolo, Nuestra Señora de Paz y Buenviaje, Nuestra Señora de la Porteria, Biglang-Awa, Virgen de las Apocalipsis,* while the *Santo Rosario* was *La Japonesa, Birhen ng Manaoag* and *Birhen ng Piat.*

Since the eleventh century depiction of Mary's *Transitus,* there has been a tug and pull between depicting Mary alone or with Jesus. It is instructive to note how the *Divina Pastora* iconography, venerated in Gapan, Nueva Ecija, evolved.

The devotion traces to the efforts of Fray Isidoro de Sevilla, who pioneered and promoted this devotion in 1703. Born in Seville in 1662, Fray Isidoro joined the Franciscan Capuchin convent of the city where, in 1682, he was professed and, five years later, ordained. With his companion, Fray Pablo de Cadiz, he promoted devotion to the rosary, while Fray Pablo founded many *cofradias* in the region. After he had returned from Cadiz, and with his travel companion, Fray Feliciano de Sevilla, he began processions in honor of the Rosary. During these processions much loved by the *Sevillanos,* a cross and a painted standard of the Virgin were brought.

After one such procession, while Fray Isidoro was praying in the choir of the convent, he had a divine inspiration (vision) to have an image of the Virgin painted, showing her as a shepherdess, seated under the shade of a tree with the Christ child on her lap. Lamb and sheep representing Christians or souls are gathered around the pair. Fray Isidoro commissioned the artist Miguel Alonso to Tubar to paint what he had seen, and the work was used as a standard during the rosary procession.

The devotion was spread by the Capuchins throughout Spain and the new world, and the image was declared patroness of the Capuchin missions. A liturgical feast was approved by Pope Pius VI on August 1795.

Fray Isidoro's original iconography gave the Virgin the title *Madre del Divino Pastor.* It is Jesus who is the shepherd and only indirectly are shepherd's attributes attached to Mary. The Mary-with-Christ image harmonizes with the Byzantine *Theotokos* tradition. However, in its transmission, the figure of Jesus and the sheep disappear and Mary is the one who is called shepherd (shepherdess).

Philippine Marian iconography comes after more than a millennium of development in Marian devotion and the imaginative portrayals of her through the arts. The twin iconographic strands are not a local invention but an inheritance. The rest of this paper is about how this inheritance came about and what it says about the dynamics of Christian life and devotion.

Beginnings of the Visual Tradition

Tradition has it that the first Marian image was painted by Saint Luke the Evangelist. Luke (who was also a doctor, according to tradition) created the prototype of what was to become the Byzantine *Theotokos* (God-bearer).

The Lucan origin of Marian iconography is legendary, probably suggested by the Infancy narratives in his Gospel, which seem to point to an intimate knowledge about the birth and childhood of Jesus. The fact is, for almost three centuries, Christian art was not publicly known but circulated within the small community of believers. Because of imperial persecution, early examples of Christian art were in secret places like catacombs. Some early manifestations of Christian art did not employ the human figure, but rather symbols and ciphers like the fish. Early manifestations employed classical motifs like Apollo or the shepherd for Christ.

A motif that appears in catacomb art is the praying figure called *orans* or *orante.* Some art historians have suggested that this figure represents Mary, but that is a minority opinion.

The sarcophagus of Junius Basso, cited both as an illustrative example of the marriage between scriptural themes and classical

antique sculpture and as an example of public art, comes from Rome of AD 360, almost sixty years after Constantine's 313 edict of religious freedom and tolerance.

Textual Sources

Literary sources have inspired artists as they created images. The chief text is, needless to say, the Bible.

The Bible. The references to Mary in the canonical texts are few, but sparse does not mean they are insignificant. Mary is mentioned in the Infancy Narratives of Matthew and Luke, the Passion narratives of the Synoptics and John, and there are brief notices of her in the Synoptics and the Acts of the Apostles. At the expense of sounding like a harmonization of the Gospel witness, here in outline is what Scriptures say of Mary.

The Infancy narratives mention that Mary

- is from Nazareth (Lk. 1:27).
- espoused to Joseph, also of David's line (Lk. 1:27; 3:23ff; Mt.1:1-17).
- to her appeared the angel Gabriel, who announced that she was to be mother of the Messiah, conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:26-37).
- the angel tells Joseph not to denounce Mary but to take her as his wife (Mt. 1:18-25).
- Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth (Lk. 1:29-56).
- Mary sings the Magnificat (Lk 1:47-55).
- Mary gives birth to Jesus in Bethlehem of Judah (Lk. 2:1-20; Mt. 2:1-12).
- Mary and Joseph present Jesus in the Temple (Lk. 2:22-40).
- Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt (Mt. 2:13-14).
- Mary and Joseph find Jesus in the temple after he is lost (Lk. 2:41-51).
- Jesus returns to Nazareth and is obedient to his parents (Lk. 2:52).

During his public life, there is a brief encounter between Jesus and his mother (Mt. 12:46-50; Mk. 3:31-35; Lk. 8:19-21). The Passion narratives note that she stood at the foot of the cross (Jn. 19:26-27). In Acts, she is among the disciples waiting for the spirit (Acts 1:14).

Patristic Exegesis. Following the analogical and metaphorical method of exegesis rooted in the classical tradition, the Fathers of the Church saw an intimate connection between the Old and New Testaments. They perceived in certain Old Testament personages and events foreshadowings of New Testament types. They saw the inchoate revelation in the Old fulfilled in the New. Thus, the Old Testament books were scoured to discover if there were any hidden spiritual meanings in the text. From this metaphorical approach to text, analogies and connections were drawn between Mary and biblical personages, notably Judith; Miriam, sister of Moses; Esther, the Beloved in the Song of Songs; and Eve, the mother of humankind. This metaphorical analogical exegesis became a fertile ground for Christian imagination, a vast landscape where artists could exercise their creativity.

The liturgy reinforced this nexus-building exegetical method through its choice of readings. Some harmony was sought between the Epistle reading and the Gospel, for instance, in the Tridentine Mass for the Annunciation, where the prediction of Isa. 7:10-15 of the Virgin conceiving and bearing a Son to be named Emmanuel is applied to Mary, or in the formulary *Salve Sancte Parens* for the feast of the Visitation, where the passage from Song of Songs 2:8-14 is chosen for the Epistle reading. Other examples are the Mass for the Epiphany, where Isa. 60:1-6 is predicated of the Magi that visit Jesus, or the Mass of the Assumption, which has as first reading the praises sung of Judith in 14:22-25, 15:10: "The Lord hath blessed thee by His power, because by thee He hath brought our enemies to naught. Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord the most high God, above all women upon the earth."

The liturgy gave rise to poetry, to poetic tropes written in later centuries, where the same bridge-making exegesis operated and where laudatory praises were heaped upon biblical characters. These poetic

sequences or poetic expansions of the Alleluia before the Gospel were incorporated in the Masses of the Virgin; again, for instance, the *Salve Sancta Parens,* whose *Introit* (entrance verse) quotes lines 63-64 from a hymn (*Carmen*) written by the fifth-century poet Sedulius. Of the numerous sequences, four survived the Tridentine liturgical reform. These included *Stabat mater dolorosa (Hymnus de passione),* written by Jacopone de Todi (1230-1306) for the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, and the *Victimae Paschali* of Easter Sunday. The verses *"Dic nobis Maria, quid vidisti in via? Sepulcrum Christi viventis, et gloriam vidi resurgentis: Angelicos testes, sudarium et vestes. Surrexit Christus spes mea: praecedet suos in Galilaeam"* in the Easter Sequence *Victimae Paschali* (usually attributed to Wipo of Burgundy [1039], chaplain of the German Emperor Conrad II [eleventh century], also to Notker Balbulus [tenth century] and Adam of Saint Victor [thirteenth century]) have usually been interpreted as referring to Mary Magdalene, although there is a minor tradition that equates Mary with the Mother of Jesus, citing as biblical warrant the ambiguous line in Matthew about "the other Mary" (Mt. 28:1) who went to the tomb with Magdalene at dawn on the first day of the week.

Non-canonical sources. The Byzantine Liturgy celebrated as a principal feast the Dormition of Mary, that is, her passing, or as the Latins would call it, *Transitus Mariae.* The principal literary source for the feast is the writing attributed to John the Theologian (i.e. the Evangelist) but which was not part of the canonical gospels. Another important non-canonical source of information on Mary is the *Protoevangelium* of James (c. 150). Enjoying great authority, this apocryphal text was read in some Eastern liturgies. Other literary sources are the *Gospel of the Nativity of Mary* and the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew.*

These non-canonical sources and pious legends (some passed on orally) were compiled and synthesized in the West in lives of saints. Although it can be faulted for lack of historical criticism, one of the most popular *vita* was the *Legenda Sanctorum* or *Legenda Aurea* (c. 1260), written by Jacobus de Voragine. Born in 1231 in Viraggio (now Varazze) near Genoa, Jacobus entered the Dominican order in 1244, was made bishop of Genoa c. 1292, and died in 1298. Arranged to follow the

liturgical year, the narratives in *The Golden Legend* served for many centuries as the authoritative reference for artists. Later compilations of saints' lives, dependent on Voragine and the same legends which he consulted, were also popular, like Pedro de Ribadeneira's sixteenth century *Flos Sanctorum.* This work, written by a Jesuit, was brought by missionaries to their assignments in the Americas and Asia, thus spreading hagiographic tradition beyond the confines of Europe.

It is in the Eastern half of the Roman Empire, with Constantinople, or Byzantium, as imperial capital, that Christian art entered its own and developed a unique form of expression. This period in Christian art lasted with vigor for about a millennium but was not without controversy. The Church was facing the Iconoclasts who declared that it was not proper, even idolatrous, to have representations of Christ, the Virgin and the Saints. The controversy was put to rest by the Church in a Council held in Nicaea, Asia Minor in 787 under Empress Irene and attended by 367 bishops. This seventh ecumenical council laid down the basis and justification for the making of icons with this proclamation:

> We define that the holy icons, whether in color, mosaic, or some other material, should be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on the sacred vessels and liturgical vestments, on the walls, furnishings, and in houses and along the roads, namely the icons of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, that of Our Lady the *Theotokos,* those of the venerable angels and those of all saintly people. Whenever these representations are contemplated, they will cause those who look at them to commemorate and love their prototype. We define also that they should be kissed and that they are an object of veneration and honor *(timitiki proskynisis),* but not of real worship *(latreia),* which is reserved for Him Who is the subject of our faith and is proper for the divine nature. Honor rendered to the type (icon) is in effect transmitted to the prototype; he who venerates the icon, venerated in it the reality for which it stands.

A staunch defender of this teaching was Saint John of Damascus (675-745). Thus, the Council, clarifying the Church's official stand, paved the way for a vigorous artistic tradition that spread throughout the Mediterranean world, where examples of Byzantine type iconography

are found to the west in Spanish Cataluña, in Greece, the Middle East, and even further east in Holy Russia, where the tradition remained vigorous to the second millennium.

Byzantine iconography, because it was the work of monks or of artisans closely supervised by Church people, was conservative. It disdained originality and innovation and looked for faithfulness and adherence to tradition. Icons were judged for their conservatism and faithful transmission of tradition, not for novelty. Typically, the Byzantine *Theotokos* and *Christos Pantokrator* incorporated symbols of the Roman Empire. The typical Byzantine Mary is clothed in a tunic of blue and a mantle that is both veil and cape in reddish purple or crimson. Gold stars, borders and tassels decorate the outer cape. Handbooks of instructions for iconographers explained that the color blue of Mary's tunic represented her humanity and purple her sharing in the divine qualities because of her *Fiat* to God's will. Purple was the empire's royal color because since Republican times, purple dye was the most expensive in the market, such that Roman senators could afford only a purple strip to decorate their tunics and togas. Thus, this expensive dye was considered as most appropriate when referring to divinity.

The *Theotokos* was never separated from the Christ-child, which she bore in her arms or displayed in a roundel in her heart in the *Orans*-type Madonna. The child in Mary's arms has the proportions of an adult, not a baby, and he is dressed in royal robes of white or gold. The child overwhelms Mary, who gingerly holds the child with but one hand. Compositionally, Mary is subordinated to the Christ; she is background and throne to the eternal word made flesh—the Word sometimes symbolized by a scroll or a book.

Many variations of the *Theotokos* are found; some have distinctive names like Mother of Divine Love, or Mary of the Passion (aka Perpetual Help icon, a late-Byzantine icon from Crete). But always, where Mary is, there Christ is. But it is not the other way around. Christ can be all alone, as *Pantokrator* or ruler of all, with his hands

outstretched in blessing or holding the Book of Life; he can also be alone on a throne, with angels as his footstool.

Byzantine icons did not attempt nor care to reproduce human images as they "really are"; they did not care for verisimilitude or realistic renderings of holy persons. In fact, artists composed icons not by observing human models, but by geometry. Egon Sendler has pointed out that the features of an icon's eyes, nose and lips can be inscribed in a circle, the face in an even bigger circle and the head with the halo in a third outer circle. The icon's body is related to these concentric circles by a triangle where the base is the width of the lower part of half or bust portrait. The reason for this disregard of naturalism is the icon's intent of painting a theological and religious statement rather than a semblance or virtual image of the person being signified.

In fact, one method proposed for meditating on icons is to dissolve the image mentally. First, one looks at the icon until all its features are deeply ingrained in one's memory. Then, with eyes closed, one reconstructs the icon mentally from memory. Further on, one erases the icon little by little until one stands face to face with what it represents. Icons almost always have frames, either raised or drawn as a deep reddish brown around it. The frame reminds one that the icon is both mirror and window, mirror that reflects what it represents and window through which one encounters the person being represented.

The Naturalization of Mary. Unlike the East or Byzantium, where Marian iconography remained static, the West, during the Middle Ages, allowed a naturalism to creep into art. Its clearest manifestations surfaced during the twelfth century, the Gothic period, when lithe and wispy sculptures of Mary and the child appear. These images, dressed in the courtly attire of the era, with appurtenances of royalty like crowns, diadems, jewels, and scepters, are sculpted on cathedral facades or as free-standing sculptures in the round. The biblical warrants for the queenly Mary are found in the Song of Solomon and Psalm 44,

where the bride adorned in rich regal array is prepared to meet the groom, interpreted as Jesus or God.

Spiritually, the late twelfth to the fourteenth centuries were dominated by the figures of two saints, contemporaries of each other: Domingo de Guzman (born in Calaruega, Burgos, 1170; died August 4, 1221) and Francesco d'Assisi (born in Assisi in Umbria, 1181 or 1182; died October 3, 1226). Dominic and his eloquent band of preachers (Order of Friars Preachers established by Dominic in 1215) revived the Catholic faith and challenged the Albegensian heretics, while Francesco and his band of simple, nature loving *fratelli minori* easily became grist for romantic minstrels. *Il poverello's* direct, unsophisticated approach to preaching the Gospel caught the fancy of artists. Both Domingo and Francesco broke the time-honored reclusion of the monk, and founded a new mode of Christian presence combining prayer and active work in teaching, preaching and works of charity.

Both Domingo and Francesco valued simple people, the peasants, and in Francisan tradition an accent on the value of nature as a way to God was evident. This is elucidated in Francesco's hymn to *fratello sole e sorella luna* (brother sun and sister moon). This return to nature is evident in Giotto's paintings for the Franciscan church in Assisi and for the Arena chapel. In Giotto's hand, the Passion is no longer a quiet scene where sorrow, following the classical tradition, is expressed with restraint. It is time for the bursting of emotions, of hands pulled back in dismay, of tender touches and embraces. In this era, Mary becomes the Mother of Divine Love, the Madonna of the Smile; she is also the sorrowing, suffering dolorous mother with a pained expression on her face, not just the restrained sorrow of the Byzantine version. Giotto is a transitional figure. On the one hand, his works are still influenced by the Byzantine; on the other hand, he is striving for the realism so loved by the Renaissance. Giotto signifies the end of the Byzantine style in the West and the beginning of a new artistic movement that flowered in the High Renaissance.

Dominic's popular preaching and Francis' unsophisticated approach (which dramatized the story of Christmas by building a

crib) indicate that Western Europe—except for the clergy, monks, lawyers and some nobility and merchants—was largely illiterate. This illiteracy was the ground in which narrative illustrations of biblical and hagiographical stories, transmitted orally or visually, flourished. True enough, during the Byzantine period, biblical scenes were already illustrated in the section of the iconostasis dedicated to the principal feasts, but these scenes were limited. With the invention of stained glass windows during the Gothic period, artists had a wide canvas on which to fill scenes. Stained glass, frescoes and painting were the Bible of the poor. By looking, they learned about the faith. Not only Gospel scenes were depicted, but figures from the Old Testament that related to the Gospels were depicted. Hence, the genealogy of Jesus was illustrated through the Jesse Tree, the sacrifice of Jesus alluded to by the sacrifice of Isaac, and valiant women of the Old Testament pointed to Mary. When decorating the Franciscan church of Our Lady of the Angels in Assisi, Giotto painted a life of Christ and, parallel to this, a life of Mary.

The *Quattrocento*. Italians called it the *Quattrocento;* the French and later historians called it the Renaissance. This was a remarkable period in art, when the legacy of Greece and Rome in various fields was rediscovered. As the Renaissance spread from Italy, where its most important center was Florence, to northern Europe, northern artists sought to learn from the Italians, and a trip to see the ruins of Rome was considered a must for any serious painter or sculptor. Albrect Durer, the sixteenth century German painter and engraver, memorialized his journey to Italy in a text he left behind. Standard history textbooks generally characterize the Renaissance as pagan in inspiration and equate the rediscovery of the classics as the single reason for the Renaissance. More recent studies, like that done on preaching by John O'Malley and Larissa Taylor, or on iconography by Leo Steinberg and Michael Baxandall, question this simplistic causation. Steinberg points out that the Renaissance saw the development of Incarnation theology with a corresponding practice in spirituality. Baxandall relates the gestures and composition of religious subjects to the conventions of Christian preaching rather than the poses crystallized in antiquity.

Typical of Renaissance spiritual practice is Ignatius of Loyola's instructions in his contemplations on the mysteries of the life of Christ on how to bring events within the exercitant's imaginative grasp. In the Incarnation contemplation of the Second Week of the *Spiritual Exercises,* he firmly places the exercitant within the mystery being contemplated. The exercitant is now a servant girl helping the Holy Family. It is in this stream of spiritual pedagogy that one can make sense of the intrusion into the biblical event of persons like Dominic, Peter the Martyr or Aquinas in the works of Fra Angelico.

During the Renaissance too, Italian artists painted sacred personages with more accurate physical proportions and more realistic features. The baby Jesus assumes the proportions of a child, whose head relative to the rest of the body is bigger than an adult's. Distinct characteristics of children like the chubby face, layers of baby fat, and the innocent look appear in paintings. As the crucified adult, Jesus is perfection of the male form, a true Apollo or Adonis. Mary too becomes an Italian beauty. In fact, it was during this era that artists started using human models for painting.

Here the works of two *Fras* (friars/brothers) are worth comparing. Beato Fra Angelico, a Dominican, painted the San Marco Monastery in Florence under the patronage of Lorenzo de Medici, the richest banker in Europe at that time. The blessed Fra, while he paints biblical figures with generic faces, strives at portraiture when he depicts his Dominican brothers—Dominic, Thomas Aquinas and Peter the Martyr—within or viewing the biblical scenes which he frescoed on San Marco's walls. Fra Filippo Lippi, not as angelic nor as beatific as Angelico, was also a Medici favorite. Joining the Franciscans at an early age, Fra Filippo asked to leave the order and married a most beautiful nun, Lucretia Buti, whom some art historians say he used as model for his painting of the *Madonna and Child with Angels.*

With works by Renaissance artists like Lippi, verisimilitude is attained. It is a matter of mastering realism that occupies artists from the Renaissance to the Baroque. Perfection is achieved with the mastery of the third dimension in the perspectival works of the Baroque.

Art and Religion. It is important to reflect briefly on what has happened to the depiction of Mary. From images of her as a noble being, shrouded in divine grace because of her close connection to Christ, to her as queenly person adorned as a bride for her groom, Mary is now rendered with the beauty of the human figure. The human figure, because of a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Incarnation, is no longer seen as an unfit instrument for the transcendental, but rather becomes the vehicle through which the transcendental shines or glows, with an ethereal light radiating from within or coming from some unseen source.

It is not surprising that, during the Renaissance, artists like Giotto could draw close parallels between the life of Jesus and Mary. Divinity is now within. If Jesus was born miraculously, so was Mary. If Jesus was presented in the temple, so was Mary. If Jesus died and rose from the dead, Mary was assumed into heaven.

Mary Alone. While in the East the close association of Mary and Jesus was safely guarded because of the conservatism of the iconographer, in the West, the image of Mary separated from Christ began to appear in the late Middle Ages. It is in the iconography of the *Transitus,* beginning with the eleventh century illuminated manuscripts of the Reichenau School, Germany, where one notes a separation. In the manuscripts, Jesus is no longer painted beside Mary but rather above her in a mandorla. In Titian's depiction of this scene five hundred years later, Mary rises to heaven by her own power. The composition is divided into three sections: the lower section depicts the apostles in amazement, the middle section paints Mary surrounded by angels, and the top section portrays God the Father welcoming her to heaven. Titian's composition hews closely to the iconographic tradition of Christ's Ascension where a similar tripartite division is employed. The iconography came to be known as the Assumption.

One sees that the tendency to separate Christ from Mary is already evident in the works of Giovanni Bellini, where Mary is presenting Christ while she stands in the background behind a window or ledge, or in Lippi's Madonna, where Jesus is not cradled by the Virgin but worshipped. The final iconographic separation of Mary from the Christ

figure is in the depictions of her as *Inmaculada* or *Immacolata*. Although the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was not proclaimed until 1854, the iconography antedated papal proclamation. The *Inmaculada* was especially popular in Spain, where a Baroque painter, Esteban Murillo, painted the image at least twenty-six times. Major Spanish painters like Velazquez and Zurbarran also painted the theme.

Essentially therefore, *Inmaculada* iconography is the Assumption. The additions are symbols or attributes suggested by the passage in the Book of Revelation about a woman clothed with sun (Rev. 12:1ff). The moon appears as an orb or crescent under Mary's feet, the stars around her as a halo or as a mandorla. Then, there is the introduction of the serpent, symbol of the devil, evil, sin, especially original sin, crushed by Mary's feet. This is an application of metaphorical exegesis which sees Mary and Eve as parallel figures. She is the new Eve that undoes what the old Eve had done through disobedience. Unfortunately, the crushed snake is a misapplication of the passage in Gen. 3, where the referent is not to the woman but to the offspring of the woman, he who will crush the serpent's head. But the iconography had been done, and had spread with great popularity.

Private Revelation. Reports of the appearance of Mary have become common these days: Bayside, Medjugorie, Garabandal, and in previous decades, Fatima, Lourdes, La Sallete. There are Philippine examples, Lipa being the best known and controversial (there are also reports of Marian apparitions in Agoo, La Union). Some of these apparitions have given rise to their own iconography. There is no comparable saint whose iconography has developed from occasional and unpredictable private revelation.

The Medjugorie Virgin is dressed in gray. Lourdes shows Mary as dressed in white with a blue sash, and Fatima has her in a white dress with a golden chain around her neck. In these more recent icons, Mary is almost always *alone*. While the Virgin's message always points to Jesus and how Jesus is asking for repentance and reform of life, the figure of Jesus has completely disappeared from the Marian iconography. Mary now functions as the spokesperson *par excellence* of the Divine Word, without the Word being depicted.

Iconological Reflection. The modern tendency visually presents Mary as apart from Jesus, although there is no denying that Jesus is ineluctably linked with her. This Mary-alone iconographic tendency can make some theologians and pastors uneasy, especially if elements and attributes in Jesus' iconography are predicated of Mary. Two contemporary icons are the Twin Hearts and The Lady (or Mother) of all Nations. The latter, which was the basis for the bleeding, crying Virgin of Akita, presents Mary in white tunic, above a globe and against the background of a cross. The iconography is painfully close to Resurrection icons. Theologians and pastors need to discuss whether such development in iconography is welcome and should be encouraged.

This reflection is more attuned to the discipline of critical art history. Erwin Panofsky, in his work on iconography, speaks of two levels of iconographic analysis. The simplest level is to decode the icon and to render its visual form into meaningful verbal discourse. This is the level of iconographical analysis. The next level involves relating the analysis to a discourse on what such analysis can say about the community or the society from which an artistic expression originates.

Notwithstanding the Romantic notion of an artist as a free agent of self-expression, once that expression has a physical form, it ineluctably has a social dimension. Expression in itself is a dead end. Expression has to become communication, and once it becomes communication, then the relation between expression and society becomes important.

The following are some observations about iconography. First, icons reflect the believing and worshipping Christian community. In the early stages of iconography, artists, wishing to express the elevated, the transcendental, searched through their own societies for expressions elevated from the ordinary. They saw the use of particular colors and pigments, which in themselves were precious, as a means to communicate transcendence visually. It is not surprising that the Byzantines used gold and purple generously when portraying Jesus and Mary. It is not surprising that Mary is portrayed not as a member of the

hoi poloi—she is no longer the simple maiden of Nazareth—but a royal person decked in purple. It is instructive that when artists depicted the Annunciation in the Middle Ages, Gabriel catches Mary in her chamber in the act of reading. Until the twentieth century, women's literacy rates were dismal, much more so during the medieval period. Most women were unlettered and chained to the hard life of farming, house chores and raising a family. Even noble women had their share of physical labor, and while the men went out to war, the women remained at home to tend to the day-to-day business of living. The tendency to present the literate Mary continues to the Renaissance, where Sandro Botticelli presents her as a poet writing the Magnificat, inspired by the Christ Child who lays his hand tenderly on his mother's arm.

It should be noted that, unlike in the East or Byzantium where the production of art was dominated by monks and a celibate clergy, in the West, art production moved from the *scriptoria* of monasteries to the guilds that dominated the Gothic period. Guilds were associations of artisans specializing in an art form or craft: sculpture, stained glass, painting. By the Renaissance, art production was mostly in the hands of lay people and while the guild system of the Gothic had declined, master artists maintained their own following of apprentices who assisted them. It is known for instance that Michaelangelo had fourteen assistants who helped him with the Sistine Chapel and that Leonardo da Vinci had his own following. Often a master would arise after he or she had been taught by a previous master, whom he or she would surpass. Families of lay artists are also known, like the Brueghels and the Gentilleschi. Churchmen, while remaining patrons of the arts and exercising some control over what could and could not be produced, were not themselves engaged in the artistic production. Besides, churchmen had stiff competition from a growing entrepreneurial aristocracy whose money came from trade and banking. Renaissance Florence was dominated by the Medicis as Milan was by the Sforzas and Rome by the Gonzagas. Art became, more and more, a lay concern.

It is in this context that one might understand the growth in the naturalized representation of Mary. One sees lay persons' appreciation, appropriation, and expression of the Christian message. Is it a wonder

then that the macho culture of the Middle Ages would, as counterfoil, develop a chivalric ethos that sung the praises of womankind? This epitome of womanhood is expressed in the Renaissance in the depiction of the earthly beauty above the ordinary. This process of elevation and pedestalization of women develops further when divine qualities are attached to Mary. To draw parallels between Jesus and Mary, to then postulate divine qualities as applying to her, and then to present her floating above sordid earth in the *Hyperion* are logical steps in the process of her elevation. Marian iconography has given a space for depicting women as co-equal with men, a biblically honored belief, which over the centuries was diminished by male dominated religion. "Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh," exclaims Adam in Genesis!

While Christians agree that there is a feminine dimension to God, that God is equally mother as God is father, by and large Christianity is still dominated and controlled by men, the Catholic Church especially so. Is it surprising then that this feminine side of religion would assert itself, and assert itself emphatically? This seems to be the social and cultural import of the "divinization" of Mary. Portrayed with elevated qualities, even qualities akin to those of Jesus, Marian iconography emphasizes that there are aspects of religion one ought not to forget, for they are a vital part of life in the spirit. The caring, compassionate, tender, loving, expressive face of Mary reminds all of the face of God.

A study of Marian iconography would be incomplete without examining how women saints are depicted. Saints like Mary Magdalene, Martha, Catherine of Alexandria, Lucy, Agnes and Cecilia have early on captured the Christian imagination. Like Mary, these saints were given admirable qualities that put men to shame. Magdalene, after her supposed conversion, became a hermit capable of extreme penitence, long hours of prayer and mystical transports. Catherine was noted for her brilliance, shown when she put to shame pagan philosophers and intellectuals in a debate about the true religion. A study of Marian iconography would also be incomplete without examining the feminization of Christ in art. However, developing these themes involves several other papers.

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MARY AMONG THE GODDESSES

Sabino A. Vengco, Jr.

Mary prophesied in her canticle of praise, "From now on all ages will call me blessed" (Lk. 1:48). And Elizabeth told her, "Most blessed are you among women" (Lk. 1:42). Mary is certainly the most celebrated and honored among all the women who have ever lived, but she may also be the most controversial. For centuries, people have opposed her exaltation. Even now the internet offers 10,841 articles detailing canned and esoteric explanations how and why Mary is a goddess or has been turned into some "domesticated goddess" by the Roman Catholic Church. The feminist Protestant theologian Christa Mulack entitled her book *Maria Die Geheime Göttin im Christentum* (Mary: The Secret Goddess in Christianity).[1] An examination of Mary's relationship with the goddesses of old (at least with a couple of them) may enable one to look with equanimity at the pertinent developments both in Christian life and in Marian piety and devotions. Hopefully all can, in this connection, better appreciate Mary's place in Christian life. How is Mary understood within the definitions of culture? As part of the

[1]Christa Mulack, *Maria Die Geheime Göttin im Christentum* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1985).

series of lectures on Mary under the sponsorship of the Professorial Chair for Philippine Marian Studies of the Loyola School of Theology, this is an opportunity to propose some reflections on the unique phenomenon that is Mary in the light of the history of religions and of cultural anthropology as interpreted by Catholic theology.

Touches of Divinity. A Filipino Catholic somewhere in Talipapa, Novaliches, makes the sign of the cross and devoutly pronounces, *"Sa ngalan ng Ama at ng Anak at ng Ina. Amen"* (In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Mother. Amen). On the foothills of Mount Banahaw, a group of devotees pray before a crowned image of Mary, appealing to her saving love and reminding her that she alone can give the nation the peace and unity the country sorely needs, and begging her, in addition, for the understanding among nations throughout the world that must precede planetary harmony and prosperity. In the meeting hall of the *Dating Daan* group in Longos, Malolos, Bulacan, the *ministro* is hugely enjoying himself as he expounds on the error of the Roman Catholics who for all practical purposes have turned Mary into a goddess.[2] A bank manager, looking for something to share with his fellow community members in their prayer group, pages through a book from the religion shelf of a Makati bookstore entitled *The Return of the Mother* by Andrew Harvey. He is perplexed as he reads a passage from the book:

> "In Mary the Divine Mother comes to earth.... Mary is the bridge between heaven and earth, between the human and the divine worlds.... Mary is the force of the Mother-aspect of God made manifest in time, and as such is one with the Trinity in all its aspects, when they are expanded, as they must be, to include the sacred feminine at every level and in every dimension."[3]

Who is Mary? Why is she such a focal point of religious

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[2]Armando Ang, *The Dark Side of Catholicism* (Mandaluyong City: SCR Marketing & Advertising, 2002), 19.

[3]Andrew Harvey, *The Return of the Mother* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2001), 343-344.

attention? Is she divine? What is behind the apparent ambivalence of transcendental expressions and symbols when speaking to and of her? How did she become classed among the deities of old in the mind of some?

What the Reformers of the sixteenth century voiced in protest as abuse in Catholic Marian devotion and piety seems to be as much an issue today as it was then. The medieval Marian phenomenon, for example, presents a devotion to Mary that has boldly appropriated a language with which to express itself: typology and parallelism in relation to the Godhead.[4] Anselm of Canterbury exemplifies this in his statement "God is the Father of all created things, and Mary is the Mother of all recreated things." Like God the Father, Mary so loved the world that she gave her only Son (Jn. 3:16). Mary was prayed to as "Our Mother who art in heaven" and petitioned to give us each day our daily bread. The familiar psalms became a rich source for handy substitutions, having Mary in place of God as in Psalm 96: "Sing to Our Lady a new song, for she hath done wonderful things. In the sight of the nations she hath revealed her mercy; her name is heard even to the ends of the earth." The *Te Deum* was refashioned in honor of Our Lady:

> "We praise thee, O Mother of God; we confess thee, Mary ever virgin.... Thee all angels and archangels, thrones and principalities serve. Thee all powers and virtues of heaven and all dominations obey. Before thee all the angelic choirs, the cherubim and seraphim, exulting, stand. With unceasing voice every angelic creature proclaims thee: Holy, holy, holy, Mary Virgin Mother of God!"

Today many Filipinos would take it for granted that Mary has been gifted not only with omniscience but also with some omnipotence over heaven and earth. "In Jesus is justice, in Mary is mercy," so much so that in effect, as sermonized in the thirteenth century, there is a zone in heaven where the Queen of Mercy has rescued souls from the wrath of

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[4]Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Mary and the Female Face of God," *Theological Studies* 50 (1989), 507-510.

Christ's justice. And her maternal authority as the merciful mediatrix would be explained later by her share in dominion with her Son due to the pain she also suffered on Calvary. So great is this important role of Mary's mercy that medieval theologians ascribed to her what is biblically written of Christ, i.e., that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt corporeally in her (Col. 2:9), that of her fullness we have all received (Jn. 1:16), and that because she had emptied herself, God had highly exalted her, so that at her name every knee should bow (Phil. 2:5-11). Here in the Philippines all this is summarized, e.g., by Mary's title as *Divina Pastora* in Gapan, Nueva Ecija.[5]

There appear indeed to be touches of divinity accompanying the Blessed Mother down the corridor of time. Divine prerogatives have come to be attributed to her. Is she really what is said of her: *Divina Pastora?* Why such language? One needs to accompany Mary in the development of Christianity's special devotion to her, in order to identify the processes that took place and distinguish the acceptable reflections from unwarranted conclusions. This presentation will selectively span three continents in three different periods of history in trying to trace down some patterns that may render comprehensible some startling aspects of devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and of Christians.

Ephesus

This city is very special for several reasons. As one of the greatest cities of Asia Minor, this Greco-Roman city of commerce once boasted of having one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Along with the Pyramids of Egypt, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, and the

[5]Not only in Spain does one originally have such designation for Mary, but also in other Catholic countries where folk piety sees in Mary a heavenly queen with the power to influence human destiny in this world, taking over some of the characteristics of her Son. Thus in Austrian Tirol, one sees paintings of Mary sitting among a flock of sheep as the Good Shepherdess.

Colossus of Rhodes was listed the magnificent *Artemision,* the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. Artemis was the Greek goddess (Diana to the Romans) of wild nature and fertility, portrayed as draped with eggs or multiple breasts, symbols of fertility, from her waist to her shoulders. This mother goddess was one of the most widely worshipped female deities in the Hellenistic world. The temple, also known as the "Great Marble Temple," was considered the largest such structure of that time (55x109m with 135 pillars) and was the center of very popular pilgrimage in the Mediterranean world of antiquity.

Saint Paul first briefly dropped by Ephesus when he came from Corinth with the couple Priscilla and Aquila on his way to Jerusalem. But it was on his third missionary journey in 57 that he came again to stay for some time and win converts. He was making such inroads converting people to Christianity that a silversmith called Demetrius, afraid for his souvenir business in miniature Artemis shrines, organized a public demonstration by related craftsmen and workers against Paul's activities. The protest turned ugly as he incited the crowd: "The danger grows, not only that our business will be discredited, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be of no account, and that she whom the whole province of Asia and all the world worship will be stripped of her magnificence." "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" repeatedly shouted the furious crowd as they seized two Macedonian traveling companions of Paul. The public disturbance was eventually restrained as reason prevailed in that legal means should be employed and charges, if any, filed in the courts. Paul had to leave town thereafter (cf. Acts 19:23-40).

Vital to this study is a special tradition connected with Ephesus that says, together with John after the dispersal of Jerusalem, Mary came to live in Ephesus. That John lived and died thereabout and was buried in Ephesus is historically verified. John took Mary into his home in accordance with the expressed wish of Jesus on the cross (Jn. 19:27). In 1891 the ruins of what is claimed to be the "House of Mother Mary" (*Meryem Ana Evi*) were discovered by two French Lazarist priests from Izmir (Smyrna) on Bulbul Dagh ("Mount of the Nightingales"), seven kilometers up the hill outside the city of Ephesus.

They were following the directions given in the published visions of German bedridden nun Anna Katharina Emmerich (1774-1824), edited by Clemens Brentano (1854).[6] Archaeological studies by an Austrian team have established that the ruins of the small church were of the Byzantine period (eighth century), built on an older structure dating around the beginning of the fourth century, which in turn was erected on the foundations of a house that, in comparison with other ancient buildings in Ephesus, definitely dates back at the latest to the first half of the first century.

The significance of this discovery and the 1951 restored Byzantine chapel were supported by the Kirkinjotes, descendants of early Christians in the area of Ephesus, who testified that it has been their tradition and that of their ancestors to hike every fifteenth of August to this place they call *Panajia Kapoulu* ("Most Holy Place") to remember Mary's death—long before the Roman dogma of Mary's Assumption! The finding naturally triggered off a debate with the Western tradition that Mary died in Jerusalem on Mount Zion some twelve years after the Ascension. But the main arguments[7] for the Ephesus tradition are: (1) From the fourth century there existed in Ephesus a church dedicated to Mary (the first Marian church in the world) which would even be used for the location of the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431. In those times a church dedicated to a saint could only be built in those places associated with the life or death of the saint. (2) When Saint Helena (336+) built various churches in Jerusalem to memorialize sacred sites, she did not construct any to commemorate the dormition or passing of Mary in Jerusalem because there was no such tradition then. (3) Following the Council of Ephesus in 431, the Council Fathers

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[6]*The Life of Jesus Christ and Biblical Revelations from the Visions of the Venerable Anne Catherine Emmerich as Recorded in the Journals of Clemens Brentano, Vol. IV,* ed. Carl E. Schmoger (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, 1986), 450-476.

[7]Franz Anton Passmann, *Das Schicksal der Muttergöttinnen* (Siegburg: Verlag Franz Schmitt, 1994), 125-127. For another assessment of the Ephesus position, see Walter J. Burgardt, *The Testimony of the Patristic Age Concerning Mary's Death* (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1957), 35-39.

wrote a letter to the clergy of Constantinople, Nestorius' own priests, informing them that their bishop had been condemned as a heretic in the city "where the theologian John and the Mother of God, the holy Virgin ... [lived]." (4) The Syro-Jacobite (i.e., Nestorian) Church has recognized this Ephesian tradition since the eighth century.

This writer can testify that the *Meryem Ana Evi* in Ephesus is different from many other historical places related to Mary that have been visited personally. One goes there as a tourist, but leaves as a pilgrim. It exudes a different spirit altogether, quite unlike the beautiful but cold Dormition Church on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

The preceding details are necessary in order to understand what really happened at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Books on the history of dogma have focused on the Christological concern of the bishops and on the rivalry between the main personages of Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, and of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople. But the distinctively Marian historico-religious context is often glossed over.[8] This is best symbolized by the Marian church of Ephesus, the first in the world. This church must have been built after Emperor Theodosius declared Christianity a state religion in 391. The church was erected in the heart of the city at the area of the harbor near the East Gymnasium, testifying to the influence and financial power of the young and upcoming Christian community. The church utilized the structures of an older institution, the *Museion,* the higher school of ancient Ephesus, where doctors, philosophers and rhetoricians worked and studied, discussed and lectured. Part of the compound became the bishop's residence.

The symbolic significance of the take-over was foreshadowed by the restoration of the public baths following the earthquakes that hit Ephesus in 358 and 365. A wealthy Christian by the name of Scholastikia spent for the greater part of the repair of the public baths.

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[8]Theodora Jenny-Kappers, *Muttergöttin und Gottesmutter in Ephesos* (Zurich: Daimon Verlag, 1986), 127-159.

Remarkable is the fact that the building materials used for the repair came from the almost entirely dismantled Shrine of the *Hestia Bouleia,* the temple of the eternal fire for the city of Artemis. The archaeologists made another astounding discovery in 1956. A statue of Artemis lies broken in three pieces but left in place where it fell or was toppled; another statue, two times life-size, was found carefully buried whole and unscathed underneath a side hall. Clearly in the turbulent times of the competition between and transition from paganism to Christianity, some ambivalence prevailed. Fear of the gods still exerted its force on the people, or some of their followers were still strongly resisting.

Emperor Theodosius himself exemplified the complex situation during this period. An enemy of the Arians and of paganism most especially, he ordered the closure of pagan temples in 392, the termination of the Olympic games, and also the placing of crosses on the foreheads of statues, even those of the Roman emperors. Yet when the Temple of Emperor Hadrian in Ephesus was restored, a bas-relief was made depicting the Christian imperial family of Theodosius the Great in the company of Artemis. Was he still seeking the protection of the city's virgin goddess? Or was he obliged to let the public know that he also enjoyed the favors of the goddess of Ephesus?

The devotion of Asia Minor to their mother goddesses (Artemis, Cybel, Atargatis), as in Egypt (Isis), was a real problem for the emperor of the eastern Roman Empire. The bond between the Empire and the Church meant that the doctrinal unity in the Church was vital for the political unity of the *imperium.* This concern for orthodoxy for political ends explains the emperor's direct hand in convening the first ecumenical councils. Why was Ephesus chosen for the third ecumenical council and not Constantinople as in the previous council, where the emperor could be handily on hand and where Nestorius had his episcopal seat? His absence at the council later was a big problem. The choice was not an accident, because there was already in Ephesus a large Marian church and the disputed theological topic was about Mary as the Mother of God, *Dei Genetrix,* and especially because tradition has it that Mary lived in Ephesus. Finally, it was because the cultural context of the persisting, if weakened, cult of goddesses was centered

in Ephesus, which was setting the tone for the rest of Asia Minor up to the fifth century.

Faith in mother Artemis was not yet dead, and in a way the tradition of Paul's confrontation with the adherents of Artemis in Ephesus had to be decided. It is not necessary to go into the familiar debate about the *Theotokos.* Suffice it to note that the triumph of *Theotokos* in Ephesus was the final blow to the pagan cult of fertility and of the mother goddesses in general. The Mother of Jesus had definitively overcome the old goddess of the city. Artemis would be no more and by the seventh century the city itself would be reduced to oblivion, to be resurrected only by the discovery of *Meryem Ana Evi* in the late nineteenth century. The dogma of Mary as the Mother of God would be the last message from the city of Ephesus to the rest of the world that up to today remains in force. Ephesus therefore became, in this regard, the initial spiritual center of the new cult of Mary the Mother of God, as Ephesus was once the world center of the ancient pagan cult of Artemis, the goddess mother, *Magna Mater.*

As the Christian Church overran paganism everywhere in the Mediterranean world, this could not have happened without something of the pagan culture rubbing on Christianity. That is the question: how much of the cult of female deities of the Mediterranean world became attached to Christianity? Interestingly, Pope Sixtus III (432-440) was so overjoyed by the success of the Council of Ephesus, he started renovating the following year the Basilica *Santa Maria Maggiore* in honor of the *Theotokos.* And, on the grand mosaic of the *tympanon* appears Mary for the first time as Queen of Heaven, on the same level as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Was this part of the encounter with the goddess of Asia Minor who was also called "queen of heaven," and virgin, and mother? Admittedly, one hundred years later, in the magnificent mosaic of Saint Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, one finds the Mother of God with the young *Pantokrator.* But what a fundamental difference with the multi-breasted Artemis of old! One feels mercilessly delivered to the *Magna Mater,* but with the *Theotokos* one tingles with compassion and love.

Missionary Creativity. There are evidently morphological

similarities between the post-Constantinian Marian cult and the dominant cults of goddesses in the Mediterranean world that Christianity was then moving into.[9] These similarities are historical facts. The Church issued forth from the Cenacle in the power of the Holy Spirit into countries already with strong religious delineations. Their religious beliefs and practices were not disposable wear that could merely be shed off. The Church obviously did not operate in a vacuum but within the rich cultural background of the Mediterranean world, absorbing a lot of current assumptions, philosophies, linguistic and artistic imageries, and rituals, and assimilating them into its own liturgy and theology.[10] And, this interactivity with the surrounding cultures affected the very mystery of God, the way Christ, the saints and Mary were thought of.

There is a radical difference between the mystery cults of Mediterranean female deities and Christian veneration of Mary.[11] Mary was not a figment of the imagination or merely a psychological projection of primeval urges and needs, or some form of exalting existence or a mythologizing of the wonder of biological life. Instead, Mary originated in a historically unique self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The inculturation that took place meant that the Marian cult freely adapted elements from the mystery cults of goddesses and intentionally substituted itself where female deities especially had a central role. This strategy was necessary if missionary work was to make progress in the fourth century world where goddesses were so highly honored. Also, assimilation of pagan elements was based on the belief that any symbol, once purified and "baptized," could

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[9]Johnson, "Mary and the Female Face of God," 505-506.

[10]See the interesting special issue of *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 20 (1990) on "Mary—Woman of the Mediterranean."

[11]Jean Danielou, "Le culte marial et le paganisme," in *Maria: Etudes sur la sainte Vierge,* ed. du Manoir, D'Hubert (Paris: Beauchesne et ses Fils, 1949), 162, 173-174, 180. See also E. Ann Matter, "The Virgin Mary: A Goddess?" in *The Book of the Goddess Past and Present,* ed. Carl Olson (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 80-96.

actually evoke the God of Jesus Christ. Regarding this adaptation of elements from the pagan cult of goddesses apropos Mary, it can be asked whether this needed purification has really been done, or whether in some form of syncretism, devotion to Mary has simply continued the cult of the maternal power of the goddesses. Anyway, Jean Danielou, in his above-mentioned classic study on the subject, explains that in God's providence the unique power of the Marian cult is to be found in its correspondence to the aspirations of the human heart, so that devotion to Mary functions psychologically in parallel ways to the cult of the mother goddesses.

Christianity did not begin in a vacuum but in countries that were, in the religious sense, already occupied. To give way to the Gospel must everything be jettisoned? Henri de Lubac does not think there can be any absolute beginning of any kind in this world; Christ's followers are sent to accomplish and transform, not destroy.[12] Early on the Church found the necessity of using the rich symbols of paganism, cleansed of their ancient content, to express its own revelation and truths. In this way, for instance, she insinuated herself into the hearts of new believers who were, until recently, immersed in the beliefs of the beneficence and maternal power of female deities. Christianity absorbed and transformed the world by penetrating into the very fabric of human history and religiosity, and thus renewed the face of the earth. De Lubac echoes Cardinal Newman in dismissing the objection that pagan customs have been introduced into Christian life: "These things were in heathenism, therefore they are not Christian," and now "these things are in Christianity, therefore they are not heathen."[13] It was not and it is not for the Church *naiveté* nor syncretism nor liberalism, but simply Catholicism, to assimilate with a breadth of vision the good and the true in the others. It is to be noted, points out Elizabeth Johnson,

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[12]Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism, A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958), 144-158. See also Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* (London: Burns & Oates, 1963), 3-45.

[13]De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 147.

that Marian tradition in particular has therefore become a conduit of imagery and language about divine reality derived from the cult of female deities in the pre-Christian Mediterranean world.[14] There is a universal quest for religious experience through the feminine image not available through the idea of God of other and earlier times and cultures.

This strong process of assimilation and adaptation of ideas and verbal and artistic imagery from the mystery cults of the Mediterranean world—in the case of the emerging cult of Mary in the fourth century—was the same pattern and attitude in the inception of Christianity in the New World in the sixteenth century and in the Third World in the seventeenth century. Although in the case of one, it was Mary herself who made the creative leap, appropriating and adapting what was indigenous and local, while in the other it could paradoxically be either Solomonic wisdom or pure inadvertence. The presentation now briefly swings to the other two cases and places of this study.

Guadalupe

The origin of the devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico has for its background not only the resistance by the vanquished Aztec nation against the European invaders, but also its rejection as a whole of the foreigners' religion, which inspired their degradation and near annihilation as the pagan enemy. Christianity had arrived only over a decade earlier and remained a bitter imposition on the natives.

On the hill of Tepeyac, a site associated with Tonantzin, the ancient goddess of life and the virgin mother of the gods, Mary the Mother of God appeared to claim the Aztec people as her own.[15] Early in the

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[14]Johnson, "Mary and the Female Face of God," 507.

[15]Consult the following sources: *Congreso Mariologico, 450 Aniversario (1531-1981) Insigne y Nacional Basilica de Sta. Maria de Guadalupe* (Mexico, 1983), 271-530; Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, *A Handbook on Guadalupe* (Waite Park, Minnesota: Park

morning of December 9, 1531, Juan Diego, a lowly Aztec convert and widower, was on his way to the Franciscan church in Tlatelolco in the suburb of the city of Mexico, when he heard the beautiful singing of birds and a woman's voice calling him to climb up the Tepeyac hill he was passing by. On the hilltop, he saw a young woman in magnificent splendor amid a glorious light, who identified herself to him in his Nahuatl language as the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of the True God. Juan Diego was filled with strange happiness as he gazed at her youthful countenance and felt her look of loving kindness. She expressed her desire that a shrine be built here, "where to you and to all inhabitants of the land, but also to all who trustingly call on me, I will show my love, my compassion and my succor. For I am your mother!" Then she instructed him to go to the bishop in Mexico and report to him her wish.

Bishop Juan de Zumarraga, OFM, Mexico's first bishop, evidently did not believe the story of the *indio.* The same day, on his way home, Juan Diego again saw Our Lady at the hill of Tepeyac. He narrated to her his failure and begged her to send somebody else more worthy. But she told him instead to go again to the bishop. He did the following day. This time the bishop requested for a sign from the Lady. Being told of this, she promised to do so the next day. However, Juan Diego was not able to come the following day because Juan Bernardino, his uncle with whom he was staying, suddenly took ill.

Two days later, on December 12, Juan Diego was going to Tlateloclo by way of Tepeyac to fetch a priest for his dying uncle, when Our Lady came down the hill to meet him. She listened to his excuse for not coming the previous day. Then she told him, "Do not be troubled or weighed down with grief. Do not fear any illness.... Am I not your mother? ... Your uncle will not die, be sure he is now well!" He then remembered to ask her for the sign he was to take to

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Press, 1997); Virgil Elizondo, *Guadalupe Mother of the New Creation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997); Francis Anson, *Guadalupe: What Her Eyes Say* (Makati: Sinag-Tala Publishers, 1994).

the bishop. She sent him up the hill to bring her flowers from there. He found on the stony hilltop a garden of roses not there before. She arranged the flowers he cut in his *tilma,* a poncho-like outer garment made from *magay* fibers, with the instruction to show and give them only to the bishop.

As Juan Diego presented himself for the third time to Bishop Zumarraga and reported his fourth encounter with Our Lady, he opened his mantel to give him the flowers. Then the sign from Mary was revealed. The Virgin Mary's portrait appeared on the coarse fabric of Juan Diego's *tilma,* miraculously painted in exquisite colors just as he had previously described her.

In the morning of the same day, Our Lady also appeared to the sick Juan Bernardino in their village of Tulpetlac, cured him, and told him to report the miracle to the bishop. And, she said that her image would crush the serpent. Later on, when Juan Bernardino was being interrogated by the bishop, he recognized the Lady who appeared to him in the picture on the *tilma* of his nephew in the possession of the bishop. The old man also said that Our Lady would like to be called *Santa Maria Virgen de Guadalupe. Guadalupe,* as in the Arabic word for the place where Our Lady is venerated in Estremadura in southern Spain, was the bishop's interpretation for the unfamiliar Nahuatl word *coatlaxopeuh,* which means "I have crushed the serpent." It is pronounced *quatlasupe* which sounds remarkably like the Spanish word *Guadalupe.*

The dark skin of the woman of the apparition (*La Morenita*), the Indian language she spoke, the attire and colors she was wearing, the flowers, the music, and the celestial symbols surrounding her were all reminiscent of the goddess Tonantzin of the vanquished people. Among the household gods and goddesses worshipped from time immemorial throughout pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, Tonantzin was a principal mother goddess identified with the moon. Her ancient pyramid was in ruins on the Tepeyac hill.

But it was not the goddess Tonantzin who was appearing, but the Virgin Mother of the Christian God. Mary assimilated and replaced

their goddess, providing the suffering people no less than her maternal care and consolation.[16] Mary here is not just a "reincarnation of the ancient Mexican earth mother" or a renamed goddess of some sort, according to certain feminist theologians.[17] On the contrary, though her miraculous image on Blessed Juan Diego's cloak does contain motifs from the world of Aztec deities like sun, moon, stars and serpent, these are so arranged as to turn paganism completely upside down. Hauke writes:

> Mary stands before the sun and is thus more powerful than the feared sun god. She has one foot placed on the half-moon, a symbol of the feared serpent god, to whom thousands upon thousands of humans were sacrificed and whose machinations she has overcome. She is more powerful than all the goddesses and gods, than the stars. And yet Mary is no goddess, for she folds her hands together in prayer and bows her head before one who is greater than she. She wears no mask in order to conceal her godly nature as do the Aztec gods but quite openly displays her human status.[18]

Rising out of the native soil, the ennobling and the enrichment of the ancient Indian traditions transpired in the gentle appearance of Mary as the Mother of God.[19] This adaptation and inculturation on her part powerfully gave impetus and meaning to the Church's winning the Indian people, the singular case in history of the greatest mass conversion of people to Christianity. It was a veritable birth of a nation.

In Latin America, more pronounced than in the Mediterranean, the creative result of the cross-cultural encounter shows Mary combining

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[16]Ivone Gebara and Maria Clara Bingemer, *Mary: Mother of God, Mother of the Poor* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 144-154.

[17]Mulack, *Maria Die Geheime Göttin im Christentum*, 7.

[18]Manfred Hauke, *God or Goddess? Feminist Theology: What is it? Where does it lead?* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 203-204.

[19]Virgilio Elizondo, "Our Lady of Guadalupe: A New World Image of the Trinity," *Marian Studies* 51 (2000), 40-51.

an Indian female expression of God, which the Spaniards tried to wipe out as diabolical, with the Spanish male expression of God, which the natives found incomprehensible, since in the Nahuatl cosmovision everything perfect has a male and female component. The Indian heritage and longings are transformed and directed toward the one true God. Mary personifies openness to the genius of the people and, at the same time, its ultimate destination in the self-revealing God. In this new "mestizo" experience of the divine, the very understanding of the selfhood of God becomes enriched, each particular expression being expanded by the other.[20]

Caysasay

The third case study on Mary's coming into creative contact with goddesses took place in the Third World and this time also at the beginning of the Christianization of the natives. The Spaniards had been continuously in the Philippine Islands for about forty years, yet were still a long way from the consolidation of their hold on the people, and much more so from the conversion of the *indios.*

In 1603 a wooden statue of a woman was fished out of Pansipit River, near Caysasay in Batangas, by a local fisherman, Juan Maningcad.[21]

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[20]Virgil Elizondo, *The Future is Mestizo* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 57-66.

[21]For the stories of the discovery of Our Lady of Caysasay, see "Congregantes Marianos de los Colegios de la Compania de Jesus de Manila," in *La Virgen Maria Venerada en sus Emagenes Filipinas* (Manila: Imp. de Santos y Bernal, 1904), 35-40; Pedro Murillo Velarde (1696-1753), *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compania de Jesus, Libro 1, cap. 4* (Manila: Imprenta de la Compania de Jesus, 1749), and Casimiro Diaz, OSA (1693-1745), *Conquista de las Islas Filipinas, Libro 1, cap. 12* (Villadolid: Imprenta, Libreria de Luis N. Gavira, 1890). A more detailed treatment of the subject was given by Francisco Bencuchillo, OSA (1622-1667) in *Epitome de la historia de la aparicion de Ntra. Sra. De Caysasay y su novena en lengua Tagala* (Manila: Imprenta de la Compania de Jesus, por D. Nicolas de la Cruz Bagai, 1754); Bencuchillo was assigned to various towns in Batangas from 1650 to 1666, and his work was reedited several times in 1844, 1856, 1859 and 1885. See also Ma. Ignazia S. Bunuan, *Gentle Woman, Mary*

The place used to teem with Kingfisher birds locally called *Casay-casay.* That is why the woman figure would later come to be called Our Lady of Caysasay. The river used to flow into the Taal Lake, a large crater created by the explosion of what was once a huge volcano. The present Taal volcano is considered the smallest active volcano in the world, a volcano within a volcano. In 1570, Martin de Goite and Juan de Salcedo sailed the coast of Batangas and entered the river flowing into the lake. They found a Malay settlement at the mouth of the river. It was established a couple of years later as the town of Taal and as the parish of Saint Martin of Tours. The province itself of Bombon (later called Balayan, or Taal, or Batangas, as the capital was moved around) was organized only in 1581 and consisted of what is now Batangas, but including the islands of Mindoro and Marinduque and the southeastern portion of Laguna.

Another version of the beginnings of Our Lady of Caysasay speaks of the 1611 discovery of the Lady in a cave by the local inhabitants. Miracles would be attributed to the Lady, including her repeated disappearance, as well as the many healings that took place in connection with her image and the spring of water that was later found near the church built in her honor. When the statue was first seen by the Spanish Augustinian parish priest of Taal, the friar identified it as the Blessed Virgin Mary. Whether the good friar noticed or not—that the statue could not be of Christian provenance—he *de facto* appropriated it for Christianity and adopted it when he identified it as that of Our Blessed Mother Mary. Actually, upon closer inspection, the statue—hardly ten inches high—is indeed of a willowy woman, but an Asian, a Chinese, slit-eyed, and standing in a small boat on wavy waters and the whole on a base of a lotus flower. A traditional voluminous royal gown had been wrapped around the figurine, and a wig of long hair plus a crown placed on its head, thus transforming it into a Catholic Marian

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to the Filipinos (Pasay: Paulines Publishing House, 1997), 120-123. Incidentally, this year the Shrine of Our Lady of Caysasay in Taal, Batangas is celebrating the 400th anniversary of Our Lady of Caysasay.

image. A more equable pedestal was added and some metal braces have been constructed to hold up all the additions. But underneath it all, the lady stands, according to the revealing description of Father Antonio Serra, a staff member of the Archbishop of Manila,

> Esta de pie sobre un casco de embarcacion (mas bien parece una corteza de un cuarto de melon), y el casco esta flotando sobre olas. Todo junto tiene 15 pulgadas y reposa sobre un pequeno pedestal de plata; carece de media luna y de serpente.[22]

For Buddhists, the hull or boat on which the figurine stands, the waves, and the lotus base (which Father Serra missed), all speak of their *Kuan-yin* ("the jewel in the lotus") or *Ma-cho* in the setting of sea travel where her protection is traditionally most sought. Father Serra unabashedly tried to downplay the Chinese motifs by parenthetically suggesting instead "a quarter rind of a melon" for the boat, and by noting paradoxically the absence of the regular items like the half moon and the serpent in the Catholic portrayal of the Immaculate Conception. It is an unmistakable statue of Kuan-yin, the goddess of compassion and mercy, the protectress at sea, in classical Chinese Buddhism.

Some forty years ago, as a seminarian doing volunteer summer work in the parish of San Nicolas, Batangas (the second site of the town of Taal buried by the volcano and whence it was transferred even farther up to its present location), this writer was enthralled by the story of an old parish priest in Balayan who narrated how even non-Catholic Chinese hold Our Lady of Caysasay close to their hearts. These would make pilgrimages to Taal and hold vigils at her shrine in the basilica. No explanation was given then. The reason would come only later when, on a trip up north in San Fernando, La Union, there was a strange claim on a billboard outside the towering Chinese temple overlooking the bay that the goddess Ma-cho inside is also Our Lady of Caysasay! The Chinese, the *Sangleyes,* already in the early eighteenth

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[22]"Congregantes Marianos," 40.

century, were recorded as among the devotees of the Virgin, according to the Jesuit historian Pedro Murillo Velarde. Father Antonio Serra wrote that *"Los chinos creen que la imagen fue traida de china."*[23] Indeed, the Chinese in Luzon must have recognized early on that the so-called *Nuestra Senora de Caysasay* is definitely one of their own.

The Taoist Buddhists identify Our Lady of Caysasay in particular with their Ma-cho. And so every year, on the first day of the tenth lunar month of the Chinese calendar, the feast of Ma-cho (or Ma Zhou and Matzu), they bring the statue of their goddess from San Fernando, La Union, to Taal, Batangas, to reunite with Our Lady of Caysasay. According to Chinese divinations, Ma-cho wants her devotees to venerate her in Our Lady of Caysasay in Taal for her devotees to receive her blessings. Chinese in Batangas City have also built their temple in honor of Ma-cho, who is Our Lady of Caysasay. Very much like Kuan-yin, Ma-cho is a goddess of the sea, protecting and helping those who call upon her in any predicament especially at sea or while traveling. Ma-cho in fact is supposed to be a manifestation of Kuan-yin, after she swallowed a flower offered her by the compassionate *bodhisattva.*

Kuan-yin is the most popular *bodhisattva* for the general Buddhist population, as an immediate savoir/savioress.[24] In Mahayana Buddhism

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[23]"Congregantes Marianos," 40. See also Josephine Darang, "Purely Personal: La Union Chinese venerate Taal's Casaysay Lady," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (October 12, 2003), G3.

[24]Cf. Martin Palmer and Jay Ramsay with Man-ho Kwok, *Kuan Yin, Myths and Prophecies of the Chinese Goddess of Compassion* (London: Thorsons, 1995), 1-53; Diana Paul, "Kuan-Yin: Savior and Savioress in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism," in *The Book of the Goddess Past and Present*, 161-175. See also Maria Reis-Habito, "Maria-Kannon: The Mother of God in Buddhist Guise," *Marian Studies* 47 (1996), 50-64. "Kuan-shih-yin" can be translated as "the one who listens to the cries of the world" and is also written as "Kanzeon" or "Kannon." In Sanskrit, it is Avalokitesvara. Bodhisattava Avalokitesvara is part of the entourage of the Buddha Sakamuni. Interestingly, in Tacloban City's Madonna of Japan Park, there is a statue of "Maria-Kannon" intended as a sign of friendship between Catholic Philippines and Buddhist Japan.

a *bodhisattva* is a compassionate enlightened being who vows to postpone his/her entrance into final Nirvana in order to help first all suffering, living beings. The cult of this compassionate savior *bodhisattva* Kuan-yin captures the hearts of the majority of the Chinese. Her statue in various poses used to accompany any traveler for protection and for warding off any calamity or misfortune. Having miraculous powers to change circumstances in this world, Kuan-yin is considered close to the people's concerns and needs. Chinese travelers must have lost their statue of Kuan-yin in the mud of the river leading into the Taal Lake, which was frequented before the coming of the Spaniards by both Chinese traders and pirates. Was it a volcanic eruption or a violent encounter with the natives or a pure accident that caused the dropping of the statue into the waters?

Kuan-yin, or Ma-cho, baptized into Our Blessed Virgin Mary when found by the Christians, was effectively appropriated into Catholic iconography and piety. For the Filipinos, it was a miraculous appearance and discovery, deepening their devotion to Our Blessed Mother. For the Chinese, Kuan-yin as Mary is but another transformation and assumption of their goddess of mercy and compassion. Sharing her with Filipino Catholics can provide everyone another instance of commonality. But the syncretism of the Chinese, who now magnanimously say that their Kuan-yin is Mary, cannot be matched by the Catholics, who would insist that the statue is (now) *Nuestra Senora de Caysasay,* or a statue of the Immaculate Conception even, *a la* Murillo, *La Purisima de Caysasay.* This much was asserted above by Father Antonio Serra, who tried to explain the discovery:

> Yo creo que algunos navegantes, de los que acompanaron a Juan de Salcedo en 1570 rio arriba del Pansipit hasta la laguna de Bombon, perderian dicha imagen en el rio o en la laguna. Era costumbre de los marinos espanoles llevar imagines.

Symbolic of the Filipino people, ever inclusive and oft defined by what outsiders variously bring into their land, Kuan-yin was adopted as an image of the Virgin Mary, and Caysasay served as the stage for the exchange, an inchoate interreligious dialogue. Our Lady of Caysasay

is one of the earliest "local" images of Mary that helped facilitate the conversion of the Filipinos who find in her a mother always needed.

Conclusion. Mary evidently fits neatly into the protective and sustaining role of goddesses whether in the Near East, in the Americas or in the Far East. Trappings and motifs, so to say, were borrowed from the pagan deities to clothe Our Blessed Mother for the better understanding of the people. The intersection of Christian and pagan cultures called for some amount of eclecticism to aid the spread of Christianity. And the witness of one religion to the Absolute or the Transcendental is never really lost, for actually it survives in its successors or kindred phenomena.[25] The resulting imagery that particularly surrounds Mary underlines her as the woman who leads us to God. She is not a goddess herself, but the Mother of God Incarnate, who reveals the feminine side, the anima, of the otherwise exclusively male God of Christianity. Corresponding to a primordial human need, according to Andrew Greeley's understanding of the Sacramental Imagination of Catholics, Mary's role in Christianity is as the symbol of the eternal feminine, who reveals the true God as an inclusive, androgynous deity so capable of motherly love.[26] The anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner, stressing the importance of icons in religious traditions that accept symbolic representations of the divine, see Marian devotion as the epitome of iconicity. Woman is the eternal feminine, the good mother, and Mary is the most powerful and ultimate symbol of the symbolic feminine.[27]

In Caysasay of Batangas, Mary has encircled the earth from

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[25]George H. Tavard, *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 232-233.

[26]Andrew M. Greeley, *The Mary Myth on the Femininity of God* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), 216-217. See also Greeley's book *The Catholic Myth* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), 252-254.

[27]Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 236.

Ephesus in the Near East through Mexico in the Americas to the Philippines in the Far East, as if in one big, maternal embrace of a woman with a thousand faces, ready to be modeled, if need be, on representations of local goddesses. In each place and time, she reached out to identify with the people in their own situation and religiosity. In Ephesus, she replaced the goddess Artemis; in Mexico, she appeared like Tonantzin; in the Philippines, she borrowed a statue of Kuan-yin. In each case, Mary displayed the creativity of a mother trying to get the attention of her children for a dialogue of life, in the manner they understand and in response to their own *Sitz im Leben.* In each case, she availed herself of the goddess cult but without wanting to be, or ending as, one. In Ephesus, Mexico and Caysasay, Mary was among goddesses and was more than they.

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MARY AND THE SPIRIT IN GOD'S GRACIOUS DESIGN

James H. Kroeger, M.M.

To assert that Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) is a "Marian Pope" may appear to be a clear understatement. At every turn, his life seems to overflow with devotion to the Mother of God.

The pope grew up in Poland with its prominent Marian shrines (e.g. Jasna Gora/Czestochowa); Poland itself is dedicated to Mary under the title, Queen of Poland. In addition, his Marian theology and piety are anchored in his early study of Saint Louis Grignion de Montfort (*Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*). When he was chosen pope on October 16, 1978, he affirmed publicly his trust in Mary.

On May 13, 1981, when Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Agca attempted to assassinate him, the pope entrusted his life to Mary; the day was the feast of Our Lady of Fatima. One year later he made a pilgrimage to Fatima and rededicated his life to Mary. John Paul II's coat-of-arms symbolizes Mary standing under the cross of Jesus. He gifted the Church with the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (RMa) in 1987, which he had declared a special Marian year.

The pope's programmatic apostolic letter on the Great Jubilee Year 2000, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (TMA), linked each year of preparation for the celebration (1997-1999) with Mary (TMA 43, 48, 54). The Trinitarian Jubilee celebration in 2000 witnessed the entire Church entrusted to "the maternal intercession of Mary" (TMA 59); she is the

fairest Daughter of the Father, the loving Mother of the Son, and the docile Spouse of the Holy Spirit. When the Jubilee year concluded, the pope noted in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (NMI) that a "new millennium is opening before the Church," and that "we are accompanied by the Blessed Virgin Mary ... [to whom] I entrusted the Third Millennium"; he invoked her "as the 'Star of the New Evangelization'" (NMI 58).

From this broad panorama of Marian reflection, one could choose any number of themes for a fruitful exploration. This extended theological meditation, inspired by the thought of John Paul II—but not only limited to his writings, aims to elucidate the loving presence of the Holy Spirit in the life and person of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is noteworthy that the relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit has emerged in recent studies of Pneumatology and Mariology as an exceedingly rich source of theological inspiration for Christian life and spirituality. And, while John Paul II has spoken extensively on Mary, he has also reflected deeply on the role of the Holy Spirit, particularly in his 1986 encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* (DV). The passing of the millennial pope (April 2, 2005) provides an opportune moment and impetus for further exploration of this Spirit-Mary relationship.

FRAMEWORK OF INTERPRETATION

Reflection on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Mary is further enriched if set within a comprehensive theological framework. Conversely, the various events found in Scripture that portray the Mary-Spirit relationship may appear fragmentary if they are not integrated into an overall synthesis. Isolated Gospel events take on an enhanced depth of meaning when understood within a comprehensive interpretation.

Such an interpretive key is suggested by the full title that Vatican II gave to its eighth chapter of *Lumen Gentium* where one finds the Council's discussion on Mary. The Latin original reads: "*De Beata Maria Virgine Deipara in mysterio Christi et Ecclesiae.*" In the English translation

of Abbott, it is rendered: "The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church."[1]

Following the lead of the Council, this presentation adopts the framework that locates Mary *within the divine mystery of salvation.* Admittedly, this is not an original insight; yet, it needs to be noted. At every turn, the isolated instances where Mary is presented in Scripture are integrated within a total history of salvation. Mary is thus portrayed as having a unique role in unfolding God's salvific design through the power of the Holy Spirit.[2]

As one reads the voluminous literature that has flowed from the hand—and heart—of John Paul II, it becomes eminently clear that he too speaks within such a comprehensive framework, whether he treats of moral, doctrinal, pastoral, spiritual, or social questions. The pope anchors his thought in "the eternal design of God," "*the divine plan of salvation*," "the saving mystery of Christ and the Church" (RMa 7, 38).

A brief excursus into the thought of Saint Paul (employed by Vatican II and John Paul II) will further illumine the comprehensive theological framework within which the roles of Mary and the Holy Spirit unfold. At the core of Pauline theology, one encounters the *mysterion*, understood as God's universal loving plan of salvation for all peoples (cf. Eph. 1:3-14; 3:1-13; Col. 1:24-29; 4:2-6; 1 Cor. 2:7-10; Rom. 16:25-27).

Paul is absolutely certain that God has a wonderful, marvelous, design of salvation for the whole world. His letter to the Ephesians convincingly—almost mystically—explains how "God has given us the wisdom to understand fully the mystery" (Eph. 1:9), the mysterious design which for ages was hidden in God" (Eph. 3:9).

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[1]*The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott (New York: America Press, 1966), 85.

[2]Paul VI, "Renewal of Devotion to Mary" (May 16, 1975), *The Pope Speaks* 20 (1975), 200-201.

Pauline reflection on God's loving plan of salvation (*mysterion*) synthesizes his belief that this design has been fully revealed in Christ the Savior and will be recapitulated in Christ at the end of time (Eph. 1:10). This manifestation is focused on salvation, not condemnation or judgment, and is open to all peoples (Rom. 16:25-27). It unfolds in many facets and stages: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Church, Mary, the world; humanity's response is faith or personal appropriation of the *mysterion.*

Paul was a true minister and servant of the *mysterion*; he believed, lived, prayed, labored, and suffered (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23-28) so that God's loving plan for the redemption of humanity would become known and graciously received. Christians, in like manner, live the *mysterion* (spirituality), celebrate it (liturgy), share it (mission), and look forward to its final fulfillment in the parousia. Like Saint Paul, Christians strive to develop a deep "*mysterion*-consciousness."

This brief excursus into Pauline *mysterion* theology provides that comprehensive framework for interpreting the Spirit-Mary relationship (cf. RMa 5). It undergirds the main body of this presentation as it elucidates how Mary in the power of the Spirit unfolds God's *mysterion.* This piece unfurls Mary's inspiring journey of faith, accompanying her as she generously surrenders to her God-given role in the *mysterion*—all in response to the gentle action of God's Spirit. "God has used her [Mary] for the service of his own mystery ... when it pleased him to make this mystery a reality in this world."[3]

ADDITIONAL SIGNPOSTS OF INTERPRETATION

In preparation for this contemplation on the Holy Spirit's chief actions in her whom God chose for his mother, some few additional guidelines are offered.

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[3]François-Xavier Durrwell, *Mary: Icon of the Spirit and of the Church* (Middlegreen, Slough: St. Paul Publications, 1991), 7.

Mary's role must always be seen as subordinate to and anchored within God's *mysterion.* Paul VI clearly held to a basic principle in Pneumatology and Mariology: "the Holy Spirit first, Mary second."[4] The Spirit made Mary his collaborator in the work of humanity's salvation. He intervened in Mary's life in a personal way. As Person-Love of the Father and Son, the Spirit "acted with both infinite power and infinite gentleness in perfectly adapting the person of Mary and her dynamic powers of body and spirit to the role assigned her in the plan of redemption [*mysterion*]."[5]

Mary is always an active recipient of God's action, yet, a true collaborator. Her entire life—from beginning to glorification—is a constant faith response to the action of the Spirit. Faith continually opens Mary to an ever more profound unfolding of the *mysterion*; her life becomes a *series of fiats.* As recorded in the New Testament, her many "yes-responses" enable the one *mysterion* to be manifested on many occasions and in diverse ways.[6]

It would be inaccurate to somehow "semi-deify" Mary because she gave such a perfect faith-response to God's action in her life. Likewise, it would minimize her true "pilgrimage of faith" if, because she was perceived as "super-human," Mary's faith-struggles (Bethlehem, Egypt, Nazareth, Calvary, etc.) were not those of a fully human person. John Paul II in *Redemptoris Mater* speaks eloquently of "her personal journey of faith ... [within] the mystery of salvation" (RMa 5). Mary is a genuine, faith-full disciple. Through faith she enabled the Holy Spirit to abide in her as in a holy temple; her human personality became

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[4]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin" (May 13, 1975), *The Pope Speaks* 20 (1975), 101; Heribert Mühlen, "New Directions in Mariology," *Theology Digest* 24 (Fall, 1976), 289; Léon Joseph Cardinal Suenens, "The Holy Spirit and Mary," *A New Pentecost?* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975), 197-200.

[5]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 102.

[6]Léon Joseph Cardinal Suenens, "The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit," *The Way: Supplement* 45 (1982), 8-10.

transparent to the Spirit; she can properly be called "Sanctuary of the Holy Spirit."[7]

In Mary's words, actions, silence and contemplation, God's *mysterion* (loving design of salvation) unfolds; through Mary there are many epiphanies of God's action. Her relationship was one of an ever-increasing docility and surrender to the Spirit. Her being and her awareness were transformed; yes, she developed a profound "*mysterion*-consciousness." In the Holy Spirit, Mary manifests how intensely God loves the world. John Paul II writes, "*At the center of this mystery*, in the midst of this wonderment of faith, stands Mary" (RMa 51).

KEY MOMENTS OF THE SPIRIT'S ACTION IN MARY'S LIFE

Pope Paul VI, in his apostolic exhortation *Marialis Cultus* (MC 26-27), encouraged Christians to reflect on the theme of Mary and the Holy Spirit. The pope noted that it is sometimes said that "many spiritual writings today do not sufficiently reflect the whole doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit." Specifically, he asked that theologians "meditate more deeply on the workings of the Holy Spirit in the history of salvation.... Such a study will bring out in particular the hidden relationship between the Spirit of God and the Virgin of Nazareth" (MC 27).

Paul VI realized that, while Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium* (LG 52-69) had presented a beautiful overview of Mary in the Mystery of Christ and the Church, the Council had not given "a complete doctrine on Mary" (LG 54). Nor did the Council give a formal treatment of the relationship of Mary to the Holy Spirit; it had mentioned the Spirit about a dozen times in chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium* and once related Mary to the Holy Spirit in the Decree on Mission (*Ad Gentes* 4).

Yet, since the Council, several authors have explored a theology of Mary and the Holy Spirit. This presentation now shifts to an

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[7]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 102.

examination of those *key moments* drawn from Scripture and Church reflection wherein the Spirit-Mary relationship is expressed.

At the outset, it should be observed that as each "event" is presented, its *source* in Scripture and Church teaching will be indicated; insights from popes, saints, and theologians will elucidate the *Spirit-Mary Dynamic* of the event; finally, an appropriate *theme for reflection* will be suggested. This approach intends to enhance the reader's *reflective understanding and appreciation of Mary and the Spirit* as the Church constantly renews herself in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, whose fortieth closing anniversary is celebrated this year (1965-2005). Admittedly, this presentation intends to be a theological-spiritual reflection and therefore does not lay claim to being a comprehensive Pneumatological-Mariological synthesis.

(1) Mary's Immaculate Conception. Pope Pius IX in *Ineffabilis Deus* on December 8, 1854 wrote: "we declare, pronounce and define: the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin, is revealed by God and, therefore, firmly and constantly to be believed by all the faithful."[8]

Paul VI described Mary's Immaculate Conception by noting that "It was the Holy Spirit who filled Mary with grace in the very first moment of her conception, thus redeeming her in a more sublime way in view of the merits of Christ, the Savior of mankind, and making her the Immaculate One."[9] From the very first moment of her existence Mary was being prepared by the Spirit for the sublime task that awaited her.

The Immaculate Conception does not signify a special grace that

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[8]*The Christian Faith*, eds. J. Neuner & J. Dupuis (New York: Alba House, 1996), 260-261.

[9]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 102.

was given to Mary at some later point of her life; it describes her person, her nature—from the beginning of her existence. She can truly say (as she did to Bernadette): I *am* the Immaculate Conception. Mary's whole being becomes a temple of God and the Holy Spirit dwells in her in a very special way.[10]

Mary's role in God's plan of salvation [*mysterion*] begins in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception. Without doubt, this is a special "irruption of grace"; a new and decisive stage in God's design has begun; the Holy Spirit is acting; the new creation is dawning. Mary has been "fashioned by the Holy Spirit into a new substance and new creature" (LG 56). Through the power of the Spirit, God has enacted a marvelous "turning point" in salvation. Contemplating this event, one can assert: *God is faithful; the mysterion unfolds with love.*

(2) Annunciation to Mary. Saint Luke's beautiful story of the Annunciation (Lk. 1:26-38) is a very clear statement on the role of the Holy Spirit: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow" (Lk. 1:35). "For nothing is impossible to God" (Lk. 1:36). "I am the handmaid of the Lord ... *fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*" (Lk. 1:37-38).

All is grace: the angel Gabriel announces the unfolding of the mystery through the power of the Spirit. Mary's response—free, prayerful, generous—is that she be worthy of the divine mysteries to unfold in her life. "Mary's 'yes' to God was flaming with faith; it was an unqualified assent, without reserve and without either false humility or futile dramatics. It was given in holy silence.... Mary [became] the perfect type of the servant and agent of the Holy Spirit"[11]

God's action overwhelms with its love. Life will spring forth from a peasant girl—filled with the Spirit. Mary rejoices to surrender

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[10]Dwight Campbell, "The Holy Spirit and Mary," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 93: 8 (1993), 16.

[11]John Cardinal Wright, "Mary, Type of Servant and Agent of the Holy Spirit," *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition) 8:25 [377] (June 19, 1975), 10.

herself—body, soul, and spirit. In the Annunciation she certainly moved to a new level of consciousness; she became more deeply aware of the *mysterion*—and her role in its unfolding. She now has a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, whom John Paul II calls "Person-love" and "Person-gift" (DV 10, 22, 50). This relationship will grow, blossom, and bear fruit in her very being, her person.

What richness is included in that simple word: *fiat.* It is the only authentic response possible to God's marvelous design. John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* is fashioned around Mary's *fiat,* her faith; the pope writes: "In these reflections ... I wish to consider primarily that 'pilgrimage of faith' in which 'the Blessed Virgin advanced'" (RMa 5). Saint Augustine poetically captures Mary's profound faith when he writes: "*Maria concepit Christum in corde [mente] priusquam in carne [ventre].*"[12] Yes, Mary's conception *in her faith* precedes the conception *in her flesh.*

The Second Vatican Council notes: "By thus consenting to the divine utterance ... in subordination to Him and along with Him, by the grace of almighty God, she served the mystery of redemption. [Mary is thus] cooperating in the work of human salvation through free faith and obedience" (LG 56).

The words of John Paul II speak eloquently: "This *fiat* of Mary—'let it be to me'—was decisive, on the human level, for the accomplishment of the divine mystery.... The mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished when Mary uttered her *fiat* ... [that is in] as far as it depended upon her in the divine plan.... Mary uttered this *fiat in faith*" (RMa 13).

Succinctly, "faith is contact with the mystery of God.... From the moment of the Annunciation, the mind of the Virgin-Mother has been initiated into the radical 'newness' of God's self-revelation and has been made aware of the mystery" (RMa 17). Faith is nothing less than *living into mystery.* Readers will find much to contemplate as they consider *Mary's fiat and her free response of faith.*

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

(3) Virginal Conception. Flowing from Mary's *fiat* is her virginal conception of the Word-made-flesh. In Matthew's Gospel (Mt. 1:18-25) it is stated that Mary the Virgin is "with child through the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 1:18). Joseph is advised that "what she has conceived is in her by the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 1:20).

Paul VI notes that it was the Spirit that inspired Mary's consent "to the virginal conception of the Son of the Most High and made her womb fruitful so that she might bring forth the Savior."[13] John Paul II declares that the "union of divinity and humanity in the one Person of the Word-Son, that is the 'hypostatic union,' ... is the Holy Spirit's greatest accomplishment in the history of creation and in salvation history."[14]

This unique moment in salvation history "was a complete and therefore hypostatic descent of the Holy Spirit and entry to the Virgin Mary.... [Through] his coming into the Virgin Mary [he] identifies himself in a way with her through her God-motherhood, [and] he does not at all leave her after the birth of Christ, but remains forever with her in the full force of the Annunciation."[15] The Holy Spirit abides "in the ever-virgin Mary as in a holy temple, while her human personality seems to become transparent to Him."[16] Enduring intimacy is a defining characteristic of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary.

Matthew notes that the fruit of this virginal conception will be a son to be called Emmanuel, a name which means "God-is-with-us" (Mt. 1:23)—equivalently "Word-made-flesh" (John 1:14). All this is made possible because Mary gave the Spirit total freedom in her

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[13]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 103.

[14]John Paul II, "Christ: Totally Holy, Body and Soul" (June 6, 1990), *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition) 23:24 [1144] (June 11, 1990), 5.

[15]Michael O'Carroll, "The Holy Spirit," in *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1982), 332.

[16]O'Carroll, "The Holy Spirit," 332.

life. It is accurate to hold that Mary's fundamental charism was that of receiving the gift of the Spirit; she allowed the Christ-seed to be sown in her; she allowed the Body of the Son of God, the Incarnate Word, to be formed in her. Mary accepts the Redemption into her own heart; "the mystery of the Redemption took shape beneath the heart of Mary."[17]

The Incarnation is truly a profound mystery. By her consent to be the Mother of Jesus Christ, Mary "gave an extraordinary demonstration of faith." Through the power of the Holy Spirit, she "expressed her acceptance of the divine gift of salvation, not only for herself but for all mankind; ... her involvement in God's saving plan [*mysterion*] was not to be limited to that single moment. In God's design she was to continue to be intimately involved in the great saving mission of her Son. She was destined by God to be his Mother, not only in the physical sense, or in the private sphere of the home, but also in the public domain, on the plane of the history of salvation: she was to be his Mother too in his role as Redeemer of mankind."[18] A reflection can center on: *Faith bears fruit; for us, the Word is made flesh.*

(4) Visitation to Elizabeth. The Visitation story is chronicled in Luke 1:39-45. The scene presents Mary, filled with the Holy Spirit and impelled by love, rushing to the aid of her cousin Elizabeth who also is pregnant—even in her old age. In God's loving plan, nothing is impossible. What a scene of great joy! Mary and Elizabeth, both faithful women of Israel, have been blessed by the Most High.

When Mary enters Zechariah's house, Elizabeth replies to Mary's greeting and feels the child leap in her womb; being filled with the Holy Spirit, she greets Mary enthusiastically: "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk. 1:42).

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[17]Catalino Arévalo, "Pope John Paul II on Mary, the Mother of the Lord," *Ministry Today* 1:2 (1985), 42.

[18]Kevin McNamara, *Mary, the Mother of God* (London: Incorporated Catholic Truth Society, 1982), 6-7.

Note the active presence of the Holy Spirit in this scene. Mary, prompted by the Spirit undertakes a difficult journey into the hill country; she went in haste; she was on a mission of service. She could have rationalized staying at home. When she arrives at Zechariah's house, her presence brings the Holy Spirit to both Elizabeth and the child in her womb. Prompted by the Spirit, Elizabeth responds with a blessing; the unborn baby leaps in her womb.

It seems that every word of Elizabeth's greeting has a special meaning: "Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled" (Lk. 1:45). Who is blessed? The one who *believes* in God's promise, God's design, God's *mysterion.*

Note that the evangelist says that Elizabeth was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Lk. 1:41) when she uttered these words. Those filled with the Spirit can recognize God's plan, praise and thank God for it, and joyfully accept their role in the unfolding of this loving plan. Two generous, holy women share their faith. Both would be mothers of important and significant figures in God's salvific design; faith-filled, Spirit-inspired women are central to the workings of God.

The Visitation scene prompts reflection on a gift from the Holy Spirit: *a lively sense of mission and service.*

(5) Mary's Spirit-inspired *Magnificat.* The prayerful, poetic genius of Saint Luke is manifested in Mary's hymn of praise known as the *Magnificat* (Lk. 1:46-55); it is sung daily in the heart of the Church during Vesper prayer. Paul VI writes: "It was the Holy Spirit who filled her [Mary's] soul with jubilant gratitude and moved her to sing the *Magnificat* to God her Savior."[19] When the Church celebrates Marian feasts, her liturgy notes that "it is our special joy to echo her song of thanksgiving [*Magnificat*]. What wonders you have worked throughout the world. All generations have shared the greatness of your love" (Second Preface of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

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[19]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 103.

This beautiful song of gratitude, sung under the Spirit's inspiration, is a brief, yet profound, synopsis of *how* God intends to unfold his *mysterion*, *what* his plan of salvation entails, and *what role* Mary will play within this unfolding design. The *Magnificat* asserts many profound truths: salvation comes from a loving God and is a cause for rejoicing; lowly servants like Mary play important roles in God's design; God does great deeds for his faithful people; mercy, shown to Israel's ancestors, will extend from age to age and the promises to Israel will be fulfilled; the world's secular values will be subverted and inverted; God's plan will be for all peoples and for all generations. The *Magnificat* is a sublime example of authentic prayer inspired by the Holy Spirit.

John Paul II calls Mary's *Magnificat* an "*inspired profession of her faith*"; it is "*her response to the revealed word*"; in it "Mary's personal experience, the ecstasy of her heart, shines forth." Here one sees a brilliant "ray of the mystery of God, the eternal *love which, as an irrevocable gift, enters into human history.*" These Spirit-inspired utterances reveal "the deepest truth about God and [humanity's] salvation." Mary is "aware that concentrated within herself as the Mother of Christ is *the whole salvific economy*" (RMa 36).

Mary's *Magnificat* "is both *personal* ('he who is mighty has done great things for *me*' [Lk 1:49]) and *social* (her proclamation serves Elizabeth's faith). The experience of the Spirit always involves seeing and hearing; it is never a private, purely inner and mental relationship with God. Elizabeth and Mary, then, serve one another, each in a unique way; ... one charism calls forth another, and the faith of one aids the faith of another."[20]

As the Church-in-mission journeyed toward the celebration of the Great Jubilee Year 2000, John Paul II reminded Christians: "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'." "Drawing from Mary's heart, from the depth of her faith

[20]Mühlen, "New Directions in Mariology," 291.

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 Church looks to Mary "as Mother and Model ... in order to understand in its completeness the meaning of her own mission" (RMa 37). Meditating on Mary's *Magnificat,* readers can reflect on the fact that *authentic prayer includes gratitude, praise, social awareness, and commitment.*

(6) Mary Reflects on the Events of Jesus' Birth-Childhood. This section presents a composite picture of the role of Mary and the Holy Spirit in the events of the birth and childhood of Jesus. It incorporates several passages from the infancy narratives of Luke and Matthew: *birth* (Lk. 2:1-7); *visit of shepherds* (Lk. 2:8-20); *visit of magi* (Mt. 2:1-12); *sojourn in Egypt* (Mt. 2:13-15); *life at Nazareth* (Lk. 2:39-52; Mt. 2:19-23); *presentation in the temple* (Lk. 2:22-38). How did Mary follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit during those many years of her "hidden life" with Jesus and Joseph?

It is valid to assert that the Spirit inspired Mary to be a "giver" of Jesus to people. In the mystery of Jesus' birth, she gave him to the world; she presented him to the shepherds and the magi; she presented him to the joyful, old man Simeon. Mary struggled with giving Jesus to the temple teachers, fearing that he had been lost. Many works of Christian art consistently show Mary in a "presenting-mode"; she presents Jesus to all peoples of the world—represented by the various Scripture scenes listed earlier.

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).

A particular manifestation of the Spirit's presence in Mary is seen

in her ability to insightfully read the deep meaning of the mysteries unfolding in her life; Mary contemplated the wonders of God—often in eloquent silence. Through meditation and the "storing of all things in her heart" she discovered God; she lived the injunction of the Hebrew Scriptures: "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

In her response of active contemplation, Mary deepens her relationship with the Spirit throughout her entire life. Mary continually realizes that the *fiat* she spoke when the Spirit came upon her in Nazareth was actually a commitment to an ongoing submission to God and his *mysterion.* Reflective faith is most characteristic of Mary, as Saint Luke took care to note.

One example succinctly illustrates Mary's "response of the heart." When Luke describes Simeon's role during the presentation of Jesus in the temple, he specifically links Simeon to the Holy Spirit three times. Simeon speaks God's word to Mary; in particular, he points out that her role in God's unfolding mystery will entail suffering. Mary accepts this difficult dimension of the *mysterion* in faith, a faith that only emerges from deep contemplation and a true commitment of the heart.

This scene—and Mary's overall faith response—is well captured by John Paul II. "Simeon's words seem like a *second Annunciation* to Mary, for they tell her of the actual historical situation in which the Son is to accomplish his mission, namely in misunderstanding and sorrow.... [They reveal that] she will have to live her obedience of faith in suffering, at the side of the suffering Savior, and that her motherhood will be mysterious and sorrowful" (RMa 16).

As the whole panorama of events mentioned in this section serves to illustrate, Mary's participation and insight into God's *mysterion* demand constant reflection and meditation. Learning from Mary's experience and practice, Christians realize that *meditation (prayer of the heart) is essential for integrating faith and daily life.*

(7) The Mother of Jesus at Cana. Examination of the text of John 2:1-11 that records the wedding at Cana reveals no explicit mention of the Holy Spirit. Yet, Paul VI identifies this as an important event that manifests Mary's responsive openness to the Spirit: "It was

the Holy Spirit who urged the compassionate Mary to ask her Son for that miraculous change of water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana, which marked the beginning of Jesus' activity as a wonderworker and led his disciples to believe in him."[21]

The encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* devotes a lengthy section to the Cana scene and Mary's Spirit-inspired actions on that occasion. "Mary is present at Cana in Galilee as the *Mother of Jesus*, and in a significant way she *contributes* to that 'beginning of the signs' which reveal the messianic power of her Son" (RMa 21); a new stage in the unfolding of the *mysterion* begins in Cana.

The Cana event also "outlines what is actually manifested as a new kind of motherhood according to the spirit and not just according to the flesh, that is to say *Mary's solicitude for human beings*; ... this coming to the aid of human needs means, at the same time, bringing those needs within the radius of Christ's messianic mission; ... the episode at Cana in Galilee offers us a *sort of first announcement of Mary's mediation*, wholly oriented toward Christ and tending to the revelation of his salvific power" (RMa 21-22).

Some Scripture exegetes see a second pneumatological theme in the Cana narration; they hold that Cana parallels/foreshadows Pentecost. John 2:1-11 has many aspects of a Pentecostal meditation, with striking similarities to the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts. Only in John 2:1 and Acts 1:14 is the precise expression "the mother of Jesus" used; the old wine has run out and the disciples and the mother of Jesus ask for the new wine of the Spirit, which is given in abundant measure to those obedient to Jesus' command; they then brim with the Spirit and bring this gift to others.[22]

The liturgical Preface for Our Lady of Cana builds on this double,

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[21]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 103.

[22]Joseph Grassi, "The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11): A Pentecostal Meditation?" *Novum Testamentum* 14 (1972), 131-136.

pneumatological theme: "With loving care for the bridegroom and his bride, she turns to her Son for help and tells the servants to do what he commands. Water is changed into wine [and] the wedding guests rejoice.... In this great sign, the presence of the Messiah is proclaimed, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is foretold, and the hour of salvation is foreshadowed." A theme that suggests itself for reflection is: *sensitivity and compassion for human need result in outpourings of the Holy Spirit.*

(8) Mary at the Foot of the Cross. The coat-of-arms of John Paul II graphically illustrates this *stabat mater* scene of Mary standing at the foot of the cross. On the right side of the seal under the bold cross, one finds the capital letter "M" in the place usually thought of as Mary's position at the crucifixion. John Paul II frequently returns to this poignant scene for his meditations; it seems, as Arévalo notes, "he cannot write or speak at any length on the mystery of the Redemption without taking us to Mary's side at the foot of the Cross."[23]

Vatican II gave prominence to this scene: "the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and loyally persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross. There she stood, in keeping with the divine plan [*mysterion*] (cf. John 19:25). There she united herself with a maternal heart to his sacrifice, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth" (LG 58).

In Paul VI's understanding, "It was the Holy Spirit who strengthened the soul of the Mother of Jesus as she stood beneath the cross, and inspired her once again, as he had at the Annunciation, to consent to the will of the heavenly Father who wanted her to be associated as a mother with the sacrifice her Son was offering for mankind's redemption."[24]

Numerous writers carefully note that Calvary was a significant moment in Mary's *fiat.* Her surrender and consent "did not remain on

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[23]Arévalo, "Pope John Paul II on Mary, the Mother of the Lord," 42.

[24]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 103.

the level of her initial response. It grew through the darkness of the Cross ... [as] an actual and personal reality."[25] "Mary will live this consent [*fiat*] to communion with Jesus without restriction until Calvary."[26]

Spirituality author George Maloney writes: "At the foot of the Cross especially did Mary experience the final purification of the Holy Spirit.... She wrung from the depths of her being, through the power of the Holy Spirit's faith, hope, and love within her, her renewed '*fiat*.'... The unifying, transforming power of the Holy Spirit brought Mary into a new level of oneness with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that was in proportion to her sorrows."[27]

In the same vein, John Paul II writes in his encyclical on Divine Mercy (*Dives in Misericordia*): "*No one has experienced, to the same degree as the Mother of the Crucified One,* the mystery of the Cross.... No one has received into his heart, as much as Mary did, that mystery, that truly divine dimension of the Redemption effected on Calvary by means of the death of the Son, together with the sacrifice of her maternal heart, together with her definitive '*fiat*'" (DM 9).

The pope extols Mary's *fiat*: "How great, how heroic then is the *obedience of faith* shown by Mary in the face of God's 'unsearchable judgments'! ...And how powerful too is the action of grace in her soul, how all pervading is the influence of the Holy Spirit and of his light and power" (RMa 18). Christians join Mary in her *fidelity in trial, suffering, and even death* on all the Calvaries of the world.

(9) Mary and Her Maternal Mission. With great tenderness John the Evangelist (John 19: 26-27) records the words of Jesus on Calvary to "his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her."

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[25]Seunens, "The Holy Spirit and Mary," 203.

[26]René Laurentin, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," in International Marian Research Institute, *Mary in Faith and Life in the New Age of the Church* (Ndola, Zambia: Franciscan Mission Press, 1983), 287.

[27]George Maloney, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," in *Mary: The Womb of God* (Denville: Dimension Books, 1976), 92.

The Spirit's presence and action in the episode is noted: "It was the Holy Spirit who filled the Sorrowful Mother with immense love, widening and deepening her heart, as it were, so that she might accept as a last testament from the lips of her Son her maternal mission with regard to John, the beloved disciple: a mission which, 'as the Church has always understood it,' prefigured her spiritual motherhood toward mankind as a whole."[28]

Mary's maternity unfolds in this pattern: "Under the leading of the Spirit, Mary consents actively to the Redemption. By receiving the words 'Behold your Son,' she opens her Immaculate Heart to receive the Heart of her Son ... into her own heart. Thus, she becomes manifestly to the world the Mother of the Redeemed.... And we—each one of us, like John the disciple—can go to her."[29]

This marvelous fact does *not* make Mary "Co-redeemer" (a term avoided by Vatican II). Under the Spirit's influence, Mary humanly cooperated in the acceptance of *God's* salvation. The words of Vatican II are clear: "The maternal duty of Mary toward men in no way obscures or diminishes [the] unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power" (LG 60). However, the Council does speak of Mary as "Mediatrix" in a carefully nuanced presentation (LG 62). The entire third chapter of *Redemptoris Mater* is devoted to a reflection on the "Maternal Mediation of Mary" (RMa 38-50).

This Calvary scene is understood as one of three key moments in Mary's motherhood. First, in Nazareth Mary becomes the mother of Jesus spiritually [*mente*] and physically [*ventre*] by welcoming him into her heart in faith. Secondly, at the foot of the Cross she becomes the Spiritual Mother of all (represented by Saint John). Finally, at Pentecost she becomes specifically "Mother of the Church"—a Marian title announced by Paul VI on November 21, 1964.[30]

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[28]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 103.

[29]Arévalo, "Pope John Paul II on Mary, the Mother of the Lord," 44.

[30]McNamara, *Mary, the Mother of God*, 8.

John Paul II's words again prove enlightening. Under the Cross, "Mary's motherhood of the human race ... is clearly stated and established. It *emerges* from the definitive accomplishment of *the Redeemer's Paschal Mystery.* The Mother of Christ, who stands at the very center of this mystery—a mystery which embraces each individual and all humanity—is given to every single individual and all mankind." The pope observes, "the Council did not hesitate to call Mary 'the Mother of Christ and mother of mankind'" (RMa 23).

Some writers see in John 19:30 a "proto-Pentecost" when Jesus "gave up his spirit" as he died on the cross.[31] An adequate discussion of that point is beyond the scope of this theological meditation. Through frequent reflection, *Christians experience an intimacy with Mary their mother*; they praise God for sharing his mother with all humanity.

(10) Mary with the Church at Prayer and Pentecost. Building upon the Lukan narration of the Church at prayer (*ecclesia orans*) and the Pentecost event (Acts 1:14-2:13), Paul VI writes in his characteristically poetic manner: "It was the Holy Spirit who raised Mary on the burning wings of love so that she might be a model intercessor during those hours in the Upper Room when the disciples of Jesus 'together ... devoted themselves to constant prayer' along with 'some women ... and Mary the Mother of Jesus' and waited for the promised Paraclete."[32]

Several eminent theologians have written on the role of the Spirit and on the presence of Mary at Pentecost, when the Church is fully born and sent into the world in the power of the Spirit. Hans Urs von Balthasar holds that at Pentecost the Church as a subject begins to be present in Mary and is perfected through the mystery of the Holy Spirit; "Mary's living faith is the perfect prototype of what is expected in the

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[31]Raniero Cantalamessa, *Mary: Mirror of the Church* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 190ff; Laurentin, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 287; Mühlen, "New Directions in Mariology," 291.

[32]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 103.

life of the Church."[33] Carroll observes: "Mary is herself a member of the Church, joined to her Son by her pilgrimage of faith on earth, joined now to the Risen Christ, and in both stages under the influence of the sanctifying Spirit."[34]

For Schmemann, "Mary is truly the icon and the epiphany of the Church—of the Church as life in Christ and of the Church as Christ's life in us."[35] Congar writes: "Mary has a pre-eminent place in the Christian mystery as the model of the Church and of universal intercession. This is the work of the Spirit in her."[36] Would that space permitted an extended commentary on these profound insights!

Other writers highlight the clear parallelism between the Incarnation and Pentecost. They see that the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost is, in fact, the continuation of the mystery of the Incarnation that took place in Mary by the operation of the Holy Spirit.[37] In both cases the Spirit overshadows, first Mary alone and then Mary with the first believers. There is the birth of the bodily Christ, then the birth of the Church, the Body of Christ.[38]

This beautiful parallelism is captured well by Bishop Kevin McNamara: "At the Annunciation Mary co-operated with the Spirit in the Incarnation of the messiah, destined to be the Savior and ruler

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[33]Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mary: God's Yes to Man* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 170.

[34]Eamon Carroll, "The Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary," in *Understanding the Mother of Jesus* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1979), 69.

[35]Alexander Schmemann, "Our Lady and the Holy Spirit," *Marian Studies* 23 (1972), 75.

[36]Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit, Vol. I* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), 164.

[37]Arévalo, "Pope John Paul II on Mary, the Mother of the Lord," 44.

[38]Maloney, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 81; Christopher O'Donnell, *Life in the Spirit and Mary* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1988), 89-90.

of his people; at Pentecost she co-operates with the Spirit in the emergence of that people on to the stage of human history. She who had first become the Mother of Christ is now revealed as Mother of the Church, and central to her motherhood on each occasion are the humility, obedience and loving trust in God which unite her profoundly to the Holy Spirit."[39]

On this point John Paul II, once again, manifests his eloquence: "And so, in the redemptive economy of grace, brought about through the action of the Holy Spirit, there is a unique correspondence between the moment of the Incarnation of the Word and the moment of the birth of the Church. The person who links these two moments is Mary: *Mary at Nazareth* and *Mary in the Upper Room at Jerusalem.* In both cases her discreet yet essential presence indicates the path of 'birth from the Holy Spirit.' Thus she who is present in the mystery of Christ as Mother becomes—by the will of the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit—present in the mystery of the Church" (RMa 24).

In contemplating Mary at prayer in Nazareth and in the Upper Room, Christians will deepen their awareness that *prayer begets radical openness to an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.*

(11) Assumption of Mary into Heaven. On November 1, 1950 in the apostolic constitution *Minificentissimus Deus* Pius XII defined as an article of faith the Assumption of Mary into the glory of heaven. Twenty-five years later, another pope wrote: "It was the Holy Spirit who brought love to its supreme pitch in the soul of Mary while she was still a pilgrim on earth and made her yearn for reunion with her glorified Son. The Holy Spirit thereby disposed her for her crowning privilege: her Assumption body and soul into heaven."[40]

The Assumption, as understood by Byzantine Christians, is "Mary's

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[39]Kevin McNamara, "The Holy Spirit and Mary," *The Way: Supplement* 51 (1984), 13.

[40]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 103.

demise, *koimisis*, a dormition, a restful sleep, a repose rather than a death."[41] When Pius XII defined the dogma, he carefully noted: "Mary ever Virgin, when the course of her earthly life was ended, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven."[42] Saint John Damascene asserted that Mary's earthly departure should not be called death. In addition, Vatican II asserts Mary's Assumption "upon the completion of her earthly sojourn" (LG 59). These few quotes enable believers to understand the Assumption as the Spirit's unique gift to Mary.[43]

Belief in the Assumption affirms Mary's link to Jesus within the mystery of salvation. Through His resurrection, which was a work of the Spirit (cf. Rom. 1:3-4), Jesus is Lord of lords, the conqueror of sin and death. Mary, through her Assumption, becomes more thoroughly conformed to her Risen Son. Christ's Resurrection and subsequently Mary's Assumption stand as two pillars of Christian faith in full resurrection. Through the power of the Spirit, Mary remains uniquely linked to Christ—whether in the Incarnation, the life at Nazareth, Calvary, or in her glorious Assumption.

John Paul II affirms this beautiful gift of the Spirit to Mary: "By the mystery of the Assumption into heaven there were definitely accomplished in Mary all the effects of the one mediation of *Christ the Redeemer of the world* and *Risen Lord*: 'In Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ' (1 Cor. 15:22-23)" (RMa 41). Looking to Christ as Risen Lord and believing in Mary's Assumption, *Christians strengthen their faith in the resurrection*, which they believe will also be a personal event for them in God's unfolding *mysterion*.

(12) Mary as Our Heavenly Intercessor. Although enjoying the full glory of heaven, Mary does not abandon her sons and daughters in

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[41]Maloney, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 93.

[42]Neuner & Dupuis (eds.)., *The Christian Faith*, 264.

[43]O'Donnell, *Life in the Spirit and Mary*, 90.

the Church. Vatican II expresses Mary's continual maternal presence in this way: "For, taken up to heaven, she did not lay aside this saving role, but by her manifold acts of intercession continues to win for us gifts of eternal salvation" (LG 62). The Council went on to say: "In the bodily and spiritual glory which she possesses in heaven, the Mother of Jesus continues in this present world as the image and first flowering of the Church ..." (LG 68). "Mary's maternity will last without interruption until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect" (LG 62). Indeed, "Mary [is] a Sign of Sure Hope and of Solace for God's People in Pilgrimage" (title for sections 68-69 of LG).

Paul VI speaks eloquently on this special gift of the Spirit enabling Mary to be our Intercessor. He notes that her place in heaven does not "put an end to Mary's mission as associate of the Spirit of Christ in the mystery of salvation.... She continues to be spiritually present to all her redeemed children.... Mary's motherhood in the economy of grace goes on unceasingly."[44]

On this same theme, permit the introduction of a lengthy passage (because of its clarity and eloquence) from Paul VI's writings: "We must therefore keep in mind that the activity of the Mother of the Church in behalf of the redeemed neither substitutes for nor rivals the omnipotent, universal action of the Spirit. Mary's role is rather to impenetrate and prepare for the action of the Holy Spirit, not only through intercessory *prayer* that accords with the divine plan she contemplates in the beatific vision but also through the direct influence of her *example*, including the supremely important example of her docility to the inspirations of the divine Spirit. Thus it is always in dependence on the Holy Spirit that Mary leads souls to Jesus, forms them in his image, inspires them with good counsel, and acts as a living bond of love between Jesus and the faithful."[45]

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[44]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 104.

[45]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 104.

Without doubt, Mary's role as spiritual mother and intercessor is, in the writings of Paul VI and John Paul II, not something vague, remote or abstract. It is an intimate, consoling, fruitful relationship. The Spirit is always at work here; every spiritual experience, including the relationship with Mary as mother and intercessor, is accomplished only through the mediation of the Spirit of Christ. This means, therefore, that as Christians seek to draw closer to Mary in the Church, they will concomitantly become more aware of the action of the Holy Spirit in their lives. McNamara says: "The more Mary, the Spirit and the Church merge into one another in our thoughts, in our prayers, in our lives, the more authentic is our vision of God's plan of salvation [*mysterion*]."[46]

Totus Tuus in John Paul II's coat-of-arms proclaims his total dedication to Mary as Intercessor and Mother of the Church. In the Spirit he frequently implores Mary to show a mother's love, care, and protection for the Church (a mission similar to his own). To Mary he commits every aspect of the Church's life; to her he entrusts his own Papal ministry. Even in times of great difficulty and suffering (e.g. the assassination attempt, his final sickness and death), John Paul II, quoting Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, proclaims: "*Totus tuus sum, O Maria, et omnia mea tua sunt.*"[47] All Christians rejoice to have *Mary as their maternal intercessor in the power of the Spirit*; each Christian also proclaims *Totus tuus sum.*

CONCLUDING REFLECTION

In the introductory comments of this theological meditation, it was noted that "this presentation adopts the framework that locates Mary *within the divine mystery of salvation.*" Through examining key events in Mary's life, a deeper awareness and appreciation of the Spirit-Mary

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[46]McNamara, "The Holy Spirit and Mary," 22.

[47]Bernard LeFrois, *Mary and the Spirit* (Baguio, Philippines: Allied Printers, 1990), 28.

relationship has emerged. Continuing personal reflection will reveal many additional insights—more profound than the points considered here. The author's hope has been that his cursory treatment would evoke in readers a personal reflection on the role of the Spirit in Mary's life—and in their own lives.

Mary's faith-journey is a precious treasure for Christians who wish to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in one of God's humble handmaids; Mary's experience is a gift of the Spirit. Since "she is a charism of the Spirit in person," Christians can learn from Mary "to believe more purely, to discern the Spirit more clearly, to listen to the Word more intently, and to await more creatively the hour of the Lord's coming."[48] Yes, through Mary and the Spirit, all can enter more fully into God's *mysterion*—in its profound beauty.

Mary's relationship to the Spirit is at its foundation an *awareness and surrender* to God's infinite love and action in her person and her life; Mary brimmed with "*mysterion*-consciousness." She allowed herself to be "a woodwind for the Lord," to play God's song with the Spirit's "pure and tranquil tone."[49] She said *fiat*: "I am your reed.... Now, if you will, breathe out your joy in me."[50]

Mary invites all her children to discover and open themselves to the Spirit. Her faith-response can serve as a sure and inspiring criterion for appreciating the revelation and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Mary continues to remain "present in the mystery of the Church as a *model*" (RMa 44). Those who allow themselves to come under the dominion of the Spirit will find they are also more closely united with Mary.

In the Holy Year of 1975 Paul VI spoke words that are always appropos to Christian disciples, to the entire Church. He noted:

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[48]Suenens, "The Holy Spirit and Mary," 211.

[49]Maloney, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 95.

[50]Caryll Houselander, *The Reed of God* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1944), 53.

"the faithful must cultivate an outstanding devotion to the Spirit as the supreme source of love, unity, and peace. At the same time however, and in harmony with this first devotion which draws ever new strength from the fire of the Divine Love, the faithful should also be deeply devoted to the great Mother of God who is Mother of the Church."[51]

The prayer of Ildefonsus of Toledo[52] is a fitting way to conclude these reflections and humbly lay them at the feet of Mary:

> I beg you, I beg you, O holy Virgin, that I may have Jesus from the Spirit from whom you conceived Jesus. May my soul receive Jesus through the Spirit, through whom your flesh conceived the same Jesus. Let it be granted to me to know Jesus from the Spirit, from whom it was given to you to know, to have and to bring forth Jesus. May I in my lowliness speak exalted things of Jesus in that Spirit, in whom you confess yourself to be the handmaid of the Lord, choosing that it be done unto you according to the angel's word. May I love Jesus in that Spirit in which you adore him as Lord, contemplate him as your Son.

[51]Paul VI, "The Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin," 106.

[52]O'Carroll, "The Holy Spirit," 330.

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