

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND THE DIVINE MOTHERHOOD, ASSUMPTION AND COREDEMPTION

CHARLES DE KONINCK

JUNE, 1955

INTRODUCTION

One may wonder how a study on the connection between the Immaculate Conception, the Divine Motherhood, and the Assumption, viewed specifically in the light of the doctrine of Coredemption, could find a suitable place in a Symposium in commemoration of the dogma defined by Pius IX in the Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* of a century ago. Our aim is to show that the Immaculate Conception is not an isolated privilege. The Divine Motherhood--than which, in the entitative order and in the line of *esse personale*, there is nothing greater in all creation this side of the hypostatic union itself--is its very foundation: the seat of all the Virgin's graces and privileges. Furthermore, the Immaculate Conception not only renders the person of Mary incomparably more worthy of her Son; it means that her habitual grace belongs to the hypostatic order and, therefore, that a mere human person was able to share actively and worthily in the fulfillment of the very purpose of the Incarnation, by way of coredemption. In other words, that privilege makes her more worthy of her Son specifically *qua* Redeemer. Without it, she could not have become the universal Coredemptrix that she is. The intimate connection between Mary's singular fullness of grace and the fact that the Mother of the Redeemer, the new Eve, did *crush the head* of the Serpent, according to the prophecy in Genesis III, 15, is actually the main theme of the constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*.

More recently, the bull *Munificentissimus Deus*, which proclaimed the Assumption as a dogma of faith, establishes a further connection between the Immaculate Conception and the victory over the Enemy, on the one hand, and the complete glorification of Mary's person at the term of her earthly life, on the other:

We must remember above all (*maxime*) that since the second century, the Virgin Mary has been designated by the holy Fathers as the new Eve, who, although subject to the new Adam, is most intimately associated with Him in that struggle against the infernal foe which, as foretold in the *protoevangelium*, finally resulted in that most complete victory over the sin and death which are always associated in the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Consequently, just as the glorious Resurrection of Christ was an essential part and the final sign of this victory, similarly that struggle which was common to the Blessed Virgin and her divine Son should be brought to a close by the glorification

of her virginal body, for the same Apostle says: *when this mortal thing hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death swallowed up in victory.*

Hence the reverend Mother of God, from all eternity joined in a hidden way with Jesus Christ, in one and the same decree of predestination, immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood, the noble associate of the divine Redeemer who has won a complete triumph over sin and its consequences, was finally granted, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved free from the corruption of the tomb and that, like her own Son, having overcome death, she might be taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendour at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages.¹

In other words, just as the final cause of the Incarnation of the Son of God is, in fact, none other than the redemption of mankind and the glory of the elect, the fulfillment of this end is no less the first cause of the Divine Motherhood, and of the Immaculate Conception perfecting beyond all measure that same motherhood with regard to the mode of achieving our redemption. This privilege--this gift of divine mercy, bestowed upon her by the prevenient piety of her Son, raising her above the common law---enriches the Mother with that spiritual fecundity from which, in the Compassion, we are born to the life of her Son's very Godhead. It is in this fuller sense that the Assumption is "the crowning and complement of that prior privilege [the Immaculate Conception]."

. . . For the greatest possible glorification of her virgin body is the complement, at once appropriate and marvelous, of the absolute innocence of her soul, which was free from all stain; and just as she took part in the struggle of her only-begotten Son with the utterly wicked serpent of hell, so also she shared in His glorious triumph over sin and its sad consequences.²

If, then, by her Assumption, the Blessed Virgin shared in the triumph of the new Adam, it was not because of her Immaculate Conception considered merely as an effect of the merits of Christ: it was, more properly, owing to this perfect innocence, inasmuch as in virtue of it she could and did take part in the victorious struggle of her Only-begotten Son with the Enemy who held mankind in bondage. It was by reason of this active participation that Mary won the title of Coredemptrix, and that her Assumption was "an essential part and a final sign" of the "common" struggle and victory. There exists, therefore, a strict parallel between the Incarnation of the

¹ *Munif. Deus*, A.A.S., Nov 4, 1950, pp. 768-769. We quote the English translation from *Papal Documents on Mary*, compiled and arranged by William J.

Doheney, C.S.C. and Joseph P. Kelly, S.T.D., The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1954. We shall henceforth refer to this volume by the initials P.D.M. (The present passage is on p. 237) Here and there we have changed a word in order to bring the English closer to the original, whenever this seemed feasible--though usually at the expense of felicity of style.

² *Fulgens Corona*, P.D.M., pp. 258-259.

Word and its actual purpose, viz. the redemption of man, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God and its ultimate purpose, viz. the Coredemption. Only the *causa causarum* of the Word's becoming flesh can provide the proper and adequate light in which we must endeavor to consider every truth of faith concerning the person of Mary: the real meaning of the Immaculate Conception is to be found in its *finis cuius gratia*--the Redemption itself.

Now, the Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* not only confirmed that the Virgin was immaculate in and from the first instant of her existence; in the very opening sentence of that solemn document, this singular privilege is referred to what is, in fact, the ultimate purpose of

God ineffable, whose ways are mercy and truth, whose will is omnipotence itself, and whose wisdom *reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things graciously* . . .; [of God Who] decreed, by a plan concealed from the centuries, to complete the first work of His goodness by a mystery yet more wondrously hidden [*sacramento occultiore complere*] through the Incarnation of the Word. . .

What was this purpose? The same sentence goes on to state:

this He decreed in order that man who, contrary to the plan of divine Mercy, had been led into sin by the cunning malice of Satan, would not perish; and in order that what had been lost in the first Adam would be gloriously restored by the second Adam.³

If, then, Mary's active share in the universally redemptive mission of her Son depends not only upon the Divine Motherhood as such but upon the Mother and new Eve inasmuch as she was conceived entirely free of all contagion of sin, it follows that the Immaculate Conception is the proximate principle in virtue of which the second Eve, "while subject to the new Adam," could achieve the redemption of mankind in what the Constitution on the Assumption and the Encyclical *Fulgens Corona* call their "common" struggle and victory. Hence, unless we consider the Immaculate Conception, not only in the line of formal causality with respect to the person of Mary, but further, as a *principle*, indeed a universal one, pertaining to the order of efficient causality, we fail to see this privilege of the Mother of God in the light of its ultimate reason: the active share of a mere human person in the salvation of mankind.

Such is the reason why we believe that, instead of distracting us from what the Immaculate Conception really is, the doctrine of the Coredemption provides the truly proper perspective in which Mary's fullness of grace must be viewed; subject to Christ, it is a fullness from which we have all received through the merits of "the one and only daughter, not of death but of life; the child, not of anger but of grace."⁴

³ *P.D.M.*, pp. 9-10

⁴ *Ineff. Deus*, *P.D.M.*, p. 20.

If the doctrine of the Coredemption is the light in which we ought to consider the Immaculate Conception, we must explain first of all what that doctrine is; and for the sake of further clarification, we shall envisage some of the difficulties to which it may give rise (part I).

But the Immaculate Conception was bestowed upon Mary as Mother of God; for “she obtained this unique privilege, never granted to anyone else, because she was raised to the dignity of Mother of God.”⁵ We must try to show, in particular, why it is that “from this sublime office of the Mother of God seem to flow, as it were from a most limpid hidden source, all the privileges and graces with which her soul and life were adorned in such extraordinary manner and measure.”⁶ We must therefore endeavor to catch some glimpse of what it means to be the Mother of God and show the reason why this motherhood is essential to the coredemption; we shall point out why the assimilation of Christ and Mary in the order of nature is basic to all her privileges and graces. Then we must show how the Immaculate Conception, conferred upon Mary as Mother of God, renders her proximately and properly able to share in Christ’s redeeming Passion, for the good and honor of all--*honorificentia populi tui* (part II). Finally, we must try to show why the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption are “most intimately bound to one another”; on what condition there can exist a strict correspondence between the two, and how the latter can be called a reward of the former (part III).

I

THE MEANING OF COREDEMPTION

THE DIGNITY OF MAN AND THE MOTIVE OF REDEMPTION

The first thing we must call to mind here is that, without any injustice whatsoever, God might well have forgiven man without redeeming him.⁷ There was no need for God to sacrifice

⁵ *Fulgens Corona, P.D.M.*, p. 255.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁷ “Even this justice depends on the Divine will, requiring satisfaction for sin from the human race. But if He had willed to free man from sin without any satisfaction, He would not have acted against justice. For a judge, while preserving justice, cannot pardon fault without penalty, if he must punish fault committed against another—for instance, against another man, or against the State, or any Prince in higher authority. But God has no one higher than Himself, for He is the sovereign and common good of the whole universe. Consequently, if He forgive sin, which has the formality of fault in that it is committed against Himself, He wrongs no one: just as anyone else, overlooking a personal trespass, without satisfaction, acts mercifully and not unjustly. And so David exclaimed when he sought mercy: *To Thee only have I sinned* (Ps. i. 6), as if to say: *Thou canst pardon me without injustice.*” St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Illa Pars*, q. 46, a. 2, ad 3. -- We use, throughout, the English Dominican translation of the *Summa* (Benziger Brothers edition, 1947). But we have made some changes. For instance,

His only-begotten Son, *laying on Him the iniquities of us all, to bruise Him in infirmity.* (Isa. liii 6, 10) Nor was it even necessary that He should expose the Church, the body whose head is Christ, to the contempt and hatred of the world, letting its vanquished Prince, *liar and homicide from the beginning*, feign victory until the end of time. God willed freely that the sound and the fury should go on until the day of His choice. *He who does wrong, let him do wrong still, and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still.* (Apoc. xxii. 11)

Yet it was more in keeping with both His mercy and His justice that God should exact satisfaction for the sin of the human race, and let all share in the sacrifice.⁸ Thanks to the Incarnation, man himself, in the Person of Christ, can render justice to God and be cause of his own redemption.

For it is far more to the glory of man that he himself should fully satisfy for the fault he had committed, rather than being forgiven without atonement. . . For whatever one obtains by merit, one achieves by oneself, in the measure that it is deserved. In like fashion, by satisfying for his fault, the one who satisfies is somehow the cause of his own cleansing. . . Because God willed man to be redeemed by way of satisfaction, His mercy is revealed in a most perfect manner; for He wanted, not only to remove the fault, but also to restore human nature wholly to its original dignity.⁹

The Incarnation, therefore, is a unique manifestation of God's Wisdom and Power--*reaching from end to end mightily and ordering all things graciously* (Wisdom, viii. 1). For in the Person of Christ are united the extremes of rational nature, the Godhead and man--*in*

"distinguuntur ratione" is not the same as "a distinction of reason between them."

⁸ "With his justice, because by His Passion Christ made satisfaction for the sin of the human race; and so man was set free by Christ's justice: and with His mercy, for since man of himself could not satisfy for the sin of all human nature, as was said above (q. 1, a. 2), God gave him His Son to satisfy for him, according to Rom. iii, 24, 25: *"Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood.* And this came of more copious mercy than if He had forgiven sins without satisfaction. Hence it is said (Ephes. ii. 4): *God, who is rich in mercy for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ.*" *Illa Pars*, q. 46, a. 1, ad 3.

⁹ *In III Sent.*, d. 20, a 1, sol. 2.--This does not mean, of course, that by redemption, man was merely restored to his original dignity; for man's worthiness, his *bonitas propter se*, is now far greater than it might have been had Adam never sinned. Pius XI, *Lux Veritatis*: "With this dogma of truth [i.e. the hypostatic union] placed beyond the realm of doubt, it is easy to conclude that the entire aggregation of human beings and earthly creatures has, by the mystery of the Incarnation, been invested with a dignity greater than can be imagined, far greater than that to which the work of creation was raised. Among the offspring of Adam, there is One, namely Christ, who attained everlasting and infinite divinity, and who is united with it in a mysterious and most intimate manner; Christ, We repeat, our Brother, possessing human nature, but God with us, or Emmanuel, who by His grace and merits has brought us back to the divine Author and recovered for us that heavenly blessedness from which we had fallen away by original sin. Let us therefore be grateful to Him, obey His precepts and imitate His example. In this way we shall be partakers of the divinity of Him *who deigned to partake of our human nature.*" *P.D.M.*, p. 171.

se reconcilians ima summis. As to mercy, considered in itself,

it takes precedence of other virtues, for it belongs to mercy to be bountiful to others, and, what is more, to succor others in their wants, which pertains chiefly to one who stands above. Hence mercy is accounted as being proper to God: and therein His omnipotence is declared to be chiefly manifested.¹⁰

However, to God, in His Divinity, only the effect of mercy can be attributed, and not the affection of passion.¹¹ Yet, thanks to the Incarnation, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Image of the Father, stoops down to us and takes upon Himself our misery; *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on the cross.* And that is the very reason why *God has exalted Him and has bestowed upon Him the name that is above every name.* (Philipp. ii. 8)

By denying the oneness of the Person of Christ, and, therefore, the reality of the Incarnation, the Nestorians, while pretending to exalt the Godhead in His infinite perfection above all creatures, ignored His power to stoop down to and exalt the lowly; they strained the quality of *mercy in which God's omnipotence is chiefly manifested.*¹² That denial of His superabundant goodness and power to unite in His Person the lowly nature of man, to achieve in it the work of universal redemption, was, therefore, a negation of what God is--of the very transcendence of the Godhead. Yet, *God hath made foolish the wisdom of this World* (I Cor., i. 20), *by showing, a gloss adds, those things to be possible which it judges to be impossible.* He did so, more especially, by demonstrating how much He can do with how little. For, *the weakness of God is stronger than men. . . But the foolish things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the "wise," and the weak things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the strong, and the base things of the world and the despised has God chosen, and the things that are not, lest any flesh should pride itself before Him.* (I Cor., i. 25) The wisdom of the world had been defined and judged once and for all by the words: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord.* (Isa. iv. 8)

This rejection of God's merciful might underlies every heresy down to our own time when God is most frequently denied because, in His designs, He tolerates *that very great evil among all things that are done under the sun, that the same things happen to all men.* [Eccl. ix 3]¹³ In each and every instance, the one who elects his own self protests against some special work of divine mercy, especially against the Virgin Mother of whom the Church says that *She alone*

¹⁰ *Ila-Ilae*, q. 30, a. 4, c.

¹¹ *Ia Pars*, q. 21, a. 3.

¹² Collect for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.

¹³ *There are just men and wise men, and their works are in the hands of God: and yet man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred.--But all things are kept uncertain for the time to come; because all things equally happen to the just and to the wicked, to the good and to the evil, to the clean and to the unclean, to him that offereth victims, and to him that despiseth sacrifices. As the good is, so also is the sinner: as the perjured, so he also that sweareth truth. This is a very great evil among all things that are done under the sun, that the same things happen to all men.* (Eccl. ix, 1-3)

destroyed all heresies.¹⁴ For she, too, was to be a *sign that shall be contradicted*. (Luke ii. 34) Yet, that Mary should have been raised to such heights, which naturally arouses protests among those who would compass God's designs with their own measure, is expressly attributed by her to the Lord's merciful might:

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; Because He has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid; for, behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; Because He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name; And His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him. He has shown might with His arm, He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart, He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly. (Luke i. 46)

CHRIST AND MARY, THE OBJECT OF ONE AND THE SAME DECREE OF PREDESTINATION

The extent to which God willed Mary to share in the work of salvation He first made known to the head of all evil by a prophecy of predestination (Gen. iii. 15): *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she ('he', 'it?') shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her ('his'?) heel*. The plural *enmities* makes it plain that the opposition is one of adversaries mutually recognized as such and active, much as in the contrary case, viz., "to be friends, [people] must be mutually recognized as bearing good will and wishing well to each other."¹⁵ In other words, *enmities* already implies that each party deliberately desires, and acts for, the defeat of the other. Whichever may be the correct reading of the pronouns in the next part of this verse, the sense is much the same.¹⁶

What is important to us is the way in which the Church understands the implications of this text. That Mary's role in the struggle against the enemy and in the achievement of victory was indeed an active one we find clearly stated in the Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*:

[The Fathers and writers of the Church] in quoting the words by which at the beginning of

¹⁴ Tract of the Mass *Salva Sancte Parens*.

¹⁵ Aristotle, *Ethics*, VIII, 2, 1156a.

¹⁶ Cf. Cornelius A Lapide, *Comm. in Scripturam Sacram*, t. I, Paris, 1866, pp. 106-108. Cf. F. M. Braun, O.P., *La Mère des Fidèles*, Paris 1953; "En dépit de la leçon *ipsa conteret caput tuum*, qui ne se lit que dans la *Vulgate*, la victoire à vrai dire dépendait, non pas directement de la *Femme*, mais de son descendant. Etablie en état de guerre ouverte vis-à-vis du Serpent, la *Femme* était cependant destinée à y participer personnellement. A cet effet, il était indispensable qu'elle fit cause commune avec son enfant. C'est pourquoi il n'a pas suffi à Jean, comme à Matthieu et à Luc, dont il est cependant si proche, de faire entrer Marie dans le plan du salut simplement pour avoir donné le jour au Sauveur. La présence de Marie au Calvaire l'avait introduit dans un autre mystère. Il n'a pas craint de faire entendre qu'au moment où Jésus consommait son sacrifice la maternité de Marie avait acquis une nouvelle dimension." (p. 91).

the world God announced His merciful remedies prepared for the regeneration of mankind--words by which He crushed the audacity of the deceitful Serpent and wondrously raised up the hope of our race, saying, *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed*--taught that by this divine prophecy the merciful Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, was clearly foretold; that His most blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was prophetically indicated; and, at the same time, the very enmity of both against the Evil One was significantly expressed.--Hence, just as Christ, the Mediator between God and man, assumed human nature, blotted out the handwriting of the decree that stood against us, and fastened it triumphantly to the cross, so the most holy Virgin, united with him by a most intimate and indissoluble bond, was, with Him and through Him, eternally at enmity with the evil Serpent, and most completely triumphed over him, and thus, crushed his head with her immaculate foot.--This sublime and singular triumph of the Blessed Virgin, together with her most excellent innocence, purity, holiness, and freedom from every stain of sin, as well as the unspeakable abundance and greatness of all heavenly graces, virtues, and privileges--these the Fathers beheld in that ark of Noah, which was built by divine command and escaped entirely safe and sound from the common shipwreck of the whole world.¹⁷

The second prophecy of the same nature was made to Mary herself at the Presentation in the Temple (Luke, ii. 34-35): *And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted, and thy own soul a sword shall pierce--that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."*¹⁸ This prophecy manifests the unity of the Passion of Christ and of the Mother's Compassion. Such a unity, as we shall see, was possible only because of the complete enmity between the Woman and the Serpent, because of her total preservation from every stain of sin in the first instant of her conception.

To see how fitting it was that God should bestow upon the person of His Mother such a unique role, we must recall that in the Incarnation God's aim is to bring about the salvation of man by way of merit, atonement, sacrifice and redemption.¹⁹ In this He shows His mercy, raising human nature to the utmost dignity. Now the Incarnation might have been wrought in the manner in which the first man was formed, i.e. not by way of birth, but immediately by God from

¹⁷ P.D.M., pp. 17-18.

¹⁸ On this verse 35, M.-J. Lagrange, O.P., observes: "La première moitié du verset n'est pas une parenthèse; elle se soude à ce qui précède, tandis que la seconde moitié s'applique à tout ce qui est antérieur." *Evangelium selon saint Luc*, Paris, 1921, p. 88.

¹⁹ "Christ's Passion, according as it is compared with His Godhead, operates in an efficient manner: but in so far as it is compared with the will of Christ's soul it acts in a meritorious manner: considered as being within Christ's very flesh, it acts by way of satisfaction, inasmuch as we are liberated by it from the debt of punishment; while inasmuch as we are freed from the servitude of guilt, it acts by way of redemption: but in so far as we are reconciled with God it acts by way of sacrifice." *Illa Pars*, q. 48, a. 6, ad 3.

an irrational nature; or even by mere creation of the human nature as a whole. Thus, just as God could have forgiven man without exacting the debt, He might have assumed our nature without any dependence whatsoever upon the offspring of the father of all men. Yet, "His power being thereby made more manifest, He assumed, from a corrupt and weakened nature, that which was raised to such might and glory."²⁰ To this end He chose to proceed from human nature by way of birth, i.e. as a substantial image of the one to whom He is assimilated in His temporal origination, even as in His eternal procession the Son is assimilated to the Father. That same Son was joined with the very person of His mother *in one and the same decree of predestination*.²¹

It is thanks to this singular election that Christ's human nature was united to the Godhead by way of birth. Because of this, Mary belongs to the order of the hypostatic union. It is by reason of "the grace of union [which is wholly of the entitative order] that man is God, and that God is man." This union was predestined from all eternity. For "predestination, in its proper sense, is a divine preordination from eternity of those things which are to be done in time by the grace of God."²² Now, "eternal predestination covers not only that which is to be accomplished in time, but also the mode and order in which it is to be accomplished in time."²³ It is therefore natural that this same predestination should extend to the grace of motherhood, which is likewise of the entitative order, owing to which the Son of God is also and truly the Son of Man.

Predestination, however, refers all that is done in time by the grace of God, to the ultimate, supernatural end of the rational creature. Since this end exceeds all proportion and faculty of created nature, and thus cannot be attained by the power of nature alone, it must be directed to it by another, as the arrow is directed by the archer towards a mark.

Hence, properly speaking, a rational creature, capable of eternal life, is led towards it, directed, as it were, by God. The reason of that direction pre-exists in God; as in Him is the type of the order of all things towards an end, which we proved above to be providence. Now the type in the mind of the doer of something to be done, is a kind of pre-existence in him of the thing to be done. Hence the type of the aforesaid direction of a rational creature towards the end of life eternal is called predestination. For to destine, is to direct or send. Thus it is clear that predestination, as regards its objects, is a part of providence.²⁴

Christ and Mary are joined by nature in a way that is wholly unique. But they are also united in the order of sanctifying grace which, in them, belongs to the hypostatic order. Now, all grace is ordered to the state of glory. Since Mary was predestined not only to be the Mother of

²⁰ *IIIa Pars*, q. 4, a. 6, c.

²¹ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*; Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*.

²² *IIIa Pars*, q. 24, a. 1, c.

²³ *Ibid.*, a. 4, c.

²⁴ *Ia Pars*, q. 23, a. 1, c.

God, but a Mother such as to be, in glory, far above any or all other created persons, she is also most intimately conjoined to the Godhead in the order of glory, i.e. of "clear knowledge with praise," in a fashion that is again wholly unique. For not only is her Son glorified there, seeing God by His created intellect, viz. according to the nature which He received from her, and in which he saved mankind; this same Son of hers, this Person, is at the same time the Word in Whom the blessed see God, and Who is God.

THE PROPHECIES OF PREDESTINATION CONCERNING MARY'S COREDEMPTION

The prophecies of the divine motherhood were prophecies of predestination. *I will put enmities between . . . thy seed and her seed.* (Gen. iii. 15) *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son: and his name shall be called Emmanuel.* (Isa. vii. 14) *Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus.* (Luke i. 31) This, however, did not prevent Mary's consent from being most perfectly free. Indeed, "a prophecy of predestination is fulfilled without the causality of our will, but not without its free consent."²⁵ They act in greatest freedom who readily and unfailingly fulfill the will of God.

But Mary's share in the act of Redemption was also implied in the prophecies of predestination in Genesis iii. 15, and Luke ii. 35. What, then, is the relationship between the object of this prophecy and that elevation of human dignity far above anything it might have been in the order of original justice? We have seen that, thanks to the nature assumed by the Word, in which He satisfied for our sins, man is a *causa suae purgationis*. In this regard, however, the *human person* as such is not a cause, since the Person of the Incarnate Word is Divine. Therefore, although man, in this respect, did save himself (for Christ is a man), the human person did not redeem himself. But if Mary, thanks to her offspring, did crush the head of *the one by whose envy sin and death came into this world*, then the human person, too, shared in delivering man from enslavement.

In Adam, original sin was both an actual or personal sin, and a sin of nature, which is derived from the former. In him, "the person corrupted the nature, and by means of this corruption the sin of the first man is transmitted to posterity, inasmuch as the corrupt nature corrupts the person."²⁶ But we do not therefore distinguish a twofold grace, one corresponding to the nature, the other to the person, as in Adam we distinguish the sin of the nature and the sin of the person. For, "grace is not vouchsafed us by means of human nature, but solely by the personal action of Christ Himself."²⁷ Yet, thanks to Mary, in whom those prophecies were fulfilled, the New Order, too, is derived from a human person. Children of Eve, we derive our corrupt nature from the person of Adam. But Adam had fallen through the mediation of Eve already seduced by the serpent to sin against both God and her neighbor. Adam preferred to offend God rather than resist the elated will of Eve. So too in the order of Redemption, mankind

²⁵ *IIIa Pars*, qu. 30, a. 1 ad. 1.

²⁶ *IIIa Pars*, q. 8, a. 5, ad 1 ; q. 69, a. 3, ad 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

owes its spiritual regeneration not only to the Divine Person who is Christ, but also to a human person, to the second Eve from whom the New Adam was formed, and who conformed her will to that of the Father and her own Son. For

When the supreme hour of the Son came, beside the cross of Jesus there stood Mary, His Mother, not merely occupied in contemplating the cruel spectacle, but rejoicing that her only Son was offered for the salvation of mankind; and so entirely participating in His Passion, that, if it had been possible “she would have gladly borne all the torments that her Son underwent.”--From this community of will and suffering between Christ and Mary, “she merited to become most worthily the reparatrix of the lost world” and dispensatrix of all the gifts that our Savior purchased for us by His death and by His blood.²⁸

As we shall see, this kind of participation of the human person in the work of universal Redemption was possible only because the Mother of God had been conceived immaculate.

One of the reasons for the Angel Gabriel’s mission was “to show that there is a spiritual wedlock between the Son of God and human nature. Wherefore in the Annunciation the Virgin’s consent was besought in lieu of that of the whole of human nature.”²⁹ In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, St. Thomas calls this consent an “actus singularis personae in multitudinis salutem redundans, immo totius humani generis.”³⁰ Leo XIII, referring to this teaching of the Angelic Doctor, uses the expression: “Ipsius generis humani personam quodammodo agebat.”³¹ So too, at the foot of the Cross, in her Compassion, “generis humani personam quodammodo agebat.”

It is true that her compassion was natural inasmuch as the *Man of sorrows* was her own Son by nature, and that compassion is not necessarily meritorious. Even the Passion of Christ was not meritorious in virtue of its outward principle, namely the will and actions of His persecutors, but because of an inward principle, inasmuch as He bore the Passion willingly.³² Now, in giving consent, at the Annunciation, to be the Mother of the Savior, the Virgin, full of grace, freely consented to compassionate Him. It was therefore willingly that she accepted to share the suffering of her Son. Furthermore, that the sword of His Passion would *pierce her own soul*, that He *must be about His Father’s business*, were things that she had *kept carefully in her heart*. (Luke ii. 35, 49, 51) It was she, then,

who, free of all personal and inherited sin, ever most intimately united to her Son, offered Him to the Eternal Father, as well as the sacrifice of her maternal rights and motherly

²⁸ St. Pius X, *Ad diem illum*, P.D.M., p. 140.

²⁹ *Illa Pars*, q. 30, a. 1, c.

³⁰ *In III Sent.*, d. 3, q. 3, a. 2, ad 2 qu., obj. 3.

³¹ *Octobri mense*, P.D.M., p. 56.

³² *Illa Pars*, q. 48, a. 1, ad 1.

love, even as a new Eve, for all the children of Adam, deformed by his fall.³³

THE HABITUAL GRACE OF MARY BELONGS TO THE HYPOSTATIC ORDER AND IS A "GRATIA PERSONALIS IN ALIOS REDUNDANS"

The habitual grace of Christ,--which is ordained to an act (viz. the operations which attain God, as He is in Himself, by knowledge and love, to which it is necessary for human nature to be raised by grace),³⁴--follows, "as a natural property," upon the grace of union, which is not ordained to an act, but to the personal being.³⁵ It follows naturally, first of all because the nearer a recipient is to the inflowing cause, the more it receives; therefore, the soul of Christ, which is more closely united than all other rational creatures, to God, the cause of all grace, receives the greatest outpouring of His grace. Secondly it follows by reason of the very purpose of the grace of union, of the Incarnation itself, namely that Christ be the Mediator between God and men. (I Tim. ii. 5) It is therefore natural that Christ's habitual grace should overflow to each and all according to every operation, and to all effects of grace, i.e. the virtues, gifts, and the like; it follows, as a natural property, that His personal grace should be such as to have the nature of a universal principle in the genus of such as have grace. *And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.* (John i. 16)³⁶ Because of the unparalleled nearness of His soul to the outflowing cause of grace and because the grace of any other man is compared to His own as a particular to a universal power, Christ possesses grace in a pre-eminent way.³⁷

The habitual grace of Mary, too, belongs to the hypostatic order,³⁸ inasmuch as it is proportioned to and was destined, by privilege, to follow from the Divine Maternity in which she attains to the hypostatic union. For

god gives to each one according to the purpose for which He has chosen him. And since Christ as man was predestined and chosen to be *predestined the Son of God in*

³³ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, Epilog.

³⁴ *Illa Pars*, q. 7, a. 1, c.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, a. 13, ad 2; q. 8, a. 5, ad 3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, q. 7, a. 1, c.; a. 9, c.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, q. 8, a. 5, c.

³⁸ Cf. l'abbé Maurice Dionne, "La grâce de Marie est d'ordre hypostatique," *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 1954, vol. X, n. 2, pp. 141-145: "Nous disons 'ordre hypostatique' car il faut distinguer *union* hypostatique et *ordre* hypostatique. Cette distinction s'impose déjà à propos du Christ: il n'y a pas que la grâce d'union qui soit d'ordre hypostatique; la grâce habituelle du Christ, qui est une grâce capitale, est propre à cet ordre. La grâce habituelle du Christ se distingue de toutes les autres, non par un simple degré d'intensité mais par un mode éminent qui s'enracine dans l'union hypostatique. De même, toute proportion gardée, la grâce de Marie se distingue de la nôtre. Notre grâce est une grâce commune, effet de la rédemption réparatrice, et qui obéit à la *loi commune*. En revanche, la grâce de Marie est toute singulière, privilège qui soustrait la Mère de Dieu à la loi commune. *Non enim pro te, sed pro omnibus haec lex constituta est.* (Esther xv. 13) Et non seulement la grâce de la maternité divine appartient à cet ordre, mais aussi la grâce "gratum faciens" de Marie. En d'autres termes, la grâce de Marie se distingue-t-elle encore de la nôtre, par un mode éminent propre à l'ordre hypostatique." (p. 142)

power . . . of sanctification (Rom. i. 4), it was proper to Him to have such a fullness of grace that it overflowed from Him into all, according to Jo. i. 16: *Of His fullness we have all received*. Whereas the Blessed Virgin Mary received such a fullness of grace that she was nearest of all to the Author of grace; so that she received within her Him Who is full of all grace; and by bringing Him forth, she, in a manner, dispensed grace to all.³⁹

That all Mary's graces and privileges have the Divine Maternity as their seat is plainly taught in the following pontifical texts:

When the Fathers and writers of the Church meditated on the fact that the most blessed Virgin was, in the name and by the order of God himself, proclaimed *full of grace* by the Angel Gabriel when he announced her most sublime dignity of Mother of God, they taught that this singular and solemn salutation, never heard before, shows that the *Mother of God is the seat of all divine graces* and is adorned with all gifts of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰

. . . *From this sublime office of the Mother of God seem to flow, as it were from a most limpid hidden source, all the privileges and graces* with which her soul and life were adorned in such extraordinary manner and measure.--For, as Aquinas correctly states: "The Blessed Virgin, because she is the Mother of God, has a certain infinite dignity from the infinite Good, which is God." And a distinguished writer [Cornelius a Lapide] develops and explains this in these words: "The Blessed Virgin . . . is the Mother of God; therefore she is the purest and the most holy, so that under God a greater purity cannot be understood."⁴¹

Although Mary's habitual grace does not follow upon her Motherhood as a natural property, it is, nevertheless, connatural to her.

The Blessed Virgin is said to be full of grace, not on the part of grace itself--since she had not grace in its greatest possible excellence--nor for all the effects of grace; but she is said to be full of grace in reference to herself, i.e. inasmuch as she had sufficient grace for the state to which God had chosen her, i.e. to be the mother of His Only-begotten. So, too, Stephen is said to be full of grace, since he has sufficient grace to be a fit minister and witness of God, to which office he had been called. And the same must be said of others. Of these fullnesses one is greater than another, according as one is divinely pre-ordained to a higher or lower state.⁴²

³⁹ *Ibid.*, qu. 27, a. 5, c.

⁴⁰ *Ineffabilis Deus*, P.D.M., p. 19.

⁴¹ Pius XII, *Fulgens Corona*, P.D.M., p. 256.

⁴² *Illā Pars*, q. 7, a. 10, ad 1.--That Mary did not have all the effects of grace, St. Thomas explains, *ibid.*, qu. 27, a. 5, ad 3 in the following terms: "There is no doubt that the Blessed Virgin received in a high degree both the gift of wisdom and the grace of miracles and even of prophecy, just as Christ had them. But she did not so receive them, as to put them and such like graces to every use, as did Christ: but

Hence it is the clear and unanimous opinion of the Fathers that the most glorious Virgin, for whom *He who is mighty has done great things*, was resplendent with such an abundance of heavenly gifts, with such a fullness of grace and with such innocence, that she is an unspeakable miracle of God--indeed, the crown of all miracles and truly the worthy Mother of God; that she approaches as near to God Himself as is possible for a created being; and that she is above all men and angels in glory.⁴³

She dispenses grace with a generous hand from that treasure with which from the beginning she was divinely endowed in fullest abundance that she might be worthy to be the Mother of God. By the fullness of grace which confers on her the most illustrious of her many titles, the Blessed Virgin is infinitely superior to all the hierarchies of men and angels, the one creature who is closest of all to Christ. "It is a great thing in any saint to have grace sufficient for the salvation of many souls; but to have enough to suffice for the salvation of everybody in the world, is the greatest of all; and this is found in Christ and in the Blessed Virgin."⁴⁴

The last quotation as well as several of the preceding ones make it plain that Mary, too, in her own way, has the eminence of a universal principle in the order of grace--a cause universal *in causando*.

THE PERSON OF MARY, AN INSTRUMENTAL, VOLUNTARY CAUSE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION

Since the Godhead alone is the principal efficient agency of grace and salvation, the humanity of even Christ Himself can be no more than the instrumental cause of the Godhead in this regard.⁴⁵ Hence "all Christ's actions and sufferings operate instrumentally in virtue of His Godhead for the salvation of men." And since the instrumental cause belongs, properly and exclusively, to the order of efficient agency, "Christ's Passion accomplishes man's salvation

accordingly as it befitted her condition of life. For she had the use of wisdom in contemplation, according to Luke ii. 19: *But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart*. But she had not the use of wisdom as to teaching: since this befitted not the female sex, according to I Tim., ii. 12: *But I suffer not a woman to teach*. The use of miracles did not become her while she lived: because at that time the teaching of Christ was to be confirmed by miracles, and therefore it was befitting that Christ alone, and His disciples who were the bearers of His doctrine, should work miracles. Hence of John the Baptist it is written (Jo. x, 41) that he *did no sign*; that is, in order that all might fix their attention on Christ. As to the use of prophecy, it is clear that she had it, from the canticle spoken by her: *My soul doth magnify the Lord*. (Luke, i. 46)

⁴³ *Ineffabilis Deus*, P.D.M., pp. 19-20.

⁴⁴ Leo XIII, *Magnae Dei Matris*, P.D.M., pp. 69-70.--The passage quoted in the text is from St. Thomas' *Super Salutatione angelica* 'Ave Maria.'

⁴⁵ *Ia-IIae*, qu. 112, a. 1.

efficiently.”⁴⁶ Nevertheless, “it is proper to Christ as man to be the Redeemer immediately,” though not principally, for it is His blood and bodily life which were the price he paid for our redemption.⁴⁷ Now the Person of Christ, in His Divinity, could not be an instrument in any sense, for it belongs to the very nature of an instrument to move *qua* moved: *movens motum*. We must note, however, that while

the humanity of Christ is the instrument of the Godhead, [it is] not, indeed, an inanimate instrument, which nowise acts, but is merely acted upon; but is merely acted upon; but an instrument animated by a rational soul, which is so acted upon as to act.⁴⁸

But the very person of Mary, being a mere creature, can be such an instrumental cause, that is, a living, rational instrument, which is not only moved, but also moves itself by its will, freely acting for a purpose, in subjection to the principal agent--as when a man is so acted upon by the Holy Ghost that he also acts himself, insofar as he has a free will.⁴⁹

Hence, just as the Virgin Mary’s consent to become the Mother of the Savior was an “actus singularis personae in multitudinis salutem redundans,” so was her act of sacrifice and Compassion on Calvary. Thanks to this share in the act of universal redemption, not only human nature, in the Person of Christ, but a mere human person too, while dependent on Him, was a cause of man’s salvation.

The sorrowful Virgin took part in the work of redemption along with Jesus Christ; and, being made the Mother of mankind, she took into her arms the children entrusted to her by the testament, as it were, of divine charity, and she protects them with the greatest love.⁵⁰

THE SUBORDINATION OF MARY’S UNIVERSAL CAUSALITY TO THAT OF CHRIST

There is no point in trying to evade the difficulty which is frequently raised at this juncture, by both Catholic and Protestant authors--though to the former it is rather a question of understanding the *how* than of contesting the fact. It is a real one, and should be faced squarely. How could Mary be the Coredemptrix when she too was in need of redemption? There is no shying away from the plainly stated truth: *For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus.* (I Tim. ii. 5) *Furthermore, it is by one offering [that] He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.* (Hebr. x. 14)

Christ has grace fully in every respect: viz. its totality and perfection, understood as

⁴⁶ *Illa Pars*, qu. 48, a. 6, c.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, a. 5, c.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, q. 7, a. 1, ad. 3.

⁴⁹ *Ia IIae*, q. 68, a. 3, ad 2.

⁵⁰ Pius XI, *Explorata res*. See also the text of Benedict XV, cited below, in note 72

regards both intensive quantity--which is none other than the maximum of quality⁵¹--and power. He has the fullness of grace as regards intensive quantity, since, by reason of the hypostatic union and of His mission, He has as much grace as can be had.⁵² Likewise, as regards the fullness of power, "grace was bestowed on Him, as upon a universal principle in the genus of such as have grace." Now, whatever is first in any genus, is principle and cause of all that is contained within that genus. "Hence the [fullness of grace as to power] is seen in Christ inasmuch as His grace extends to all the effects of grace . . ."⁵³

From this it is plain that grace could not be in Mary as fully as it can be "on the part of grace itself"; nor can she be a universal cause of all that is contained within its genus. This is proper to Christ, in virtue of the hypostatic union upon which His habitual grace follows "as a natural property." But this does not prevent the relative fullness of Mary's grace from extending to each and every one, except to her Son Himself.

Two distinctions must be called to mind, in this connection. The first distinction was already implicit in the Constitution of Alexander VII, *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*, of December 7, 1661. The passage is quoted in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*. We refer to the belief as expressed in the following terms: "Beatissimam Virginem, *praeveniente* scilicet Spiritus Sancti gratia, a peccato originali *praeservatam* fuisse." Now this grace should not be equated with common prevenient grace. For inasmuch as it cleanses the soul--its first effect--grace is called prevenient with respect to its second effect: the desire of the divine good; and inasmuch as it causes this desire, grace is called subsequent with respect to its first effect.⁵⁴ Now the prevenient grace which preserved the Blessed Virgin from the stain of original sin should be specified by this latter particular effect which, natural in Christ, is in Mary a unique privilege, bestowed upon her in virtue of the future merits of her Offspring, the Redeemer--whose merits are present to God in His Eternity--that she might be a Mother worthy of such a Son. As a result, Pius IX goes on to say, the Mother of God was "redeemed in a more sublime way--*sublimiori modo redempta*"; she is:

. . . the one and only daughter not of death but of life, the seed not of enmity but of

⁵¹ *Ia IIae*, qu. 52, a. 1.

⁵² *IIa Pars*, qu. 7, a. 9, c.--The translation of the *Summa* by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province renders the last words of the sentence, "puta si dicam aliquem plene habere albedinem, si habeat eam *quantumcumque nata est haberi*," by: "If he has as much of it as can naturally be in him." This is somewhat confusing inasmuch as it converts St. Thomas' argument into a vicious circle; whereas in applying the analogy to grace, he means that to have it totally and perfectly according to intensive quality is to have grace as much as it can be had, without reference to any particular subject, viz. the fullness of grace "ex parte ipsius gratiae." True enough, Christ is the only one who can have grace to this extent--*quod erat demonstrandum*. As it is shown in article 10 of the same question, the Blessed Virgin did not have the fullness of grace "ex parte ipsius gratiae," but only to the extent that she could have the fullness of it, i.e. as much as can naturally be *in her*.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ia-IIae*, qu. 111, a. 3.

grace, which [seed] by the singular providence of God has always flourished, budding from a corrupt and infected root, contrary to the settled and common laws--*praeter statas communesque leges*.⁵⁵

This grace, given her thanks to the merits of the Redeemer, preserves Mary from the common lot of man, and is therefore rightfully called *gratia praeservatrix* in a sense that is unique to her, whereas all other human persons, subjects as they are to the general law, born with a corrupt nature, are in need of healing grace, *gratia sanans*; for the corruption is already there, in the individual, and must be removed by grace. For this reason, all others first need a gratuitous strength from God in order to be healed from the infection that is already in them.⁵⁶ Hence, with respect to us, grace has first of all the character of what restores the health. Our nature is a fallen one, and is in need of being saved from a condition in which we were born and that was ours until we were baptized--not omitting the *fomes peccati* that remains. The grace that is common to all who are under the law, is in this exact sense rightly called *gratia reparatrix*. Yet grace, whether *praeservatrix* or *reparatrix*, is derived from the Redeemer.

The second distinction to be borne in mind concerns "universal cause." God alone is the *causa universalis totius entis*. Christ, in his humanity, cannot be a universal agent to such extent, neither in the order of nature nor in that of grace. By a universal agent we mean a cause which is one and extends to many; not in a confused manner, as when we say that *art* is the cause of the house, but in a determinate fashion, as a single art which could produce the particular effects of diverse arts. In the natural order, no human being can achieve the status of a truly universal agent. The reason is that our general knowledge is confused; e.g., the concept *animal* does not represent in their distinction and diversity the things of which animal can be said--such as horse, man, this rabbit, etc. And this again is due to the abstractive nature of our reason. But the separated substances all have means of knowing, intelligible species, that are universal *in repraesentando*; somewhat as if in our general concept *animal* were represented, at the same time and distinctly, all the kinds of animals and each one that exists. Because a purely spiritual substance, viz. an angel, does have species that are universal in representation, such an agent can be a universal *in causando*, though always dependent on something already given--as the sculptor on the stone.

Now, according to his degree of specific perfection one angel has intelligible species that are more universal and distinct than those of another, and can therefore be more universal in his agency--in the manner in which the direction by the general manager of a factory extends to more persons and works than the direction by the head of one department. This comparison, however, is most inadequate, because a truly universal cause is, at the same time, more cause of the particular effect than the particular cause. The comparison is nearer to the truth when we

⁵⁵ *Ineffabilis Deus*. We have followed for this text the translation of *Official documents connected with the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception . . .*, Baltimore, Murphy & Co., 1855, p. 84. Cp. P.D.M., p. 20.

⁵⁶ *Ia-IIae*, qu. 109, a. 2, c.

consider the example of a worker who makes, as directed, this particular part of a machine without knowing how it fits in with other parts, what its function is in the whole, and what is the purpose of the whole that requires the parts to be such and such; whereas those who planned this kind of part and that, would know better what the particular worker is making than the latter does himself. The comparison fails, however, inasmuch as the former do not actually *make, hic et nunc*, this particular part to be this *kind* of part in *this* thing.

The angelic hierarchies, and the orders within each of them, are distinguished according to degrees of universal agency in the order of divine government by means of subordinate causes.⁵⁷ What should be pointed out, as relevant to the present subject, is that a more universal and primary cause attains the proper effect of a particular cause with greater force (*vehementius*) and intensity than the particular cause itself; nevertheless, the more universal cause does not render superfluous a less universal cause extending to an effect that is the same in number. Otherwise, as some believed, only God would be the agent cause of anything that comes about.⁵⁸

The reason for divine government by subordinate causes--which is confined to the order of execution--is to be found in the very nature of the good as *diffusivum sui*. For whatever God produces is for the sake of manifesting His own goodness.

Now it is a greater perfection for a thing to be good in itself and also the cause of goodness in others, than only to be good in itself. Therefore God so governs things that He makes some of them to be causes of others in government; as a master, who not only imparts knowledge to his pupils, but gives also the faculty of teaching others.⁵⁹

In other words,

if no creature exercises an action for the production of an effect, much is detracted from the perfection of the creature; because it is due to the abundance of its perfection that a thing is able to communicate to another the perfection that it has. Therefore [the opinion that no creature has an active part in the production of things] detracts from the divine power.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *Ia Pars*, qu. 108.--We realize that most modern Scholastics tend to ignore or even reject (e.g. the late Father Joseph Gredt) the reality of created universal agency. This attitude is modern inasmuch as it is in keeping with the neglect, or denial, of the very idea of "good" and its proper causality; and with the consequent assumption that a scientific explanation of whatever comes about should proceed "ex causis prioribus in esse, quae sunt movens et materia," inasmuch as with respect to future events their necessity is *a priori*. (Cf. St. Thomas, *In II Phys.*, lect. 12-15).

⁵⁸ On this error, and for its refutation, see *Contra Gentiles III*, cc. 69, 70 77).

⁵⁹ *Ia Pars*, q. 103, a. 6, c.

⁶⁰ *Contra Gentiles III*, c. 69. For quotations from this book we use the translation of *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Anton Pegis, Random House, N. Y., vol. II.

Furthermore,

it is better that the good bestowed on someone should be common to many than that it should be proper to one; since *the common good is always considered more godlike than the good of one only*. But the good of one becomes common to many if it flows from the one to the others, and this can be only when the one, by its own action, communicates it to them; but if it has not the power to transmit it to others, that good remains its own property. Accordingly, God communicated His goodness to His creatures in such wise that one thing can communicate to another the good it has received. Therefore it is derogatory to the divine goodness to deny to things their proper operations. Again, to take order away from creatures is to deny them the best thing they have, because though each one is good in itself, together they are very good because of the order of the universe; for the whole is always better than the parts, and is their end. Now if we take away action from things, the order among things is withdrawn; because things differing in nature are not bound together in the unity of order, except through the fact that some are active and some passive. Therefore it is unfitting to say that things have not their proper actions.⁶¹

A last point to be noted is that the effect of the most universal agent and the effect of a less universal cause may be numerically one with that of a particular cause, such as *this* man or *this* tree; each agent attaining in its own mode the same effect--the more deeply according as the agent is a cause less restricted to this particular effect.⁶²

. . . The action of the lower agent must not only proceed from the lower agent through the agent's own power, but also through the power of all the higher agents, for it acts by the power of them all. Now just as the lowest agent is found to be immediately active, so the power of the first agent is found to be immediate in the production of the effect; because the power of the lowest agent does not of itself produce this effect, but by the power of the proximate higher agent, and this by the power of a yet higher agent, so that the power of the supreme agent is found to produce the effects of itself, as though it were the immediate cause, as may be seen in the principles of demonstration, the first of which is immediate. Accordingly, just as it is not unreasonable that one action be

⁶¹*Ibid.*--In view of the objection that we have recourse to intermediaries when we ourselves cannot perform a task alone, as the head of a state, in need of ministers; whereas God does not need such help, St. Thomas repeats that divine providence "governs things inferior by things superior, not on account of any defect in His powers, but by reason of the abundance of His goodness; so that the dignity of causality is imparted even to creatures." (*Ia Pars*, qu. 22, a. 3, c.)--Hence the respect in which God's government by intermediaries differs from that of a king. "It pertains to a king's dignity to have ministers who execute his providence. But the fact that he has not the plan of those things which are done by them arises from a deficiency in himself. For every operative science is the more perfect, the more it considers the particular things with which its action is concerned." (*Ibid.*, ad 1)--Nevertheless, "that an earthly king should have ministers to execute his laws is a sign not only of his being imperfect, but also of his dignity; because by the ordering of ministers the kingly power is brought into greater evidence." (*Ia Pars*, qu. 103, a. 6, ad 3).

⁶² *Ia Pars*, qu. 104, a. 1; *Contra Gentiles III*, c. 65; *Q. D. de Potentia*, qu. 3, a. 7; qu. 5, a. 1.

produced by an agent and by the power of that agent, so it is not unreasonable that the same effect be produced by the inferior agent and by God, and by both immediately, though in a different way. It is also evident that there is nothing superfluous if a natural thing produce its proper effect and God also produce it, since a natural thing does not produce it except by God's power. Nor is it superfluous, if God can produce all natural effects by Himself, that they should be produced by certain other causes, because this is not owing to the insufficiency of His power, but to the immensity of His goodness, by which it was His will to communicate His likeness to things not only in the point of their being, but also in the point of their being causes of other things. For it is in these two ways that all creatures in common have the divine likeness bestowed on them, as we proved above.--In this way, too, the beauty of order is made evident in creatures. It is also clear that the same effect is ascribed to a natural cause and to God not as though part were effected by God and part by the natural agent; but the whole effect proceeds from each, yet in different ways, just as the whole of one and the same effect is ascribed to the instrument, and again the whole is ascribed to the principal agent.⁶³

Let us now apply these distinctions.--The redeeming grace of Christ has a twofold effect, one of which is proper to Mary, who, conceived Immaculate, is above the common law. *Thou shalt not die: for this law was not made for thee, but for all the others.* (Esther xv. 13). Redeemed in a fashion "more sublime," she "*came forth from the mouth of the Most High* (Ecclus. xxiv. 5) entirely perfect."⁶⁴ From her very Conception she was confirmed (I Cor. v. 7) her grace, in her initial sanctification, was already, as Suarez suggested, "intensively more perfect than the supreme grace in which the blessed angels and men have attained their end."⁶⁵ The other effect is common to all who are under the law.

Mary's habitual grace is, indeed, a grace of redemption, merited by her Son. Yet it differs from our own by the scope of its purpose: namely, that she be a worthy mother of the Savior Himself, highest glory in all creatures.

Now the Blessed Virgin did not conceive the eternal Son of God merely in order that He

⁶³ *Contra Gentiles III*, c. 70.

⁶⁴ *Ineffabilis Deus, P.D.M.*, c. 70.

⁶⁵ Suarez, *In Illam Partem*, qu. 27, disp. 4, sect. 1, n. 4 (edit. Vives) t. 19, p. 57: "Quarto addo, pium et verisimile esse credere gratiam Virginis in prima sanctificatione intensiorem fuisse quam supremam gratiam, in qua consummantur Angeli et homines. Solet ad hanc veritatem accommodari illud Ps. 86: *Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis*, quia fundamenat sanctitatis Virginis posita fuerunt ubi alii Sancti consummantur: *Quia diligit Dominus portas Sion, super omnia tabernacula Jacob*; neque mirum, *quia Altissimus, qui illam fundavit, in ea factus est home*; . . ." Regarding this opinion Suarez points out, further on, against Cajetan, that St. Thomas refers Mary's grace to "the state for which God had chosen her, i.e. to be the mother of His Only-begotten Son." This places her above, and apart from, all other created persons.

might be made man, taking His human nature from her, but also in order that by means of the nature assumed from her He might be the Redeemer of men.⁶⁶

Just as Mary, having conceived of the Holy Ghost, and giving birth to the Son of the Eternal Father, attains (*attigit*) to the hypostatic union, so her habitual grace was ordained to the end that she might be a worthy dwelling place of the Word Incarnate, the Savior of all mankind. For this reason, her habitual grace belongs, as we saw, to the hypostatic order. Hence, it is not only the Divine Motherhood as such that sets her apart from all others; but even her habitual grace, considered on the part of its subject, as connatural to the Mother of the Redeemer, is above that which is given to those who are under the common law, i.e. each and everyone excepting the Son and the Mother.

Christ, then, is a universal principle with respect to every grace bestowed upon the human race because of His merits: the plenitude of grace that is proper to Mary, and the grace which is common to all under the law, viz. of both preservative and reparative grace. And by this may be defined the universal causality that is proper to Him, even according to His humanity, extending as it does to graces of such widely different modes. First, according to a priority of nature, Christ merits the singular grace of Mary--"*sublimiori modo redempta*"--in virtue of which she alone, of all created persons, belongs, even as to habitual grace, to the hypostatic order, in which the entire order of redemption has its root. The words *Ego sum radix*, are attributed to both Christ and Mary. Secondly, His meritorious action extends simultaneously to the grace of all who are under the common law.

Now there is nothing to prevent Mary from being, in virtue of her singular plenitude of grace, a universal principle with regard to common grace, which is not of the hypostatic order but presupposes it. By the choice of Mary to be his Mother, and bestowing upon her, *de congruo*, such fullness of grace, Christ assimilates the Blessed Virgin to Himself, in the hypostatic order, as regards both nature and grace.

Hence it is the clear and unanimous opinion of the Fathers that the most glorious Virgin, for whom "He who is mighty has done great things," was resplendent with such an abundance of heavenly gifts, with such a fullness of grace and with such innocence, that she is an unspeakable miracle of God--indeed, the crown of all miracles and truly the worthy Mother of God; that she approaches as near to God Himself as is possible for a created being; and that she is above all men and angels in glory.

As a result, her greatness is such that only God can know fully the "sublimissima Dei matris dignitas."

Above all creatures did God so love her that truly in her was the Father well pleased with singular delight. Wherefore, far above all the angels and all the saints, so wondrously

⁶⁶ St. Pius X, *Ad diem illum*, P.D.M., p. 139.

did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of His divinity that this Mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot even imagine any thing greater, and which, outside of God, no mind can succeed in fully comprehending. And indeed it was by all means fitting that so wonderful a mother should be ever resplendent with the glory of most sublime holiness and so *absolutely free from all taint of original sin that she would triumph over the ancient serpent*.⁶⁷

In other words, the Son of God assimilated Mary so faithfully to Himself, in nature and in grace, not merely for her sake in view of His own dignity, but also in view of His mission as Redeemer. *Full of grace*, she is Mother of *Jesus*: the Savior. As near “to God Himself as is possible for a created being,” she approaches, in that measure, the source of all good and mercy, from which she--”in qua totius boni posuit [Deus] plenitudinem”--⁶⁸ derives all that she is, all that she has, and all that she does even as to its very mode. Now, if such is her perfection, it is entirely in keeping with the divine rule, that her goodness should overflow into others, to all who, born in sin, are in need of spiritual regeneration. And this demonstrates the superabundant fecundity of God’s own Goodness.

Wherefore in the same holy bosom of His most chaste Mother, Christ took to Himself flesh, and united to Himself the spiritual body formed by those who were to believe in him. Hence Mary, carrying the Savior within her, may be said to have also carried all those whose life was contained in the life of the Savior. Therefore all who are united to Christ, and as the Apostle says, are *members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, have issued from the womb of Mary like a body united to its head. Hence, in a spiritual and mystical fashion, we are all children of Mary, and she is Mother of us all; “the Mother spiritually indeed, but truly the Mother of the members of Christ, who we are.”⁶⁹

It is in virtue of such an incomparable assimilation to Christ that Mary can be a worthy principle of reparative grace in us. For, once established in the hypostatic order to that fullness, there seems to be no reason why she could not merit *de condigno*, with her Son, in dependence upon Him, all graces for those who are beneath the common law.⁷⁰ In other words, when we

⁶⁷ *Ineffabilis Deus*, P.D.M., pp. 19-20; p. 10.

⁶⁸ Leo XIII, *Supremi Apostolatus*.

⁶⁹ St. Pius X, *Ad diem illum*, P.D.M., p. 139.--The quotation at the end of this passage is from St. Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, c. 6.

⁷⁰ Leo XIII, in his Encyclical Letter *Magnae Dei Matris*, adds his authority to the following passage from St. Thomas’ *Expositio super Salutatione angelica*: “It is a great thing in any saint to have grace sufficient for the salvation of many souls; but to have enough to suffice for the salvation of everybody in the world, is the greatest of all; and this is found in Christ and in the Blessed Virgin.” (P.D.M., pp. 69-70) Now, if the grace is “sufficient for the salvation of everybody in the world,” whoever possesses that grace is also a free and sufficient cause--though dependent--with regard to “the salvation of everybody in the world.” To be such a cause is proper to Christ and to Mary. In this she differs from all other saints taken together,

refer our salvation to the remote principle of Mary's own universal causality--namely God who, in virtue of the merits of Christ, bestowed upon her, *de congruo*, the singular privilege of such fullness of grace--we say that she merited our redemption *de congruo*. But if we refer our salvation to the proximate cause, i.e., to Mary as regards the state in which she was established and wholly confirmed in the good, by way of congruous privilege, it seems we ought to say that--dependent on her Son, as he Compassion on His Passion--she merited with Christ our redemption *de condigno*.⁷¹

She suffered and almost died with her suffering and dying Son; for the salvation of mankind, she renounced her mother's rights over Him; to appease the divine justice--insofar as this depended on her--she sacrificed her Son; hence it can rightfully be said that, together with Christ, she redeemed the human race.⁷²

It is sometimes objected that Mary's cooperation would divide the redeeming act of Christ, which is contrary to the *one offering*, taught by St. Paul. (Hebr. x. 14) This would be true enough if Christ acted in the mode of a particular cause, whose agency is divided according to the multiplicity of its effects. But just as an intelligible species that is universal in representation is in no way divided by the specific or numerical diversity of its objects, neither is the action of a universal cause divided by the diversity of its effects--not even when the latter are universal agents in their turn.⁷³ Nor does the agency of the subordinate universal cause follow upon that

quasi genere.

⁷¹The well-known text of St. Pius X does not seem to present any difficulty in this matter: ". . . She merits, as the expression is, *de congruo* what Christ merits *de condigno* . . ." (*Ad diem illum, P.D.M.*, p. 141) For Christ, "by His nature is the Mediator between God and man." (*Ibid.*, p. 140). In other words, Mary does not share in mediation by her Motherhood considered in itself and apart from the fullness of grace that is hers by privilege, except in a remote way inasmuch as she "is in truth and by nature the Mother of Christ." (*Illa Pars*, qu. 5 a. 3, c.) Yet, by reason of the singular grace bestowed upon her without absolute necessity, but only *de congruo* by a special mercy of the Almighty, she can, on this condition and in virtue of what the theologians call "necessitas immutabilitatis" (*De Verit.*, qu. 23, a. 4, ad 1), merit for us in justice, i.e., *de condigno*.

⁷²"Ita cum Filio patiente et moriente passa est et paene commortua, sic maternam Filium iura pro hominum salute abdicavit placandaeque iustitiae, quantum ad se pertinebat, Filium immolavit, ut dici merito queat Ipsam cum Christo humanum genus redemisse." Benedict XV, *Inter Sodalicia*. Our translation of *paene commortua* by "almost died with . . ." could be misleading, if interpreted to mean literally that Mary was actually near death. The meaning intended seems to be--*salvo meliori iudicio*--that in her Compassion she willingly renounced the good of her temporal life, in such wise that the merit was the same as if God had permitted her to die.

⁷³The now current distinction between "objective" and "subjective" redemption, tends to favor an otherwise already widespread confusion of what is universal *in repraesentando*, or *in causando*, with what is universal *in praedicando* or *in essendo* (as opposed to *in essendo*). E.g., it is sometimes said that Christ, during His life on earth, merited our salvation in a "global" way, as when a man stores up wares with only a general idea of those to whom they are to be allotted; as if the treasury of graces were like a general store-house, whose goods are unlabeled and the addresses still undetermined. This is all wrong in as much as it implies that the act of distribution and application, by means of the sacraments, is the first

of the higher in a succession of time.

Finally, we must consider the opinion of those who, distinguishing between the private person of Mary and her *persona publica*, suggest that she was pre-redeemed and sanctified by the grace of Christ in her private person; but that she was coredemptrix only in her social person, in which respect she is not, they claim, dependent on the influence of the grace of Christ, but of the grace of God, directly. It follows that, in this respect, her causality would not be subordinate to that of Christ, but coordinated with it. But it is difficult to see how such a position can be reconciled with the *one offering* by which Christ *has perfected forever those who are sanctified*. Such an opinion divides the Order of Redemption at its very head.

And why should the grace of a private person and that of the *persona publica* be distinct any more than in notion? To the question whether the grace of Christ, as Head of the Church, is the same as His grace inasmuch as He is an individual man, St. Thomas replies:

Since everything acts inasmuch as it is a being in act, it must be the same act whereby it is in act and whereby it acts, as it is the same heat whereby fire is hot and whereby it heats. Yet not every act whereby anything is in act suffices for its being the principle of acting upon others. For since the agent is nobler than the patient, as Augustine says (*Gen. ad lit.* xii. 16) and the Philosopher (*De Anima*, iii. 19), the agent must act on others by reason of a certain preeminence. Now it was said above, grace was received by the Soul of Christ in the highest way; and therefore from this preeminence of grace which He received, it is from Him that this grace is bestowed on others,—and this belongs to the nature of the head. Hence the personal grace, whereby the soul of Christ is justified, is essentially the same as His grace, as He is the Head of the Church, and justifies others; but they are distinct in notion.⁷⁴

Furthermore, because the personal grace of Christ and the grace which overflows to others are essentially the same, the Mystical Body of Christ is also more one and divine.

. . . Grace was in Christ not merely as in an individual, but also as in the Head of the whole Church, to Whom all are united, as members to a head, who constitute one mystical person. And hence it is that Christ's merit extends to others inasmuch as they are His members; even as in a man the action of the head reaches in a manner to all his

cause of distinction; as if grace received thereby a determination which the universal cause did not provide. The lack of determination is on the part of the recipient and its particular cause; not on the part of the universal agency inasmuch as it is universal *in causando*. In other words, the terminology "objective" and "subjective" redemption lends itself all too readily to Father Th. De Regnon's understanding of universal causality in his *Métaphysique des causes* (Paris, 1886). What it should mean is the distinction between Christ's Passion as a "universalis causa salutis," and the application of this universal cause to each in particular by means of the sacraments—the "the remedia quibus universalis causae virtus pertingit ad homines." (*Contra Gentiles* IV, cc 53-54; *IIIa Pars*, q. 49, a. 1, ad 4).

⁷⁴ *IIIa Pars*, q. 8, a. 5, c.

members, since it perceives not merely for itself alone, but for all members.⁷⁵

Now Mary's singular plenitude of grace, bestowed upon her in virtue of the merits of her Son, sanctifies her own person, but in such a preeminent way that, essentially the same, her grace overflows to others. This personal preeminence does not set the Mother apart from her Son, as if she were henceforth a first principle all by herself, acting in extrinsic coordination with Him--*quasi duo trahentes navim*. One the contrary, in her very difference as Mother and Spouse, it renders her more perfectly subordinate to His purpose, and more one with Him in His redeeming action. The nature of this subordination is illustrated by the analogies, quoted from St. Bernard, in the Encyclical Letter *Ad diem illum* (1904) in which St. Pius X commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception:

But Mary, as St. Bernard justly remarks, is the "channel" or, if you will, that connecting portion by which the body is joined to the head and by which the head exerts its power and its virtue: "For she is the neck of our Head by which He communicates to His Mystical Body all spiritual gifts."⁷⁶

In this way, the Order of Redemption is itself more perfect and one; just as God's creation in general is more assimilated to Him when a thing is able to communicate to another the perfection that it has, and especially when

the good of one becomes common to many [flowing] from the one to the others, and this can be only when the one, by its own action, communicates it to them; but if it has not the power to transmit it to others, that good remains its own property.⁷⁷

That God might have governed all without subordinate universal causes, does not imply that we can behave as if He actually does.

Thanks to the person of Mary, the dignity of every human person graced by God is raised in a most merciful way, such as would not have been without her. This is in keeping with God's will to renew this dignity to the utmost. Now such is indeed the case when man owes his redemption not only to the God-man, but to a human person as well: deriving all grace from

the new Eve, who, although subject to the new Adam, is most intimately associated with Him in that struggle against the infernal foe which, as foretold in the *protoevangelium*, finally resulted in that most complete victory over the sin and death which are always associated in the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, q. 19, a. 4, c.--"For, just as the natural body is one, though made up of diverse members, so the whole Church, Christ's mystic body, is reckoned as one person with its head, which is Christ." (*Ibid.*, q. 49, a. 1, c.)

⁷⁶ *P.D.M.*, pp. 140-141.

⁷⁷ *Contra Gentiles III*, c. 69.

⁷⁸ Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, *P.D.M.*, p. 237.

Now that we have seen, in general, what is meant by Mary's Coredemption, it remains to be shown more concretely how the fullness of grace, to the extent of Immaculate Conception, is the proximate, formal and perfecting cause of that "arctissima conjunctio" between the new Adam and the person who was chosen as a *help like unto himself*, the second Eve, as well as of the "perpetual enmity between her and the serpent, spoken of from the earliest tradition down to the time of the solemn definition of the Immaculate Conception."⁷⁹ For it was in virtue of this most intimate union that Mary could take part, as she did, in the struggle of her Son, *to crush the head of the Serpent*, and share in the new Adam's glorious triumph by her Assumption. However, as we have quoted from both *Ineffabilis Deus* and *Fulgens Corona*, Mary's Divine Motherhood is the *sedes* and *fons* of all her privileges and graces. Hence, before considering in particular the Immaculate Conception as achieving, with regard to the final cause of the Incarnation, the fullest possible assimilation between the new Adam and the second Eve, we must note that (as remains to be shown in the following chapter) in virtue of the *Divine Motherhood* there already exists in the entitative order, by priority of nature, a unique assimilation between the Virgin and her only-begotten Son--an assimilation which is the basic prerequisite of all the privileges and graces bestowed upon Mary as Mother of God. It is in virtue of this natural assimilation, presupposed to the Immaculate Conception as nature is to grace, that the evil inflicted upon the Son affected the Mother as a personal one--as a *malum proprium*. Then we can show, specifically, that because of her Immaculate Conception, Mary's assimilation to the Son *qua* Redeemer, was such that she could take an active, universally meritorious part, in the Redemption of all who are under the general law.

⁷⁹*Fulgens Corona, P.D.M.*, p. 254.

II

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND THE FULLNESS OF MARY'S MOTHERHOOD WITH RESPECT TO THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION

A DIVINE PERSON IS THE IMAGE OF MARY

As Mother of God, Mary does not derive her greatness merely from the excellence of Christ's human nature considered in itself, but from the fact that the temporal generation of the Son of God must be attributed to the Divine Person. For "nativity is attributed to the person or hypostasis as to the proper subject of being born, but not to the nature."⁸⁰ For the Virgin to be *Dei Genitrix*, requires that the Divine Person should proceed from her "by way of similitude in the same specific nature."⁸¹ Now that which proceeds from another, like to it in species, has the nature of true image.⁸² But Christ was conceived of the Virgin Mary "unto likeness of species. For this reason He is called her Son."⁸³ In other words, in His temporal birth, the Word of the Father proceeds as the image of Mary who thereby has the nature of "origo Dei."⁸⁴

We must note, then, that the Word, in His humanity, is not simply "in the image" of the Mother, but *He* is her image, just as He is her Son. the reason for this is that Christ is univocally a man⁸⁵ and proceeds by way of generation *in quarto modo dicendi per se*--that is, in the same mode in which, according to His Godhead, He proceeds as the image of the Father.

Furthermore, since the human nature of Christ is the term of his temporal procession, and not 'that which' is born, it is not the humanity of Christ which is the image of Mary, but the very Person of her Son, *according to* His humanity.⁸⁶ Thus, if we said, absolutely speaking, that the Blessed Virgin is the origin of Christ's human nature formally as the *subject* of generation, we could not say that she is true Mother of God. In the same way, if we said that it is the human nature of Christ which is the image of Mary, and not the Person Himself, according to His humanity, the Son of the Eternal Father would not be the Offspring of Mary, nor would God have

⁸⁰ *Illa Pars*, q. 35, a. 1, c.

⁸¹ *Ia Pars*, q. 27, a. 2, c.

⁸² *Ibid.*, q. 35, a. 1, c.

⁸³ *Illa Pars*, q. 32, a. 3, ad. 1.

⁸⁴ Cf. St. Albert, *Mariale*, q. 145, (edit. Borgnet) t. 37, p. 206a (It has recently been shown that St. Albert is not the author of this work, which nevertheless enjoys great authority, as we noted in *La Piété du Fils*, pp. xi-xii.)

⁸⁵ *Illa Pars*, q. 2, a. 5, c.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, q. 35, a. 4, c.

been *born* man.

It follows, therefore, that Mary, in generating the Son of the Father--*Deum verum de Deo vero*--assimilates Him to herself according to the nature in which He proceeds from her. For assimilation is of the very notion of generation: *assimilatio viventis a principio vivente conjuncto*; and it is precisely 'what proceeds' that is assimilated to its origin, with respect to which whatever proceeds by way of similitude has the nature of image.

THE DIVINE MOTHERHOOD AS A NATURAL BASIS OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

The kind of assimilation we have just considered is provided by the operation of nature, inasmuch as "the Blessed Virgin Mary is in truth and by nature the Mother of Christ."⁸⁷ We must now return to this assimilation, and consider it with regard to the order of action, as a natural basis of that similitude which is the *per se* cause of friendship.⁸⁸ For, since the child is the image of the parent, nature provides the basis for a friendship that is "abiding and excellent."⁸⁹ It is, more particularly, the love of a mother for her child that is the most natural and striking expression of what is also most perfect in friendship, namely loving rather than being loved.⁹⁰ Aristotle shows that it is by referring to motherly love that the basic traits of friendship are defined, such as to grieve and rejoice with one's friend--"and this too is found in mothers most of all."⁹¹

For parents love their children as being a part of themselves, and children their parents as being something originating from them. . . Mothers love more than fathers do. Parents, then, love their children as themselves (for their issue are by virtue of their separate existence a sort of other selves), while children love their parents as being born of them, and brothers love each other as being born of the same parents; for their identity with them makes them identical with each other (which is the reason why people talk of the 'same blood,' 'the same stock,' and so on). they are, therefore, in a sense the same thing, though in separate individuals.⁹²

We should not fail to note that, even from this point of view, the friendship between the Virgin, as "vera naturalis mater," and her Son, is unique inasmuch as Mary gave free consent to become mother of the One whose Name and purpose she knew, thus conforming to the rule: "We must not make a man our friend against his will."⁹³

⁸⁷ *Illa Pars*, q. 35, a. 3, c.

⁸⁸ St. Thomas, *In VIII Ethicor.*, lect. 4, n. 1588.

⁸⁹ "When children render to parents what they ought to render to those who brought them into the world, and parents render what they should to their children, the friendship of such persons will be abiding and excellent." Aristotle *Ethics*, VIII, c. 7, 1158 b 20.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, c. 8, 1159 a 25.

⁹¹ *Ethics IX*, c. 4, 1166a.

⁹² *Ibid.*, VIII, c. 12, 1161 b 25

⁹³ *Ibid.*, c. 13, 1163 a.

THE DIVINE MOTHERHOOD AS THE REASON WHY EVIL INFLICTED UPON GOD CAN AFFECT A HUMAN PERSON AS A "MALUM PROPRIUM"

The proper object of sorrow is *one's own evil*, i.e. the evil inflicted upon one's own person--*dolor est tristitia de malo proprio*.⁹⁴ But one may sorrow for an evil that is not one's own; "and thus we have *pity*, which is sorrow for another's evil, considered, however, as one's own--*misericordia . . . est tristitia de alieno malo, inquantum tamen aestimatur ut proprium*."⁹⁵

Mercy or pity, like justice, is directed, properly speaking, towards another. It is said of the sorrow for one's own evil in a figurative way only, as when we speak of justice towards oneself, according as a man is considered to have various parts, as in the text: *Have pity on thy own soul, pleasing God*. (Ecclus. xxx. 24) In fact, as Aristotle observes, our pity extends only to people who are not very closely related to us.⁹⁶ However, "in the case of those persons who are so closely united to us, as to be part of ourselves, such as our children or our parents, we do not pity their distress, but suffer [dolemus] as for our own sores."⁹⁷

THE UNION OF GRACE BETWEEN THE SON OF GOD AND HIS MOTHER

As the true natural Mother of Christ, Mary, in her very person, is as near to God as can be in the order of nature. Yet, as St. Augustine says, "a *mary* is more blessed in receiving the faith of Christ, than in conceiving the flesh of Christ. . . Her nearness as a Mother would have been of no profit to Mary, had she not borne Christ in her heart after a more blessed manner than in her flesh."⁹⁸ We should note here, that all graces and privileges bestowed upon Mary are proportioned to her Motherhood of the Savior. The fulness of grace was hers "*ut esset propinquissima auctori gratiae*--in order to be as near as possible to the Author of grace, and to receive within her Him Who is full of all grace; so that by bringing Him forth, she, in a manner, might dispense grace to all."⁹⁹

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 13, 1163 a.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*,--Cf. "The Compassion of the Virgin-Mother, and the Prophecy of Simeon," *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 1950, vol. VI, n. 2, pp. 314-327.

⁹⁶ "The people we pity are: those whom we know, if only they are not very closely related to us--in that case we feel about them as if we were in danger ourselves. For this reason Amasis did not weep, they say, at the sight of his son being led to death, but did weep when he saw his friend begging: the latter sight was pitiful, the former terrible, and the terrible is different from the pitiful; it tends to cast out pity, and often helps to produce the opposite of pity." *Rhetoric II*, c. 8, 1386 a 15. W. R. Roberts transl.

⁹⁷ *Illa-Ilae*, q. 30, a. 1, ad 2.--The same kind of union in sorrow is true of husband and wife, as St. Thomas points out elsewhere, for they too are part of one another, even in virtue of the sole "indissolubilis conjunctio animorum." This union in sorrow applies to Christ and Mary as new Adam and second Eve.

⁹⁸ *De Sancta virginitate*, c. 3. Quoted by St. Thomas, *Illa Pars*, q. 30, a. 1, c.

⁹⁹ *Illa Pars*, q. 27, a. 5, c.

Unlike that of any other saint, the grace of Mary was not confined to her soul. "It is a great thing indeed to have so much grace that it sanctifies the soul. But the soul of the Blessed Virgin was so replete that grace overflowed from her soul into her flesh, in order to conceive from it the Son of God. . . *Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son . . . the Son of the Most High.*" (Luke, i. 31)¹⁰⁰

In Christ we distinguish the grace of union--ordained as it is to His *esse personale*--from His habitual grace, which is both personal and ordained to others. Likewise, in Mary, we distinguish the grace of Divine Motherhood from her habitual grace which may, nevertheless, also be called grace of motherhood inasmuch as it is ordained to her Maternity.. But the grace of Motherhood in the first sense, is something of the physical order, of the *esse personale* of Mary herself inasmuch as in and by her nature of Mother she is a principal agent and the generating cause of her Son according to His humanity, to Whom she is referred by a real relation. And this is what St. Thomas calls the "affinitas quam habet ad Deum,"¹⁰¹ which is the basis of the cult of hyperdulia. "This affinity belongs to the Blessed Virgin alone," Cajetan adds in his commentary, "for she alone attains to the confines of the Deity by her own operation.

Now the habitual grace of Mary, which by its nature is ordained to the operations of mind and will with regard to the supernatural end, viz. God in His very Godhead, is also called grace of Motherhood because it was bestowed upon her as Mother of God, who, even in the order of nature, "ad fines deitatis . . . attigit." Thereby, her nature as a whole, soul and body, is singularly sanctified, and not just the person by reason of a part, namely the soul alone.

Grace is a participation of the Divine Nature. While singularly adapted to her person as Mother of God, Mary's sanctifying grace does not in any way divert from the final cause of grace. To the Blessed Virgin, this end is none other than union with the Godhead of the One Who is her only-begotten Son. This is entirely proper to her, inasmuch as her sanctifying grace perfects the divine Motherhood with respect to the final cause of all grace. Her grace is likewise singularly proportioned to the means designed by God for the sake of this end, viz. the mission of the Word: His birth, life, and death among us, to redeem man that, by grace, he may again be child and friend of God--a mission which she shares both as Mother and as new Eve.

MARY'S MOTHERHOOD AS THE NATURAL BASIS OF HER UNIQUE FRIENDSHIP OF VIRTUE WITH GOD

Friendship is a mutual love between persons, founded on some kind of communication. When love is based on the communication between God and man, inasmuch as He communicates to us the happiness which is proper to Him as God, it is essentially a love of

¹⁰⁰ St. Thomas, *Expositio super Salutatione angelica 'Ave Maria,' Opuscula*, (Edit. Mandonnet), t. IV, p. 458

¹⁰¹ *Ila-Ilae*, q. 103, a. 4, ad 2.

friendship--the one, "of which it is written: *God is faithful: by Whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son* [I Cor. i. 9]. The love which is based on this communication is charity: wherefore it is evident that charity is the friendship of man for God."¹⁰² But Mary, both by nature and by grace, is united to this Son as her own--to Him Who is charity by His nature.

Love, as such, is a unitive force--*amor est virtus unitiva*--¹⁰³ and friendship is one kind of love. For lack of words to express the union between friends, proverbial sayings refer to "a single soul," "another self," and "what friends have is common property."¹⁰⁴ Now charity is the friendship of man for God. Indeed the archetype of the union of charity is none other than that which exists, by nature, between the Divine Persons. *Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are. . . . That all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. . .* (John, xvii, 11, 20) This union is such that if it were to be achieved naturally between created persons, it would imply their mutual destruction.¹⁰⁵

This most intimate of unions must be had in mind when we consider Mary's Compassion--but never in separation from her nature as Mother of God and of new Eve, for while the union of grace surpasses beyond measure every natural union, it does not destroy, nor even by-pass nature, but perfects it. It is for this reason that the order to be observed in charity respects the order of nature, such as loving one's own parents more than those of another.¹⁰⁶ Likewise, the vision of God does not consume the mind of the blessed, but raises it to its highest perfection in conformity with its own nature, whereas excessive light would destroy the very organ of sight.

In the order of nature, Christ's temporal filiation, unlike the filiation of any other child of man, is wholly undivided, since, in this procession according to human nature, He is brought forth exclusively in the image of the Virgin, who is the only generating principle of His birth among us. For, though she conceived of the Holy Ghost, Christ did not proceed in the image of His active principle of generation, and in no wise should He be called the Son of the Holy Ghost.¹⁰⁷ It is because of her that the Incarnation of the Word is a generation in the strictest sense of this term. The assimilation of one human nature to another could not be more complete and undivided. Hence, the same evil that befalls her Son in His Passion, at the same time attains undivided her own person--of a passible nature. It is not as when parents share the sorrow for their child in distress.

Whatever the implications of the epithet *Woman* at the Marriage Feast of Cana, the sole

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, q. 23, a. 1, c.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, q. 25, a. 4, c.

¹⁰⁴ *Ethics*, IX, c. 8, 1168 b.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Plato, *Symposium*, the discourse of Aristophanes, 189a, et sq.; Aristotle, *Politics*, I, c. 4, 1262 b 10.

¹⁰⁶ *Ila-Ilae*, q. 26.

¹⁰⁷ *Illa Pars*, q. 32, a. 3. Although the Holy Ghost is a principle of this generation, He is not a generating principle, for the latter implies assimilation.

assertion of Christ, “*My hour has not yet come*,” (John, ii. 4) is sufficient to warrant St. Augustine’s teaching on this point, which St. Thomas makes his own.¹⁰⁸ The power to work miracles belongs to Christ’s Godhead, not to the nature He received from the Mother. St. Augustine explains that Christ will acknowledge Mary publicly as His Mother when the weakness of the nature which He owes to her shall be exhibited upon the Cross, where, at the same time, her spiritual motherhood shall be made known to all. *Behold thy Mother*. (John, xix. 27) We may understand, therefore, that the Son of Man and new Adam designed this solemn manifestation to express at once the unity between her natural motherhood with regard to Him and—owing to her fullness of grace and union with the Savior in His sacrifice—the new Eve’s spiritual fecundity with regard to us.¹⁰⁹

Mary, then, compassionated the Redeemer not only because He was her Son by nature, but immeasurably more so because to this Son of hers by nature, she was singularly united in most perfect innocence, by her grace of the hypostatic order. This means that she was one with her Son *qua* Redeemer, as a second Eve, subject to the new Adam.

In this regard, our spiritual regeneration is the fruit of Mary’s singular union with Christ in His Passion, a oneness of Passion and Compassion which could not have been without the Virgin-Mother’s “most complete innocence,” i.e. without the Immaculate Conception.

THE NOBILITY OF CHRIST’S FRIENDSHIP, AS CAUSE OF THE VIRGIN’S SHARE IN THE REDEMPTION OF MANKIND

Friendship must involve at least an equality of proportion. But justice, too, involves such a proportion. Yet there is a difference between them, for whereas justice reduces inequality to equality, the latter having the nature of a term, in friendship the equality of persons has the nature of a principle. As Aristotle points out:

Friendship and justice seem . . . to be concerned with the same objects and exhibited between the same persons. . . . And the extent of their association is the extent of their friendship, as it is the extent to which justice exists between them. And the proverb, “what friends have is common property,” expresses the truth; for friendship depends on community. . . . And the demands of justice also seem to increase with the intensity of the friendship, which implies that friendship and justice exist between the same persons and have an equal extension.¹¹⁰

There is still another point, in Aristotle’s treatise on friendship, that may be used in connection with our subject:

¹⁰⁸ St. Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium*, Tract. 8, c. 9; Tract. 119, cc. 1-3. St. Thomas, *In Joann.*, c. ii, lect 1; c. xix, lect. 4.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Mystici Corporis*, Epilogue.

¹¹⁰ *Ethics*, VIII, c. 9, 1159 b 25. (Ross transl.)

It is true of the good man too that he does many acts for the sake of his friends and his country, and if necessary dies for them; for he will throw away both wealth and honors and in general the goods that are objects of competition, gaining for himself nobility; since he would prefer a short period of intense pleasure to a long one of mild enjoyment, a twelve-month of noble action to many trivial ones. Now those who die for others doubtless attain this result; it is therefore a great prize that they choose for themselves. . . . Rightly then is he thought to be good, since he chooses nobility before all else. *But he may even give up actions to his friend; it may be nobler to become the cause of his friend's acting than to act himself.* In all the actions, therefore, that men are praised for, the good man is seen to assign to himself the greater share in what is noble. In this sense, then, as has been said, a man should be a lover of self; but in the sense in which most men are so, he ought not.¹¹¹

Because of her singular fullness of grace, Mary is the most perfect and most worthy of God's friends. *Tota pulchra es amica mea, et macula non est in te.* (Cant. iv. 7) The friendship between the Son and the Mother, between the new Adam and the second Eve, being what it is, it is entirely natural according to the doctrine quoted above, that the most Noble of friends should have become the cause of Mary's acting for the sake of His own end as Redeemer. Thus the Virgin's share, instead of detracting from the Savior's power, shows it more fully: whatever she does is performed in virtue of His friendship. And though He is the cause of His friend's acting, the Friend is truly a cause nevertheless. To underrate the proper worth of this action would amount to belittling the power and nobility of the Redeemer Himself, as well as His Wisdom in the choice and making of His most worthy friend. Thus, in bestowing upon Mary the character of a *help like unto Himself*, in causing her to act universally for the sake of His mission on earth, the Savior demonstrated His divine nobility in the mode which we recognize as proper to the perfect friend.¹¹² That is why we may say that the perfection of Christ's friendship for the Mother and new Eve--and, through her person, for all mankind--is the cause of her role as Coredemptrix.

MARY'S INITIAL SANCTIFICATION, AS ORDAINED TO THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION

The Order of Redemption is not merely a restoration of the Order in which man had originally been established. In God's plan, reaching from end to end, the old was ordained to

¹¹¹ *Op cit.*, IX, c. 8, 1169 a 15-35.

¹¹² "Et dicit [Philosophus], quod contingit quandoque quod virtuosus etiam actiones virtuosos concedit suo amico: puta si sit aliquod opus virtutis faciendum per ipsum vel alterum, *concedit quod fiat per amicum, ut ex hoc proficiat et laudetur.* Et tamen in hoc etiam accipit sibi id quod est melius. Melius est enim et magis virtuosum, quod ipse sit causa amico suo talia faciendi, quam etiam si ipse faceret: praesertim cum sibi remaneat opportunitas, alias talia vel maiora faciendi. Sic ergo patet, quod virtuosus plus sibi tribuit de bono quantum ad omnia laudabilia, et sic maxime amat seipsum." St. Thomas, *In IX Ethic.*, lect. 9 (edit. Pirotta), n. 1883.

the new; an occasion, as it were, “to complete, by a plan concealed from the centuries, the first work of His goodness by a mystery yet more wondrously hidden through the Incarnation of the Word.”¹¹³ Before time began:

the eternal Father chose and prepared for His Only-begotten Son a Mother . . . [whom] He so loved that truly in her was the Father well-pleased with singular delight. Wherefore, far above all the angels and all the saints, so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of His divinity that this Mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot even imagine anything greater, and which, outside of God, no mind can succeed in fully comprehending.¹¹⁴

In the following few lines, Pius IX states plainly the reasons why it was most fitting that such sanctity should have been conferred upon the Mother of the Redeemer:

And indeed it was by all means fitting that so wonderful a mother should be ever resplendent with the glory of the most sublime holiness and so absolutely free from all taint of original sin that she would triumph completely over the ancient serpent. To her did the Father dispose to give His Only-begotten Son--the Son whom, equal to the Father and begotten by Him, the Father loves from His heart--and to give this Son in such a way that He would be the one and same common Son of God the Father and of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was this venerable Mother whom the Son Himself chose to make His mother. And the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Son willed and brought it about that of Mary should the Son be conceived and born.¹¹⁵

The New Order did not make a clean sweep, so to speak, of the Old. Not only was the greatest good of the latter elicited from the “lamentable wretchedness” that resulted from Adam’s sin,¹¹⁶ the first Eve was the figure of the Woman, as the first Adam was the figure of the

¹¹³ *Ineffabilis Deus*, P.D.M., p. 9.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ The good that is proper to the order of Redemption, as distinguished from the state of original justice, is of the kind “which could not be elicited except from some evil, such as the good of patience which comes about from the evil of persecution, and the good of penance from the evil of fault; nor does this deny the weakness of evil with regard to the good, for such things are not elicited from evil as from a *per se* cause, but accidentally, so to speak, and materially.” St. Thomas, *Q.D. de Veritate*, q. 5, a. 4, ad 5. Evil is subject to God’s *providentia concessionis*, as distinguished from the *providentia approbationis*. (*Ibid.*, c.) *For God has shut up all in unbelief, that he may have mercy upon all.* (Rom. xi. 32) Since God does not permit any evil except inasmuch as He can ordain it to a greater good, does it not follow that we should, *as some calumniously accuse us of teaching, do evil that good may come from it?* *The condemnation of such is just.* (Rom. iii. 8) “To commit evil for the sake of good is reprehensible in man, nor can such be attributed to God. But to ordain evil to the good, is not contrary to goodness; hence, to

New. The “plan concealed from the centuries” embraces both orders even as to their proper principles: *It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself.* (Gen. ii. 18) Since our purpose, in the present chapter, is to show how the Virgin’s Immaculate Conception is the manner in which its end is achieved, the most pertinent words, in the passage just quoted from *Ineffabilis Deus*, are those of the very first sentence: “So absolutely free from all taint of original sin that she would triumph completely [*amplissimum . . . triumphum referret*] over the ancient Serpent.” Note the sequence of ideas, as the Bull goes on to say: “To her did the Father dispose to give His Only-begotten Son. . .” In other words, by reason of the Immaculate Conception, bestowed in virtue of the merits of her Son, intuited by God in His eternity, she is not only most wondrously assimilated to the Father as to the nature of generating principle with regard to the same Son, as well as to the Holy Ghost from Whom she conceives, and Who proceeds from the same Father and Son; she is there, at the very principle of the Order of Redemption, with active regard to its final cause by her ability to triumph completely over the head of all evil, and to free us from enslavement to him. The same relationship will be repeated over and again in this solemn document.¹¹⁷ “ . . . By divinely given power she utterly destroyed the force and dominion of the evil one.”¹¹⁸ “All our hope do we repose in the most Blessed Virgin--in the all fair and immaculate one who has crushed the poisonous head of the most cruel Serpent and brought salvation to the world.”

Now that we know, most explicitly, with divine certitude, that in the very first instant of her conception, Mary was already freed from every subjection to the Serpent, we see that the Order of Redemption is, universally, both more divine and human, comprising at its very root a mere human person raised to the dignity of a *help like unto* the Savior. How radically different this order would have been if, for no matter how brief a time, Mary had been subject to the hereditary fault, as St. Thomas believed, and thus under the dominion of the one whose name is *Enemy*.¹¹⁹ Though by her Motherhood she would have attained, nevertheless, to the hypostatic union, her habitual grace would not have been of the hypostatic order; the Virgin would not have been conceived a second Eve as a *help like unto* the new Adam. No human person would have been that close to Him in sanctity, at the very foundation and principle of the Order of Redemption; nor would the Woman have been so one with her seed in complete enmity against

permit evil for the sake of some good to be elicited from it, this is attributed to God.” (St. Thomas, *loc. cit.*, ad 10) The fact that the incomparable perfection of the order of Redemption presupposes the concession of an evil does not make its goodness depend upon an evil as upon a *per se* cause; on the contrary, it demonstrates the excellence of the *per se* cause, which can ordain not only good to good, but evil as well to an even greater good. This latter good owes its greater perfection not to the evil as to a *per se* cause, but wholly to the *per se* cause of the greater good that it is.

¹¹⁷ E.g., *P.D.M.*, pp. 17-18.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, *P.D.M.*, pp. 20, 26.

¹¹⁹ “Now, if at any time, the Blessed Mary were destitute of divine grace even for the briefest moment, because of contamination in her conception by the hereditary stain of sin, there would not have come between her and the Serpent that perpetual enmity spoken of from earliest tradition down to the time of the solemn definition of the Immaculate Conception, but rather a certain subjection. *Fulgens Corona*. *P.D.M.*, p. 254.

the *father of all liars*. A more merciful design towards mankind is inconceivable.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND THE UNITY OF THE ORDER OF REDEMPTION

In His Encyclical Letter *Fulgens Corona*, of September 1953, Pius XII pays heed to the accusation that, on account of the Immaculate Conception, “the Redemption by Christ was lessened, as if it did not extend to the whole race of Adam: and that, therefore, something was taken away from the office and dignity of the divine Redeemer.” To this objection, the Holy Father replies:

. . . if we carefully and thoroughly consider the matter, we easily perceive that Christ the Lord in a most perfect manner really redeemed His Mother, since it was by virtue of His merits that she was preserved by God immune from all stain of original sin. Wherefore, the infinite dignity of Jesus Christ and His office of universal redemption is not diminished or lowered by this tenet of doctrine; rather it is greatly increased.¹²⁰

But why could the Blessed Virgin not have been preserved from the stain of original sin by a grace bestowed upon her immediately by God, without dependence on the merits of Christ, as was the case of the original grace of Adam and of the angels? This might have been, but God chose otherwise. Thanks to the redeeming grace of Christ, Mary belongs, entirely and intrinsically, to the Order of Redemption. If God had chosen the other method, the Virgin would have been, in the order of grace no only alien to us but to her own Son as well. The Order of Redemption would have been divided at its very root. Mary would not have been assimilated as she is to her Son the Redeemer. This union in His Passion would not have been what it was; nor would she have been, in the strictest sense, the Mother of our spiritual regeneration. She would not have been the spouse of Christ as Eve was the spouse of Adam

The first Eve received from God her nature formed from Adam. *For Adam was formed first, then Eve*. (I Tim. ii. 13) In the order of nature, Adam was prior to Eve, though she was not his daughter. But in the order of spiritual evil, it is Eve who was first. *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and was in sin*. (Ibid., 14) Conversely, in the order of generation, the new Adam receives his human nature from the second Eve, and therein she precedes Him. But in the order of the good, namely of grace, the new Adam is prior to her, inasmuch as it is in virtue of His merits that she is preserved from the stain of the first man's sin. Thanks to this preservation, the new Adam proceeds from a wholly spotless nature. He can therefore be the more freely assimilated to her in the order of nature itself, she being an origin more worthy of the One who is her Image. The Immaculate Conception is therefore a work of supreme piety and friendship. Of *pietas*, the virtue which extends to the principles of our origination, to whom we owe homage and duty inasmuch as we are in debt towards those who

¹²⁰ *P.D.M.*, pp. 256-257.

gave us life;¹²¹ of perfect friendship, too, inasmuch as, owing to His merits, He causes Mary to assimilate Himself, as to His human nature, more entirely to her own. Here again applies the rule that it is nobler to be the cause of one's friend's acting. And this mutual assimilation--of the Mother to the Son in the order of grace, of the Son to the Mother in the order of nature--is sealed, "in a hidden way, by one and the same decree of predestination."¹²²

The Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* teaches that because of the singleness of this decree of predestination: "the very words with which the Sacred Scriptures speak of Uncreated Wisdom and set forth His eternal origin, the Church, both in the ecclesiastical offices and in the liturgy, has been wont to apply likewise to the origin of the Blessed Virgin."¹²³

Thanks to "her most excellent innocence, purity, holiness, and freedom from every stain of sin, as well as the unspeakable abundance and greatness of all heavenly graces, virtues and privileges,"¹²⁴ Mary, in her Compassion, can experience the depth of the abyss which separates the sinful creature from its Maker. For "the pain of the innocent sufferer is more intensified by reason of his innocence, in so far as he deems the hurt inflicted to be the more undeserved. Hence it is that even others are more deserving of blame if they do not compassionate him; according to Isaias, lvii. 1: *The just perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart.*"¹²⁵ Christ is the innocent victim by His very nature, even in his human nature united to the Godhead, and this makes His Passion the more intense. Now the pure of heart have a better understanding of innocence than they who themselves bear guilt. They can compassionate the one who suffers undeservedly in a manner more selfless and understanding. Hence, the Mother of God could not have been so intimately one with Her Son in His Passion had she herself not been conceived in perfect innocence, had she at some time borne guilt. Otherwise, how could she have offered her Son in perfect dignity?

Pius XII, in a text we have already quoted, states explicitly that "it was she who, *free of all personal and inherited sin*, ever most intimately united to her Son, offered Him to the Eternal Father, as well as the sacrifices of her maternal rights and motherly love, even as a new Eve, for all the children of Adam, deformed by his fall."¹²⁶

By this mode of redemption, all who are under the common law derive incomparable

¹²¹ *Ila-Ilae*, q. 101, a. 1.

¹²² *Munificentissimus Deus*, *P.D.M.*, p. 237.

¹²³ *P.D.M.*, p. 11--Even in some Christians there remains a spark of that envy to which Luther gave vent when protesting against the Church's use of *Proverbs xii* for the Epistle of the mass of the Nativity of Mary; he considered it a blasphemous lie to apply those words to Mary. "We are the equals of the Mother of God," he proclaimed, "and just as holy as she is, except that we cannot be mothers of God, as she was." Cf. Canisius, *De Maria Deipara Virgine*, Lib. I, c. 12, (edit. Ingolstadii, 1583) p. 84; *De corruptelis Verbi Dei*, c. 10, p. 121.

¹²⁴ *Ineffabilis Deus*, *P.D.M.*, p. 18.

¹²⁵ *Illa Pars*, q. 46, a. 5, ad 5.

¹²⁶ *Mystici Corporis*, Epilog.

dignity from Mary's Immaculate Conception, inasmuch as their reparative grace derives both from Christ and, subject to Him, from a human person whom God had made worthy of that share in the work of salvation.

WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON

It is more than a theological opinion that "the most holy Virgin is the Mother of all Christians, whom she bore on Mount Calvary in the supreme torments of the Redeemer."¹²⁷ The Church has made it plain that this is the very meaning of Christ's last words from the Cross: *Woman, behold thy son.* (John, xix, 27)

The mystery of Christ's immense love for us is clearly shown in the fact that the dying Savior bequeathed His Mother to His disciple John in the memorable testament: *Behold thy son.* Now in John, as the Church has constantly taught, Christ designated the whole human race, and in the first rank are they who are joined with Him by faith. It is in this sense that St. Anselm of Canterbury says: "What dignity, O Virgin, could be more highly prized than to be the Mother of those to whom Christ deigned to be Father and Brother?"

¹²⁸

The words of Christ to His Mother *Woman, behold thy son*, and to the disciple *Behold thy mother*, are therefore the formal and solemn proclamation made by God Incarnate at the consummation of His redemptive Passion, of the fact that "from this community of will and suffering between Christ and Mary 'she merited to become most worthily the reparatrix of the lost world'";¹²⁹ that "she who was bodily the Mother of our Head, became spiritually, by a new title of suffering and glory, the Mother of all His members."¹³⁰

This is, essentially, the doctrine of the Coredemption.

III

THE "PLENISSIMA GLORIFICATIO" OF MARY'S PERSON

¹²⁷ Leo XIII, '*Quamquam pluries*,' *P.D.M.*, p. 48.

¹²⁸ Leo XIII, '*Adiutricem Populi*,' *P.D.M.*, p. 102.

¹²⁹ St. Pius X, *Ad Diem illum*, *P.D.M.*, p. 140.

¹³⁰ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, Epilog.--cf. F.-M. Braun, O.P., *op. cit.*, chap. IV.

THE DEATH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Owing to the future merits of Her Son, the Virgin was “the first and especial work of God--*proprium Dei opus primum*.”¹³¹ “. . . It was fitting that she be conceived as the first-born, from whom *the first-born of every creature* would be conceived. By that fullness of grace which is proper to the Mother of God, Mary was “the one and only daughter not of death but of life, the child not of anger but of grace.” “Never in darkness but always in light,” she was exempted from the general law, having “only nature in common with us. *Thou shalt not die: for this law is not made for thee, but for all others.* (Esther xv. 13) By virtue of her Immaculate Conception and her consequent share in the work of Redemption, Mary was likewise exempted from the law of common death. According to this law:

the bodies of even the just are corrupted, and only on the last day will they be joined, each to its own glorious soul. Now God has willed that the Blessed Virgin Mary should be exempted from this general rule. She, by an entirely unique privilege, completely overcame sin by her Immaculate Conception, and as a result she was not subject to the law of remaining in the corruption of the grave, and she did not have to wait until the end of time for the redemption of her body.¹³²

The first part of the Apostolic Constitution on the Assumption shows that, in the mind of the faithful as well as in fact, these two privileges are “most closely bound to one another--*arctissime . . . inter se connectuntur*.”¹³³ The reason for this most intimate bond has been somewhat simplified by those who suggest that, in virtue of her Immaculate Conception, the Mother of God had a right to immortality, such that, at the term of her earthly life, she was glorified without passing through death. However, there is sufficient evidence that, in the mind of the Church, Mary really died. On the other hand, it is not less certain that her death was unlike that of all who are under the common law. This is plainly stated in the same Constitution:

Christ's faithful, through the teaching and the leadership of their shepherds, have learned from the sacred books that the Virgin Mary, throughout the course of her earthly pilgrimage, led a life troubled by cares, hardships, and sorrows, and that, moreover, what the holy old man Simeon had foretold, actually came to pass, that is, that a terribly sharp sword pierced her heart as she stood under the cross of her divine Son, our Redeemer. In the same way, it was not difficult for them to affirm that the great Mother of God, like her Only-begotten Son, had actually passed from this life [*quemadmodum jam Unigenam suum, ex hac vita decessisse*]. But this in no way prevented them from believing and from professing openly that her sacred body had never been subject to the corruption of the tomb, and that the august tabernacle of the Divine Word, had never

¹³¹ *Ineffabilis Deus, P.D.M.*, p. 21. Unless otherwise indicated the subsequent quotations are taken from the same document, pp. 20, 21.

¹³² Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus, P.D.M.*, p. 222.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

been reduced to dust and ashes.¹³⁴

The teaching of this solemn document is so plain that we fail to see how the question whether Mary died or not could still be a problem in theology. That she did pass through death, “even as her Only-begotten Son before her,” becomes a matter of principle beyond all doubt--whether we understand the reason and the how of it or not. The reader must be made aware of our position on this point, lest he gather the impression that in the course of the present discussion we are trying to show why Mary was actually subjected to death (in itself a legitimate question, even though we are quite certain that she did die); whereas our purpose is to examine how the fact of her death is compatible with the privilege of the Immaculate Conception: how, at the very term of her earthly life, and in virtue of that privilege, she was fully glorified, notwithstanding the reality of death.

THE SIMULTANEITY OF MARY’S DEATH AND ASSUMPTION

The person of Mary, being merely human, depends, for its reality, upon the actual union of body and soul. If, then, her soul had been maintained in a *state* of separation; if, during some course of time, she had been in death, she would have ceased, for that time, to exist as a human being, as a person, and as Mother of God. Such a state would mean that, during some lapse of time, however brief, the grace of Motherhood--the seat of her habitual grace and of all her privileges as Mother of God--would have been withdrawn. Now, “what is bestowed through God’s grace is never withdrawn except through fault.” But Mary, conceived Immaculate and wholly confirmed in the good, could never have committed the slightest of faults. For this reason, we have argued elsewhere¹³⁵ that no lapse of time occurred between Mary’s death and Assumption, in which her soul would have been in a state of separation from her body; but that, on the contrary, her resurrection from death took place in the same instant as her death itself. We will not repeat here the arguments we have already presented in other writings, but will give only the following points of explanation.

Death, understood *proprie et essentialiter*, cannot occur but in the instant, the indivisible of time. Since there can be no such thing as a before-last instant, but only a last time, the last instant of Socrates’ life is the first in which he already no longer exists. Death, in the most proper sense of the word, is verified of that instant alone, and never of a course of time, either before or after. It is a case of *fieri et simul factum esse*. Now resurrection, too, is wrought in the instant. The first instant, here, is one in which the person is already resurrected; it is the only one of which resurrection can be verified essentially. All this is common doctrine. Now the question is: does the reality of death and resurrection require an interval of time, to distinguish

¹³⁴ *Munificentissimus Deus*, P.D.M., p. 225.

¹³⁵ *La Piété du Fils*, Les Presses Universitaires Laval, 1954, chapters V and VI, which had appeared in *Laval Théologique et philosophique* under the title, “La mort et l’Assomption de la Sainte-Vierge,” 1952, vol. VIII, n. 1, pp. 9-86; *ibid.*, “La personne humaine et la résurrection,” 1954, vol. X, n. 2, pp. 199-221.

them?¹³⁶ Is it really necessary that resurrection take place after death, according to an *after* of time? If so, how long after? You might suggest: at least one instant later. But this postulates the possibility of a next-after instant which again involves a contradiction since any two instants must be separated by an interval of time.

The general doctrine involved was fully developed by Aristotle in Book VI of the *Physics*, as well as in chapter 8 of Book VIII. St. Thomas applies it consistently, as the only possible solution, wherever he discusses the instantaneous character of absolute generation and corruption, of transubstantiation, and of justification. As regards justification, the last instant of the fault is the first in which there is no longer fault, and the first in which there is already grace. The last instant of the bread is the first in which the bread no longer is, and the first in which the body of Christ is already present. The last instant of St. Peter's life was the first in which his soul was already separated from his mortal body [*corpus animale*]. The first instant of his future life will be one in which his soul is already reunited to his glorified body [*corpus spiritale*]. Now, considering things absolutely, there is no reason why the last instant of one's earthly life, the one in which body and soul are already separated, could not be the same instant in which the glorified soul is already reunited to the body now immortal. The only difficulty of this doctrine arises from the fact that we imagine the last instant of the earthly life as still occupied, as it were, by the person who in reality has already ceased to be; yet, if this were so, nothing could cease to be, nor could anything new become.¹³⁷

But, you might say, if such were the case: if (as St. Augustine actually believed a person might die and be resurrected *in ipso temporis puncto*,¹³⁸ he would not have died really; for the same instant in which he ceased to exist, would be exactly the one in which he already exists anew. True enough, there would not be a single instant in which he did not exist; there would be neither a time nor even an instant in which the man, the very person, did not live. But there would have been--and this is the crux of the matter--a last instant of his life according to the union of corruptible body and soul, viz. the first instant of the *primum non esse* of earthly life, which is death *proprie et essentialiter*; and there would have been a first instant, the same as the latter, in which glorified soul and body were already reunited, viz. the instant of the *primum esse* of the glorified life of the person, which is resurrection essentially.

¹³⁶ This would be necessary if we were expected to establish their truth by experience; which is wholly extrinsic to what is possible in itself. And who, furthermore, has ever had an experience of the indivisible of time? Whatever we experience is always in part no longer and in part not yet. The indivisibility of the instant can be established by demonstration only.--Thus, in the case of Christ, "to confirm our faith regarding the truth of His humanity and death, it was needful that there should be some interval between His death and resurrection." *Illa Pars*, q. 53, a. 2, c.

¹³⁷ Hegel, for this very reason, declared that "to begin," or "to end," implies a contradiction. We have examined this problem in an article entitled, "Un paradoxe du devenir par contradiction," in *Doctor Communis*, Rome, n. III, 1954, pp. 133-188.

¹³⁸ *De Civitate Dei*, XX, c. 20.--On the various meanings and paradoxes of death, *ibidi.*, XX, cc. 9-11. That by *punctum temporis* St. Augustine meant the indivisible of time, can be seen in the *Confessiones*, XI, cc. 15 and 28.

But would this not imply that, in the same instant, a person would be both dead and alive? be and not be? Does not the principle of contradiction object to that sort of thing? Indeed it does preclude the possibility of being simultaneously dead and alive according to the same kind of life; of being and not being in the same respect. But that is all.¹³⁹

Except in the case of Christ and Our Lady, death achieves at least a partial victory inasmuch as "by reason of the common law [generalis lege], God does not will to grant the full effect of victory over death to the just until the end of time shall have come."¹⁴⁰ In view of this it might be objected that by deferring until the third day the full effect of victory over death in His own humanity Christ Himself to that extent apparently submitted to the common law. Hence, it would seem that the mode of Mary's resurrection, such as was suggested above, would make her triumph over death more complete than that of Christ; a circumstance hardly honoring Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life (John, xi. 25)--This difficulty is easily disposed of, for

Christ was not held fast by any necessity of death, but was *free among the dead*: and therefore He abode a while in death, not as one held fast, but of His own will, just as long as He deemed necessary for the instruction of our faith.¹⁴¹

Christ, then, was not even in the state of death if by this we mean a time during which one is kept down by the bonds of death (*mortis nexibus*). Nor did the reality of His death ever affect the very Person in His Godhead, to which both body and soul remained united. And He arose from the dead through His own power--the same by which He shall raise all the elect who are in the bonds of death. But in His Mother He showed without delay the fullness of their common victory over death by leaving her at no time in the bonds of death. As the ancient prayer has it: "Venerable to us, O Lord, is the festivity of this day on which the Holy Mother of God suffered temporal death, but still could not be kept down by the bonds of death, who has begotten Thy Son Our Lord incarnate from herself."¹⁴²

THE "MARVELOUS AND FITTING CONFORMITY BETWEEN MARY'S CONCEPTION AND ASSUMPTION

In the Encyclical *Fulgens Corona*, of Pius XII, there is a line which calls to mind a particular comparability between the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. We quote it in its context:

¹³⁹ Whoever is familiar with the doctrine that the generation of one thing is the corruption of another in the same instant of time, should have no difficulty with this other application. In generation and corruption, it is the subject that is permanent. In death and resurrection, the form is permanent; the proper subject is reproduced one in number. All one has to do is to turn the whole thing upside-down--with a qualification.

¹⁴⁰ *Munificentissimus Deus*, P.D.M., p. 222.

¹⁴¹ *Illa Pars*, q. 53, a. 2, ad 2.

¹⁴² Quoted in *Munificentissimus Deus*, P.D.M., p. 227.--This prayer is still used in the Dominican Rite.

Henceforth, it seems that the faithful can with greater and better reason turn their minds and hearts to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. For the two dogmas are intimately connected in close bond. And now that the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven has been promulgated and shown in its true light--that is, as the crowning and complement of the prior privilege bestowed upon her--there emerge more fully and more clearly the wonderful wisdom and harmony of the divine plan, by which God wishes the most blessed Virgin Mary to be free from all stain of original sin.

And so these two very singular privileges, bestowed upon the Virgin Mother of God, stand out in most splendid light as the beginning and as the end of her earthly journey [*ut terrestris ejus peregrinationis ortus it et occasus fulgentissima emicuerit luce*]; to the absolute innocence of her soul, which was free from all stain, did correspond, with a marvelous and appropriate conformity [*mirabili quadam congruentique ratione respondit*] the most complete glorification of her virgin body; and just as she took part in the struggle of her Only-begotten Son with the wicked serpent of hell, so also she shared in His glorious triumph over sin and its sad consequences.¹⁴³

We assume that the words *ortus* and *occasus* are aptly chosen and deserve to be weighed. *Ortus* refers to Mary's Conception, to the very first instant of her earthly life. *Occasus* first means a going down, as in *ab ortu ad occasum*, from sunrise to sundown; and, finally, downfall, destruction, death, as in *post orbitum occasumque vestrum*, or *occasus interitusque rei publicae*. It was never used to mean a final term in general. Now, it is thanks to the Assumption that the *occasus* of Mary's earthly journey stands out in fullest light--*fulgentissima luce*. But this can be literally true only if the *occasus* is somehow overshadowed and enclosed by the Assumption. Then, death itself might be called glorious. And that is exactly how St. Amadeus (1110-1159) of Lausanne--"that most pious man" of the earliest period of Scholastic Theology, as Pius XII calls him in the Constitution on the Assumption¹⁴⁴--did phrase it.

She passed away with a glorious death--if, indeed a passing to life can be called death. To speak truly, it is life, in which death alone dies, and 'the body of this death' is laid aside.

* * *

The heavenly hosts find her rising rather than dying, departing rather than perishing . . .

* * *

(Her death) does not bring on the darkness; it opens the way to eternal light. It does not take away the life which it sends to the Author of life.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ *P.D.M.*, pp. 258-259.--We have changed in part the last paragraph of the English translation we use, to bring out the idea of correspondence in the Latin original. *Ratio*, in this context, means conformity or proportion.

¹⁴⁴ *P.D.M.*, p. 232.

¹⁴⁵ *Hac morte gloriosa migravit, si transitum ad vitam mortem liceat nominare. Imo, ut verum fatear, vita est, ubi sola mors moritur, ubi corpus mortis exuitur [. . .] Ibi orienti magis quam morienti, et abiturae plus*

The statement, in *Fulgens Corona*, which follows immediately upon the one we have just examined seems to confirm our understanding of Mary's death as a glorious one. For not only does her *occasus* "stand out in most radiant light"; we are told that the Assumption corresponds, in a marvelous and fitting proportion, to the Immaculate Conception. Now the "true object" of the latter belief is Mary's "Conception considered in its first instant." If her *occasus* involved a certain amount of time--an interval between death and "the most complete glorification of her virgin body"¹⁴⁶---the comparison would fail in this respect, for there can be no true proportion between instant and time. If, on the other hand, we compared the first instant of a glorification some time after death, with the instant of Conception, the correspondence would hardly be "mirabili quadam congruentique ratione." The comparison, as we understand it, implies the following: just as in the first instant of her Conception Mary was already preserved from every stain of sin, though conceived by the natural process of generation; so, in the last instant of her earthly life [*expleto terrestris vitae cursu*]-which is naturally the instant of the *primum non esse* of that life of the person--she was preserved from the 'state of death' inasmuch as the same instant was that of her *primum esse* according to the life of glory. Now in this, and on this condition only, can she be compared to her son, Whose Person, in death, was nevertheless the Person of her Son.

THE ASSUMPTION AS THE REWARD OF COREDEMPTION

Although the Assumption--as well as the "glorious death" which it implies--was due to her in virtue of the Immaculate Conception, the Blessed Virgin merited, nonetheless, her complete glorification, and this, specifically by reason of her role as Coredemptrix. Here, besides the one we have just quoted from *Fulgens Corona*, is a crucial text on this subject, taken from the Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*:

We must remember most of all that, since the second century, the Virgin Mary has been designated by the holy Fathers as the new Eve, who, although subject to the new Adam, is most intimately associated with Him in that struggle against the infernal foe which, as foretold in the *protoevangelium*, finally resulted in that most complete victory over the sin and death which are always associated in the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Consequently, just as the glorious Resurrection of Christ was an essential part and the final sign of this victory, similarly that struggle which was common to the Blessed Virgin and her divine Son should be brought to a close by the glorification of her virginal body,

quam obiturae occurrunt castra Dei [. . .] Nec tenebras inducit, quae lumen aeternum aperuit, *nec vitam tollit*, quam dirigit ad auctorem vitae.--Hom. VII, *P.L.* 188, col. 1340-1341. For further significant quotations taken from this author, cf. *La piété du Fils*, pp. 156-157; or "La mort et l'Assomption de la Sainte Vierge," in *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 1952, vol. VIII, n. 1, pp. 84-85.

¹⁴⁶ We must note that if the preservation from corruption was due to the "amplissima virginei corporis glorificatio," this could not have been achieved before reunion with the soul since the formal cause of the glory of the body is none other than what St. Augustine calls the "plenissima beatitudo" of the soul. Cf. St. Thomas, *In I ad Cor.*, c. xv, lect.6.

for the same Apostle says: *when this mortal thing hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.*

Hence the revered Mother of God, from all eternity joined in a hidden way with Jesus Christ in one and the same decree of predestination, immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood, the noble associate of the divine Redeemer who has won a complete triumph over sin and its consequences, was finally granted, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved free from the corruption of the tomb and that, like her own Son, having overcome death, she might be taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages.¹⁴⁷

The Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, of Pius IX, had already made quite explicit the relationship between Mary's Immaculate Conception and the meaning of the prophecy: *I will put enmities between thee and the woman:*

Also did they [the Fathers] declare that the most glorious Virgin was the Reparatrix of her first parents, the giver of life to posterity; that she was chosen before the ages, prepared for Himself by the Most High, foretold by God when he said to the Serpent, "I will put enmities between thee and the woman"--an unmistakable evidence that she has crushed the poisonous head of the Serpent. And hence, they affirmed that the Blessed Virgin was, through grace, entirely free from every stain of sin, and from all corruption of body, soul, and mind; . . .¹⁴⁸

The Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* and the Encyclical Letter *Fulgens Corona* have now established beyond doubt the intimate relationship between Mary's Coredemption and her Assumption: between "that struggle which was common to the Blessed Virgin and her divine Son," and "the glorification of her virgin body."

Because of her redeeming Compassion--for which she was prepared in the Divine Motherhood graced by the Immaculate Conception establishing between her and the Serpent that complete and perpetual enmity--she is now there in her own person: that merely human person through whose *consortium* in the work of Redemption as willed by ineffable Wisdom and Mercy, we who are subject to the common become *partakers of the divine nature*. (II Peter i. 4)

MARY'S PRESENT QUEENSHIP

It is significant that, in the Constitution on the Assumption, the Holy Father should point out, in a passage quoted on a preceding page, the relation between Mary's Coredemption, her Assumption, and her Queenship. ". . . Like her Son, having overcome death, she [was] taken

¹⁴⁷ *P.D.M.*, p. 237.

¹⁴⁸ *P.D.M.*, pp. 20-21.

up body and soul to the glory of heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages.”

Mary is not only the Mother of the One Who is King in the most proper sense of this name¹⁴⁹ and Who conquered the Kingdom in His Passion and death: by her sorrowful Compassion she shared in His victory, even as a new Eve; for she “who corporally was the Mother of [Christ] our Head, through the added title of suffering and glory became spiritually the mother of all His members.”¹⁵⁰ It was foretold to her, at the Annunciation, that her Son, with Whom she is the object of a single decree of predestination now fulfilled, would be given, by the Lord God, *the throne of David His father*--David His father thanks to her Motherhood; that *He shall be King over the house of Jacob forever; that of His Kingdom there shall be no end.* (Luke i. 32) In their “common struggle” they conquered the Kingdom--she as Mother of the King, but also as the new Eve and, therefore, as His Spouse.

At the marriage feast of Cana, Mary interceded on behalf of the guests as Mother of the Son--*gessit . . . mediatricis personam*;¹⁵¹ whereas she first intercedes as Queen, while still on earth, after the death of the Savior. For it was through her mediation that, at Pentacost, the fullness of the Holy Ghost, which is ours at Confirmation, was bestowed upon the Church newly born.¹⁵² When we reflect that Confirmation, conferring as it does both spiritual maturity and full citizenship in the City of God, is appropriately called the Sacrament of the Kingdom, Mary’s role of Queen becomes strikingly evident.

It is thanks to the Assumption that Mary is now present as Queen. If her soul alone were in heaven, she herself would not be there in person, nor, therefore, as Queen.¹⁵³ It is essential for a King that he be one in nature with his subjects, although he should be superior to them by his goodness.¹⁵⁴ Owing to His humanity the Person of Christ is a King in the proper sense of this title. A separated soul could not have the nature of either King or Queen, in the strict meaning of the names.

We must note, too, that the King and Queen of the Kingdom of God are universal agencies *in causando* who attain to each and every person in particular, no matter how contingent the circumstances of their life, ordaining all to the supreme common good which is

¹⁴⁹ “La perfection de la royauté du Christ,” *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 1950, vol. VI, n. 2, pp. 349-351.

¹⁵⁰ *Mystici Corporis*, Epilog.

¹⁵¹ St. Thomas, *In Joannem*, c. 2, lect. 1.

¹⁵² “Ipsa fuit, quae validissimis suis precibus impetravit, ut Divini Redemptoris Spiritus, iam in Cruce datus, recens ortae Ecclesiae prodigialibus muneribus Pentecostes die conferretur.” *Mystici Corporis*, *ibid.*

¹⁵³ Cf. Msgr. Ferdinand Vandry, “The nature of Mary’s Universal Queenship,” *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 1954, vol. X, n. 1, pp. 60-64.--On the relationship between Christ and Mary as King and Queen, see, especially, M.-J. Nicolas, O.P., “La Vierge-Reine,” in *Revue Thomiste*, January-March, 1939, pp. 1-29; April-June, 1939, pp. 207-231.

¹⁵⁴ St. Thomas, *In Polit.*, lect. 10.

none other than the King Himself in His Godhead. In this too, the Kingdom of Christ is wholly unlike any other. For, in it, the common good of the realm and the proper good of the King are one and the same. To Christ, considered in His Godhead, the divine good is a strictly personal good, His own by nature. Considered in His human nature, that same good is to Him a common good, as it is to everyone but God Himself in his Godhead. For the soul even of Christ does not see the divine essence comprehensively. Now in this He is one with his subjects, but first of all with the Queen of the realm, whose vision of the Godhead is, intensively and extensively, nearest to His own according to the humanity in which He is her image--He the Word in Whom all comprehensors, angel or man, enjoy the glory of divine fruition.

Sapientis est ordinare. The Wisdom that founded the Kingdom of Christ is shown in its hierarchy, reaching as it does *from end to end mightily and ordering all things graciously.* (Wisdom viii. 1) Truly King, He is nonetheless a Divine Person. Considered in His Godhead alone, He is too lofty to be our King:¹⁵⁵ His Person is King because He is also a man. Yet His reign is aimed at the Godhead. Now it is only in virtue of grace, conveyed by the sacraments--the mercifully humble, sensible things and words--that we can become children, friends of God, and fellow-citizens in His realm. In His Godhead, the King works in the sacraments by authority; yet even as man, His operation conduces to the inward sacramental effects meritoriously and efficiently, inasmuch as His humanity is the instrument of His Godhead.¹⁵⁶ Thus., the dominion which extends to all created persons is that of One Who is also a man. Without lowering His Godhead, the rule of the One *Who is the head of every Principality and Power* (Col. ii. 10), is most connatural to us--owing to His Kingship.

Thanks to the Queen of this same indivisible realm, whose grace is one of pre-eminence and who-in a fashion entirely her own, viz. in her character of Woman, Mother, Spouse and Queen--shares in Christ's power of excellence with regard to the sacraments,¹⁵⁷ the governance of God's Kingdom is at once as mercifully human as can be, to the greater dignity of man's person, which by nature is the lowliest of all. *Nigra sum, sed formosa.* (Cant. i. 4) For Mary, by right of conquest seated at the right of her Son, is entirely near to us inasmuch as she is a merely human person--the Handmaid of the Lord, truly Mother of God, Spouse of the new Adam, Queen of the One Who was given the throne of David, His father, owing to His descent from *a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David.* (Luke i. 27) And of their *Kingdom there shall be no end.*

¹⁵⁵ As Aristotle said: "but when one party is removed to a great distance, as God is, the possibility of friendship ceases." *Ethics*, VIII, c. 7, 1159 a.

¹⁵⁶ *III Pars*, q. 64, a. 3.

¹⁵⁷ *III Pars*, q. 64, a. 4.

