

of the mind of the contemporary Church on what she considers to be her rights. Now, the Canon in question asserts that the religious instruction of (Catholic) youth in all schools whatsoever (public, therefore, as well as Catholic), is subject to the authority of and supervision by the Church (section 1); that the local Ordinaries have the right and duty of vigilance over all schools in their territory, lest anything be taught or done in these schools contrary to faith or morals (section 2); that the same Ordinaries have the right to approve the teachers and text-books of religion, and to demand, in the interests of religion and morality, that teachers and text-books be removed (section 3).

As I see it, Canon 1381, section 3, amounts to the assertion by the Church of her right to call upon the civil authorities, who control the public schools, to inhibit the spread of heresy. Moreover, the Church has called upon various states to acknowledge this her right, as could readily be shown from various modern Concordats. Now, since the Church may neither demand nor claim the right to demand, that civil authority do something illicit, it should follow that civil authority, the government of a state, has, even *in thesi*, the right, and, when called upon to exercise it, the duty of "repressing heresy."

That said, I conclude this attempt to indicate some of the reasons why I have found it difficult to subscribe to Fr. Murray's views. I have, of course, too great respect for the complexities of the problem, "What is the veritable 'Catholic thesis'?" and too great a respect for Fr. Murray's superior grasp of those complexities, to suppose that the difficulties I have suggested are altogether incapable of solution. But, meanwhile, they remain very real difficulties for me, and they move me to say that a recent description of the "old thesis" as "somewhat obsolescent"²⁹ is somewhat premature.

GEORGE W. SHEA

Immaculate Conception Seminary
Darlington, N. J.

2. Ordinarius locorum ius et officium est vigilandi ne in quibusvis schulis sui territorii quidquam contra fidem vel bonos mores tradatur aut fiat.

3. Eisdem similiter ius est approbandi religionis magistros et libros: itemque, religionis morumque causa, exigendi ut tam magistri tum libri remaneantur.

²⁹ Cf. the review of Hervé, *op. cit.*, by Sheedy, C.S.C., in *Spectrum*.

THE MARIAN CHARACTER OF THE REDEMPTION

(1) *Mary's consent to the Incarnation by itself would assure a Marian note to the Redemption.*

"God sent the angel Gabriel to a city of Galilee called Nazareth, where a virgin dwelt, betrothed to a man of David's lineage; his name was Joseph, and the virgin's name was Mary. Into her presence the angel came and said . . . Mary, do not be afraid, thou hast found favour in the sight of God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call him Jesus. He shall be great, and men will know him for the Son of the most High. . . . The Holy Spirit will come upon thee, and the power of the most High will overshadow thee. Thus this holy offspring of thine shall be known for the Son of God. . . . And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be unto me according to thy word."¹

Was Mary unaware of the contents and of the scope of this celestial message? Could we dare pretend this without wronging God? Can we assert the same without dishonoring His Mother? Would not the Incarnation cease to be a mystery of wisdom and of love if it had had to be accomplished by offending man's liberty and by diminishing his responsibility?

Unquestionably, the young Virgin did not as yet know, for the moment, all the events which must encompass the existence of her Son; but she knows exactly the consequences of her acceptance. She had read, in the Holy Scriptures, the divine promises, in particular the prophecies of Daniel (6:13-14) and those of Isaias (53:1-12) concerning the Servant of God, His sufferings, His ignominious death. Often had she meditated upon the afflictions and torments of the future Redeemer, foreseen by the Prophet of the Passion. "But he was wounded for our iniquities: he was bruised for our sins. The chastisement of our peace was upon him: and by his bruises we are healed."²

In the eyes of Mary, to conceive and bear the Messiah did not mean to engender a future victor who would cover himself with glory; on the contrary, it meant to become the mother of one despised, scoffed at, enveloped in opprobrium, and crowned with

¹ Luke 1:26-38.

² Isaias 53:5.

thorns. The angel Gabriel asked her if she was willing to be the mother of a martyr who would be the Saviour of His people by the complete shedding of His blood. And Mary, drawing an invincible courage from her love for God and men, answered: "*Ecce ancilla Domini*; behold the handmaid of the Lord. It will cost me everything God exacts, all the blood of my Son and all my motherly tears to lead Him from the cradle to the cross. Here I am; I accept: *Ecce ancilla Domini*; behold the handmaid of the Lord."

Freely and lovingly Mary consented to become the Mother of the Saviour of men; she united herself to Him in the purest of all loves in order to effect under Him and with Him the Redemption of mankind, by martyrdom and by blood.

Our Lady adhered to the *redemptive* Incarnation, and to *all* the sorrows, sufferings, and labors it would involve. By her acceptance of the divine offer, she already began to play her rôle of co-operator in this, the mystery of the amorous restoration of a decaying humanity. Our Redemption, therefore, from the very instant of the Incarnation, takes on a *truly Marian character*; it will always bear the characteristic sign of Mary.

But there is more. The consent of the Virgin of Nazareth was indispensable to the redeeming Incarnation.³ Had not God Himself decreed that the atonement for sin would be the work of His Son made man in the womb of a Virgin?

Could we not apply to Mary, by modifying them a little, the words by which the Church, on Easter-eve, extols the grandeur of Christ? *O certe necessarium Adæ peccatum. . . . O felix culpa!* Let us sing the same sentiments of gratitude and of admiration: *O certe necessarius Mariæ consensus, qui talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!*

If Jesus is the Son of her womb, He is first of all the fruit of her love and of her consent. If our Redemption proceeds essentially and principally from the Redeemer, Christ, it is also dependent, although secondarily, upon Mary and her adherence to the word of the angel Gabriel. For, in truth, without Mary, no Incarnation, no Redemption, no salvation. We rely upon Mary for those graces which are offered to us at every instant and which we *need* to conquer heaven. Without Mary's influence, would we have

³ Cf. *Sum. theol.*, III, q. 30, a. 1.

received the grace of Baptism or those of the other sacraments? Deprived of this *Marian* assistance, would we be capable of living Christianly and of expending ourselves for our fellow-man? Our personal sanctification, our self-sacrifice, our priestly zeal for souls or our apostolate in Catholic Action depend upon Mary! But for Adam's sin, no Incarnation, but also no Mary, no Christ, no reparation, no grace! In the face of such a noble kindness, in the presence of such a benefactress we can give voice to the joy of our hearts: "*O felix culpa!* Oh! Blissful trespass which procured for us such a sublime co-Redeemer."

(II) *On Calvary, the union of Mary to the immolation of her Son procures for the Redemption a Marian character.*

Jesus, as we sing it in the Credo of the Mass, was born for the cross; He lived for the cross; He died on the cross. That supreme objective, which He contemplated unceasingly and continuously pursued during the thirty-three years of His terrestrial life, attracted the first transports of His heart. He scarcely received the blood, which Mary so lovingly gave Him, before he wanted to shed it for us. At the dawn of His life, He offered Himself to His Father: "No sacrifice, no offering was thy demand; thou hast endowed me, instead, with a body. . . . I said, See, my God, I am coming to do thy will." In accordance with this divine will, St. Paul notes, we have been sanctified by an offering made once for all, the body of Jesus Christ.⁴

And all of the Saviour's life on earth was to be inspired by that initial abandonment, by that thirst for martyrdom, by that need of shedding His blood on the cross. "There is a baptism I must needs be baptized with," He said to His Apostles, "and how impatient am I for its accomplishment!" Only the immolation on Calvary was to have the power of quenching that burning thirst and enable Him to make known to men the sentiments of His heart and the purpose of His advent among them. *Consummatum est!* All is achieved! God is glorified, man is redeemed.

Those sacrificial dispositions of the God-Man, constantly active and manifested with so much heroism on Golgotha, were likewise the intimate sentiments of Mary.

By her consent she became the Mother of Jesus, future propitiatory victim: she lived in order to nourish and prepare that Host

⁴ Cf. *Heb.*, 10:5-8, 10.

of sacrifice; she immolated It finally on Calvary. One sole love animated the Son and the Mother, the Redeemer and the coredeemer; one motive activated them; to suffer and to die for the glory of God and the redemption of the world. One thought, one desire, one heart impelled both of them towards the redemptive cross. If we count here two persons, we cannot distinguish a duality of objectives or of sentiments; on the contrary, we can discern but one end and one sole charity. With Jesus, the flesh of her flesh, the blood of her blood, Mary could say while contemplating the cross of salvation: "There is a baptism I must needs be baptized with, and how impatient am I for its accomplishment."⁵

From the moment of the Incarnation, and particularly after the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple, having heard Simeon tell her that a sword of grief would pierce her soul, Mary knew that in her Son she was preparing the Host of the redemptive sacrifice. What is more, like Jesus, she never took her eyes off the bloody cross of Golgotha. Came the hour for the holocaust; and her love, stronger than her anguish, led her to the very foot of the cross. Standing like a priest at the altar, partaking of those sacerdotal and sacrificial dispositions of Christ, united to and as if identified with Him, so great was her desire, as His, to accomplish the divine will, a Mother—Mary—immolated her Son, she offered Him to God for us. And, as He yielded up His spirit, with Him, she said: "*Consummatum est*; all is achieved!" How can we help but cry out in the face of such grandeur and generosity and heroism? Mary loved the world to such a degree that she gave us her only Son. Our salvation, then, is the fruit of one love; it is the common labor of Jesus and Mary, of the Son and His Mother, who has become our Mother.

The Redemption is certainly marked with the sign of Mary; it carries within itself a maternal note, a Marian character. Such were the designs of God. And that Marian character teaches us that we cannot attain Christ, the Redeemer, without the intervention of the coredeemer; we cannot come near to the cross if we do not partake of the salutary sorrows of Mary.

This doctrine, so firmly based on Holy Scripture, reproduces the most authentic teachings of the Sovereign Pontiffs, especially since Leo XIII and Pius X.

⁵ Luke 12:50.

Associated with Jesus from the very moment of the Incarnation for the Redemption of mankind, Mary, at every instant of her existence and by all of her actions, co-operated in this work of salvation. But the martyrdom of her compassion on Calvary marked the apex, the culminating point of her contribution. "It is not only to the glory of the Virgin," writes Pius X, "that she furnished the substance of her flesh for God's only Son . . . and by so doing prepared a victim for the salvation of men; but, what is more, her mission was to guard this victim, to nourish it and to present it at the altar on the appointed day."⁶

Benedict XV speaks to us in a like manner: "By uniting herself to the Passion and death of her Son, [Mary] suffered almost unto death . . . in order to appease divine justice; as much as she could, she immolated her Son, in such a way that we can say she redeemed mankind with Him."⁷

According to Pius XI, the Virgin ". . . was chosen as the Mother of Christ so that she might be made to participate in the Redemption of mankind."⁸

"It was Mary," Pius XII teaches, "who, always so narrowly united to her Son, presented Him to the Eternal Father on Golgotha for all of Adam's sons who carry the blemish of the original sin."⁹

Since we are redeemed by Christ under the sign of Mary, our Mother, for us to establish our spiritual life outside of the Virgin's influence would be in vain. God's decrees and the dispositions of Divine Providence will always conserve their Marian exigencies. Mary's redeeming mission does not end with the death of her Son but it must be prolonged until the very last chosen one is crowned. So that our personal lives may reach new summits, and our apostolate gain its maximum spiritual yield, we must act under our heavenly Mother's protection, we must march under her banner and guidance. Our Redemption carries the seal of Mary. May our daily lives always reflect her image and one day be transformed into glory—and for all eternity!

The Grand Seminary of Montreal
Montreal, Canada

AUGUSTE FERLAND, S.S.

⁶ Encyclical *Ad diem illum* (Feb. 2, 1904).

⁷ Apostolic Letter, *Inter sodalicia* (March 22, 1918).

⁸ *Osservatore romano*, April 29, 1935.

⁹ Encyclical, *Mystici Corporis* (June 22, 1943).