

# **Mary's Relationship to the Holy Spirit: A Focus for the Union of East and West**

Submitted by

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*"Mariology the first and most important locus of pneumatology".*

*Alexander Schmemmann*

*"it is the same power of the Most High which overshadowed the Virgin of Nazareth (cf Lk 1:35) and which today is at work within the ecumenical movement and making it fruitful".*

*Paul VI*

## Statement of Authorship and Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

Signed

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## Abstract

The figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a cherished element in all of the apostolic churches, East and West. Each of the various traditions has unique ways of understanding and expressing this foundational ecclesial element. This study attempts to contribute to a deeper understanding of the Blessed Virgin Mary both as Mother of God and Mother of all Christians in the light of the theologies of four theologians representative of the Orthodox Christian East and the Roman Catholic West. It presupposes that the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches' deeper understanding of important common elements can enable Eastern and Western Christians to mutually recognise themselves in each other, and in so doing advance the movement towards the restoration of their full visible communion.

This study aims to investigate the profound significance of the Virgin Mother as both Mother of the Divine Redeemer and as Mother of all Christians, examining in particular the relationship of Mary and the Holy Spirit in the theologies of Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944), Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983), John Henry Newman (1801-1890) and Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988). It aims to determine to what degree the insights of these four theologians can be directed to the cause of ecumenical unity, through a particular emphasis on Mary and the Holy Spirit. Ecumenism, in the new century, needs reform and renewal.<sup>1</sup> Ecumenical activity, on its own, becomes a soulless routine and is certain to exhaust itself.<sup>2</sup> Realising this, church leaders have placed strong emphasis on spiritual ecumenism.<sup>3</sup> Spiritual ecumenism is understood as the soul of the ecumenical movement

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Kasper, "The Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century - A Contribution from the PCPCU," *The Ecumenical Review* 57, no. 4 (2005): 512.

<sup>2</sup> Kasper, "The Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century - A Contribution from the PCPCU," 513.

<sup>3</sup> Kasper, "The Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century - A Contribution from the PCPCU," 515.

and it requires a relationship with the Holy Spirit who alone can engender inner conversion, holiness of life and renewal and reform of the Church.<sup>4</sup>

This study will argue that the most fruitful perspective through which to appreciate the person and work of the Holy Spirit, although it may surprise some, is pre-eminently the Virgin Mother of Christ. As the disciples asked Christ to show them the Father (Jn 14:8), so the Christian asks Mary to show them the Holy Spirit. The present work demonstrates through historical and exegetical methods of enquiry, that Mary must be linked both spiritually and theologically to the work of ecumenism.

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<sup>4</sup> Vatican Council II, "Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*)," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), 358, par. 8. (Hereafter cited as *UR* followed by paragraph number)

## Statement of Appreciation

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## Chapter 1

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### **Introduction: Situating the Study**

#### **a) Title of the Study**

The title of the study is *Mary's Relationship to the Holy Spirit: A Focus for the Union of East and West*. It is a study that endeavours to determine to what degree the work of four theologians, representative of both Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism, can be directed to the cause of ecumenical unity, emphasising in particular Mary, the Mother of God, and her relationship to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity.

Throughout this study the terms East and West refer to the Churches of the Eastern Orthodox and Western Roman Catholic Christian Traditions. The Churches of the Eastern Christian Tradition are also referred to in this study as Eastern Orthodoxy, Orthodoxy, Byzantine, the Orthodox Christian East, the Christian East, the Orthodox Church(es) and the Eastern Orthodox Church(es). They also refer to the communion of self-governing Eastern Christian Churches which accept the validity of the first seven Ecumenical Councils, thus distinguishing them from both the non-Chalcedonian Orthodox, also referred to as the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and the Assyrian Orthodox Church of the East. The Church of the Western Roman Catholic Christian Tradition is referred to in this study as Western Catholicism, most often as the Roman Catholic West, the Roman Catholic Church and more loosely as the Christian West.

#### **b) Choice of Topic**

This study has grown out of an attempt to answer to a question that I came across eight years ago in my first year of my Bachelor of Theology Degree in Lawrence Cross' book

*Eastern Christianity: The Byzantine Tradition*. In the introduction to his book about Eastern Christians, Cross asks, "Who are they?"<sup>5</sup> His answer to the question is the "seed" from which this study grew: "The shortest answer is that they are the other side of the Roman Catholic soul. The reverse is also true. The Roman Catholics are the other side of the Eastern Christian soul".<sup>6</sup> A deep desire arose within me, as a Roman Catholic Sister of Mercy, to get to know the other side of my soul. This desire increased progressively as I reflected on my own family connections and participated in the Divine Liturgy according to St John Chrysostom each week at St Patrick's Campus of the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne.

After I completed my Bachelor of Theology Degree, I continued my study in Theology and did Honours. My Honours thesis entitled *The Jesus Prayer of the Heart in the Churches' Search for East-West Unity* reflects my continued interest in the spiritual life of the Eastern Orthodox Church. As a result of my study, I came to a deeper appreciation of how both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches are supported by the one mystical life, which is grounded in the mystery of Jesus Christ. They, truly, are sister churches. An implication for me of this relationship for future research was to examine those things that make them true sister Churches, elements such as the sacraments, Mary, the Mother of God, and the saints and the mystical life. This study follows on from this conviction.

### **c) Background and Significance of the Study**

In the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, promulgated on 21 November, 1964, the Council strongly urged the whole Catholic

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<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Cross, *Eastern Christianity: The Byzantine Tradition*, Revised ed. (Virginia, USA: Eastern Christian Publications, 1999), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Cross, *Eastern Christianity: The Byzantine Tradition*, 4.

Church to be concerned about and actively involved in ecumenism, that is, the movement promoting the restoration of Christian unity.<sup>7</sup> In the words of the Decree:

Concern for restoring unity pertains to the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone, according to the potential of each, whether it be exercised in daily Christian living or in theological and historical studies. This very concern already reveals to some extent the bond of brotherhood existing among all Christians, and it leads toward that full and perfect unity which God so lovingly desires.<sup>8</sup>

Recognising that Christ established one Church, and that Christ desires His followers to "be one" as He and the Father are one - so that the world might believe He was sent by the Father (Jn 17:21), the Council exhorts all Catholics to be engaged in the ecumenical movement, which it sees as the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>9</sup> It stresses that true ecumenism calls for a "change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians", which it regards as "the soul of the ecumenical movement" and calls "spiritual ecumenism".<sup>10</sup> The Second Vatican Council made the divided Church an object of serious concern because it "openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling block to the world, and inflicts damage on the most holy cause of proclaiming the good news to every creature".<sup>11</sup>

Thirty years after the conclusion of Vatican II, John Paul II reinforcing the teaching of Vatican II wrote, "It must not be forgotten ... that the Lord prayed to the Father that his disciples might be one, so that their unity might bear witness to his mission and the world would believe that the Father had sent him (cf Jn 17:21)".<sup>12</sup> He also reminded Catholics

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<sup>7</sup> *UR*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> *UR*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> *UR*, 1.

<sup>10</sup> *UR*, 7-8. See also, "Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism", [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/general-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_19930325\\_directory\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/general-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19930325_directory_en.html) (accessed 7 July 2010).

<sup>11</sup> *UR*, 1.

<sup>12</sup> John Paul II, "Ut Unum Sint," in *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, ed. J. Michael Miller (Notre Dame, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 1996), 793, par 23. (Hereafter cited as *UUS* followed by the paragraph number)

that ecumenism "is not just some sort of 'appendix' which is added to the Church's traditional activity. Rather ecumenism is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently it must pervade all that she is and does".<sup>13</sup>

With regard to theology, the Decree on Ecumenism demands that an ecumenical spirit should pervade all the various theological disciplines and the theology of the spiritual life.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, as Johannes Feiner explains,

Catholic theology must bear constantly in mind the whole of Christianity, and must participate in the thought of other Christians in order to discover what the testimony of their doctrine and life has to tell to us Catholics. Catholic theology must discover and set forth the Christian heritage of truth and spirituality which is common to all Christian Churches, and must create an awareness of the doctrinal richness and spiritual endowments which are characteristic of other Christian communities, and which can lead to a deeper understanding of the true catholicity of the Church.<sup>15</sup>

Applying the principle of diversity in unity to theology, the Decree on Ecumenism both affirms and encourages various theological methods and ways of expressing revelation:

In the investigation of revealed truth, East and West have used different methods and approaches in understanding and proclaiming divine things. It is hardly surprising, then, if sometimes one tradition has come nearer than the other to an apt appreciation of certain aspects of a revealed mystery, or has expressed them in a clearer manner. As a result, these various theological formulations are often to be considered as complementary rather than conflicting.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *UUS*, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Johannes Feiner, "Decree on Ecumenism: Commentary on the Decree," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (London: Burns & Oates, 1968), 112.

<sup>15</sup> Feiner, "Decree on Ecumenism: Commentary on the Decree," 112.

<sup>16</sup> *UR*, 17.

The Decree on Ecumenism shows deep respect for the theology of the Christian East, recognising that it is deeply embedded in both Sacred Scripture and apostolic tradition and that it can enrich the theology of the West, and thereby the whole Church:

With regard to the authentic theological traditions of the Orientals, we must recognise that they are admirably rooted in Holy Scripture, fostered and given expression in liturgical life, and nourished by the living tradition of the apostles and by the writings of the Fathers and spiritual authors of the East; they are directed toward a right ordering of life, indeed, toward a full contemplation of Christian truth.<sup>17</sup>

Likewise, the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, which first met in Rhodes in 1980, and whose purpose is the re-establishment of full visible communion between the two Churches, declares that the ecumenical dialogue should begin positively with the elements which unite the two Churches.<sup>18</sup> Other aspects of the dialogue method include consideration of recent theological and ecclesial developments in relations between the Churches and the work accomplished by study groups composed of both Roman Catholic and Orthodox theologians.<sup>19</sup>

In the Sistine Chapel on 20 April, 2005, the first day after his election as Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Benedict XVI strongly underlined the ongoing commitment of the Church to ecumenism. In his words:

With full awareness ... at the beginning of his ministry in the Church of Rome ... Peter's current Successor takes on as his primary task the duty to work tirelessly to rebuild the full and visible unity of all Christ's followers. This is his ambition and his impelling duty. He is aware that good intentions do not suffice for

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<sup>17</sup> *UR*, 17. See also, Feiner, "Decree on Ecumenism: Commentary on the Decree," 139.

<sup>18</sup> Joint International Commission, "Plan to Set Underway the Theological Dialogue Between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church," in *The Quest for Unity: Orthodox and Catholics in Dialogue*, ed. John Borelli and John Erickson (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 47.

<sup>19</sup> Joint International Commission, "Plan to Set Underway the Theological Dialogue Between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church," 47-48.

this. Concrete gestures that enter hearts and stir consciences are essential, inspiring in everyone that inner conversion that is the prerequisite for all ecumenical progress.<sup>20</sup>

Benedict XVI stirs his own conscience and the conscience of each member of the Roman Catholic Church regarding this quest for Christian unity when he goes on to say: "Each one of us must come before [Christ], the supreme Judge of every living person, and render an account to him of all we have done or have failed to do to further the great good of the full and visible unity of all his disciples".<sup>21</sup> In this regard, leading Roman Catholic ecumenist Walter Kasper stresses that ecumenical activity on its own, becomes a soulless routine and exhausts itself.<sup>22</sup> This leads him to place strong emphasis on spiritual ecumenism. He writes:

The ecumenical movement from its very beginnings has been and will continue to be an impulse and a gift of the Holy Spirit. Ecumenical activities not grounded in spiritual ecumenism will very soon become a soulless routine, whereas spiritual ecumenism will lead us to the conviction that who has initiated the whole ecumenical movement, is faithful and will bring it to its fulfilment.<sup>23</sup>

It is to be hoped that the present study will contribute, in some small way, towards furthering the restoration of the full and visible unity between Christians, especially between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

Since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the historic embrace of Pope Paul VI and the Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras I in Jerusalem on 5 and 6 January 1964,<sup>24</sup> the Pope and the hierarchs of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches

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<sup>20</sup> Benedict XVI, "Striving to be the 'Servus servorum Dei'," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 27 April 2005, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Benedict XVI, "Striving to be the 'Servus servorum Dei'," 4.

<sup>22</sup> Kasper, "The Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century - A Contribution from the PCPCU," 513.

<sup>23</sup> Kasper, "The Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century - A Contribution from the PCPCU," 515.

<sup>24</sup> John Paul II and Bartholomew I of Constantinople, "Common Declaration of Pope John Paul II and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople



have, after centuries of mutual separation, embraced each other once again as sister Churches. On many occasions the Pope and the hierarchs of the respective Churches have drawn attention to certain significant elements that both Churches hold in common and which unite them as sister Churches. One of these elements is the loving veneration of and special devotion to Mary the Mother of God. As Paul VI, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus: For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, promulgated on 2 February 1974, affirms:

in venerating with particular love the glorious Theotokos and in acclaiming her as the 'Hope of Christians', Catholics unite themselves with their brethren of the Orthodox Churches, in which devotion to the Blessed Virgin finds its expression in a beautiful lyricism and in solid doctrine.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, in a shared homily with Pope John Paul II, delivered during Vespers in the Basilica of St Mary Major in Rome on 5 December, 1987, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Dimitrios I asserts that:

of all the entire Christian world our two sister Churches have maintained throughout the centuries unextinguished the flame of devotion to the most venerated person of the all holy Mother of God, dedicating to her the finest and most inspired artistic works of song, architecture and painting, turning to her sweetest figure the hearts' desires and the hopes of the devout people of every epoch.<sup>26</sup>

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" [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/2004/july/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20040701\\_jp-ii-bartholomew-i\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2004/july/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20040701_jp-ii-bartholomew-i_en.html) (accessed 16 June 2010). See also, E.J. Stormon, ed., *Towards the Healing of Schism: The Sees of Rome and Constantinople: Public statements and correspondence between the Holy See and the Ecumenical Patriarchate 1958-1984* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), Nos. 48 & 49.

<sup>25</sup> Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus* (Sydney: St Paul Publications, 1980), 49, par. 32. (Hereafter cited as *MC* followed by the paragraph number)

<sup>26</sup> Dimitrios I, "May the Mother of God be the hinge of our unity," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 21-28 December 1987, 6.

Patriarch Dimitrios I goes on to state that although the unilateral Marian dogmas<sup>27</sup>, which took place centuries after the two Churches sadly broke, tended to differentiate the common tradition regarding the Mother of God, the common dogmatic and theological Marian heritage can once again create "an axis of unity and reunion of the separate parts".<sup>28</sup> If, according to the ecumenical Council of Ephesus held in 431, to which Patriarch Dimitrios I alluded in his homily, Mary is truly the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God, the one who was overshadowed by the Spirit of God and who freely assented to become the Mother of Jesus, the Son of God (Lk 1:26-38; Gal 4:4), Patriarch Dimitrios I identified Mary as a unifying centre for reunion of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. As the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God who is our salvation, Mary "occupies a central and principal position in the faith of our Churches".<sup>29</sup> She, who is eternally connected with our Lord Jesus Christ, "constitutes the 'gateway to heaven' and the 'space of the uncontainable' through which the eternal plan of God the Father for the salvation of the world in his only begotten Son is realized".<sup>30</sup>

It is important to remember the physical context for Patriarch Dimitrios I's remarks. He proclaimed this connection of Mary to the faith of the two Churches in the most important Church in Western Christendom dedicated to Mary the Mother of God.<sup>31</sup> It was in this Church that Patriarch Dimitrios I saw himself surrounded by the incomparable masterpieces of the common dogmatic and theological Marian heritage as he put forward the following proposal on behalf of the Eastern Orthodox Church to John Paul II:

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<sup>27</sup> Dimitrios I is referring to the Roman Catholic Church's dogma of the Immaculate Conception (*IneffabilisDeus*) defined and proclaimed by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854, and the dogma of the Assumption (*Munificentissimus Deus*) defined and proclaimed by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950.

<sup>28</sup> Dimitrios I, "May the Mother of God be the hinge of our unity," 6.

<sup>29</sup> Dimitrios I, "May the Mother of God be the hinge of our unity," 6.

<sup>30</sup> Dimitrios I, "May the Mother of God be the hinge of our unity," 6.

<sup>31</sup> The present Basilica of St Mary Major or Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome is dedicated to Mary the Mother of God. It was built by Pope Sixtus III (432-340) after the Council of Ephesus proclaimed Mary as *Theotokos*, Mother of God, in 431. See *The Weekday Missal*, (London: CollinsLiturgical, 1992), 1555.

we desire to propose in a more official manner that the subject of Mariology should occupy a central position in the theological dialogue between our Churches, not only examined from a Christological point of view, but also anthropological, and especially ecclesiological, for the full re-establishment of our ecclesial communion.<sup>32</sup>

In his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, promulgated on May 25, 1995, John Paul II, conscious of the communion of faith and sacramental life that held the early Apostolic Church together, exhorted all Christian traditions to help one another in the search for a true unity of faith. He nominates five subjects that need to be studied at a deeper level by all Christian communities before the Churches can arrive at a true consensus of faith. One of these is "the Virgin Mary, as Mother of God and Icon of the Church, the spiritual Mother who intercedes for Christ's disciples and for all humanity".<sup>33</sup> John Paul II is following Paul VI who, in *Marialis Cultus*, urged pastoral ministers and theologians especially to reflect more deeply on the theme of the Holy Spirit's work in salvation history in order to "bring out in particular the hidden relationship between the Spirit of God and the Virgin of Nazareth, and show the influence they exert on the Church".<sup>34</sup> On a more specific level, Mary and the Holy Spirit, is one of the themes that can show that "what unites us is greater than what divides us".<sup>35</sup>

This study is based on the assumption that the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches' deeper understanding of the important elements that unite them can, and should, enable Eastern and Western Christians to mutually recognise themselves in each other, and in so doing advance the movement towards the restoration of their full visible communion. It makes an original contribution to scholarly theology by providing an example, or

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<sup>32</sup> Dimitrios I, "May the Mother of God be the hinge of our unity," 6.

<sup>33</sup> *UUS*, 79.

<sup>34</sup> *MC*, 43.

<sup>35</sup> John Paul II, "Eastern theology has enriched the whole Church," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 21 August 1996, 8.

working model, of how to do theology and to answer theological questions using the work of theologians who come from different traditions, and address the same question and then evaluates the results in an ecumenical context.

This study chooses the theme of Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit through which to examine the mystical union of the two sister Churches, the Blessed Virgin Mary being the common mother of them both. Further, Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit is unique, and as such brings communion or *koinonia* for all Christians uniting them in Christ. A deeper understanding of this relationship, viewed from the perspectives of the two Churches, can contribute to the rapprochement between them. However, the fulcrum upon which this whole study rests, or the heart of the matter, is the declaration of Paul VI in 1974, that "it is the same power of the Most High which overshadowed the Virgin of Nazareth ... which today is at work within the ecumenical movement and making it fruitful".<sup>36</sup> This study also recognises a paradox. While the person of Mary is much loved and venerated in both East and West, doctrines related to her Immaculate Conception and Dormition/Assumption have also generated controversy. The thought of the four theologians examined in this study will address this paradox.

This study attempts to contribute towards a deeper understanding of the Blessed Virgin Mary both as the Mother of God and Mother of all Christians. Each of the theologians considered in this thesis, Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944), Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983), John Henry Newman (1801-1890) and Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988), is in his own way representative of his own Church's theological traditions, sources and methodologies. For this reason, their work can contribute towards a deeper understanding of the Blessed Virgin Mary both as Mother of God and Mother of all Christians. At this point, a brief summary of the role that each of the theologians has

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<sup>36</sup> *MC*, 33.

played within their own particular Churches will show how their various contributions to their own traditions are considered central and creative by these same traditions.

In his introduction to his translation of the three volumes of Bulgakov's great theological trilogy, *On Divine Humanity*,<sup>37</sup> from Russian into English, Boris Jakim declares that Father Sergius (Sergei, Sergeii) Bulgakov is the most profound Orthodox systematic theologian of the twentieth century.<sup>38</sup> According to Jakim's colleague Constantin Andronikof, whom Jakim refers to as "the greatest French translator of Russian religious thought",<sup>39</sup> Bulgakov is "the greatest Orthodox theologian since Saint Gregory Palamas".<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Andronikof strongly underlines the value of Bulgakov's theological thought in linking him to this prominent fourteenth century saint, whom the Christian East, in the *Apolytikion* (Dismissal Hymn of the Feast) of Gregory Palamas, honours as the "invincible champion of theologians".<sup>41</sup> Others who endeavour to inspire the exploration of Bulgakov's ideas claim that his life and thought provide a sobering and stimulating model for the engagement of Christian intellectuals in their age.<sup>42</sup>

In his eulogy for Father Alexander Schmemmann, "A Life Worth Living", Orthodox theologian John Meyendorff states that Schmemmann was "first and foremost a priest committed to the Church always seen, in spite of all human deficiencies, as an anticipation

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<sup>37</sup> Bulgakov's Great Trilogy *On Divine Humanity* consists of three volumes: *The Lamb Of God* (1933), *The Comforter* (1936), *The Bride of the Lamb* (1945). The three volumes are on Christology, pneumatology and ecclesiology and eschatology respectively.

<sup>38</sup> Boris Jakim, "Translator's Introduction," in *The Bride of the Lamb* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), ix. See also, Boris Jakim, "Translator's Introduction," in *The Comforter* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), viii.; Boris Jakim, "Translator's Introduction," in *The Lamb of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), x.

<sup>39</sup> Jakim, "Translator's Introduction," xv. (*The Bride of the Lamb*)

<sup>40</sup> Cited in Antoine Arjakovsky, "Review of Sergeii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology, by Rowan Williams ed.," *The Ecumenical Review* 55, no. 3 (2003): 286.

<sup>41</sup> Cited in Saint Gregory Palamas, *Mary the Mother of God: Sermons by Saint Gregory Palamas*, ed. Christopher Veniamin (South Canaan, PA: Mount Thabor Publishing, 2005), vii.

<sup>42</sup> Rowan Williams, *Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), vii, 19.

of the Kingdom and as the only authentic token of immortality".<sup>43</sup> In his journal entry for Thursday, October 13, 1977, Schmemmann declared: "While rereading my articles, I realized that 'theologically,' I have one idea – the eschatological content of Christianity and of the Church as the presence in *this* world of the Kingdom, of the age to come".<sup>44</sup> This one idea rules all of Schmemmann's thought and embraces the two aspects of his theology in which we are most interested, namely his thoughts on Mary and the Holy Spirit and their implications for ecumenical unity. There are two principal sources for this in his works, a lecture on "Mary and the Holy Spirit" and his series of sermons on "The Mother of God".<sup>45</sup> It may seem strange to Western theologians to choose a liturgical theologian in order to explain what might be considered a "dogmatic" or systematic theological question. Schmemmann himself declares that the Church's liturgy (*leitourgia*) is "the full and adequate 'epiphany' – expression, manifestation, fulfillment of that in which the church believes, or what constitutes her faith".<sup>46</sup> He explains that liturgical theology is not about liturgy, but about theology:

liturgy is viewed as the *locus theologicus par excellence* because it is its very function, its *leitourgia* in the original naming of that word, to manifest and to fulfil the Church's faith and to manifest it not partially, not 'discursively,' but as living totality and catholic experience. And it is because liturgy is that living totality and that

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<sup>43</sup> John Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," in *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*, ed. Thomas Fisch (Crestwood, New York: 1990), 145.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann 1973-1983*, trans. Juliana Schmemmann (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), 174.

<sup>45</sup> The lecture on Mary and the Holy Spirit is one in a series of Mariological academic lectures addressed to a western audience. It was originally published in *Marian Studies* in 1972 (vol. 23) and reprinted in Alexander Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995). Schmemmann's sermon series on Mary the Mother of God was originally broadcast in Russian over Radio Liberty to listeners in the former Soviet Union. The first English translation of these sermons was published in 1995. See, Paul Meyendorff, "Foreward," in *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 7-8. It has been difficult to determine when the sermons were originally broadcast. Anatol Shmelev, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Project Archivist at Hoover Institution Archives, was unable to help since their cataloguing of RFE/RL tapes is still in infancy. Deborah Belonik, Associate Editor of St Vladimir's Seminary Press, regrettably, had no information on file that would indicate the exact dates that the sermons were broadcast. Serge Schmemmann, son of Alexander Schmemmann, was also unable to find out when the sermons were actually broadcast at the time.

<sup>46</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*, ed. Thomas Fisch (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), 39.

catholic experience of her own faith that it is the very *source* of theology, the condition that makes it *possible*. For if theology, as the Orthodox Church maintains, is not a mere sequence or more or less individual interpretations of this or that 'doctrine' in the light and thought forms of this or that 'culture' and 'situation,' but the attempt to express Truth itself, to find words adequate to the mind and experience of the Church, then it must of necessity have its source where the faith, the mind, and the experience of the Church have their living focus and expression, where faith in both essential meanings of that word, as Truth revealed and given, and as Truth accepted and 'lived,' has its *epiphany*, and that is precisely the function of the *leitourgia*.<sup>47</sup>

Commenting on Schmemmann's reflection on the theological dimension of the liturgy, Thomas Fisch writes: "He recognised that the renewal of the churches requires a rediscovery of the liturgy's own inherent theology which once informed the whole of the church's life as well as the teachings and writings of the Patristic age".<sup>48</sup> Schmemmann understands what it means to return to the Fathers - a return not simply to patristic texts, but to the patristic mind.<sup>49</sup>

The centrality of John Henry Newman to contemporary Catholic theology is undeniable. In his address to Newman scholars during the Cardinal Newman Academic Symposium in Rome in 1975, Paul VI declares that not only Vatican II, which considered many of the problems that Newman treated, such as ecumenism, but also the present time can be regarded as "Newman's hour".<sup>50</sup> He insists "it is precisely the present moment that suggests, in a particularly pressing and persuasive way, the study and diffusion of Newman's thought".<sup>51</sup> Continuing Paul VI's thought, John Paul II expresses similar sentiments in his letter on the occasion of the Centenary of Newman's Cardinalate in 1979. He writes: "The philosophical and theological thought and the spirituality of Cardinal

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<sup>47</sup> Schmemmann, *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*, 40.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Fisch, "Introduction: Schmemmann's Theological Contribution to the Liturgical Renewal of the Churches," in *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*, ed. Thomas Fisch (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), 4.

<sup>49</sup> Schmemmann, *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*, 42.

<sup>50</sup> Paul VI, "Holy Father to Newman Scholars: Cardinal Newman's thought and example relevant today," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)* 17 April 1975, 1.

<sup>51</sup> Paul VI, "Holy Father to Newman Scholars: Cardinal Newman's thought and example relevant today," 3.

Newman, so deeply rooted in and enriched by Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Fathers, still retain their particular originality and value".<sup>52</sup> John Paul II also expresses the hope that "the figure and teaching of the great Cardinal will continue to inspire an ever more effective fulfilment of the Church's mission in the modern world, and that it will help to renew the spiritual life of her members and hasten the restoration of unity among all Christians".<sup>53</sup> Cross likewise affirms the study and value of Newman's thought stating that Newman's influence, "while not yet exhausted, has even yet to reach its peak".<sup>54</sup>

Reflecting on Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar's theological work in his eulogy for Balthasar, "A Witness of Christ in the Church: Hans Urs von Balthasar", renowned French theologian Henri de Lubac underscores the value of his work and its importance in the exploitation of the conciliar texts of Vatican II, stating that:

there is not one of the subjects tackled by Vatican II that does not find a treatment in depth – and in the same spirit and sense as the Council – in his work ... Before the Fathers of the Council had insisted that the dominant role of Christ be recognized in the schemas on the Church and revelation, von Balthasar had seen the need. His voice was an advance echo, as it were, of the voices that were raised in St. Peter's to ask for an adequate statement of the role of the Holy Spirit. The Virgin Mary in the mystery of the Church, her prototype and anticipated consummation, is one of his favoured contemplations. Gently, but with all the force of love, he has denounced those eternal temptations of churchmen, 'power' and 'triumph', and has at the same time recalled to all the necessity of witnessing through 'service'.<sup>55</sup>

De Lubac maintains that Balthasar's theological approach sheds new light on the divine origin of Christian faith, frees the authenticity of Christian theology from

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<sup>52</sup> John Paul II, "Letter of Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the Centenary of the Cardinalate of J.H.Newman," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 21 May 1979, 5.

<sup>53</sup> John Paul II, "Letter of Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the Centenary of the Cardinalate of J.H.Newman," 5.

<sup>54</sup> Lawrence Cross, "John Henry Newman: A Father of the Church?," *Newman Studies Journal* 3, no. 1 (2006): 11.

<sup>55</sup> Henri de Lubac, "A Witness of Christ in the Church: Hans Urs von Balthasar" [http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library\\_article/757/Hans\\_Urs\\_von\\_Balthasar\\_Eulogy\\_de\\_Lubac.html](http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library_article/757/Hans_Urs_von_Balthasar_Eulogy_de_Lubac.html) (accessed 7 March 2010).



naturalistic and objectivistic consequences and sweeps away fearful conservatism.<sup>56</sup> Likewise, Pope Benedict XVI affirmed the importance of Balthasar when he spoke of the riches of Balthasar's theology in his message to the participants in the international convention on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of Hans Urs von Balthasar on October 6, 2005 and encouraged them to continue eagerly to study his work. In his words: "It is not to memories, however, that I wish to refer, but rather, to the riches of von Balthasar's theology ... I hope that you will continue with interest and enthusiasm to study von Balthasar's work and will find ways to apply it effectively".<sup>57</sup>

#### **d) Aims and Objectives of the Study**

This study understands that the figure and person of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a cherished element in all of the apostolic churches, East and West. It also understands that the various traditions have unique ways of understanding and expressing this foundational ecclesial element. This study aims to: i) investigate the deep significance of the Virgin Mother as both Mother of the Divine Redeemer and as Mother of all Christians, examining in particular the relationship of Mary and the Holy Spirit in the theologies of four contemporary theologians representing both the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches; ii) determine to what degree the insights of the four theologians can serve as signposts for the achievement of ecumenical unity through a particular emphasis on Mary and the Holy Spirit; iii) contribute towards a deeper understanding of the Blessed Virgin Mary both as the Mother of God and Mother of all Christians in the light of the theologies of the four theologians representing the Orthodox Christian East and the Roman Catholic

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<sup>56</sup> Lubac, "A Witness of Christ in the Church: Hans Urs von Balthasar" (accessed).

<sup>57</sup> Benedict XVI, "Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI for the Centenary of the Birth of Fr Hans Urs Von Balthasar" [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/pont-messages/2005/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20051006\\_von-balthasar\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/pont-messages/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20051006_von-balthasar_en.html) (accessed 27 November 2009).

West; iv) show that Mary must be linked both spiritually and theologically to the work of the restoration of full visible unity among Christians; iv) find a mutually acceptable understanding of the participation of the Virgin Mary in the economy of salvation.

The study argues that the most fruitful perspective through which to appreciate the person and work of the Holy Spirit is pre-eminently the Virgin Mother of Christ. As the disciples asked Christ to show them the Father (Jn 14:8), so the Christian asks Mary to show them the Holy Spirit.

It is envisaged that through this study: i) the members of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches will become more aware of their shared faith regarding Mary. This, in turn, should help both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians to grow to an even greater awareness of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ thus bringing them closer together; ii) Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians will be further encouraged to recognise and affirm the legitimate and different theological approaches of both Churches that help deepen their understanding of Mary as Mother of God and Mother of all Christians. This, in turn, should lead both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians to a greater acceptance of legitimate differences thus fostering the catholicity of the Church; iii) the Churches of the East and West will become more aware of the ecumenical dimension of theology and of its benefits. This, in turn, should encourage both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theologians to include aspects of both traditions in their teaching and future theological works thus promoting the preservation of the total heritage of Christ's Church.

#### **e) Research Questions**

The critical questions driving this study are: What do the theologies of the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches tell us about the relationship between Mary and

the Holy Spirit? What does the understanding of four representative theologians of this relationship bring to an illumination of the role of Mary and the Holy Spirit in the creation of Christian unity? To what extent does this impact on the relationship between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church at an ecclesial level?

#### **f) Scope and Methodology**

This study is developed in three stages and uses both historical and exegetical methods of enquiry. It begins with a discussion of the Second Vatican Council's Chapter VIII of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, and Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus: For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*. The documents *Lumen Gentium* and *Marialis Cultus* provide an "official" Roman Catholic perspective of contemporary Mariology. No similar "official" documents exist within Orthodox theological tradition. However the documents themselves show a high level of ecumenical sensitivity. It next examines in detail the theme of Mary and the Holy Spirit and its implications for Christian unity in the contemporary theologies of the two Eastern Orthodox and the two Roman Catholic theologians in the order noted above. It considers the theological insights of the four theologians on Mary and the Holy Spirit and their implications for ecumenical unity under the following headings: 1) The Holy Spirit; 2) Mary; 3) The Mary- Spirit Connection; 4) The Implications for Ecumenical Unity. This enables us to better compare their theological insights on Mary and the Holy Spirit and their implications for ecumenical unity. It must be recognised, however, that there will be some overlap in some areas. Finally, it brings together the theological insights of the four theologians, to determine to what degree the work of the four theologians can be directed to the cause of ecumenical unity, with a particular emphasis on Mary and the Holy Spirit.

*Chapter 1* provides a set of reference points for the role of Mariology in the ecumenical dialogue based on a detailed analysis of the Second Vatican Council's Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium* and a brief consideration of several themes in Paul VI's *Marialis Cultus*. *Chapter 2* uncovers and explains Bulgakov's theological insights on Mary and the Holy Spirit, which spring from both his Sophiology and personal story and which ranges from the creation of humankind to a consideration of its ultimate destiny, and its implications for ecumenical unity. *Chapter 3* explores Schmemmann's liturgical approach to Mary and the Holy Spirit, which is anchored in the total living eschatological experience of the Church, and its implications for ecumenical unity. *Chapter 4* considers Newman's broad, vivid, concrete and scriptural and patristic based approach to Mary and the Holy Spirit and its implications for ecumenical unity. *Chapter 5* examines Balthasar's theology of Mary and the Holy Spirit, which is influenced by mystic Adrienne von Speyr and which emphasises Mary's "holistic" *fiat*, and its implications for ecumenical unity. *Chapter 6* brings together the theological insights of the four theologians on Mary and the Holy Spirit and their implications for ecumenical unity to determine to what degree their theologies can be directed to the cause of ecumenical unity by reflecting back on the study and summarising and discussing the principal findings of the study and their implications. This chapter also offers a suggestion for future research.

The following abbreviations are cited in the text: *LG* *Lumen Gentium* and *MC* *Marialis Cultus*. Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version: Catholic Edition, *Anglicized Text*. Every attempt has been made to use inclusive language, except in the citation of texts.

## Chapter 2

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### 20<sup>th</sup> Century Roman Catholic Mariology from an Ecumenical Perspective

#### Introduction

As noted, the Orthodox Church has made no modern statements on the theme of Mary, the Mother of God, even though its devotion to her is as deep and as warm as that of the Roman Catholics. Orthodox thought on this theme is found in diffuse sources, such as liturgical texts and the work of individual saints and theologians, and in occasional patriarchal statements.<sup>58</sup> Modern Roman Catholics, however, do have many modern magisterial statements, two of the most important of which are Vatican II's Chapter VIII of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, and Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus: For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*.<sup>59</sup> These documents will now be examined in order to establish a set of reference points for the role of Mariology, both potential and actual, in the ecumenical dialogue of East and West. The reference points are intended to help determine how the

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<sup>58</sup> Such as Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I's Universal Lenten Encyclical on the Mother of God and Mother of Us All in the Order of Grace, March, 1998. Commenting on the letter published in *Mother of All Peoples*, the editor writes: "During the Lenten season of 1998, Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I promulgated the following profound letter on the nature of the Mother of God and her role in maternal mediation. Clearly, the Catholic and Orthodox union of mind and heart on Our Lady's universal mediation constitutes the quintessential means for ultimate Catholic-Orthodox unity". See, Bartholomew I, "Orthodox Patriarch on Maternal Mediation" <http://www.motherofallpeoples.com/articles/general-mariology/orthodox-patriarch-on-maternal-mediation.html> (accessed 14 July 2010).

<sup>59</sup> Other Roman Catholic Documents include: Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* (1854); Leo XIII's Encyclical *Supremi Apostolatus Officio* on Devotion of the Rosary (September 1, 1883); Encyclical *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum*: On the Immaculate Conception by Pius X (February 2, 1904); Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* (1950); Pius XII's Encyclical *Ad Caeli Reginam*: On Proclaiming the Queenship of Mary (October 11, 1954); Encyclical *Mense Maio* on the Occasion of the First of May by Paul VI (April 30, 1965); Paul VI's Encyclical *Signum Magnum*: The Great Sign (May 13, 1967); John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *A Concilio Constantinopolitano I* commemorating the 1600<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Council of Constantinople and the 1550<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Council of Ephesus (March 25, 1981); John Paul II's Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987); Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* by John Paul II (October 16, 2002); John Paul II's Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (April 17, 2003).

four theologians, representing both East and West, direct their respective theologies to the cause of ecumenical unity, with a particular emphasis on Mary and the Holy Spirit.

This examination will be presented under the following headings: 1) Preliminary remarks on these Marian Texts; 2) An Outline of Chapter 8, *Lumen Gentium*; 3) The Themes of *Marialis Cultus*; and 4) Summary and Conclusion.

## 1. Preliminary remarks on these Marian Texts

In his Address at the Closing of the Third Session of the Second Vatican Council on 21 November, 1964, Paul VI highlighted the value of Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*:

The very headstone of the Constitution *De Ecclesia* ... is the chapter dealing with the Blessed Virgin Mary. We are entitled to say that this session is being concluded with a matchless hymn in praise of the Virgin Mother of God. For the very first time – and it is not without emotion that I make this statement – an Ecumenical Council has produced a synthesis, a rich synthesis, of the Catholic teaching on the place to be assigned to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Mystery of Christ and the Church ... The Mother of God is closely connected with the Church: she is, to borrow a remarkable phrase, its 'greatest part, finest part, principal part, choicest part'.<sup>60</sup>

Paul VI's recognition of the importance of Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium* finds an echo in the Pastoral Letter of the National Conference of the United States Catholic Bishops *Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith* whose purpose is to share the teachings of the Church regarding Mary, express filial love for Mary, and emphasise that the Second Vatican Council had not downgraded devotion to the Mother of God.<sup>61</sup> The Pastoral Letter, referring to the Marian Chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, states: "This chapter, fashioned from the inspired texts of Sacred Scripture, the teachings of early Christian writers, and the practice and prayer life of the Church, is in reality a beautiful shrine in which the Mother

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<sup>60</sup> Paul VI, "Closure of the Third Session: Address of His Holiness Pope Paul VI," in *English Bishops at the Council: The Third Session of Vatican II*, ed. Derek Worlock (London: Burns & Oates, 1965), 178-179.

<sup>61</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1973), 1.

of Jesus is honored and from which she continues to speak to us with a mother's loving concern".<sup>62</sup>

The Second Vatican Council's historic decision to incorporate its treatment of Mary into its presentation of the mystery of the Church was achieved only with the narrowest majority - 1114 votes to 1074. It marked, however, a turning point in Roman Catholic Marian theology.<sup>63</sup> Prior to Vatican II, Marian theology had been somewhat isolated from the larger themes of the theology of salvation history, centred in the mystery of Christ. This was a result of an abstract and sterile scholastic theological method prevailed that considered Mary, her privileges and her titles separate from such theological themes as the Trinity, the Incarnation and Redemption, Grace, ecclesiology and eschatology. Vatican II ended this isolation, reintegrating Marian theology into a comprehensive theology of the history of salvation. While reflecting on the Council's new communal ecclesiology of the People of God, the Catholic theologian Wolfgang Beinert was able to assert that "the Mother of God does have a unique place; but it is a place *within* the Church".<sup>64</sup> Here we can see that the Roman Catholic Church has moved nearer to an "Orthodox" approach to Marian theology, than was previously the case. Vladimir Lossky defines this approach as follows:

The Orthodox Church has not made Mariology into an independent dogmatic theme: it remains integral to the whole of Christian teaching, as an anthropological *Leitmotif*. Based on Christology, the dogma of the Mother of God has a strong Pneumatological accent; and through the double economy of the Son and the Holy Spirit, it is bound up with ecclesiological reality.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith*, 1.

<sup>63</sup> Wolfgang Beinert, "Marian devotion: a pastoral opportunity," *Theology Digest* 29, no. 2 (1981): 156. See also, Stefano De Fiores, "Mary in Postconciliar Theology," in *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives: Twenty-Five Years After (1962-1987)*, ed. R Latourelle (Mahwah N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1988), 469-474.

<sup>64</sup> Beinert, "Marian devotion: a pastoral opportunity," 156.

<sup>65</sup> Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, ed. John H. Erickson and Thomas E. Bird (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 195.

This move toward Orthodoxy as made explicit in *Lumen Gentium* offers greater scope for Mariology in the dialogue between the two Churches. The revitalisation of Mariology within the Roman Catholic Church, however, was not an easy task. Paul VI's subsequent Apostolic Exhortation, *Marialis Cultus*, was issued in response to what was considered to be a crisis in Marian theology and in devotion to Mary in the Church between 1964 and 1974. Beinert captures the mood of the time in his description of the postconciliar period: "[t]he widespread praise of God's Mother – so strong under Pius XII – was replaced by a deep silence".<sup>66</sup> Mary was absent in ecumenical dialogue and in the large theological treatises on Christ and the Church.<sup>67</sup> There was a great deal of confusion among Catholics, both laity and clergy, because they "did not know what their attitude should be towards Mary after what took place in the Second Vatican Council".<sup>68</sup> *Marialis Cultus* "broke the deep silence and confirmed the Church's teaching regarding Mary".<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, it opened up a new anthropological view of the Mother of God.<sup>70</sup> Paul VI understood that the Marian crisis would "not be resolved by some well-balanced personal and structural reasoning that might attract acceptance within the Church, but by taking account of the full extent of the cultural changes taking place in our age".<sup>71</sup>

The following sections examine in more detail the exposition on Mary in *Lumen Gentium*, along with a brief consideration of a number of themes in Paul VI's *Marialis Cultus*. We will follow the structure outlined in *Lumen Gentium*: a) Introduction; b) Mary's Role in God's Plan of Redemption; c) Mary's Mediation and the Church; d) The Veneration of Mary in the Church; e) Mary, Sign of Hope and Comfort for the Pilgrim Church; and f) Mary and Ecumenism. In regard to *Marialis Cultus*, the following themes

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<sup>66</sup> Beinert, "Marian devotion: a pastoral opportunity," 156.

<sup>67</sup> Fiore, "Mary in Postconciliar Theology," 475.

<sup>68</sup> Antoine Nacheff, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary* (New York: St Pauls, 2002), 52-53.

<sup>69</sup> Nacheff, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 53.

<sup>70</sup> Fiore, "Mary in Postconciliar Theology," 523.

<sup>71</sup> Fiore, "Mary in Postconciliar Theology," 523.



will be noted: a) Mary in Christian Worship; b) Mary's Relationship with the Holy Spirit; and c) Marian Devotion and Ecumenism. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the themes derived from these texts.

## 2. An Outline of Chapter VIII, *Lumen Gentium*

### a) Introduction

The title of this chapter concisely suggests the approach that will be followed: "The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church". In its Marian chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, the Council states that, while clarifying Catholic teaching concerning the Church, it intends to describe both the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of the Incarnate Word and the Mystical Body, the Church, and the duties of the redeemed towards the Mother of God the Incarnate Word and Redeemer and Mother of the whole human race, particularly of the Christian faithful.<sup>72</sup>

The Council goes on to say that it does not intend to give a complete doctrine on Mary or settle those questions which require further theological illumination.<sup>73</sup> Catholic historical theologian Hilda Graef asserts: "This remark probably refers particularly to the questions of coredeemption and the mediation of all graces".<sup>74</sup> At this point it should be noted that the Second Vatican Council purposely avoids the term "co-redemptrix".<sup>75</sup> According to Jesuit theologian Otto Semmelroth, this term is intentionally avoided because it might "occasion a dangerous misunderstanding".<sup>76</sup> Leading Mariologist Mark Miravalle sheds clear light on the misunderstanding:

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<sup>72</sup> *LG*, 54.

<sup>73</sup> *LG*, 54.

<sup>74</sup> Hilda Graef, "Our Lady and the Church," in *Vatican II on the Church*, ed. A. Flannery (Dublin: Scepter Books, 1966), 137.

<sup>75</sup> Otto Semmelroth, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Chapter VIII," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (London: Burns & Oates, 1967), 288.

<sup>76</sup> Semmelroth, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Chapter VIII," 288.

The prefix 'co' does not mean equal, but comes from the Latin word, 'cum,' which means 'with'. The title of *Coredemptrix* applied to the Mother of Jesus *never places Mary on a level of equality with Jesus Christ, the divine Lord of all, in the saving process of humanity's redemption.* Rather it denotes Mary's singular and unique *sharing with her Son* in the saving work of redemption for the human family. The Mother of Jesus participates in the redemptive work of her *Saviour Son, who alone could reconcile humanity with the Father in his glorious divinity and humanity.* Jesus Christ, true God and true man, redeems the human family, *as the God-man.* Mary, who is *completely subordinate and dependent* to her redeeming Son even for her own human redemption, participates in the redemptive act of her Son as his exalted human mother.<sup>77</sup>

The Second Vatican Council, as will become clear, while not using the term "co-redemptrix", underscores Mary's active collaboration in the work of Redemption as completely subordinate and dependent on that of her Son the Redeemer.<sup>78</sup> The Council, in avoiding the term, echoes the ecumenical sentiment of the *Prænotanda* to the first conciliar draft *schema* on Mary: "Certain expressions and words used by Supreme Pontiffs have been omitted, which, in themselves are absolutely true, but which may only be understood with difficulty by separated brethren (in this case Protestants). Among such words may be numbered the following: "Coredemptrix of the human race".<sup>79</sup>

It appears that the Second Vatican Council has the Orthodox Church also in mind in its avoidance of the term "co-redemptrix". Orthodox Metropolitan Kallistos (Timothy) Ware, speaking as a member of the Orthodox Church in the context of his position on the current proposal to define Mary as Co-Redeemer, states that he has no objection to the title "Co-Redeemer", along with the related titles "Mediator of All Graces" and "Advocate of the People of God" in themselves provided that they are rightly understood.<sup>80</sup> He also

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<sup>77</sup> Mark Miravalle, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing, 1993), xv. Mary was given the title of Co-Redemptrix by Pope Pius XI in 1935.

<sup>78</sup> A Calkins, "The Mystery of Mary Coredemptrix in the Papal Magisterium," in *Mary: Co-Redemptrix Doctrinal Issues Today*, ed. Mark Miravalle (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing, 2002), 39.

<sup>79</sup> Cited in Calkins, "The Mystery of Mary Coredemptrix in the Papal Magisterium," 37.

<sup>80</sup> Kallistos of Diokleia, "No new dogmas please," *The Tablet*, 17 January 1998, 93. Also known as: Bishop

declares: "Any definition concerning Mary as Co-Redeemer and Mediator, however carefully hedged about by theological qualifications, will inevitably give rise to misunderstanding".<sup>81</sup>

In the opening statement of the Introduction to Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*, the Council declares that Mary has a unique place in the mystery of God's plan of redemption in these words: "Wishing in His supreme goodness and wisdom to effect the redemption of the world, 'when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman ... that we might receive the adoption of sons' (Gal. 4:4-5)".<sup>82</sup> Indeed, according to John Paul II, these words underscore Mary's privileged relationship with the Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

Everything in fact comes from the will of the Father, who has sent his Son into the world, revealing him to men and establishing him as the Head of the Church and the centre of history. This is a plan that was fulfilled by the Incarnation, the work of the Holy Spirit, but with the essential co-operation of a woman, the Virgin Mary, who thus became an integral part in the economy of communicating the Trinity to mankind.<sup>83</sup>

For the Council, this divine mystery of salvation, proclaimed in the Creeds, is revealed and continued in the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ.<sup>84</sup> In this Church, united to Christ the Head and in communion with all the saints, the faithful venerate the memory above all of the Virgin Mary because she is "truly the Mother of God and the Mother of the Redeemer".<sup>85</sup> At the Annunciation, she "received the Word of God in her heart and in her body, and gave Life to the world"<sup>86</sup>. Vatican II follows the theme of Mary's faith common in Antiquity, seeing Mary's acceptance of the Word of God as the very heart of her

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Kallistos; Ware, Kallistos; Ware, Timothy; and Kallistos of Diokleia.

<sup>81</sup> Kallistos of Diokleia, "No new dogmas please," 93.

<sup>82</sup> *LG*, 52.

<sup>83</sup> John Paul II, "Mary's Relationship with the Trinity," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 17 January 1996, 11.

<sup>84</sup> *LG*, 52.

<sup>85</sup> *LG*, 53. See also, *LG*, 55-56, 61.

<sup>86</sup> *LG*, 53.

motherhood in the Incarnation.<sup>87</sup> As *Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith* explains: "Mary consented *in faith* to become the Mother of Jesus ... She conceived in her heart, with her whole being, before she conceived in her womb. First came Mary's faith, then her motherhood".<sup>88</sup>

The Second Vatican Council underscores that Mary's privileges have their source in her divine motherhood:

Redeemed in an especially sublime manner by reason of the merits of her Son, and united to Him by a close and indissoluble tie, she is endowed with the supreme office and dignity of being the Mother of the Son of God. As a result she is also the favourite daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Because of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all other creatures, both in heaven and earth.<sup>89</sup>

The Council recognises that Mary is one with all human beings in their need for redemption because she belongs to the human race.<sup>90</sup> Citing Augustine, Vatican II declares that Mary is the mother of each individual Christian because she "cooperated out of love so that there might be born in the Church the faithful, who are members of Christ their Head".<sup>91</sup> Commenting on this aspect of Augustine's influence on the theological thought of the Second Vatican Council, Antoine Nacheff explains that

For him, Mary's universal motherhood comes from both her faith and her charity. She brought forth members of Christ thanks to her faith that was burning with charity. St Augustine's concept of *caritas* (charity or love) can be applied to the Divine Persons as well as to human beings. Charity, so to speak, is the engine that moves the faith and directs it to become a living witness of God's manifestation to us. In the case of Mary, her charity enables her to accept God's plan for her to be the Mother of His Son and to extend

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<sup>87</sup> Donal Flanagan, "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church," in *The Church: A Theological and Pastoral Commentary on the Constitution on the Church*, ed. Kevin McNamara (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1983), 339.

<sup>88</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith*, 27.

<sup>89</sup> *LG*, 53. See also, John Paul II, "Mary's Relationship with the Trinity," 11.

<sup>90</sup> *LG*, 53.

<sup>91</sup> *LG*, 53.

her motherhood to the members of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church.<sup>92</sup>

The Council concludes that Mary is a "pre-eminent and altogether singular member of the Church".<sup>93</sup> She is "the Church's model and excellent exemplar in faith and charity".<sup>94</sup> In Newman and Balthasar's theology, as we will see in Chapters Five and Six respectively, Mary is also an archetype of faith in the study of Divine Truth. Nacheff points out that in the theology of the Second Vatican Council Mary is not merely an outstanding model of faith and love for each person and the Church to follow:

Mary also *cooperates* in the birth of believers in the Church because her role is far more than just an invitation to people to conform themselves to her Son. Her cooperation indicates a dynamic presence in the Church with incomparable work in the faith of the people of God. Because of her charity she is dynamically present to the members of Christ's body as a model of faith. Mary cooperates in generating faith and making it grow in people's hearts. It is Mary's faith that constantly expresses itself in her charity and by this charity she 'joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head'.<sup>95</sup>

Vatican II acknowledged the Holy Spirit's guidance in its understanding of Mary as Mother of the Church: "Taught by the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church honors her with filial affection and piety as a most beloved mother".<sup>96</sup> Paul VI bestowed the title "Mother of the Church" on Mary in his closing address at the end of the third session of the Council on November 21, 1964. It is significant to note that the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), the Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) and that on the Eastern Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*) were all promulgated at the close of the

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<sup>92</sup> Nacheff, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 16.

<sup>93</sup> *LG*, 53. See also, *LG*, 63.

<sup>94</sup> *LG*, 53. See also, *LG*, 63-65, 67-68.

<sup>95</sup> Nacheff, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 17.

<sup>96</sup> *LG*, 53. See also, *LG*, 58, 60-63, 67.

same session of the Council.<sup>97</sup> The ecumenical emphasis of this, and of the following words in Paul VI's prayer at the end of his speech, is clear: "O, Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church ... Look with benign eyes on our separated brothers and condescend to unite us, you who brought forth Christ as a unity between God and men".<sup>98</sup>

### **b) Mary's Role in God's Plan of Redemption**

The Second Vatican Council connects the Old and the New Testaments in discerning the role of Mary in God's saving plan.<sup>99</sup> Reading the Old Testament in the light of the fullness of revelation of New Testament revelation in Christ, the Council concedes that Mary is "prophetically foreshadowed in that victory over the serpent which was promised to our first parents after their fall into sin (cf. 3:15)".<sup>100</sup> Likewise, Mary is the Virgin prefigured in the prophet Isaiah's words regarding the sign that God is with us: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" (Is 7:14; cf. Mic 5:2-3; Mt 1:22-23).<sup>101</sup> Thus, Mary "stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently await and receive salvation from Him".<sup>102</sup>

Mary is "the exalted Daughter of Sion" (cf. Joel 2:21; Zeph 3:14-17; Zech 9:9).<sup>103</sup> In her, all the promises of God to Israel are fulfilled and the new covenant established, at the Annunciation as the Son of God becomes flesh, in order to free humanity from sin.<sup>104</sup> Catholic theologian Anthony Kelly puts it well: "In this 'Virgin Daughter of Sion', all the

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<sup>97</sup> Walter Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), 741-742.

<sup>98</sup> Paul VI, "Mother of the Church" <http://www.users.qwest.net/~slrorer/MotherOfChurch.htm> (accessed 18 November 2008).

<sup>99</sup> *LG*, 55.

<sup>100</sup> *LG*, 55. See also, Vatican Council II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium Et Spes*)," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), No. 22. The Council states: "only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light".

<sup>101</sup> *LG*, 55.

<sup>102</sup> *LG*, 55.

<sup>103</sup> *LG*, 55.

<sup>104</sup> *LG*, 55.

hopes and faith of her people are condensed ... She stands both at the culminating point of the past history of divine promises, and at the beginning of their unheard-of fulfilment".<sup>105</sup>

Vatican II declares that Mary was predestined by God the Father to be Mother of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God.<sup>106</sup> This clearly echoes the words of John of Damascus in his reflection on the genealogy of Mary and Jesus: "She was predestined in the eternal foreknowing counsel of God".<sup>107</sup> According to the Council, Mary's consent precedes the Incarnation so that "just as a woman contributed to death, so also a woman would contribute to life".<sup>108</sup> This antithesis was verified by Mary because she gave Life to the world.<sup>109</sup> It is important to note that the two women, Eve and Mary, are contrasted in terms of death and life. This enables the theology of both East and West to engage in a more fruitful dialogue on original sin. Orthodoxy contrasts the two Adams, Adam and Christ, in terms of death and life. It understands, as Meyendorff points out, that "the inheritance from Adam is mortality, not guilt".<sup>110</sup> Consequently, the Orthodox Church has great difficulty with the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which states that "the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her Conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God and by virtue of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin".<sup>111</sup>

Vatican II emphasises that Mary was enriched by God with special gifts appropriate to her calling as Mother of God.<sup>112</sup> The Council reflects an ecumenical approach to Mariology as it proceeds to support the Marian doctrine, the Immaculate Conception of

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<sup>105</sup> Anthony Kelly, "Mary: Icon of Trinitarian Love"  
[http://www.acu.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/140527/Kelly\\_Mary\\_Icon\\_of\\_Trinitarian\\_Love.pdf](http://www.acu.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/140527/Kelly_Mary_Icon_of_Trinitarian_Love.pdf)  
 (accessed 21 July 2010).

<sup>106</sup> *LG*, 56.

<sup>107</sup> Saint John of Damascus, *Saint John of Damascus. Writings*, trans. Frederic H. Chase Jr, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 37 (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1958), 362.

<sup>108</sup> *LG*, 56.

<sup>109</sup> *LG*, 56.

<sup>110</sup> John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (London: Mowbrays, 1974), 147.

<sup>111</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second ed. (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, 2000), 124.

<sup>112</sup> *LG*, 56.

Mary, by drawing on patristic sources, common to both the West and the East. This, in itself, is an ecumenical approach to Mariology. The Council states that the Fathers called Mary "entirely holy and free from all stain of sin, fashioned by the Holy Spirit into a kind of new substance and new creation".<sup>113</sup> On this point, the Council refers to four of the Fathers of the Eastern Church, two examples of which we cite here: Andrew of Crete (c. 660-740) and Germanus of Constantinople (ca. 634 – 740). In his Canon on the Nativity of the Blessed Mother, Andrew proclaims: "Today, O Savior, you have given to pious Anne fruitful offspring of her womb, Your Immaculate Mother" (Ode 4); "O Virgin undefiled, undefiled is your birth" (Ode 5).<sup>114</sup> In his second sermon on the Dormition of the Mother of God, in which he addresses Mary on behalf of Christians who regard Mary with awe in their faith, Germanus says:

Let death pass you by, O Mother of God, because you have brought life to men. Let the tomb pass you by, because you have been made the foundation stone of inexplicable sublimity. Let the dust pass you by; for you are a new kind of formation, so that you may be mistress over those who have been corrupted in the very stuff of their potter's clay ... Painful though it be for the soul to be drawn away from the body, O Most Immaculate Lady, it is far more painful to be deprived of you.<sup>115</sup>

Clearly, East and West both agree that Mary was pure and immaculate, overshadowed by the power of the Most High. Vatican II's observation that the Fathers spoke of Mary as "all-holy" and "free from all stain of sin" opens another door to an authentic dialogue between East and West.<sup>116</sup> According to Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, who draws on Martin Jugie, a scholar of Eastern Christianity, the theological concept that Adam

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<sup>113</sup> *LG*, 56.

<sup>114</sup> *LG*, 56. Cited in William Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Church Fathers*, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1979), 326.

<sup>115</sup> *LG*, 56. Cited in Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Church Fathers*, 327. See also, Germanus of Constantinople, "On the Most Venerable Dormition of the Holy Mother of God," in *On The Dormition Of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 163-165. In this translation of Brian Daley, Homily I contains two parts although it is presented as a single work. See page 167.

<sup>116</sup> *LG*, 56.



transmitted an original stain to all humanity, with the exception of Mary, was foreign to the East.<sup>117</sup> Mary was the All-Pure, without speculation as to the moment when she was purified from original sin.<sup>118</sup> Following Vatican II's approach to Mary, John Paul II, in his General Audience of 12 June 1996, insists that the negative formulation of Mary's unique privilege of the Immaculate Conception, which stresses Mary's freedom from all stain of original sin, and which arose in the West, "must always be complemented by the positive expression of Mary's holiness more explicitly stressed in the Eastern tradition".<sup>119</sup> In Bulgakov's theology, as we shall see in Chapter Three, personal sinlessness can be combined with the presence of original sin. The Mother of God was personally sinless while remaining subject to original sin.<sup>120</sup> This Orthodox understanding of the Mother of God, which is based on a different teaching on original sin, respects the human freedom and dignity of Mary and the fact that salvation is grounded upon our humanity assumed by the Saviour.

It is necessary to provide here at least some comment about the East's theology of Mary as *Panagia*, if the reader is to understand the Eastern approach to Mary's all holiness. The Orthodox Church calls Mary *Panagia* or "All-Holy One".<sup>121</sup> It is a much loved title for Mary in the East and can be found in the Divine Liturgies of St John Chrysostom (354-407) and St Basil the Great (c.330-379), when the faithful are called to "remember our all-holy, spotless, most highly blessed Lady the Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary".<sup>122</sup> Mary is All-Holy because "[a]mong all God's creatures, she is the supreme example of

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<sup>117</sup> Marie-Helene Congourdeau, "Conception of the Virgin Mary: Byzantium," in *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages* ed. Andre Vauchez (Paris: Editions Du Cerf, 2000), 348.

<sup>118</sup> Congourdeau, "Conception of the Virgin Mary: Byzantium," 348.

<sup>119</sup> John Paul II, "Immaculate Conception defined by Pius IX," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 19 June 1996, 11.

<sup>120</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, *The Friend of the Bridegroom*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 20-21.

<sup>121</sup> Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, New ed. (London: Penguin Group, 1997), 258-259.

<sup>122</sup> Joseph Raya and Jose De Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship* (Allendale, N.J.: Alleluia Press, 1969), 262, 306. From Chrysostom and Basil respectively.

synergy or co-operation between the purpose of the deity and human freedom".<sup>123</sup> Her all-holiness is her free, active and total consent to the Incarnation.<sup>124</sup> The question arises: Does the West understand Mary's all-holiness in the same way as the East? Vatican II touches on the answer to this question as it proceeds to emphasise the divine gift of Mary's unique holiness. Aaron Riches states that "the Orthodox tradition can be understood as conceiving the holiness of Mary in terms of 'act', while the Latin tradition emphasized the immaculate status of Mary's 'being'".<sup>125</sup>

The Council emphasises that Mary was "[a]dorned by God from the first instant of her conception with the splendors of an entirely unique holiness".<sup>126</sup> In the mystery of Christ she is greeted by the divine messenger, Gabriel, as "full of grace" (Lk 1:28).<sup>127</sup> The meaning of "full of grace" is explained by John Paul II in his encyclical of 25 March, 1987, *Redemptoris Mater*, which Italian theologian Achille Triacca describes as "the most authoritative comment on *Lumen Gentium*".<sup>128</sup> Concerning grace, John Paul II writes:

In the language of the Bible "grace" means a special gift, which according to the New Testament has its source precisely in the Trinitarian life of God himself, God who is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:8). The fruit of this love is 'the election' of which the Letter to the Ephesians speaks. On the part of God, this election is the eternal desire to save man through a sharing in his own life (cf. 2 Pt. 1:4) in Christ: it is salvation through a sharing in supernatural life. The effect of this eternal gift, of this grace of man's election by God, is like a seed of holiness, or a spring which rises in the soul as a gift from God himself, who through grace gives life and holiness to those who are chosen. In this way there is fulfilled ... that 'blessing' of man 'with every spiritual blessing', that 'being his

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<sup>123</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 258-259.

<sup>124</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 258-259.

<sup>125</sup> Aaron Riches, "Deconstructing the Linearity of Grace: The Risk and Reflexive Paradox of Mary's Immaculate Fiat," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10, no. 2 (2008): 182.

<sup>126</sup> *LG*, 56.

<sup>127</sup> *LG*, 56.

<sup>128</sup> Cited in Antoine Nacheff, *Mary's Pope: John Paul II, Mary, and the Church since Vatican II* (Franklin, Wisconsin: Sheed and Ward, 2000), 5.

adopted sons and daughters ... in Christ,' in him who is eternally the 'beloved Son' of the Father.<sup>129</sup>

John Paul II goes on to point out that Mary's greeting by Gabriel as "full of grace" (*kecharitoméne*) is an exceptional and unique blessing because "[i]n the mystery of Christ Mary is present even 'before the creation of the world', as one whom the Father 'has chosen' as Mother of his Son in the Incarnation".<sup>130</sup> He also adds: "And, what is more, together with the Father, the Son has chosen her, entrusting her eternally to the Spirit of holiness".<sup>131</sup>

The Second Vatican Council stresses that Mary's cooperation in the Redemption did not cease with her *fiat* at the Annunciation by describing her close association with her divine Son, the Redeemer, as a pilgrimage of faith.<sup>132</sup> Semmelroth's encapsulation of the Council's portrayal of Mary's pilgrimage of faith in the following statement in his commentary on Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*, serves as a good introduction in this regard:

The spirit of Mary's assent to the Incarnation carries through all the events that interweave her life with the Lord's. We are given as it were samples of them, and they all sound the same note – a blend of the receptive faith in which she shares the life, work, and sufferings of her Son, and the meaning this share of hers has for the rest of men.<sup>133</sup>

Vatican II teaches that Mary embraced the saving will of God with her whole heart devoting herself totally "as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son".<sup>134</sup>

As stated before, the Council understands that Mary served the mystery of Redemption

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<sup>129</sup> John Paul II, "Redemptoris Mater"

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_25031987\\_redemptoris-mater\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031987_redemptoris-mater_en.html) (accessed 2009 6 January). (Hereafter cited as *RM* followed by paragraph number).

<sup>130</sup> *RM*, 8, 9.

<sup>131</sup> *RM*, 8, 9.

<sup>132</sup> *LG*, 58. See also, Miravalle, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, xv.

<sup>133</sup> Semmelroth, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Chapter VIII," 289.

<sup>134</sup> *LG*, 56.

under and with her Son, the Redeemer, through the grace of Almighty God.<sup>135</sup> The Council proceeds to emphasise Mary's active cooperation in the work of human Redemption through faith and obedience by drawing on the teachings of the ancient Fathers.<sup>136</sup> Here, the Council cites Irenaeus of Lyon (c.130-c.200), "the earliest and strongest bridge between east and west".<sup>137</sup> Mary, "being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race".<sup>138</sup> It also states that many Fathers concur with Irenaeus that "The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience. What the virgin Eve bound through her unbelief, Mary loosened by her faith".<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, the Council once again citing several Fathers reinforces the antithesis of "death through Eve, life through Mary".<sup>140</sup>

Drawing on Scripture, the Council underscores Mary's personal union with Jesus in the work of salvation.<sup>141</sup> This, in itself, is also an ecumenical approach to Mariology. The Council shows that Mary was closely associated with Jesus in the work of redemption from the moment He was conceived to the moment of His death on the Cross.<sup>142</sup> At the Visitation, Elizabeth calls Mary blessed because she "believed in the promise of salvation, while the precursor leaped with joy in the womb of his mother (cf. Lk 1:41-45)".<sup>143</sup> She confirms Mary's response in faith to the Incarnation, the gift of Christ, and acknowledges and proclaims that Mary is the Mother of the Lord, the Messiah. Elizabeth's unborn child John the Baptist, the Precursor or Forerunner of the Lord, also shares in this witness in her womb.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, at the Birth of Jesus, Mary joyfully shows Jesus, her first-born Son, to

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<sup>135</sup> *LG*, 56.

<sup>136</sup> *LG*, 56. See also, Calkins, "The Mystery of Mary Coredemptrix in the Papal Magisterium," 39.

<sup>137</sup> Murphy-O'Connor Jerome, *Paul His Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 238.

<sup>138</sup> *LG*, 56.

<sup>139</sup> *LG*, 56.

<sup>140</sup> *LG*, 56.

<sup>141</sup> *LG*, 57. See also, Calkins, "The Mystery of Mary Coredemptrix in the Papal Magisterium," 40.

<sup>142</sup> *LG*, 57-58. See also, Calkins, "The Mystery of Mary Coredemptrix in the Papal Magisterium," 40.

<sup>143</sup> *LG*, 57.

<sup>144</sup> *LG*, 57. See also, *RM*, 12.

the shepherds (cf. Lk 2:8-19) and the Magi from the East (cf. Mt 2:1-12).<sup>145</sup> Indeed, Mary is the truest daughter of Abraham, and therefore the New Israel of God. Just like Abraham, she too believed in face of the impossible.

At the presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Mary hears Simeon's prophecy that her child "would be a sign of contradiction and that a sword would pierce the mother's soul, that out of many hearts thoughts might be revealed (cf. Lk 2:34-35)".<sup>146</sup> She discovers that "she will have to live her obedience of faith in suffering, at the side of the suffering Saviour, and that her motherhood will be mysterious and sorrowful".<sup>147</sup> In other words, Mary recognises that her faith will be tested.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, at the finding of Jesus in the Temple, Mary does not understand what Jesus means when He says: "I must be in my Father's house?" (Lk 2: 49). Nevertheless, Mary "treasured all these things in her heart" (Lk 2:51).

Mary is present with Jesus at the beginning of His public life at the wedding at Cana, where her intercession moves Him to perform His first miracle (cf. Jn 2:1-11).<sup>149</sup> John Paul II, in his reflection on Mary at Cana in Galilee, captures something of the profound depth of Mary's relationship with Jesus: "What deep understanding existed between Jesus and his mother? How can we probe the mystery of their intimate spiritual union?"<sup>150</sup> Next, Jesus praises His Mother in His preaching when He declares that His family are those who hear God's Word and keep it (cf. Mk 3:35; Lk 11:27-28), as Mary kept and pondered all these things in her heart (cf. Lk 2:19, 51).<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> *LG*, 57.

<sup>146</sup> *LG*, 57.

<sup>147</sup> *RM*, 16.

<sup>148</sup> Nacheff, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 32.

<sup>149</sup> *LG*, 58.

<sup>150</sup> *RM*, 21.

<sup>151</sup> *LG*, 58. See also, Nacheff, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 33.

Mary "advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and loyally persevered in union with her Son unto the Cross".<sup>152</sup> Here, in keeping with God's plan, suffering with Jesus, she united herself with His sacrifice and lovingly consented to it for the salvation of the human race.<sup>153</sup> Also, as Jesus was dying on the Cross, He gave Mary to John as a mother, when He said: "Woman, here is your son" (Jn 19:26-27).<sup>154</sup>

Mary prayerfully implores the gift of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit who had previously descended upon and overshadowed her at the Annunciation, with the disciples in the Upper Room before Pentecost (Acts 1:14).<sup>155</sup> In Bulgakov's theology, as we will see in Chapter Three, Pentecost is directly associated with the Incarnation. Bulgakov addresses the following questions which he himself raises in this regard: "In what manner can the temple of God, the receptacle of the Holy Spirit, need a new descent of the Holy Spirit? How is Pentecost possible for the Ever-Virgin after the Annunciation?"<sup>156</sup>

For the Council, Mary's pilgrimage of faith reached its end at the Assumption when she was taken up, body and soul, into the glory of Heaven.<sup>157</sup> Vatican II further asserts that Mary is universal Queen not only because she is the Mother of God, but also because she co-operated with her Son, the Redeemer, in the work of human Redemption: "She was exalted by the Lord as Queen of all, in order that she might be the more thoroughly conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords (cf. Apoc. 19:16) and the conqueror of sin and death".<sup>158</sup> The source and power of Mary's co-operation, as Miravalle reminds us, is the

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<sup>152</sup> *LG*, 58.

<sup>153</sup> *LG*, 58. See also, *RM*, 18.

<sup>154</sup> *LG*, 58.

<sup>155</sup> See also, Nachev, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 35.

<sup>156</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 100.

<sup>157</sup> *LG*, 59. See also, Nachev, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 36.

<sup>158</sup> *LG*, 59. See also, John Paul II, "Christians look to Mary Queen," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 30 July 1997, 7.

Holy Spirit: "It is the Holy Spirit, the Divine Spouse of Mary, who prepares and sustains Mary at each stage of her coredemptive role".<sup>159</sup>

### c) **Mary's Mediation and the Church**

Citing the First Letter to Timothy, the Second Vatican Council declares that "there is one mediator between God and humankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all' (1 Tim 2:5-6)".<sup>160</sup> Reflecting on this point, Nacheff explains that Christ "alone brought about our salvation. No one but the God-man Jesus Christ is able to execute, accomplish, and fulfill the redemption of the human race. Christ and Christ alone destroys the power of evil and brings men back to the Father in the Holy Spirit".<sup>161</sup>

Mary's mediation takes nothing away from and adds nothing to this unique mediation of Christ because all her "salutary influence on men and women originates not in any inner necessity but in the disposition of God".<sup>162</sup> As Nacheff puts it, "Mary is not a mediator by nature like Christ; she is a mediator because Christ wanted her to be".<sup>163</sup>

Because Mary's saving influence originates in God's good pleasure, "[i]t flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. It does not hinder in any way the immediate union of the faithful with Christ but on the contrary fosters it".<sup>164</sup> John Paul II, continuing the Council's approach, perceives that "[t]his saving influence is sustained by the Holy Spirit, who, just as he overshadowed the Virgin Mary when he began in her the divine

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<sup>159</sup> Miravalle, *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate*, 5.

<sup>160</sup> *LG*, 60.

<sup>161</sup> Nacheff, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 38.

<sup>162</sup> *LG*, 60.

<sup>163</sup> Nacheff, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 41.

<sup>164</sup> *LG*, 60. See also, Nacheff, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 40-41.

motherhood, in a similar way sustains her solicitude for the brothers and sisters of her Son".<sup>165</sup>

Vatican II teaches that Mary is the Spiritual Mother of all Christians because she "co-operated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls".<sup>166</sup> Eternally predestined by the Father to be the Mother of God, Mary consented to the mystery of the Incarnation of His Son.<sup>167</sup> Thus, as the loving Mother of Jesus Christ on earth, Mary was a distinctively gracious associate of the divine Redeemer and humble servant of the Lord.<sup>168</sup> "She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ. She presented Him to the Father in the temple, and was united with Him in suffering as He died on the cross".<sup>169</sup> This teaching is well captured in the following words of John Paul II in his General Audience of 24 September, 1997, on Mary's universal spiritual motherhood:

Mary's co-operation was inspired by the Gospel virtues of obedience, faith, hope and charity, and was accomplished under the influence of the Holy Spirit ... the gift of her universal spiritual motherhood stems precisely from this co-operation: associated with Christ in the work of Redemption, which includes the spiritual regeneration of humanity, she becomes mother of those reborn to new life.<sup>170</sup>

For the Council, Mary's spiritual motherhood, which began with her consent in faith at the Annunciation and which she maintained beneath the Cross, continues "without interruption until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect".<sup>171</sup> She continues this saving role in Heaven through her manifold intercession which brings us the "gifts of eternal

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<sup>165</sup> *RM*, 38, See also, Nachev, *Mary's Pope: John Paul II, Mary, and the Church since Vatican II*, 168-169.

<sup>166</sup> *LG*, 61.

<sup>167</sup> *LG*, 61.

<sup>168</sup> *LG*, 61.

<sup>169</sup> *LG*, 61. See also, Nachev, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 43.

<sup>170</sup> John Paul II, "Mary has universal spiritual motherhood," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 1 October 1997, 11.

<sup>171</sup> *LG*, 62.



salvation".<sup>172</sup> Mary is a loving Mother. She cares for all her sons and daughters in Christ who are still on their pilgrimage here on earth to Heaven.<sup>173</sup> As Semmelroth explains

Mary's spiritual motherhood is a reality here and now ... Just as Christ, the eternal priest, stands before God with his work of redemption, pleading his sacrifice in men's behalf (cf. Heb 8-10), our constant intercessor (Heb 7:25) and advocate (1 Jn 2:1), so Mary's share in the redemptive work of Christ - and that of the other saints in their own measure - continues in intercessory existence before God. Not only is Mary able to act as intercessor for men in heaven *because* she was connected with Christ and his work on earth; *what* she did on earth in connection with Christ and his work is present to the Father as a mother's concern for the brothers of her Son who are still on pilgrimage.<sup>174</sup>

Thus, the Church invokes Mary "under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix [Helper], Adjutrix [Benefactress], and Mediatrix".<sup>175</sup> In his consideration on Mary's universal spiritual motherhood, already noted above, John Paul II presented a brief explanation of each of these Marian titles. It will be valuable to note them here since they provide a deeper understanding of the nature of Mary's intercession in the life of the Church and the believer.<sup>176</sup> As Advocate, Mary cooperates both with the Holy Spirit and with her Son who, when dying on the Cross, pleaded for his persecutors, in his prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:24).<sup>177</sup> In her role as a Mother, Mary "defends her children and protects them from the harm caused by their own sins".<sup>178</sup> As Helper, she sees the needs of the faithful and is ready to "come to their aid, especially when their eternal salvation is at stake".<sup>179</sup> As Benefactress, Mary assists "those who suffering or in situations of serious danger".<sup>180</sup> At this point John Paul II recalls the oldest

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<sup>172</sup> LG, 62.

<sup>173</sup> LG, 62..

<sup>174</sup> Semmelroth, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Chapter VIII," 291.

<sup>175</sup> LG, 62.

<sup>176</sup> John Paul II, "Mary has universal spiritual motherhood," 11.

<sup>177</sup> John Paul II, "Mary has universal spiritual motherhood," 11.

<sup>178</sup> John Paul II, "Mary has universal spiritual motherhood," 11.

<sup>179</sup> John Paul II, "Mary has universal spiritual motherhood," 11.

<sup>180</sup> John Paul II, "Mary has universal spiritual motherhood," 11.

known prayer to Mary, the *Sub tuum praesidium*, which expresses the Church's deep trust and confidence in Mary's powerful assistance: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin".<sup>181</sup>

Finally, John Paul II states that "[a]s maternal Mediatrix, Mary presents our desires and petitions to Christ, and transmits the divine gifts to us, interceding continually on our behalf".<sup>182</sup> One example of many prayers from both the Roman Rite and the Byzantine Eastern Rite, which we cite here, respectively reflect this: "Lord, as we honour the glorious memory of the virgin Mary, we ask that by the help of her prayers we too may come to share the fullness of your grace"<sup>183</sup>; and "The Universe recognises in you, O Woman full of grace, the marvel of marvels, and it rejoices. You have borne without human seed the One whom even the highest ranks of angels cannot look upon, and you have given Him birth in a manner beyond understanding. Intercede with Him for the salvation of our souls".<sup>184</sup>

As stated before, the Council understands that Mary's mediation neither lessens nor enhances the unique mediation of the Redeemer, however, the Council recognises it is possible to participate in Christ's unique mediation.<sup>185</sup> This can be likened to the sharing in Christ's priesthood:

just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by the sacred ministers and by the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is in reality communicated diversely to His creatures, so also the unique mediation of the redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise among creatures to a manifold co-operation which is but a sharing in this unique source.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> John Paul II, "Mary has universal spiritual motherhood," 11. See also, Ignazio Calabuig, "The Liturgical Cult of Mary in the East and West," in *Handbook For Liturgical Studies: Liturgical Time and Space*, ed. Anscar Chupungco (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 232.

<sup>182</sup> John Paul II, "Mary has universal spiritual motherhood," 62.

<sup>183</sup> *The Weekday Missal*, 431.

<sup>184</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 410.

<sup>185</sup> *LG*, 62.

<sup>186</sup> *LG*, 62.

Because Mary's sharing in the one mediation of Christ is connected to her motherhood, the Church professes Mary's role as Mediatrix. Vatican II adds that the Church "experiences it continuously and commends it to the hearts of the faithful, so that encouraged by this maternal help they may more closely adhere to the Mediator and Redeemer".<sup>187</sup> It is obvious here that Mary's mediation is much more than a theological idea. It is the living "experience" of the Church. Both East and West, as Cross points out, have deep roots in Patristic theology, which "is experiential rather than intellectual, flowing into the realm of the mystical".<sup>188</sup> Unlike the West's approach to theology, which was largely shaped by the reception of Aristotelian philosophy, the East's approach to theology has remained closer to this Patristic tradition.<sup>189</sup> As Lossky affirms, the Eastern Orthodox Church "makes no distinction between theology and mysticism, between the realm of the common faith and that of personal experience".<sup>190</sup> Thus, Vatican II's move towards the Eastern tradition encourages Roman Catholic-Orthodox dialogue on Mary. Schmemmann's theology, as we will see in Chapter Four, is accordingly deeply experiential.

Mary's motherhood connects her to Christ and to the Church.<sup>191</sup> At this point, the Second Vatican Council refers to Ambrose (c. 338 - 397) who taught that Mary is a model of the Church in her faith, love and total union with Christ.<sup>192</sup> Here it sees Mary as a type or figure of the Church because in the mystery of the Church, which is also both mother and virgin, she is the eminent and extraordinary exemplar of both virginity and motherhood.<sup>193</sup> Through her faith and obedience to God's Word she conceived Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the Blessed Virgin is the Spiritual Mother of the faithful

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<sup>187</sup> *LG*, 62.

<sup>188</sup> Lawrence Cross, "Theology East and West: Difference and Harmony," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 71 (2006): 67.

<sup>189</sup> Cross, "Theology East and West: Difference and Harmony," 67.

<sup>190</sup> Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002), 14.

<sup>191</sup> *LG*, 63. See also, Nachev, *The Faith of Mary: Vatican II Insights on the Humanity of Mary*, 45.

<sup>192</sup> *LG*, 63. St. Ambrose, *Expos. Lc. II. 7: PL* 15, 1555.

<sup>193</sup> *LG*, 63.

because she was the new Eve who placed all her trust, not in the ancient serpent, but in the messenger from God.<sup>194</sup> Her Son is "the first-born within a large family" (Rom 8:29), in whose birth and development she co-operates with a mother's love.<sup>195</sup>

The Second Vatican Council teaches that the Church is mother because she accepts the Word of God in faith.<sup>196</sup> By preaching and Baptism she brings forth sons and daughters of God through the Holy Spirit.<sup>197</sup> As John Paul II puts it, "the Church is a mother because she gives spiritual birth to Christ in the faithful, thus carrying out her maternal role of the members of the Mystical Body".<sup>198</sup> The Church is also virgin because she "keeps whole and pure the fidelity she has pledged to her Spouse".<sup>199</sup> Following Mary as her model and through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church preserves her integral faith, firm hope and sincere charity.<sup>200</sup>

In Mary, the Church has already reached her own perfection.<sup>201</sup> Thus, the faithful, who still strive to become more holy by overcoming sin, look constantly to Mary as a model of every Christian virtue.<sup>202</sup> Contemplating Mary in the light of the mystery of the Incarnation, the Church enters more closely into this mystery and becomes more like Christ.<sup>203</sup> Semmelroth puts it well, "Mary stands before her as the image in which the Church can gaze upon her own perfection fully achieved, the ideal she must pursue in order to reach her goal ... By leading a Marian life the Church encounters Christ her bridegroom and is more and more transformed into his likeness".<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> *LG*, 63.

<sup>195</sup> *LG*, 63. See also, Semmelroth, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Chapter VIII," 293-294.

<sup>196</sup> *LG*, 64.

<sup>197</sup> *LG*, 64.

<sup>198</sup> John Paul II, "Mary is model for Church's motherhood," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 27 August 1997, 9.

<sup>199</sup> *LG*, 64.

<sup>200</sup> *LG*, 64.

<sup>201</sup> *LG*, 65.

<sup>202</sup> *LG*, 65.

<sup>203</sup> *LG*, 65.

<sup>204</sup> Semmelroth, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Chapter VIII," 294.

Because Mary played a significant role in the redemption of the human race, she "unites and mirrors within herself the central truths of the faith."<sup>205</sup> Consequently, when Mary is being proclaimed and venerated she calls the believers to Christ and His redeeming sacrifice and to love for the Father.<sup>206</sup> Pursuing Christ's glory, the Church becomes more like Mary. She "continually progresses in faith, hope and love, searching out and doing the will of God in all things".<sup>207</sup> The Church also sees Mary as the model of her apostolic work because she conceived Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and brought Him forth, "so that through the Church Christ may be born and grow in the hearts of the faithful".<sup>208</sup> As Semmelroth has it, "[w]hen the Church bestows supernatural life upon men in her bosom she is the fruitful mother prefigured by Mary".<sup>209</sup>

#### **d) The Veneration of Mary in the Church**

The cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Church is the most common meeting point between East and West. Mary is venerated in the Church above all the angels and saints, according to the Second Vatican Council, because she is the Mother of God.<sup>210</sup> As the Mother of God who was most closely involved in the mystery of the Incarnation, she occupies the highest place after Jesus in the Church.<sup>211</sup> Since its early times, the Church has venerated her as the "Mother of God" and the faithful have, as the *Sub tuum praesidium* affirms, prayerfully sought her protection when they were in danger or in need.<sup>212</sup> Vatican II sees the significant increase in the veneration of Mary, especially after she was formally declared the Mother of God by the Council of Ephesus in 341 AD, as a

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<sup>205</sup> LG, 65.

<sup>206</sup> LG, 65.

<sup>207</sup> LG, 65.

<sup>208</sup> LG, 65.

<sup>209</sup> Semmelroth, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Chapter VIII," 294.

<sup>210</sup> LG, 66. See also, Semmelroth, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Chapter VIII," 295.

<sup>211</sup> LG, 66, See also, LG, 54.

<sup>212</sup> LG, 66.

reflection of Mary's own prophecy in the Magnificat that "All generations shall call me blessed; because He who is mighty has done great things for me" (Lk 1:48).<sup>213</sup>

This special veneration of Mary, which is essentially different from the adoration offered to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, leads to the adoration of the Trinity.<sup>214</sup> Also, the Church's many and varied approved forms of true devotion to Mary cause Jesus to be known, loved and glorified, and His commandments kept.<sup>215</sup> *As Behold You Mother: Woman of Faith* explains:

To venerate Mary correctly means to acknowledge her Son, for she is the Mother of God. To love her means to love Jesus, for she is always the Mother of Jesus. To pray to our Lady means not to substitute her for Christ, but to glorify her Son who desires us to have loving confidence in His Saints, especially in His Mother. To imitate the "faithful Virgin" means to keep her Son's commandments.<sup>216</sup>

Accordingly, the Second Vatican Council calls upon the whole Church to generously promote the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of Mary.<sup>217</sup> The striking feature of this exhortation concerns the area in which the cult of Mary is to be particularly developed. The Mother of God occupies a prominent place in the Eastern liturgy. For example, icons of the Mother of God are found on the iconostasis, the solid screen which divides the sanctuary from the body of the church, and in various places in the church; there are many feasts and days especially consecrated to the Virgin Mary; and, every Office contains countless prayers to the Virgin Mary.<sup>218</sup> This would lead us to believe that Mary is a touchstone of true apostolic Christianity. Paralleling Mary's role in guaranteeing Christ's

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<sup>213</sup> *LG*, 66.

<sup>214</sup> *LG*, 66.

<sup>215</sup> *LG*, 66.

<sup>216</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith*, 31.

<sup>217</sup> *LG*, 66.

<sup>218</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988), 118.

humanity in the Christological controversies, Mary's veneration in the Churches is a sure sign of their apostolic catholicity.

The Council Fathers urge the faithful to cherish the various forms of Marian devotion that have been approved by the Church.<sup>219</sup> One of these approved forms of devotion to Mary is the Rosary.<sup>220</sup> In addition, the faithful are to follow the decrees issued in the early Church regarding the veneration of images (icons) of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints.<sup>221</sup> On this point, the Council refers to the Second Council of Nicaea (787 A.D.) and the Council of Trent (1545-1547). We cite here extracts from each of the decrees. Nicaea II declared:

that like the figure of the honoured and life-giving cross, the revered and holy images, whether painted or made of mosaic or of other suitable material, are to be exposed in the holy churches of God, on sacred instruments and vestments, on walls and panels, in houses and by public ways; these are the images of our Lord, God and saviour, Jesus Christ, and of Our Lady without blemish, the holy God-bearer, and of the revered angels and of any of the saintly holy men.<sup>222</sup>

Nicaea II goes on to add: "The more frequently they are seen in representational art, the more are those who see them drawn to remember and long for those who serve as models, and to pay these images the tribute of salutation and respectful veneration".<sup>223</sup> Similarly, Trent declared: "images of Christ, the virgin mother of God and the other saints should be set up and kept, particularly in churches, and that due honour and reverence is owed to them".<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> *LG*, 67.

<sup>220</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith*, 35-37.

<sup>221</sup> *LG*, 67.

<sup>222</sup> Second Council of Nicaea, "Second Council of Nicaea," in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. N. P. Tanner (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 135-136.

<sup>223</sup> Second Council of Nicaea, "Second Council of Nicaea," 136.

<sup>224</sup> Council of Trent, "Trent," in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. N. P. Tanner (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 775.

Therefore, Vatican II strongly urges theologians and preachers of the Word of God to avoid both exaggeration and excessive narrow-mindedness in their treatment of Mary's dignity as Mother of God.<sup>225</sup> It requires their engagement in the study of Sacred Scripture, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and the liturgy of the Church, under the guidance of the Magisterium or teaching authority of the Church.<sup>226</sup> An essential point for the Council is that Mary's offices and privileges are always linked to Christ, the Source of all truth, holiness, and goodness.<sup>227</sup> It stresses that true devotion to the Mother of God is not founded upon superficial sentiment or vain credulity, but upon true faith, which leads the faithful to know Mary's excellence, and moves them to filial love towards Mary and to imitate her virtues.<sup>228</sup>

**e) Mary, Sign of Sure Hope and Comfort for the Pilgrim Church.**

The Second Vatican Council continues to emphasise the ecclesial significance of Mary's Assumption. It states that Mary, in the mystery of her glorious Assumption, is the "image and first flowering of the Church as she is to be perfected in the world to come".<sup>229</sup> In her the Church has already entered into glory. In this eschatological fulfilment of the Church, Mary shines forth as a sign of hope and comfort for the pilgrim faithful here on earth until the coming of the day of the Lord (cf. 2 Pet 3:10).<sup>230</sup> As *The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults* explains,

the Assumption does not separate Mary from the rest of the redeemed People of God, but unites her more intimately with each one of us ... As Jesus did not abandon us by ascending to heaven but continually sends His Spirit to sustain His Church, so, Mary, in the Assumption, has not been separated from us but instead

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<sup>225</sup> LG, 67.

<sup>226</sup> LG, 67.

<sup>227</sup> LG, 67.

<sup>228</sup> LG, 67.

<sup>229</sup> LG, 68.

<sup>230</sup> LG, 68.



remains a sign of sure hope that each one of us is called to share as she has in the fullness of Christ's glory. As the most faithful spouse of the Holy Spirit, she is the model of all that the Church and humankind hope to become in heaven.<sup>231</sup>

The Preface of the Feast of the Assumption reflects this: "Today the virgin Mother of God was taken up into heaven to be the beginning and the pattern of the Church in its perfection, and a sign of hope and comfort for your people on their pilgrim way".<sup>232</sup> Here we find yet another open door for Roman Catholic-Orthodox dialogue. Both East and West meet in the mystery of the Assumption. Unlike Orthodox Christians who believe that Mary died, however, the Roman Catholic Church has as yet not settled the question as to whether or not Mary in fact died. Both Churches agree that in Mary's Assumption, the Church has reached her eschatological goal and is therefore a sign. According to Meyendorff, "The tradition of Mary's bodily 'assumption' was treated by poets and preachers as an eschatological sign, a follow up of the resurrection of Christ, an anticipation of the general resurrection".<sup>233</sup> Hence the different approaches to Mary's Assumption may find its resolution in a more eschatological understanding of her bodily assumption.

#### **f) Mary and Ecumenism**

The Second Vatican Council expresses great joy and comfort in knowing that many other Christians, especially Eastern Christians, venerate Mary.<sup>234</sup> It strongly exhorts all the faithful to beg Mary to intercede for the unity of all people, especially Christians, into the one People of God. In the Council's words:

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<sup>231</sup> Ronald Lawler, Donald Wuerl, and Thomas Lawler, eds., *The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 1976), 245.

<sup>232</sup> *The Roman Missal*, (Sydney: E.J.Dwyer, 1974), 462.

<sup>233</sup> Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, 165.

<sup>234</sup> *LG*, 68.

Let the entire body of the faithful pour forth persevering prayer to the Mother of God and the Mother of men. Let them implore that she who aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers may now, exalted as she is in heaven above all the saints and angels, intercede with her Son in the fellowship of all the saints. May she do so until all the peoples of the human family, whether they are honored with the name of Christian or whether they still do not know their Savior, are happily gathered together in peace and harmony into the one People of God, for the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.<sup>235</sup>

Clearly, the Second Vatican Council perceives that Mary, properly understood and presented, is a unifying element that can bring all peoples, especially divided Christians, closer together. We now move on to examine the specific themes in Paul VI's *Marialis Cultus* as already outlined.

### 3. The Themes of *Marialis Cultus*

#### a) Mary in Christian Worship

In *Marialis Cultus*, Paul VI declares that the primary task of the Church is divine worship. This paramount task is precisely the foundation of the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>236</sup> He states that while he contemplates with joy and gratitude the work that has been carried out thus far towards the renewal of the liturgy and its initial positive results, he will continue being concerned with "whatever can give orderly fulfilment to the renewal of the worship with which the Church in spirit and truth (cf Jn 4:24) adores the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 'venerates with special love Mary the most holy Mother of God'<sup>3</sup> and honors with religious devotion the memory of the martyrs and the other saints."<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> *LG*, 69.

<sup>236</sup> *MC*, Introduction.

<sup>237</sup> *MC*, Introduction. The footnote 3 in the citation refers to paragraph 103 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy. See, Vatican Council II, "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*)," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), 168.

Paul VI insists that devotion to Mary fits into the worship of the Church "because it takes its origin and effectiveness from Christ, finds its complete expression in Christ, and leads through Christ in the Spirit to the Father".<sup>238</sup> In this context, it necessarily reflects the divine plan of salvation, in which it is proper to venerate Mary because she is the Mother of Christ, the Redeemer.<sup>239</sup> Paul VI is concerned to point out that after every true development of Christian worship there is an increase in the veneration of Mary and that, according to the history of Christian piety, the various forms of approved Marian devotion in the Church have led to the worship of Christ. He insists that, today, as then, the Church finds the Virgin Mary at the root of the mystery of Christ and as a culmination of its own nature.<sup>240</sup> He then adds that "the increased knowledge of Mary's mission has become joyful veneration of her and adoring respect for the plan of God, who has placed within his Family (the Church) as in every home, the figure of a Woman, who in a hidden manner and a spirit of service watches over that Family 'and carefully looks after it until the glorious day of the Lord'".<sup>241</sup>

Paul VI argues that exercises of Marian piety "should clearly express the Trinitarian and Christological note that is intrinsic and essential to them".<sup>242</sup> He considers that Christian worship, seen as worship offered to the Holy Trinity, "is rightly extended, though in a substantially different way, first and foremost and in a special manner, to the Mother of the Lord".<sup>243</sup> In her everything is connected with and is dependent on Christ.<sup>244</sup> "It was with a view to Christ that God the Father from all eternity chose her to be the all-holy Mother and adorned her with gifts of the Spirit granted to no one else".<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> *MC*, Introduction.

<sup>239</sup> *MC*, Introduction.

<sup>240</sup> *MC*, Introduction.

<sup>241</sup> *MC*, Introduction.

<sup>242</sup> *MC*, 25.

<sup>243</sup> *MC*, 25.

<sup>244</sup> *MC*, 25.

<sup>245</sup> *MC*, 25.

Indeed, true Christian devotion always draws attention to Mary's inseparable bond and unique relationship to Christ.<sup>246</sup> Given the contemporary emphasis on the Christological orientation of spirituality, the expressions of Marian devotion should give special prominence to Christ and reflect the plan of salvation.<sup>247</sup> Paul VI, citing Pius IX, adds that God's saving plan established "with one single decree the origin of Mary and the Incarnation of the divine Wisdom".<sup>248</sup> He concludes that this prominence and reflection will establish more solid devotion to Mary and make it an effective instrument for attaining full knowledge of Christ, until the faithful become fully mature in Him (Eph 4:13).<sup>249</sup> It will also contribute to increasing the worship of Christ. Citing Ildephonsus of Toledo (c.607-677), Paul VI affirms that: "what is given to the Handmaid is referred to the Lord; thus what is given to the Mother redounds to the Son; ... and thus what is given as humble tribute to the Queen becomes honour rendered to the King".<sup>250</sup> Ware puts it well: "the more we esteem Mary, the more vivid is our awareness of the majesty of her Son, for it is precisely on account of the Son that we venerate the Mother".<sup>251</sup>

### **b) Mary's Relationship with the Holy Spirit**

Paul VI observes that it is appropriate to give importance in Marian devotion to both the person and the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>252</sup> He points out that both theology and the liturgy, or community worship, reveal that the Holy Spirit's sanctifying intervention in the Virgin Mary was a culminating moment of the Spirit's action in the salvation of the human race.<sup>253</sup> The ancient Fathers attributed Mary's original holiness to the work of the Spirit

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<sup>246</sup> MC, 25.

<sup>247</sup> MC, 25.

<sup>248</sup> MC, 25. See also, Pius IX, "The Immaculate Conception (*Ineffabilis Deus*)" <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9ineff.htm> (accessed 29 January 2009).

<sup>249</sup> MC, 25.

<sup>250</sup> MC, 25.

<sup>251</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 258.

<sup>252</sup> MC, 26.

<sup>253</sup> MC, 26.

and affirmed that Mary was "'fashioned by the Holy Spirit into a kind of new substance and new creature'." <sup>254</sup> On this point, Paul VI refers to paragraph 56 of *Lumen Gentium*, which, drawing on the teachings of four Fathers of the Christian East, presents one of the most striking theological metaphors for Mary's place in the process of human redemption. Using the primordial clay as a metaphor, Andrew of Crete asserts that "[t]he Virgin's body is ground which God has tilled, the first fruits of Adam's soil divinized by Christ, the image truly like the former beauty, the clay kneaded by the divine Artist". <sup>255</sup>

According to Paul VI, the early Fathers' reflection on Gabriel's answer to Mary's question at the Annunciation (Lk 1:35), and on Joseph's discovery and the angel's affirmation in a dream that Mary was expecting a child through the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:18, 20), enabled them to see that the Holy Spirit's intervention consecrated and made Mary's virginity fruitful and "transformed her into the 'Abode of the King' or 'Bridal Chamber of the Word', the 'Temple' or 'Tabernacle of the Lord', the 'Ark of the Covenant' or the 'Ark of Holiness'". <sup>256</sup> As they considered more deeply the mystery of the Incarnation, they saw Mary as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, in a relationship evoking the image of a marriage. <sup>257</sup> Here Paul VI cites from the great Roman Christian poet Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348 – c. 405): "The unwed Virgin espoused the Spirit". <sup>258</sup>

Paul VI observes that the Fathers called Mary the "Temple of the Holy Spirit". <sup>259</sup> This title, in his view, accentuates the holiness of Mary, now the Spirit's permanent dwelling. <sup>260</sup> He maintains that as the Fathers probed deeply into the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, they understood that the Holy Spirit was the Source of Mary's fullness of grace and abundance

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<sup>254</sup> *MC*, 26.

<sup>255</sup> Cited in John Paul II, "Mary was conceived without original sin," *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English*, 22 May 1996, 11.

<sup>256</sup> *MC*, 26.

<sup>257</sup> *MC*, 26.

<sup>258</sup> *MC*, 26.

<sup>259</sup> *MC*, 26.

<sup>260</sup> *MC*, 26.

of gifts.<sup>261</sup> Hence they attributed Mary's faith, hope, love, and strength that both sustained her acceptance of God's will and supported her in her suffering at the Cross of her Son, to the Holy Spirit.<sup>262</sup> They also recognised Mary's prophetic song, the Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55), as a special working of the Holy Spirit.<sup>263</sup>

As they reflected, finally, on Mary's presence in the Upper Room at Pentecost, the Church Fathers enriched the early theme of Mary and the Church with new developments.<sup>264</sup> One of the works referred to by Paul VI on this point is St Amadeus of Lausanne's *Homily VII On the Praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. It is valuable to draw attention to some of Amadeus' reflections from his homily as they give us a deeper insight into Mary's role in the primitive Church after Jesus ascended into heaven. At the beginning of his homily Amadeus tells us that as he ponders Mary's Assumption, the question comes into his mind: "why, when the Lord ascended into heaven, did his mother who embraced him with such affection not follow him at once?"<sup>265</sup> One of the reasons he gives for this delay is that Jesus wanted his disciples to enjoy Mary's maternal comfort and teaching.<sup>266</sup> He goes on to explain:

Though indeed they had been taught by the Spirit, yet they could be taught by her who put forth to the world the sun of righteousness\* [cf. Mal 4:2] and brought forth for us from a virgin meadow, from an unspotted womb, the fount of wisdom.\* [cf. Si 1:5]. In short, with wondrous goodness provision was made for the primitive Church which no longer saw God present in the flesh, that it might see his mother and be refreshed by the lovely sight.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> MC, 26.

<sup>262</sup> MC, 26.

<sup>263</sup> MC, 26.

<sup>264</sup> MC, 26.

<sup>265</sup> Amadeus of Lausanne, "Amadeus of Lausanne: Eight Homilies on the Praise of the Blessed Mary," in *Magnificat: Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications Inc., 1979), 119.

<sup>266</sup> Amadeus of Lausanne, "Amadeus of Lausanne: Eight Homilies on the Praise of the Blessed Mary," 120.

<sup>267</sup> Amadeus of Lausanne, "Amadeus of Lausanne: Eight Homilies on the Praise of the Blessed Mary," 120.

Cistercian monk Chrysogonus Waddell, in his discussion on the above homily in his *Introduction to Magnificat: Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary by Bernard of Clairvaux and Amadeus of Lausanne*, puts it thus:

Why the delay? It was for the sake of the Church ... For the Apostles in the first instance (how much Mary had to tell them about her Son!); but also as a source of consolation for Christians at large. The Redeemer was now in heaven; but the Mother of the Redeemer was still there as a visible sign of the fulfilment of all that had been promised.<sup>268</sup>

Indeed, Amadeus rightly declares blessed that privileged, gifted, graced generation which beheld in its very midst the Mother of God, "the tree producing the life-giving fruit".<sup>269</sup> He also asserts that Mary shared all her gifts of grace with the primitive Church.<sup>270</sup> In his symbolic language, he says:

as soon as she was seen glowing with the fire of holy love, she sweetly inflamed the hearts of those near her, brought faith to the hearts, urged them to modesty, made what was honourable lovely, drawing them to righteousness. She breathed the flower of virginity, sowed the untilled field of chastity, portraying before their eyes the picture of humility and showing them the mark of truthfulness ... A swift-flowing river of fire went forth from her to set on fire her foes, to warm her friends, to help her neighbours, to burn up her enemies ... she breathed forth the scent of the grace of the resurrection upon those who were far off and those who were near.<sup>271</sup>

As Waddell explains, "[t]o be close to Mary means to catch something of her purity and faith and humility. This is why she had to remain here below for so long, so that those approaching her could be enkindled from the fire of the Word which filled her, and could

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<sup>268</sup> Chrysogonus Waddell, "Introduction," in *Magnificat: Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications Inc., 1979), xl.

<sup>269</sup> Amadeus of Lausanne, "Amadeus of Lausanne: Eight Homilies on the Praise of the Blessed Mary," 120-121.

<sup>270</sup> Amadeus of Lausanne, "Amadeus of Lausanne: Eight Homilies on the Praise of the Blessed Mary," 121.

<sup>271</sup> Amadeus of Lausanne, "Amadeus of Lausanne: Eight Homilies on the Praise of the Blessed Mary," 121.

breathe the fragrance of the grace of the resurrection which she exhaled".<sup>272</sup> This is strongly evocative of the presence of Holy Spirit as reflected in the following prayer: "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love".<sup>273</sup>

Paul VI underlines that the Church Fathers sought Mary's intercession to obtain the ability to engender the life of Christ in their own soul through the Holy Spirit.<sup>274</sup> Here he cites Ildephonsus' prayer of supplication to Mary:

I beg you, holy Virgin, that I may have Jesus from the Holy Spirit, by whom you brought Jesus forth. May my soul receive Jesus through the Holy Spirit by whom your flesh conceived Jesus ... May I love Jesus in the Holy Spirit in whom you adore Jesus as Lord and gaze upon him as your Son.<sup>275</sup>

Paul VI urges everyone, especially those engaged in pastoral ministry and theologians, "to meditate more deeply on the working of the Holy Spirit in the history of salvation, and to ensure that Christian spiritual writings give due prominence to his life-giving action".<sup>276</sup> He believes that a study of this kind will have a great impact on the Church. In his words: "Such a study will bring out in particular the hidden relationship between the Spirit of God and the Virgin of Nazareth, and show the influence they exert on the Church. From a more profound meditation on the truths of the faith will flow a more vital piety".<sup>277</sup>

For Paul VI, exercises of piety to Mary should clearly demonstrate Mary's place in the mystery of the Church: "'the highest place and the closest to us after Christ'".<sup>278</sup> He affirms that even the architecture and the iconographic scheme of the church buildings, most particularly the paleo-Christian and Byzantine styles, show an ecclesiology expressing

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<sup>272</sup> Waddell, "Introduction," xl-xli.

<sup>273</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 642.

<sup>274</sup> *MC*, 26.

<sup>275</sup> *MC*, 26.

<sup>276</sup> *MC*, 27.

<sup>277</sup> *MC*, 26.

<sup>278</sup> *MC*, 28. See also *LG* 87.



Mary's place in the mystery of the Church.<sup>279</sup> It appears here that Paul VI is aware of the Eastern icon of Mary the Platytera, "more spacious than the heavens".<sup>280</sup> He whom the universe cannot contain dwelt in her! The image of the Virgin Platytera, which depicts Mary with her hands raised in the position of prayer (*orans*) with the Christ Child in a medallion on her breast, is always found in the apse of the Church where it emphasises Mary's role as a link between Heaven and earth.<sup>281</sup>

### c) Marian Devotion and Ecumenism

True devotion to Mary, according to Paul VI, reflects the concerns of the Church, one of which is the restoration of unity among Christians. Therefore, devotion to Mary has an ecumenical dimension. As renowned Mariologist Mark Miravalle puts it, "The Blessed Virgin Mary must not be seen as an obstacle, but as the instrument and Mother of the ecumenical movement ... remembering that no one unites the children of a family more than the mother of the family".<sup>282</sup>

Paul VI notes that Catholics and Orthodox Christians are united with one another in their special veneration and love for the Mother of God and in their acclamation of Mary as Hope of Christians. Similarly, Catholics and Anglicans are united in their scriptural foundation for Marian devotion and in their increasing emphasis on Mary's place in Christian life. Likewise, Catholics are united with the Churches of the Reform in their love for the Sacred Scriptures.<sup>283</sup> Paul VI sees devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of all Christians, as a natural and frequent opportunity to seek Mary's

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<sup>279</sup> *MC*, 28.

<sup>280</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*. Page 331

<sup>281</sup> Solrunn Nes, *The Mystical Language of Icons* (Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 51.

<sup>282</sup> Mark Miravalle, "Response to a Statement of an International Theological Commission of the Pontifical International Marian Academy" <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/marian/5thdogma/IntTheoLComm.htm> (accessed 9 September 2009).

<sup>283</sup> *MC*, 32.

intercession with her Son for Christian unity.<sup>284</sup> He also sees the ecumenical dimension of devotion to Mary reflected in the Church's desire to avoid any exaggeration in this devotion which could mislead other Christians about the true teachings of the Church.<sup>285</sup> Paul VI understands that true devotion to Mary is a way of reaching Christ, the source and the centre of ecclesiastical unity, in which all who confess Jesus is Lord are called to be one with one another in Christ and the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>286</sup>

Recognising that there are significant differences between Catholics and other Christians on Mary's role in the salvation of the human race, and thus on the devotion which should be shown to her, Paul VI proceeds to make an ecumenical connection with the comment, "it is the same power of the Most High which overshadowed the Virgin of Nazareth (cf Lk 1:35) ... which today is at work within the ecumenical movement and making it fruitful".<sup>287</sup> He clearly perceives that devotion to Mary will become a path and a point on which separated Christians can come together. In that vein, he declares that just as at Cana Mary's intervention caused Jesus to perform His first miracle (Jn 1:1-12), so today Mary's intercession can help to bring unity among Christians.<sup>288</sup> He sees this hope strengthened by Leo XIII's declaration in 1895 (Encyclical *Adiutricem Populi*) that the cause of Christian unity "'properly pertains to the role of Mary's spiritual Motherhood. For Mary did not and cannot engender those who belong to Christ, except in one faith and one love: for 'Is Christ divided?' (1 Co 1:13). We must all live together the life of Christ, so that in one and the same body 'we may bear fruit for God' (Rm 7:4)".<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> MC, 32.

<sup>285</sup> MC, 32.

<sup>286</sup> MC, 32.

<sup>287</sup> MC, 33.

<sup>288</sup> MC, 33.

<sup>289</sup> MC, 33.

#### 4. Summary

The Second Vatican Council offers a rich synthesis of Catholic teaching on the Blessed Virgin Mary, whereas she was previously seen in devotional isolation. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, locates Mary within salvation history. In Vatican II, Mary is intimately involved in the mysteries of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, and His Mystical Body, the Church. Her privileges and titles are not considered merely in isolation, but in the light of the mystery of Christ and the Church. In this way Mary's previous theological isolation from the whole of salvation history is remedied radically. This relocation of the treatment of Mary is an important corrective in the Roman Catholic relationship to the Christian East, where Mary is seen as integral to the whole of Christian teaching. To this degree, Vatican II's presentation of Mary is now more aligned to the Eastern Christian approach.

The major themes of the Second Vatican Council's doctrine on Mary are related to Mary's connection to the mystery of the Trinity, to Scripture and Tradition, to the mystery of Christ and the Church, and to ecumenism. In the first instance, Vatican II's teaching on Mary is distinctly Trinitarian in structure. Each of the three divine persons is involved in Mary's election. She was chosen by God the Father to be the Mother of the Son by the action of the Holy Spirit (LG, 52, 56, 61). As the Mother of her divine Son, she is also the Father's highly favoured daughter and the temple of the Holy Spirit (LG, 53). Likewise, the ecclesiological and soteriological dimensions are vital, in that Christian believers receive a new life in Christ, being embraced by the Father as adopted sons and daughters in Christ, gathered through the outpouring of the Spirit (LG, 52).

The Council also sees Mary's role in the salvation of the human race revealed in both Scripture and in the ancient common Tradition (LG, 55). It proposes that Mary is the Virgin Daughter of Zion in whom all the faith and hopes of Israel are fulfilled as the Son of

God becomes incarnate for the salvation of humankind (LG, 55). Her unique holiness and fashioning by the Holy Spirit enables her to give her free assent to the Incarnation of the Son of God (LG, 56). Unlike Eve, through her obedience and faith, Mary brings Life into the world, rather than the reign of death attributed to Eve (LG, 56).

Vatican II also acknowledges and honours Mary both as the Mother of God and as Mother of the Redeemer (LG, 53, 55-56, 61). It emphasises Mary's active co-operation in the work of Redemption as handmaid of the Lord and describes her union with her divine Son in the work of redemption as a pilgrimage of faith, Jesus being the one mediator between God and humankind (LG, 56-60). The Council shows that this journey of faith began with Mary's consent to the Incarnation of the Son of God, reached its climax at the Cross, and was completed as she was assumed body and soul into Heaven (LG, 56-59). Mary's assumption is presented as a sign of hope and comfort for the pilgrim faithful here on earth until the coming of the day of the Lord (LG, 68).

Mary is named as the Spiritual Mother of the faithful because she co-operated with God out of love in the birth of the faithful in the Church (LG, 53-54, 58, 60-63, 67). Accordingly, Mary is a pre-eminent and unique member of the Church (LG, 53, 63). She is its perfect model and archetype in faith and love (LG, 52-53, 63-65, 67-68). Her unique and sublime dignity as Mother of God, which is intimately connected with the gift of her unique holiness, raises Mary above the rest of the human race (LG, 53, 56, 62). Mary is Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix (LG 62). Her mediation is both real and active, in the here and now, through her continuous intercession before her Son, on behalf of all the redeemed (LG, 62).

Finally, Vatican II clearly recognises that the devotion of other Christians to the Mother of God, especially those of the Eastern Churches, is not merely a unifying element to be realized in a far off ecumenical future, but it is a spiritual force already forging deep

ecumenical links between Churches. It is recommended that the faithful implore Mary's intercession in order to be gathered into visible unity in the one People of God (LG, 68). Theologians and preachers of the Word are strongly urged to engage in the study of Scripture, the Church Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and the Liturgy, under the guidance of the Magisterium of the Church, in order to avoid both exaggeration and excessive narrow-mindedness in their treatment of Mary's dignity as Mother of God (LG, 67).

There are three Marian themes in regard to Paul VI's *Marialis Cultus*: Mary in Christian worship; Mary's relationship with the Holy Spirit, and Mary and Ecumenism. Paul VI's teaching on devotion to Mary, like the Council, has a Trinitarian structure. He places Mary in the worship offered by the Church to God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (MC, Introduction, 25). Here Mary reflects God's redemptive plan, in which she is the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. He recognises that devotion to Mary leads to the Father through Jesus in the Holy Spirit. Paul VI also recognises that the Holy Spirit's sanctifying overshadowing of the Virgin Mary was a culminating moment of the Spirit's action in the salvation of the human race (MC 25). Drawing heavily on the Fathers of the Church, he sees that the Holy Spirit is the source of Mary's original holiness and abundant gifts (MC, 26). She was fashioned by the Spirit into a new creature (MC, 26). The Spirit consecrated and made her virginity uniquely fruitful, and transformed her into the Bridal Chamber and Temple of the Lord, the Ark of the New Covenant and the Ark of Holiness (MC, 26). She is presented as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit and the Temple of the Holy Spirit (MC 26). Paul VI recognises Mary's prophetic canticle the Magnificat as a special working of the Holy Spirit (MC, 26). He reminds the faithful that the early Christians called on Mary's intercession to obtain from the Holy Spirit the capacity to bring forth the life of Christ in their own soul (MC, 26). He also urged pastoral ministers and theologians

especially, to reflect more deeply on the theme of the working of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of the human race so as to draw upon especially Mary's relationship with the Holy Spirit, and show the influence they bring to bear on the Church (MC, 27). Finally, Paul VI sees Mary as having an important role in bringing about the unity of all Christians (MC, 32). He recognises that it is the same Holy Spirit who overshadowed Mary who is leading and making fruitful the restoration of full visible communion among Christians (MC, 33). So saying, Paul VI recognises that the relationship of Mary with the Holy Spirit is not merely related to the ecumenical task, but that it lies at the very heart of the Church and the longing of the Saviour that "all be one" (Jn 17:21).

The documents reveal a shift in Roman Catholic Marian theology from a somewhat isolated Mariology to the larger themes of the theology of salvation history, centred in the mystery of Christ. In this way they open Roman Catholic theology towards the Christian East. Moreover, the documents both reflect and specifically encourage an openness to and respect for the spiritual heritage of the Christian East, thus opening several important doors for authentic Roman Catholic-Orthodox dialogue. Such attitudes can only promote and deepen ecumenical dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, as specifically shown, and alluded to, in this chapter. They enable each to come to know the other's soul, as they challenge, inspire and allow them to understand the perspective of each other. This, in turn, reveals the already existing closeness of the Churches.

We now turn to consider the theme of Mary and the Holy Spirit and its implications for Christian unity in the theology of Sergius Bulgakov.

## Chapter 3

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### Sergius Bulgakov on Mary and the Holy Spirit

#### Introduction

Our interest amongst the many writings of Fr Sergius Bulgakov is to uncover his theological insights on Mary and the Holy Spirit and their implications for ecumenical unity. Lamentably, this giant of a figure in the history of Russian Orthodox theology is as yet not well known to Western readers. For this reason it is necessary to begin this chapter by introducing the reader to this highly regarded twentieth century leading Orthodox theologian. This brief introduction will also serve to throw much light on Bulgakov's fresh and distinctive theological approach.

Sergius Nicolaevich Bulgakov was born into a clerical family in Livny, a town in the province of Oryol or Orel in Russia, in 1871.<sup>290</sup> His father was a sixth generation Russian Orthodox priest.<sup>291</sup> In his early teenage years, Bulgakov went through a painful religious crisis and lost his faith in God while studying at the Theological Seminary in Oryol.<sup>292</sup> Committing himself to the struggle for social and economic justice, he soon embraced Marxism, falling victim to the revolutionary, gloomy, nihilistic mood that prevailed among the intelligentsia in Russia at that time.<sup>293</sup>

Bulgakov's theology grows not from an "academic" interest in theology, or an apologetic necessity, but rather from a deeply felt, and passionate sense of working in his own life. Three separate conversion experiences were to bring him back to religion and to

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<sup>290</sup> James Pain, "Introduction," in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain and Nicolas Zernov (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), xii.

<sup>291</sup> Pain, "Introduction," xii.

<sup>292</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, "Autobiographical Notes," in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain and Nicolas Zernov (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 4.

<sup>293</sup> Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 228. See also, Bulgakov, "Autobiographical Notes," 4.

Orthodox Christianity.<sup>294</sup> The first of these occurred in 1894 when travelling across the southern Russian steppes.<sup>295</sup> The overwhelming beauty of the mountains of the Caucasus in the rays of a glorious sunset stirred his soul.<sup>296</sup> Reflecting on this experience, he wrote:

It was dusk. We were riding through the southern steppe, basking in the honeyed odors of grass and hay, golden in the rays of the serene sunset. In the distance we could see the blue hills of the Caucasus. This was the first time I had seen them. And as I gazed greedily into the unfolding hills, breathing in air and light, I received nature's revelation. My soul had, although with a dull, aching pain, become accustomed to seeing nature as nothing more than a dead, arid desert wearing a mask of beauty; my soul could not reconcile itself to a nature without God. And then, at that moment, my soul began to tremble in unease and happiness: what if there is? ... if it is not a desert, not lies, not a mask, not death, but if He is there, the divine and loving Father with His forgiveness and His love.... My heart pounded to the rhythm of the moving train as we rushed toward this fading gold and these graying mountains.<sup>297</sup>

A few years later, he had an aesthetic emotional experience in the Zwinger gallery in Dresden standing before Raphael's painting of the Sistine Madonna. Of this moment he declared:

The eyes of the Heavenly Queen, the Mother who holds in her arms the Eternal Infant, pierced my soul. I cried joyful and yet bitter tears, and with them the ice melted from my soul, and some of my psychological knots were loosened. This was an aesthetic emotion, but it was also a new knowledge; it was a miracle ... I ran there every day to pray and weep in front of the Virgin, and few experiences in my life were more blessed than those unexpected tears.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Aidan Nichols, "Wisdom from Above? The Sophiology of Father Sergius Bulgakov" <http://www.geocities.com/sbulgakovsociety/> (accessed 14 October 2009).

<sup>295</sup> Nichols, "Wisdom from Above? The Sophiology of Father Sergius Bulgakov" (accessed).

<sup>296</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, "My Conversion," in *Sergius Bulgakov: A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain and Nicolas Zernov (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 10.

<sup>297</sup> Cited in Catherine Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy, 1890-1920* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 39.

<sup>298</sup> Bulgakov, "My Conversion," 11.



From the early 1900s, Bulgakov started to profess his faith in God.<sup>299</sup> In 1908 he returned to the sacramental life of the Orthodox Church.<sup>300</sup> He saw himself as the prodigal son whom the Father, in the person of an elder from a remote hermitage in the forest, welcomed, forgave and loved. As he puts it, "The Father, seeing his prodigal son, ran to meet me. I heard from the elder that all human sin was like a drop of water in comparison with the ocean of divine love. I left him, pardoned and reconciled, trembling and in tears, feeling myself returned as on wings within the precincts of the Church".<sup>301</sup> At the same time as he returned to Orthodoxy, a desire arose within him "to return to [his] Father's house completely and become a priest".<sup>302</sup> The third conversion experience took place in the following year at the funeral of his four year old son Ivashechka.<sup>303</sup> In his work *The Unfading Light (Svet nevechernii)* he writes:

O, my lovely, my pure boy! As we carried you up the steep hill, and then followed the hot and dusty road, we suddenly turned off into a shady park, as if we had entered the Garden of Eden; suddenly, after the unexpected turn, the church, as lovely as you, looked at us with its coloured windows as it waited for you ... Your mother fell, crying, 'The sky has opened!' She thought she was dying and saw heaven.... And the sky *had* opened, it had witnessed our apocalypse. I felt, almost saw, our rise to heaven.... Pink and white oleanders surrounded you like the flowers of paradise, waiting to bend over you, to guard your coffin.... So this was it! Everything became clear, all of the suffering and the heat dissipated in the heavenly azure of this church. We thought that events took place only below, in the heat, and didn't know that these heights existed and were, it turns out, waiting for us.... And far below, far away we left the heat, suffering, pain, death – and really that was not important, for there *is* this, and it is now open to us.<sup>304</sup>

<sup>299</sup> Bulgakov, "Autobiographical Notes," 5.

<sup>300</sup> Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov*, 282. Paul Valliere states that this happened late in 1907. According to Bulgakov's account of his conversion it took place in 1908. See, Bulgakov, "My Conversion," 11-12.

<sup>301</sup> Bulgakov, "My Conversion," 12.

<sup>302</sup> Bulgakov, "Autobiographical Notes," 6.

<sup>303</sup> Nichols, "Wisdom from Above? The Sophiology of Father Sergius Bulgakov" (accessed). See also, Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy, 1890-1920*, 133.

<sup>304</sup> Cited in Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy, 1890-1920*, 124.

Ivashechka's death was to continue to have a profound impact on his life. In his letter to one of his friends he wrote:

by his coffin, two emotions struggled or alternated or rather united within me: a hymn of religious joy, victory, light, and the grief that you know. And my entire life was illumined by this light, all the corners of my sinful soul, so that I was as if blinded by this light ... In general, in my, or rather our, life, an event of such immeasurable importance has taken place that its results must, I think, affect everything: opinions, feelings, values, life. And I fear one thing, pray for one thing, that I may not forget, that the lighthearted, bustling, weak part of my soul, burdened with life's concerns, may not give in and harden itself once more.<sup>305</sup>

Indeed, according to author Paul Valliere, "Ivashechka became for him ... the measuring rod of Christian *podvizhnichestvo* [humility<sup>306</sup>], an example which would challenge Bulgakov, inspire him and bring him to tears for the rest of his life".<sup>307</sup>

Bulgakov's desire to become a priest was realised at Pentecost at the Danilov Monastery in Moscow in 1918.<sup>308</sup> He cherished and was proud of his priestly heritage. As he himself declared, "I am a levite, and I recognise and cherish my levitism more and more; I am prepared to say I take great pride in it".<sup>309</sup> Two weeks after he was ordained a priest Bulgakov withdrew to the Crimea where for a while he taught at the University of Simferopol.<sup>310</sup> Considered to be out of step with the University's communist ideology, in

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<sup>305</sup> Cited in Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy, 1890-1920*, 135-136.

<sup>306</sup> Valliere translates the Russian word *podvizhnichestvo* as 'humility', whereas the Russian word for humility is *smirenie*. In his argument supporting his translation of *podvizhnichestvo* as humility in the context of Bulgakov's reflection on the heroic revolutionary and the humble saint, Valliere writes: "*Podvizhnichestvo* is the quality of a *podvizhnik*, i.e. a saint, ascetic, witness, or martyr. But the saintly self-denial which is always integral to the meaning of *podvizhnichestvo* is understood in active, not passive terms. A *podvizhnik* is a person who accomplishes *podvigi* (feat, labours, achievements), an athlete of faith. The root indicates movement, advancement. The humility Bulgakov is speaking about, then, is an energetic value, a constructive force, not a pious euphemism for passivity or indolence". See Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov*, 246.

<sup>307</sup> Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov*, 251.

<sup>308</sup> Bulgakov, "Autobiographical Notes," 7-8. Bulgakov was ordained a deacon on Pentecost and a priest the next day.

<sup>309</sup> Cited in Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov*, 228.

<sup>310</sup> Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov*, 278.

due course he was arrested and banished by the new Bolshevik government.<sup>311</sup> Bulgakov arrived in Constantinople in January 1923 and when he visited the church of St Sophia or *Hagia Sophia* (Holy Wisdom), there which had been the source of the Russian Grand Prince Vladimir's conversion, and that of Rus, to Christianity,<sup>312</sup> he was, as he says, "permanently enriched by a new apprehension of the world in God, that is, of the divine Sophia".<sup>313</sup> Reflecting on this experience, he wrote:

Human tongue cannot express the lightness, the clarity, the simplicity, the wonderful harmony which completely dispels all sense of heaviness ... A sea of light pours from above and dominates all this space, enclosed and yet free ... it captivates and melts the heart, subdues and convinces ... It becomes the world: I am in the world and the world is in me...

This is indeed Sophia, the real unity of the world in the Logos, the co-herence of all with all, the world of divine ideas. It is Plato baptized by the Hellenic genius of Byzantium ... The pagan Sophia of Plato beholds herself mirrored in the Christian Sophia, the divine Wisdom. Truly, the temple of St Sophia is the artistic, tangible proof and manifestation of St Sophia – of the Sophianic nature of the world and the cosmic nature of Sophia. It is neither heaven nor earth, but the vault of heaven above the earth. We perceive here neither God nor man, but divinity, the divine veil thrown over the world.<sup>314</sup>

Commenting on Bulgakov's vision of Sophia in the context of Bulgakov's overall thought concerning the Mother of God, Andrew Louth writes: "Its Platonic roots are evident, but what has grown from these roots is a sense of heaven as a canopy lightly touching the earth – a canopy, or a veil, the *pokrov* that the Mother of God holds over the

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<sup>311</sup> Jakim, "Translator's Introduction," ix. (The Comforter). See also, Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov*, 278.

<sup>312</sup> Christopher Bamford, "Foreword," in *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology* (Hudson, N.Y.: Lindisfarne Press, 1993), xiii-xiv.

<sup>313</sup> Sergei Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology* (Hudson, N.Y.: Lindisfarne Press, 1993), 1.

<sup>314</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, "Hagia Sophia," in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain and Nicholas Zernov (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 13-14.

world".<sup>315</sup> All of this is based on the actual domed structure of the Church – one of the clichés of Hagia Sophia is that the dome "floats" over the Church, not actually touching the supporting walls.<sup>316</sup>

After a short time in Constantinople Bulgakov began his exile in Prague and finally settled in Paris in 1925, where he became the founding Dean of the Saint Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute and where he remained until his death in 1944.<sup>317</sup> It was here that he developed his most characteristic and controversial theological teaching his Sophiology,<sup>318</sup> a dogmatic interpretation of the world, as a response to "secularization".<sup>319</sup> As he declared: "Our modern age stands in need of a new apprehension of the dogmatic formulae preserved by the Church in its living tradition. Moreover, it cannot be over-emphasized that there is no single dogmatic problem that does not at present need such reinterpretation".<sup>320</sup> Valliere captures the freshness of Bulgakov's creative and challenging sophiological theological approach:

Sophiology works on dogma in all sorts of wonderful ways – galvanizing, crystallizing, illuminating, extending, elaborating; but it does not discard dogmas or invent new ones. It catalyses new relationships within dogma and between dogma and culture. Its job is to guide theologians on the terrain, mostly uncharted, where dogma meets experience, Church meets world, Christianity meets culture, Orthodoxy meets modernity.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Andrew Louth, "Father Sergii Bulgakov on the Mother of God," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 49, no. 1-2 (2005): 151.

<sup>316</sup> Ahmet Efe, *Hagia Sophia* (Istanbul: Efe Turizm Yayinlari Ltd, 1987), 29.

<sup>317</sup> Jakim, "Translator's Introduction," ix. See also, Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov*, 279.

<sup>318</sup> Barbara Newman, "Sergius Bulgakov and the Theology of Divine Wisdom," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (1978): 39.

<sup>319</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, "The Wisdom of God," in *Sergius Bulgakov: A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain and Nicolas Zernov (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 149-150.

<sup>320</sup> Bulgakov, "The Wisdom of God," 151.

<sup>321</sup> Cited in Myroslaw Tataryn, "Sergei Bulgakov: Eastern Orthodoxy engaging the modern world," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 31/3-4 (2002): 318.

In his appendix to his work of Christology *The Lamb of God*, originally published in 1933, Bulgakov wrote: "In developing his Christology, the author positively and openly relies on Sophiology, the doctrine of the eternal and the creaturely Wisdom".<sup>322</sup>

Along with other Russian intellectuals, Bulgakov became ecumenically active after the First World War of 1914-1918 recognising that ecumenism was a part of and consonant with the Russian Orthodox tradition.<sup>323</sup> His interest in the idea of ecumenism was sharpened both by the shock of the collapse of Imperial Russia with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and the growth of the Ecumenical Movement itself in its golden age of the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>324</sup> All the observed practices and customs of Orthodoxy that in his view made Russian Orthodoxy "unorthodox" did not shake or limit his loyal devotion to Orthodoxy. Rather, they freed it from "all 'orthodoxism' natural to a *local* church unconscious of its narrow provincialism, which takes itself to be universal and all-embracing; breathing with one lung only, or with a part of it, it feels as though it were breathing fully".<sup>325</sup> His ecumenical vision was prophetically ahead of his time by being both positive in approach and deeply theological in motivation as his following remark also affirms:

We are bound to recognise not only that which separates us, but also that which remains common to us all, notwithstanding all divisions. The ability to distinguish in life all that constitutes the common heritage of the whole Christian world is the great achievement (only possible through grace) of contemporary 'ecumenism', namely the movement striving for Church unity. An encounter between Christians of different confessions, as

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<sup>322</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 444. According to Jakim, Bulgakov's work on the Holy Spirit *The Comforter* (1936), "is only implicitly sophiological, unlike the *Lamb of God* (1933) and the *Bride of the Lamb* (1945), in which Bulgakov's sophiological theology is explicitly set forth and reaches its peak of development". Jakim, "Translator's Introduction," x-xi (*The Comforter*).

<sup>323</sup> Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov*, 282.

<sup>324</sup> Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov*, 282.

<sup>325</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, "The Episcopate," in *Sergius Bulgakov: A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain and Nicolas Zernov (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 18-19.

Christians, is a great joy which is bestowed on us in our time by the Holy Spirit and a new revelation of the universal Pentecost.<sup>326</sup>

We now proceed to consider Bulgakov's insights into Mary and the Holy Spirit and their implications for ecumenical unity under the following headings: 1) The Holy Spirit; 2) Mary; 3) The Mary-Spirit Connection; 4) The Implications for Ecumenical Unity. As already stated in the introduction to the study, it must be recognised that there will be some overlap in some areas. We begin our enquiry by examining some aspects of Divine Inspiration (spiritual union) and the Incarnation and Pentecost. After that, we will consider Mary's sinlessness and its relationship to original sin in humankind, the kenosis of Mary, and Mary, Sophia and the Wisdom of God. We then pass on to explore the Mary-Spirit connection specifically, as Bulgakov expounds Mary's close relationship to the Holy Spirit from the Annunciation to the Parousia. Finally, we will note the implications for ecumenical unity.

## **1. The Holy Spirit**

### **a) Divine Inspiration**

According to Bulgakov, divine inspiration is "the meeting and union of a spirit and the Spirit in a human hypostasis [or person]".<sup>327</sup> He concedes that divine inspiration is a true encounter between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit because he sees the human spirit as porous for the Holy Spirit.<sup>328</sup> The human spirit is neither closed nor impermeable because "[i]t is created in the image of the Divine spirit, which, being one and tripersonal, is 'communal' and mutually transparent".<sup>329</sup> Since the human spirit bears in itself the divine

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<sup>326</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, "By Jacob's Well," in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain and Nicolas Zernov (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 103.

<sup>327</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 217.

<sup>328</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 216.

<sup>329</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 301.

image, it has the capacity to receive and to be livingly united with the Holy Spirit.<sup>330</sup> Bulgakov understands that the human spirit's capacity to participate in the divine is an unceasing call to deification, that is, the attaining of likeness to God and union with God.<sup>331</sup> This resonates with the words of St Gregory Nazianzen and the prayer which begins all the Offices of the Orthodox Church, respectively: "I carry in my breast the longing for eternal life";<sup>332</sup> "Heavenly King, Consoler, the Spirit of Truth, present in all places and filling all things, the Treasury of blessings and the Giver of life, come and dwell in us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O Good One".<sup>333</sup>

Bulgakov emphasises that the union of the divine and human inspirations in one Divine-human spirit is accomplished without separation and without confusion.<sup>334</sup> This union is analogous to the union of the two natures and two wills in Jesus Christ, the God-Man.<sup>335</sup> That is, divine inspiration is not "the abolition of the human spirit and its replacement or expulsion by the divine Spirit," which implies the fusion or confusion of the divine and human natures and the annihilation of the human person.<sup>336</sup> Orthodox theologian Timothy Ware puts it well:

The mystical union between God and humans is a true union, yet in this union Creator and creature do not become fused into a single being ... we humans, however closely linked to God, retain our full personal integrity. The human person, when deified, remains distinct (though not separate) from God. The mystery of the Trinity is a mystery of unity *in diversity*, and those who express the Trinity in themselves do not sacrifice their personal characteristics. Nor does the human person, when it 'becomes god', cease to be human: 'We remain creatures while becoming god by grace, as Christ remained God when becoming man by the Incarnation'.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 301.

<sup>331</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 300. See also, Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>332</sup> Cited in Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, 117.

<sup>333</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 249.

<sup>334</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 216-217.

<sup>335</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 217.

<sup>336</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 222.

<sup>337</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 232.

For Bulgakov, divine inspiration, the gracious inter-permeation of the human spirit and the Holy Spirit, presupposes the highest tension of the creative spirit and the highest degree of creative activity.<sup>338</sup> This creative activity is "the effort to 'outgrow oneself' ... a striving to go out of oneself, beyond oneself, above oneself".<sup>339</sup> He recognises that on the one hand the Holy Spirit respects human freedom and on the other hand the creature cannot transcend itself without the action of the Holy Spirit, stating that "Grace does not coerce, but comes to man in response to his efforts, just as man cannot surpass his creaturely measure if he is not carried above it by a superhuman, supernatural force".<sup>340</sup> Bulgakov illustrates the interrelation of grace and human freedom by identifying the Holy Spirit with the image of Christ knocking at the door of the soul:

[The Holy Spirit] stops expectantly at the door of every heart. 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me' (Rev. 3:20). (It is implied that, 'if he does not open the door, I will not come in.') This is said not only about Christ, but also about the Holy Spirit, Who by His inspirations of grace knocks on the heart of man".<sup>341</sup>

In this way, the Spirit "enables man to fathom the divine depths by probing his own depths".<sup>342</sup> Here Bulgakov clearly echoes Paul's prayer for the Christian Community at Ephesus:

I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph 3:16-19).

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<sup>338</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 222.

<sup>339</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 217.

<sup>340</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 222.

<sup>341</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 282.

<sup>342</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 222.



Bulgakov insists that the Spirit who lives in each Christian demands and calls each Christian to live a life of creative activity (cf. Jn 5:17), responsibility, self-determination and audacity.<sup>343</sup> He explores this theme in his description of the relation between the image and likeness of God in humanity (Gen 1:26), a topos common in Antiquity:

The image is the given implanted by God, the sophianic image of man, whereas the likeness is the task proposed for man, his proper work, by which he is to realize his proper image in creative freedom, in the sophianization of himself and of all creation. The image of God is the inalienable ontological foundation; it is the initial *power* that is implanted in man for his life and creative activity. This power can increase in man or decrease, shine forth or become darkened as a function of his freedom. The likeness, in contrast, is the image of Divine creative activity and of the eternal actuality of the spirit. The likeness of God in man is man's free realization of his image ... man is created for creative *work* in himself and in the world ... The path of work, in the capacity of likening oneself to God, is an arduous path for man, full of temptations and requiring great exertions because of its unstable equilibrium. But it is also the royal, Godlike path, the path to freedom.<sup>344</sup>

Bulgakov's constant refrain is that human beings because of their creation in the divine image are called by God to actualize the universal fullness of their being in creative freedom. Indeed, the task of human creativity "is, ultimately, to lay bare its true image, to reveal itself".<sup>345</sup> Human life "is consummated in the discovery of one's own true face".<sup>346</sup>

Bulgakov recalls that the Christological dogma of the Council of Chalcedon (451) proclaims that the union, without separation and without confusion, of the divine and human natures "is accomplished in the one life of Christ through the one divine-human hypostasis of the Logos, hypostatically".<sup>347</sup> In contrast, in the case of divine inspiration, the divine and human natures are not united hypostatically in one person and in this

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<sup>343</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 306.

<sup>344</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 147.

<sup>345</sup> Williams, *Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology*, 140.

<sup>346</sup> Williams, *Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology*, 140.

<sup>347</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 222-223.

situation the two natures, divine and human, are united in one life.<sup>348</sup> Through inspiration the Holy Spirit does not actually become man, but simply descends upon the creaturely, human person and overshadows it with the Spirit's own power.<sup>349</sup> The person of a man or woman, inspired by the Holy Spirit and thereby deified, continues to remain fully human. However, their person, or hypostasis, can allow a place within itself for the divine-human life. It remains self-determining yet becomes transparent for the action of the Holy Spirit.<sup>350</sup> Applying Bulgakov's theology of inspiration to the Blessed Virgin Mary Cardinal Suenens gave a moving account of Mary's unceasing communion with God:

God is reflected in [Mary's] soul as in a glass prism. Everything is referred to him and she is completely at his disposal. Every fibre of her being, both natural and supernatural, utters a perpetual 'Yes' to his will, and she reflects him faithfully. Her soul offers itself to him as the keys of an organ to the hand of the musician, ready to vibrate at the slightest touch, to seize upon the faintest melody, the least breath. At every moment her own will coincides with the divine will, and she yields to his love as a reed bends with the wind".<sup>351</sup>

Although the Holy Spirit is not revealed in His Person in divine inspiration, the Holy Spirit does act in it so that the human being becomes spirit-bearing, not only in his or her natural being, but also in his or her personal being.<sup>352</sup> In Christ, the God-human, "the divine hypostasis of the Logos is the unifying and governing center in the one harmonious life of the two natures".<sup>353</sup> Divine inspiration, however, which comes from the Holy Spirit, is different, as it brings the person to a certain state of divine-humanity. The person becomes a human manifestation of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit does not become human, as does the Word becomes human through the mystery of the Incarnation.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 222-223.

<sup>349</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 223.

<sup>350</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 223.

<sup>351</sup> Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens, *Mary the Mother of God* (London: Burns & Oates, 1963), 34.

<sup>352</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 223.

<sup>353</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 223.

<sup>354</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 223.

Bulgakov here agrees with Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022) that the Holy Spirit "derives his name from the matter on which he rests".<sup>355</sup> However, for Bulgakov, as will become clear, it is Mary who is the fullest manifestation and naming of the Holy Spirit.<sup>356</sup> They "are so mutually transparent that one becomes the manifestation and revelation of the Other".<sup>357</sup> Indeed, a "more complete dwelling of the Holy Spirit in creation, in a human being or angel, than that which occurred in the Mother of God cannot be imagined".<sup>358</sup> Mary is the person who best shows or reveals the Holy Spirit. Consequently, "in divine inspiration we have a *special form* of divine-humanity, alongside and in connection with the Divine Incarnation".<sup>359</sup>

With special regard to Mariology, Bulgakov stated: "Orthodox theology has yet to dogmatically clarify the treasure of revelation about the Mother of God that is contained in the Church's veneration of Her".<sup>360</sup> This thought certainly enables a very fruitful East-West dialogue on the veneration of the Mother of God. Bulgakov believes that the universal Roman Catholic veneration of the Mother of God is better testimony to Mary's significance in the work of salvation than the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which, in his view, removes Mary from the human race.<sup>361</sup>

## **b) The Pentecost and the Incarnation**

Bulgakov sees the Pentecost as the descent of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity, into the world.<sup>362</sup> Drawing on John's Gospel, he argues that the Son of God became man so that the Holy Spirit could descend into the world. In his last discourse to

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<sup>355</sup> Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 90.

<sup>356</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 223.

<sup>357</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 248.

<sup>358</sup> Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov*, 303.

<sup>359</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 223.

<sup>360</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 206.

<sup>361</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 206.

<sup>362</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 267.

His disciples Jesus says: "it is for your own good that I am going because unless I go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I do go I will send him to you" (Jn 16:7).<sup>363</sup> As Lossky puts it, "The Logos took flesh so that we might receive the Spirit".<sup>364</sup> Hence, for Bulgakov, the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost actualizes the salvation that Christ brought to the world. Christ, having assumed human nature, became the new Adam, the universal man.<sup>365</sup> Humanity belongs to Him.<sup>366</sup> However, it was also necessary that humanity itself receive Christ into its own life that it may become the Body of Christ, the Church.<sup>367</sup> Thus at Pentecost the Holy Spirit bestows the fullness of the life of Christ on humanity, inspiring it with this life.<sup>368</sup> This fullness is precisely the Holy Spirit.<sup>369</sup> It is as though in the Upper Room the Annunciation has been repeated and the Incarnation renewed.<sup>370</sup> The Holy Spirit is sent by the Son from the Father. The Spirit, who is inseparably and inconfusibly united with the Son, Jesus Christ the God-Man, and reposes upon Him, brings the incarnate Christ.<sup>371</sup> Jesus returns in the Spirit.<sup>372</sup> Bulgakov's constant refrain is that Jesus is never separated from the Spirit.<sup>373</sup> Newman, as we will see in chapter five, resonates clearly with Bulgakov's insistence on the dyadic relationship between the Son and the Spirit.

Bulgakov understands that, just like the Son, the Spirit's descent into the world is the Holy Spirit's kenosis, that is, "a voluntary self-limitation by virtue of divine love".<sup>374</sup> However, unlike the Son's kenosis, which consists in the Son's self-emptying of divine life,

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<sup>363</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, "Pentecost and the Descent of the Holy Spirit," in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain and Nicolas Zernov (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 183.

<sup>364</sup> Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, 179.

<sup>365</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 278.

<sup>366</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 278.

<sup>367</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 278.

<sup>368</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 278.

<sup>369</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 271.

<sup>370</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 271.

<sup>371</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 271.

<sup>372</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 272.

<sup>373</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 272.

<sup>374</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 352.

the Spirit's kenosis consists in the Spirit's adaptation to human freedom and inertia upon the Spirit's entry into the world.<sup>375</sup> Because the Holy Spirit's task is the deification of human beings by allowing them to participate in God's own life, the Spirit's kenosis is a "kenosis of love, of divine condescension, where the Divine absoluteness enters into a connection with creaturely relativity".<sup>376</sup> Newman also strongly resonates here with Bulgakov's understanding of the kenosis of the Spirit. Bulgakov stresses the kenosis of God emphasising that "it is not the world that strives to meet God; rather, it is God who descends from His heights and adapts Himself to man".<sup>377</sup> Consequently, for Bulgakov, the power of the Spirit's action in the world is kenotically limited and diminished.<sup>378</sup>

## 2. Mary

### a) The Sinlessness of Mary and Original Sin in Humankind

As stated in the previous chapter, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches have a different perspective on Original Sin or the Fall. Therefore it is necessary to begin by giving a short outline of the Orthodox understanding of the question. In Orthodox anthropology, as we have seen above, humans are created in the image of God. This divine image is the basis both of their creation and of their destiny.<sup>379</sup> However, the divine image must be renovated and restored in a creative freedom, assisted by grace, by grace which does not coerce or impose itself.<sup>380</sup> In an exercise of his freedom Adam rejected his true nature and calling to realize the divine image within himself.<sup>381</sup> Willingly he sinned against his own nature. Instead of choosing to enter into fellowship with God, and thereby becoming truly human, man turned away from the God who is immortality and life, and set

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<sup>375</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 280-283.

<sup>376</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 351.

<sup>377</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 351.

<sup>378</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 351. See also, Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 422.

<sup>379</sup> Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, 105.

<sup>380</sup> Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, 105. See also, Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 38.

<sup>381</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 222.

up his own will against that of God.<sup>382</sup> As a result, Adam, and the whole of humanity in him, lost the state of original grace. There followed the general corruption of human nature which eventually led to death.<sup>383</sup> However, original sin did not totally destroy the divine image in Adam and his descendants, nor did it totally impair his freedom and that of his descendants.<sup>384</sup> Adam and his descendants came under the power of sin and of Satan, an evil being who had sinned against his own angelic being.<sup>385</sup> Human freedom was thus weakened by desire or concupiscence, the spiritual effects of the original sin.<sup>386</sup>

Original sin therefore is an infirmity of human nature. It is expressed most visibly in natural death and engenders personal sinfulness through the paralysis of human freedom.<sup>387</sup> However, as will become clear, personal sinfulness itself can be weakened and brought to the condition of full potentiality with the help of God's grace, which only assists and does not compel human freedom.<sup>388</sup>

Bulgakov recognises that original sin is the concrete foundation of the Incarnation of the Son of God. He asserts that it is also an obstacle for the Incarnation because the Son "could not assume a flesh stained by the Fall, burdened by original sin, just as the sinful flesh could not find in itself the will or power to receive the Incarnation".<sup>389</sup> This raises the questions: How was Mary's human nature, which was given to Jesus, "sinless"? How was Mary able to receive the Incarnation? Regarding the first question, Bulgakov argues that the miraculous nature of the seedless conception of Christ, through the visitation of the Holy Spirit, is not contrary to nature and therefore fully and authentically human.<sup>390</sup> It is

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<sup>382</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 222-223. See also, Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 35.

<sup>383</sup> Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, 106.

<sup>384</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 38.

<sup>385</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 223.

<sup>386</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 93.

<sup>387</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 34.

<sup>388</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 35.

<sup>389</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 177.

<sup>390</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 93.

both natural and normal.<sup>391</sup> It is "not distorted by the whisper of the serpent and not poisoned with his poison".<sup>392</sup> He makes it clear that "[i]ts miraculousness, along with its naturalness, consists precisely in its liberation from the captivity and power of sin, but in no way is it liberated from human nature itself".<sup>393</sup> As to the second question, Bulgakov draws on Scripture enabling us to see how Mary could receive the Incarnation. He points out that Adam's first impulse after the fall was to hide from the face of the Lord God (Gen 3:8). This impulse became set in his descendants as a fearful consciousness.<sup>394</sup> For instance, when Manoah realized that the angel who had appeared to him and his wife was the angel of the Lord, he said to his wife, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God" (Judg 13:22). Similarly, Moses, who was speaking of himself, said to the whole of Israel, "Today we have seen that God may speak to someone and the person may still live" (Deut 5:24). Likewise, when Isaiah saw the Lord in a vision in the Temple he cried out, "Woe is me! I am lost ... my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isa 6:5). Finally, when the Lord spoke with Moses in the tent of meeting, the Lord Himself confirms this alienation of the creature from God, with the words, "you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live" (Ex 33:20).<sup>395</sup>

Accordingly, to enable the creature to receive the Incarnation, it was necessary to overcome this human fear of the children of wrath with the love for the Lord, as only perfect love casts out fear (1 Jn 4:18).<sup>396</sup> To do this required overcoming the sin that separated humanity from God and distorted humankind's apprehension of God.<sup>397</sup> Thus, to free humanity from original sin and to reconcile humanity with God, which could only be

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<sup>391</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 94.

<sup>392</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 94.

<sup>393</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 93.

<sup>394</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 177.

<sup>395</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 177.

<sup>396</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 178.

<sup>397</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 178.

accomplished through the Incarnation, it was essential to weaken this sin so as to make it powerless.<sup>398</sup> This weakening and overcoming was accomplished in Mary.<sup>399</sup>

Bulgakov concedes that Mary's appearance in the world was the great work of the Old Testament Church.<sup>400</sup> In his opinion, a kind of "hereditary holiness, assisted by the grace of the Holy Spirit, had accumulated for centuries and millennia in the Old Testament Church; this holiness, tried by fate and temptations and formed by the entire gracious life of the Church, had ascended higher and higher above the level of fallen humanity".<sup>401</sup> This holiness reached its highest point in Mary, who was full of grace, "overshadowed even prior to the Incarnation by the constant illuminations of the Holy Spirit".<sup>402</sup> She is, for Bulgakov, truly the Virgin Israel.

In Mary "original sin *lost its power* as an obstacle to the Incarnation".<sup>403</sup> Being personally sinless, she was not subject to the power of sin although it touched her as the inherited illness of human nature, which she bore in herself. However, in her this sin was reduced to potentiality only and did not exert any influence on her freedom.<sup>404</sup> It is here that Bulgakov and Orthodox theology is at odds with the Roman Catholic idea of Immaculate Conception. For Bulgakov and the East it is at best an unnecessary doctrine, at worst a doctrine smacking of a Marian monophysitism, that is, it removes Mary from the human race.<sup>405</sup> However, according to Bulgakov, Mary's personal sinlessness opened a path to the unceasing action of the Holy Spirit.<sup>406</sup> When she had attained the spiritual strength to receive the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, the Incarnation took place.<sup>407</sup>

God the Father sent the archangel Gabriel 'to announce to Her the divine counsel: 'The

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<sup>398</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 178.

<sup>399</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 178.

<sup>400</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 178.

<sup>401</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 178.

<sup>402</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 178.

<sup>403</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 178.

<sup>404</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 178.

<sup>405</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 259-260.

<sup>406</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 178.

<sup>407</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 179.



Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee' (Luke 1:35)".<sup>408</sup> In response, she answers: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Mary is the New Eve, but she does not hide from the face of God among the trees, but obediently goes forward to receive the Lord.<sup>409</sup> In Mary the creature realizes its freedom not in disobedience, but in loving obedience to God and in the renunciation of self.<sup>410</sup> As a result, Mary is the preestablished centre of the world.<sup>411</sup>

An essential point for Bulgakov is that, unlike Eve in her primal sinlessness, Mary lived a sinless life in a fallen world. He writes:

First-formed Eve did not know the weight of original sin, which pressed on the Virgin Mary herself. For this reason, too, the primal sinlessness of Eve remained untested, unjustified, free; in contrast, the freedom from personal sin of the Virgin Mary manifests not only her personal victory [*podvig*], but also the victory of the whole Old Testament Church, of all the forefathers and fathers in God, that is of the summit of the ascent of the whole human race, of the lily of paradise that blossomed on the tree of humanity.<sup>412</sup>

As Louth puts it, Bulgakov underscores the fact that Mary's sinlessness is not "some natural state miraculously created by God ... but the result of God's providence, working through the history of salvation, and culminating in her personal faithfulness".<sup>413</sup>

Consequently, the Virgin Mary's humanity became the Son's humanity.<sup>414</sup> "In Christ this human nature was united with the divine nature, received the divine personality of the Word, and was taken up into Divine-humanity".<sup>415</sup> However, "[i]n Mary this same human nature which she gave to Christ remained in its original condition, with the personality of

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<sup>408</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 179.

<sup>409</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 179.

<sup>410</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 179.

<sup>411</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 179.

<sup>412</sup> Cited in Louth, "Father Sergii Bulgakov on the Mother of God," 155.

<sup>413</sup> Louth, "Father Sergii Bulgakov on the Mother of God," 157.

<sup>414</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 116.

<sup>415</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 116.

the Virgin, though now sanctified by the Holy [Spirit] and becoming Spirit-bearing".<sup>416</sup> In other words, Mary does not become divinely human by virtue of giving her human nature to Christ. She retains her own human, created personality, but becomes the living vessel of the Holy Spirit.

### **b) The Kenosis of Mary**

Bulgakov's understanding of Mary's "kenosis" is based on Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul tells the Philippians that they must have the same mind of Christ who "emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross" (Phil 2:6-8). Bulgakov states that Mary followed this path of self-emptying and participated in her Son's redemptive passion in a maternal manner.<sup>417</sup> Mary's great agony during the passion of Jesus on the Cross is emphasised while noting that the Church, in its hymns, canons and Cross-Theotokia in honour of Mary as she relates to her Son's Cross, describes Mary's kenosis suggesting sobs, doubt, lamentation, maternal torment, co-crucifixion and abandonment by God.<sup>418</sup> Bulgakov refers especially to the Lamentation of the Mother of God in the Byzantine hymnography of Good Friday and Holy Saturday: "When she beheld her Son and Lord hanging on the Cross, the pure Virgin was torn by grief and, weeping bitterly with the other women, she cried out: 'Woe is me!' 'I see Thee, dearest and beloved Child, hanging on the Cross and my heart is wounded bitterly', said the pure Virgin".<sup>419</sup> In the Lamentation of the Mother of God from the

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<sup>416</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 116.

<sup>417</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 247.

<sup>418</sup> Bulgakov, *The Friend of the Bridegroom*, 99.

<sup>419</sup> *The Lenten Tridion*, trans. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), 617.

Matins of Holy Saturday, she cries, "'Woe is me, Light of the world! Woe is me, my Light! Jesus, my heart's desire!' cried the Virgin in her bitter grief".<sup>420</sup>

Reflecting on the Feast of the Synaxis of the Mother of God, commemorated on December 26, which celebrates Mary's holy and most pure Motherhood, Bulgakov writes:

the Church tells us of 'the weeping of the Mother of God' before the Cross. Who will measure the torment of the Mother caused by Her Son's torment on the Cross, a torment which She observed to the end? Who will measure the darkness that descended upon Her when the darkness of the grave covered Her Son? Who will measure the sorrowful doubt that crushed the Mother when the voice of the Word became silent, when the eyes of the Light of the world were closed shut, when into the darkness of hell descended the One announced by Gabriel, the One glorified by the angels of Bethlehem? This was a death without death and before death. This was a bloodless crucifixion, and the sting of the sword pierced Her anguished heart and twisted in it.<sup>421</sup>

Bulgakov sees Mary's maternal sorrow at the foot of the Cross as immeasurably far greater than any other maternal sorrow, just as her bearing of Jesus is far greater than any other human birth-giving.<sup>422</sup> It is just as inexpressible as "the agony of the only one without sin, who in Gethsemane sorrowed our human sin to the point where 'His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground' (Luke 22:44)".<sup>423</sup> Mary's station at the Cross is totally analogous to the torment on the Cross. Her abandonment by God in her agony at the foot of the Cross is a great spiritual trial and temptation for her because, at this time she was left to her human nature and its human infirmity.<sup>424</sup>

This great trial of her faith, of her awareness of herself as the Mother of God, was needed for the accomplishment of the fullness of Mary's greatness and glory (1 Pet 1:7). Left to her own human resources, through God's will, Mary overcame this great struggle,

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<sup>420</sup> *The Lenten Tridion*, 630.

<sup>421</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, *Churchly Joy: Orthodox Devotions for the Church Year*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 20.

<sup>422</sup> Bulgakov, *Churchly Joy: Orthodox Devotions for the Church Year*, 19.

<sup>423</sup> Bulgakov, *Churchly Joy: Orthodox Devotions for the Church Year*, 20.

<sup>424</sup> Bulgakov, *The Friend of the Bridegroom*, 99.

with her own powers, through the accomplishment of faith. In this way, she, too, participated in the obedience accomplished in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:39).<sup>425</sup>

Bulgakov explains and summarises this in his further reflection on the Feast of the Synaxis of the Mother of God:

In order for the Mother of God to become inseparable from Christ in glory, She had to be inseparable from Him on Golgotha; and in order to ascend fully the path from earth to heaven, She had first to follow to the end the path of the cross. And this is holy motherhood; this image of the Mother – the Golgotha of the Mother of God – is the highest thing that is given and accessible to human motherhood. What constitutes the power of this feat? What constitutes its holiness? What constitutes the motherhood of this motherhood? ... Sacrificial obedience to God, the readiness and decisiveness to receive all and give all for the Lord, including Her own child – this is the source of the power, mystery, and holiness of the Divine Maternity.<sup>426</sup>

This would lead us to believe that Bulgakov has difficulty with the view expressed by the Cappadocian Fathers that at the Cross Mary's faith failed. As a more modern thinker, Bulgakov understands that Mary, like any and other humans, would have suffered the deepest trauma at the cross. However, psychological trauma does not equal loss of faith. Faith remains, though in a flood of trauma. The Cappadocians lacked the modern concept of 'trauma'. St Basil of Caesarea (ca.329–379), for example, in his letter to Bishop Optimus writes:

Simeon ... prophesies about Mary herself, that when standing by the cross, and beholding what is being done, and hearing the voices, after the witness of Gabriel, after her secret knowledge of the divine conception, after the great exhibition of miracles, she shall feel about her soul a mighty tempest ... He indicates that after the offence at the Cross of Christ a certain swift healing shall come

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<sup>425</sup> Bulgakov, *The Friend of the Bridegroom*, 99.

<sup>426</sup> Bulgakov, *Churchly Joy: Orthodox Devotions for the Church Year*, 20-21.

from the Lord to the disciples and to Mary herself, confirming their heart in faith in him.<sup>427</sup>

Following Basil, Cyril of Alexandria (ca.378-ca.444) asserts, in his commentary on John's Gospel, that Mary's faith failed as she stood at the foot of the Cross:

Doubt not that she admitted ... some such thoughts as these:- I bore Him who is laughed at on the wood; but, in saying He was the true son of the Omnipotent God, perhaps somehow He was mistaken. He said He was the Life, how then has He been crucified? ... why descends He not from the Cross, though He bade Lazarus to return to life, and amazed all Judaea with His miracles? And is it very natural that the woman in her ... not knowing the mystery, should slide into some such trains of thought?<sup>428</sup>

Bulgakov makes it clear that the spiritual aspect of death is the extreme sorrow of death, the feeling that one is abandoned by God, an experience that accompanies death like its shadow.<sup>429</sup> He notes that the Church in its liturgy does not diminish the profound intensity of the sorrow of death. As the Troparion (*Eighth Tone*) by John of Damascus from the Troparia in the Funeral of the Dead affirms. Faith and sorrow are held in tension.

I weep and lament when I consider death, and when I think of those who are laid in the grave. Where is now that moving beauty created in the likeness of God? Where is the glorious form? Oh, wonder: what happened that we are now delivered up to corruption? And how did death come into our life? God alone by his will and command has power to grant peace and rest to our souls.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Basil: Letters and Select Works*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 299.

<sup>428</sup> Cited in John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green & Company, 1920), 132-133.

<sup>429</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 353.

<sup>430</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 988.

Similarly, the Troparion (*Eighth Tone*) of the Funeral of the Dead implores: "O Christ, with the Saints grant rest to the soul of your servant that he (she) may repose in a place where there is no pain, no grief, no sighing but everlasting life".<sup>431</sup>

### c) Mary, Sophia and the Wisdom of God

Reflecting on the sophiological aspect of the doctrine and veneration of Mary, Bulgakov comments that the shrines of Sophia, the Wisdom of God, are identified with Christ in Byzantium and with Mary in Russia.<sup>432</sup> Drawing on the shrines of Sophia in Russia, he points out that the titular feasts of the eleventh century churches of St Sophia in Kiev and St Sophia of Novgorod are celebrated on the Marian feasts of the Nativity of Mary and the Dormition, respectively.<sup>433</sup> Similarly, Russian iconography and liturgy identify Sophia with Mary. Bulgakov notes a number of examples, two of which we mention here: on the church icon of the Mother of God in St Sophia in Kiev, Mary is depicted as Wisdom and as the Church; and, the texts of an existing office of Sophia, the Wisdom of God, which is combined with the office of the Dormition, equate Sophia simultaneously with Christ and with the Mother of God.<sup>434</sup> As this text affirms,

O God Father Almighty ...,  
I dare to sing the protectress of the World,  
The Virgin and immaculate Bride,  
Whose virginal soul Thou hast called Thy temple,  
Because of the incarnation of Thy Word.  
Thou hast called Her also Sophia, Wisdom of God,  
And in Her name, Thou hast ordered Emperor  
Justinian to build a church ...<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 988.

<sup>432</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 124.

<sup>433</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 124.

<sup>434</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 124-125.

<sup>435</sup> Cited in John Meyendorff, "Wisdom-Sophia: Contrasting Approaches to a Complex Theme," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987): 400. According to Meyendorff, this office, composed by Prince Symeon Shakhovskiy, and reedited by two Greek theologians, the brothers Likhoudes, "was never admitted in the ecclesiastically approved and officially printed *Menaia* of the Russian Church". See Meyendorff, "Wisdom-Sophia: Contrasting Approaches to a Complex Theme," 400-401.

An important point for Bulgakov is that these memorials of symbolic sophiology require creative theological understanding and development. He declared:

All this wealth of symbolism has been preserved in the archives of ecclesiastical antiquities, but, covered by the dust of the ages, it has been of no use to anyone. The time has come, however, for us to sweep away the dust of the ages and to decipher the sacred script, to reinstate the tradition of the Church, in this instance all but broken, as a living tradition. It is holy tradition which lays such tasks upon us.<sup>436</sup>

Mary's identification with Sophia, the Wisdom of God, has, according to Bulgakov, a double source that can be given a twofold interpretation.<sup>437</sup> In the first instance, Mary is the Spirit-Bearer, that is, she is the consecrated temple, the anointed vessel, the perpetual dwelling of the Holy Spirit.<sup>438</sup> This theme will be explored in more detail in the section Mary and the Holy Spirit. Secondly, "Wisdom in the Godhead is both the Son and the Holy Ghost".<sup>439</sup> Bulgakov associates the Holy Spirit with Wisdom arguing that "[i]f the Logos is Wisdom, so too is the Holy Ghost, since he is the Spirit of Wisdom".<sup>440</sup>

Bulgakov's twofold interpretation of the dual source of Mary's identification with Sophia is based on his theology of inspiration. In the first instance, the veneration of Mary as Wisdom may denote Mary's position of Spirit-Bearer.<sup>441</sup> It may refer not to her personally, but through her to the Holy Spirit.<sup>442</sup> Hence the veneration of Mary as Wisdom is veneration of the *divine* Wisdom.<sup>443</sup> Mary also is venerated as Wisdom in so far as it is directed to *created* Wisdom because she is creation, that is, creation having reached its goal, glorified and deified.<sup>444</sup> "In Mary", he argues, "is realized the purpose of creation,

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<sup>436</sup> Bulgakov, "The Wisdom of God," 146-147.

<sup>437</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 125.

<sup>438</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 125.

<sup>439</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 125.

<sup>440</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 125.

<sup>441</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 125.

<sup>442</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 125.

<sup>443</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 125-126.

<sup>444</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 126.

the complete penetration of the creature by Wisdom, the full accord of the created type with its prototype, its entire accomplishment".<sup>445</sup> Therefore, for Bulgakov, in Mary in her glorification God is already "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).<sup>446</sup> She is the "creaturely manifestation of Sophia, the Wisdom of God".<sup>447</sup> Similarly, to acknowledge that Mary is created Wisdom is also to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit, together with the Son, although differently from Him, is the personal Wisdom of God.<sup>448</sup>

Bulgakov also underlines the Christological dimension of Mary as Sophia, the Wisdom of God. In his sophiological interpretation of the Chalcedon Definition on the person of Christ, he writes:

[T]he two natures in Christ correspond to the two forms of Sophia, the divine and the created. The created humanity of Christ the God-human came to him from the Mother of God. It belongs to her. In a true sense it is possible to say that she herself personally is this created humanity of Christ, that she is the created Sophia. The humanity of Christ belongs at once to him, since it is one of his two natures, and to her, in whom it personally subsists. And it is in this sense, as sharing the human nature of the God-human, that his holy Mother is the created Sophia.<sup>449</sup>

Mary can be called Sophia, the Wisdom of God. As the Mother of Jesus Christ, who is true God and a true human, she shares His human nature, the counterpart of created Wisdom.<sup>450</sup> The "two faces" of Sophia, divine and human, are at one in the person of Mary.<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 126.

<sup>446</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 126.

<sup>447</sup> Bulgakov, *The Friend of the Bridegroom*, 138.

<sup>448</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 203.

<sup>449</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 126-127.

<sup>450</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 126.

<sup>451</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 127.



### 3. The Mary-Spirit Connection

#### a) The Annunciation

Just as at the creation of the Proto-Earth, which was ordained to become the matter-mother for the creation of the first man, Adam, from the soil of the ground (*adamah*), when the Spirit of God hovered over the waters, so also at the beginning of the new creation, when the Logos became flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Spirit descended upon Mary.<sup>452</sup> The Holy Spirit made her God's earth from which sprang Jesus Christ, the new Adam.<sup>453</sup> Thus according to Bulgakov, the Annunciation is the Pentecost of the Virgin Mary. He sees the Holy Spirit's descent upon Mary at the Annunciation prefigured in Scripture and even before time began.

Drawing on the Troparion (hymn) for the Feast of the Annunciation, Bulgakov declares that the Annunciation is the fountainhead of the salvation of humankind.<sup>454</sup> The Holy Spirit descends upon the Virgin Mary and makes her the Mother of God.<sup>455</sup> The Spirit does not descend alone because the Spirit reposes eternally upon the Son.<sup>456</sup> He brings the Son in with Himself and in making Mary His vessel He makes her virginal womb fruitful.<sup>457</sup> In this way, the Spirit accomplishes the seedless conception of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>458</sup> Ontologically, the Pentecost of the Mother of God precedes the Incarnation of the Son because the divine conception is accomplished by the Son's inhabitation of Mary through the Holy Spirit.<sup>459</sup> Thus, for Bulgakov, the Virgin Mary

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<sup>452</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 176. See also, Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 67.

<sup>453</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 67.

<sup>454</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

<sup>455</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

<sup>456</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

<sup>457</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

<sup>458</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

<sup>459</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

receives the personal descent not only of the Son but also of the Holy Spirit.<sup>460</sup> She becomes the Mother of God as a result of the descent of the Holy Spirit.<sup>461</sup>

Bulgakov underscores that it was not a specific gift of the Holy Spirit that the Father sent down upon Mary in the Annunciation, but the very hypostasis or person of the Holy Spirit himself.<sup>462</sup> The Annunciation, he argues, could not have been only the communication of a special gift of the Holy Spirit because it is not a gift of the Spirit, but the Spirit Himself, who reposes upon the Son.<sup>463</sup> This would lead us to believe that this dyadic relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit is at the heart of the individual believer's reception of Holy Communion. As the Divine Liturgy of John Chrysostom affirms in a prayer immediately after the partaking of Christ's body and blood in the mystical supper of the Eucharist, "We have seen the true light, we have received the heavenly Spirit".<sup>464</sup> In receiving Christ we receive the Spirit.

The manifestation of the coming down of the Son is, for Bulgakov, only possible through the descent of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, it is in the Annunciation that the Holy Spirit descends for the first time into the world.<sup>465</sup> This is also the descent of the Son.<sup>466</sup> As already noted, the Incarnation and Pentecost are identical because "the hypostatic Logos descends together with the hypostatic Spirit".<sup>467</sup> However, this Pentecost of the Annunciation is limited to the Virgin Mary alone.<sup>468</sup> She receives the fullness of the Holy Spirit to become the Mother of God.<sup>469</sup> Here Bulgakov underscores Mary's special relationship to the Holy Spirit. In his words: "there is here a certain identification, as it

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<sup>460</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 249.

<sup>461</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 259. See also, Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 89.

<sup>462</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

<sup>463</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 247.

<sup>464</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 293.

<sup>465</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

<sup>466</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

<sup>467</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246-247.

<sup>468</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 247.

<sup>469</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

were, of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary in the conception of the Son: the Virgin Mary conceives the Son not by Her human powers but because the Holy Spirit reposes in Her and upon Her".<sup>470</sup>

The Holy Spirit, in descending upon Mary, completely sanctified and dwelt in her.<sup>471</sup> On this point, it certainly seems that Bulgakov is drawing on Mary's words to the angel in Canticle Seven of the Canon for the Annunciation: "The descent of the Holy Spirit has purified my soul and sanctified my body: it has made of me a Temple that contains God, a Tabernacle divinely adorned, a living Sanctuary".<sup>472</sup> Thus, for Bulgakov, Mary became Spirit-bearing (*pneumatophoros*) when the Holy Spirit descended upon her at the Annunciation.<sup>473</sup>

Bulgakov underlines Mary's humility. He declares that the Holy Spirit descended upon Mary at the Annunciation the moment Mary said these words to the angel: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).<sup>474</sup> This is expressed with most clarity by Jacob of Serug in one of his rich poetic homilies on Mary the Mother of God:

He looked on her humility and her gentleness and her purity, and dwelt in her because it is so easy for Him to dwell with the humble ... He looked on her and dwelt in her because she was humble among those who were born. Even she herself said that He looked on her lowliness and dwelt in her ... He made her his mother and who is like her in humility? If there were another, purer and gentler than she, in this one he would dwell and that once renounce so as not to dwell in her.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, 177.

<sup>471</sup> Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, 117.

<sup>472</sup> *The Festal Menaion*, trans. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 455.

<sup>473</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 116-117.

<sup>474</sup> Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, 117.

<sup>475</sup> Jacob of Serug, *On The Mother Of God*, trans. Mary Hansbury (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 21-22.

Bulgakov maintains that Mary's words to the angel, and her willingness to accept her share of bearing the cross of Christ, confirm that her accomplishment, like that of her Son, is founded on humility, that is, "the supreme fruit and ... the basis and power of self-renouncing love".<sup>476</sup> Like Jacob of Serug, he underscores that Mary herself revealed that she was the vessel of humility, the very personification of humility, when, in her Magnificat, she said: "God my Savior ... has looked with favour on the lowliness of his handmaid" (Lk 1:38).<sup>477</sup>

### **b) Mary's Growth in the Spirit**

Although the Holy Spirit descended upon Mary at the Annunciation to make her the Mother of God, it also had special significance for Mary herself as a person.<sup>478</sup> Mary was full of grace prior to the Annunciation and she received "the *fullness* of the Holy Spirit with the indivisible totality of His gifts"<sup>479</sup> at the Annunciation. However, while Mary possessed all of the gifts of the Spirit within herself, there were degrees of growth in her reception and assimilation of the Spirit's gifts.<sup>480</sup> She grew in the power of the Spirit.<sup>481</sup> In other words, at every stage of Mary's life, with every challenge that Mary had to face, she was open to the reception of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and assimilated them into her life.

Bulgakov identifies the following stages of Mary's progressive growth in the Spirit. She was sanctified by the grace of the Holy Spirit at her conception, birth, presentation in the Temple and throughout her childhood and maidenhood to the Annunciation.<sup>482</sup> Then, at the Annunciation the Holy Spirit descended upon her, consecrating her body and making

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<sup>476</sup> Bulgakov, *The Friend of the Bridegroom*, 2.

<sup>477</sup> Bulgakov, *The Friend of the Bridegroom*, 2.

<sup>478</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 246.

<sup>479</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 247.

<sup>480</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 247.

<sup>481</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 247.

<sup>482</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 117.

her the Mother of God.<sup>483</sup> Likewise, from the Annunciation through Golgotha to Pentecost, she became increasingly possessed by the Holy Spirit.<sup>484</sup> At Pentecost she became totally possessed by the Spirit.<sup>485</sup> Her human nature was sanctified from every consequence and remnant of original sin and the redemptive power of Christ communicated to her.<sup>486</sup> As a human being burdened by original sin, she needed redemption through Christ and the appropriation of this redemption through the Holy Spirit.<sup>487</sup> That is, she needed baptism with both the Holy Spirit and fire and chrismation, the seal of the gift of the Spirit.<sup>488</sup> Even though the Annunciation already signified the divinization of her human nature, it was not yet salvation, but only the preparation for salvation because life in the Spirit was revealed to humankind only through and in Christ.<sup>489</sup> She herself declares in the Magnificat that her spirit rejoices in God her Saviour.<sup>490</sup> Bulgakov's emphasis is clearly on the compatibility of the grace of the Annunciation and the grace of Pentecost. At the Annunciation the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit creates Mary's divine Motherhood whereas Pentecost was a new spiritual birth.<sup>491</sup>

Consequently, Mary's reception of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the apostles in superabundant fullness prepared her for the prolongation and consummation of her glory at her Dormition.<sup>492</sup> Here Bulgakov echoes the words that Christ said to His Mother before her death. In the second homily of St Germanus of Constantinople (715-730), for the feast of the Dormition we hear: "Entrust your body to me, just as I placed my divinity

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<sup>483</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 117.

<sup>484</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 117.

<sup>485</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 117.

<sup>486</sup> Sergius Bulgakov, "The Burning Bush," in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. James Pain and Nicolas Zernov (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 101.

<sup>487</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 67.

<sup>488</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 67.

<sup>489</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 66.

<sup>490</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 67.

<sup>491</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 67.

<sup>492</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 117.

trustingly in your womb. Your soul, full of divine power, will see the glory of my Father. Your immaculate body will see the glory of his only Son. Your pure spirit will see the glory of the all-holy Spirit".<sup>493</sup>

### c) Mary's Entrance into Christ's Glory

Bulgakov sees the glorification of the Mother of God as her Dormition.<sup>494</sup> The Mother of God died according to the law of nature, but her body did not undergo corruption after her death.<sup>495</sup> Like her Son, she passed through the gates of death, which awaits all humankind. Referring to the Canon of Prayer to the Mother of God at the Departure of a Soul, Bulgakov underlines Mary's limitless love in her faithfulness and closeness to the human race, which she adopted at the foot of the Cross in John, even in the hour of death:

Through thy tenderness of heart and thy many bounties, by nature inclined thereto, O Lady, in this dread hour intercede for me, O Helper Invincible! Great terror now imprisoneth my soul, trembling unutterable and grievous, when forth from the body it must go: Comfort thou it, O All-undefiled One ... O Refuge renowned for the sinful and contrite, make thy mercy known upon me, O Pure One, and deliver me from the hands of demons: For many dogs have compassed me about ... Lo, now is the hour for succour, lo, now the hour for thine intercession; lo, now, the time because of which, day and night I have bowed down before thee, and prayed fervently unto thee, O Lady.<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>493</sup> Germanus of Constantinople, "An Encomium On The Holy And Venerable Dormition Of Our Most Glorious Lady, The Mother Of God And Ever-Virgin Mary," in *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 171.

<sup>494</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 70.

<sup>495</sup> Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, 118.

<sup>496</sup> "The Office at the Parting of the Soul from the Body", [http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/death/service\\_parting.aspx](http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/death/service_parting.aspx) (accessed 10 May 2010).

In this way, Bulgakov also emphasises Mary's limitless humility in humbling herself, like her son, though differently, in not escaping death out of love for the whole human race.<sup>497</sup>

Bulgakov stresses that the Mother of God's death was a true, real, natural death, noting that Jesus' death was freely chosen, but not natural. Due to His seedless conception from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, Jesus was free from original sin and therefore was not subject to death. Here Bulgakov refutes the Catholic Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary arguing that if Mary was removed from original sin she would be liberated from the power of death as well. Thus, for Bulgakov, the Virgin Mary died as one subject to original sin. She did not overcome death by her own power. It was defeated for her by the power of her Son. "Having fallen asleep the Mother of God was awakened from her Dormition by her Son. She was resurrected by Him and was, in this manner, the first fruits of the resurrection of the whole creation".<sup>498</sup> She now lives in Heaven in a glorified state at her Son's right hand.<sup>499</sup> Bulgakov echoes the words of Gregory Palamas in his homily *On the Dormition*:

Today she has moved from earth to heaven ... She has stood on the right hand of the King of all, clothed in vesture wrought with gold, and arrayed in divers colours, as the Psalmist and prophet says of her (cf. Ps. 45:9 Lxx); and you should take this garment interwoven with gold to mean her divinely radiant body, adorned with every type of virtue. For at present she is the only one who has a place in heaven with her divinely glorified body in the company of her Son. Earth, the grave and death could not ultimately detain her life-giving body.<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 70-71.

<sup>498</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 72.

<sup>499</sup> Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, 118.

<sup>500</sup> Palamas, *Mary the Mother of God: Sermons by Saint Gregory Palamas*, 73.

Consequently, Mary's assumption bears witness to the fullness of life in the Spirit that Mary had reached in her glorification and her divinization.<sup>501</sup> In this way, Mary, a deified creature, through grace, shares intimately and uniquely in the very life of the Holy Trinity.<sup>502</sup> Mary in the fullness of life in God is the sunlit summit of the world.<sup>503</sup> She brings to Christ, in and through her gracious and vicarious life, Christ's redeemed creation.<sup>504</sup> Mary's abiding in heaven is different from Christ's presence in the heavens at the right hand of the Father. Christ dwells in heaven "as God in the interior of the Trinity".<sup>505</sup> Mary, being a creature, "does not ascend into this heaven of heavens, She abides *at the boundary* of heaven and creation. Bulgakov agrees with Gregory Palamas that, "[Mary] alone stands at the border between created and uncreated nature".<sup>506</sup>

Hence, for Bulgakov, Mary has not left the world.<sup>507</sup> Mary in her glory "does not stop being a creature connected with the world, which is glorified in Her and by Her".<sup>508</sup> As Gregory Palamas affirms in his words addressed to Mary the Mother of God: "From [the heavenly tabernacles] you care for your inheritance, and by your unsleeping intercessions you reconcile us to your Son".<sup>509</sup>

#### **d) The Parousia of the Mother of God**

To appreciate Bulgakov's theological position on the parousia of the Mother of God it is necessary to begin with a short explanation of his understanding of the parousia. For Bulgakov, the parousia is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world in glory.<sup>510</sup> He places great stress on Christ's appearance "in glory" as Christ's possession of "the fullness of

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<sup>501</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 247.

<sup>502</sup> Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 119.

<sup>503</sup> Bulgakov, "The Burning Bush," 95.

<sup>504</sup> Bulgakov, "The Burning Bush," 96.

<sup>505</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 414.

<sup>506</sup> Palamas, *Mary the Mother of God: Sermons by Saint Gregory Palamas*, 77.

<sup>507</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 412.

<sup>508</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 412.

<sup>509</sup> Palamas, *Mary the Mother of God: Sermons by Saint Gregory Palamas*, 75.

<sup>510</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 387-388.



the union with the Holy Spirit reposing upon Him".<sup>511</sup> The Lord's coming "in glory" is emphasised while noting that it is radically different from His first coming "in humility" when the veil of human flesh covered His divinity.<sup>512</sup> In this kenosis of the Son, according to Bulgakov, the dyad of the Son and the Holy Spirit experienced a kind of interior, mutual kenosis. "The Son's glory was removed in His kenosis, and the Holy Spirit separated itself from the Son in its own kenosis. The Holy Spirit thus limited the fullness of its gifts and reduced the degree of its repose upon Christ".<sup>513</sup>

Consequently, the appearance of Christ in glory is also the appearance of the Holy Spirit, who reposes upon the Son and who already abides kenotically in the world.<sup>514</sup> Christ in His glory in the parousia reveals the Holy Spirit as glory and thereby once again sends the Spirit into the world.<sup>515</sup> Hence Christ's parousia is also the parousia of the Holy Spirit, which began at the Pentecost and which is concretely accomplished with Christ's appearance in glory.<sup>516</sup> When Christ comes He will "once again become visible and accessible to the world, but the glory itself becomes visible, the glory of the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit".<sup>517</sup> In other words, Christ's coming in glory is the same as Christ's coming in the Holy Spirit.<sup>518</sup>

Bulgakov notes that Scripture attests that when Christ comes in glory He will come in glory with all the angels, saints, and all that is holy both on earth and in heaven.<sup>519</sup> He then raises a number of questions with regard to the Mother of God and the parousia. His first question is the most thought-provoking: "But where is *She*, the Most Pure and Most Blessed One, raised into heaven, in Her Dormition and sitting 'at the right hand of the

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<sup>511</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 397.

<sup>512</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 394.

<sup>513</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 397.

<sup>514</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 398.

<sup>515</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 398.

<sup>516</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 398.

<sup>517</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 399.

<sup>518</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 410.

<sup>519</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 409.

Son?"<sup>520</sup> Bulgakov recognises that the Mother of God cannot be separated from her Son's glory or be left in heaven to wait for a new resurrection.<sup>521</sup> He believes that she will come into the world with her Son in the parousia because the parousia of the Son is also the parousia of the Mother of God. She is the glory of the world, the personal manifestation of Wisdom, the glory of Christ's personal humanity. She is the Spirit-Bearer, the personal image of the Holy Spirit, the living gates for the Holy Spirit's parousia, through which the Spirit comes into the world.<sup>522</sup> Bulgakov points out that the basis of his doctrine on parousia of the Mother of God is the iconographic gesture of the Mother of God imploring Christ at the Last Judgment seated at His right hand to extend His forgiveness.<sup>523</sup> Consequently, the Mother of God returns into the world together with her Son in His glory.<sup>524</sup>

Bulgakov therefore raises the question, "When does this parousia of the Mother of God occur?"<sup>525</sup> He argues that it is likely that it will not happen after Christ's coming in glory since it is attested to by revelation that "the glorified Church, the angels and the saints, accompanies Christ who comes in glory".<sup>526</sup> Bulgakov suggests that it is possible that Mary may enter the world in her glory before that of her Son.<sup>527</sup> He notes that after Christ ascended into heaven, "the Mother of God remained in the world alone, so to speak, without Her Son".<sup>528</sup> He maintains that if Mary enters into the world "first and alone, She can anticipate His coming into the world if that is necessary for humanity, which has need of the vision of Her face to soften its heart".<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>520</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 409.

<sup>521</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 409.

<sup>522</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 409. See also, Bulgakov, *Sophia: The Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, 122-123.

<sup>523</sup> *Bride of the Lamb* 410

<sup>524</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 411.

<sup>525</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 412.

<sup>526</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 412.

<sup>527</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 412.

<sup>528</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 412.

<sup>529</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 412.

The fact that the parousia is preceded by heaven's general approach to the world affirms the possibility of Mary appearing in the world before the parousia.<sup>530</sup> The prophetic vision of the wedding of the Lamb in the Book of Revelation affirms this possibility.<sup>531</sup> In order to capture this vision without interruption the text, as quoted and presented by Bulgakov, will be fully quoted:

'The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And [the angel] saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb' (Rev 19:7-9)? And further: 'Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God' (21:9-10). And finally: 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come' (22:17).<sup>532</sup>

The symbolic language of this prophetic vision, according to Bulgakov, "refer[s] to the appearance in the world of [the Mother of God] this Spirit-bearing Bride, preparing the way for the Lord".<sup>533</sup> He believes that the veil which covers this holy mystery "will fall away when the 'times and the seasons' approach and the call of the Bride, 'Come!' becomes accessible to vigilant hearing and the vision of the Bride Herself becomes accessible to penetrating sight".<sup>534</sup>

He claims that, in addition to the judgment of love required before Christ, the God-Man, there is a human judgment of love before Mary the Spirit-Bearer.<sup>535</sup> Bulgakov argues that Mary has a powerful presence "in the light of the love that emanates from it".<sup>536</sup> Her image "irresistibly penetrates into every human heart by virtue of a holy humanity

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<sup>530</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 413.

<sup>531</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 413.

<sup>532</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 413.

<sup>533</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 413.

<sup>534</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 413.

<sup>535</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 459.

<sup>536</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 459-460.

transparent to the manifestation of the Holy Spirit".<sup>537</sup> She connects us to Christ and God.<sup>538</sup> The appearance of Mary awakens in us knowledge of ourselves as sinful and egotistic, in a way that provokes repentance.<sup>539</sup> Mary is our living conscience.<sup>540</sup> She is, as will become clear in the next section, clearly vital for the restoration of unity among Christians.

#### 4. The Implications for Ecumenical Unity

The work of Bulgakov has two important positive and challenging ecumenical implications. The first impacts on spiritual ecumenism which the Second Vatican Council called the very soul of the ecumenical movement,<sup>541</sup> which calls for "interior conversion, spiritual renewal, the personal renewal of life, charity, self-denial, humility, patience ... [and the] renewal and reform of the Church",<sup>542</sup> and clearly involves a relationship with the Holy Spirit. Secondly, Bulgakov creates new possibilities for theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches whose implications and possibilities are outlined in Bulgakov's following statement:

The distinction between various confessions lies first of all in dogmatic differences, and then in the religious and practical discrepancies which result from them. These are on the surface and are apparent to all. But what constitutes Church unity, which actually exists as the basis of unity – this is hidden in the very depths. Meanwhile this task is a duty both of Church love and of practical utility. One must realise and express the positive spiritual basis of Christian 'ecumenism' not only as an idea but as an actuality existing by grace. We experience it as a breathing of God's Spirit in grace, as a revelation of Pentecost, when people

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<sup>537</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 460.

<sup>538</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 460.

<sup>539</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 460.

<sup>540</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 460.

<sup>541</sup> UR, 8.

<sup>542</sup> Walter Kasper, "'Unitatis Redintegratio', Vatican 11's Decree on Ecumenism: A new interpretation after 40 Years," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 1 December 2004, 8.

begin to understand one another in spite of the diversity of tongues.<sup>543</sup>

In the first instance, Bulgakov shows how to achieve spiritual ecumenism by a relationship between the believer and the Holy Spirit. He also provides insight into the Mother of God's hidden relationship with the Holy Spirit. This helps give believers an understanding and appreciation of the deifying work of the Holy Spirit within them, a better understanding and appreciation of the relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit and a deeper awareness of Mary and the Holy Spirit. It can encourage and challenge the believer to live a life of creative activity, responsibility, self-determination and audacity by deepening his or her relationship with the Holy Spirit. Out of this relationship grows clarity of vision to see the need for ecumenism and a deepening of love towards the other.

Bulgakov understands that Mary's life in the Holy Spirit entails humility and the voluntary emptying of oneself. Modern ecumenists concur that humility and sacrifice are essential in the work towards restoring Christian unity. Edward Cassidy asserts that "[t]o walk effectively along the ecumenical way ... requires a deep humility, a readiness to pardon and to ask pardon".<sup>544</sup> John Paul II maintains that "there is no lasting unity which is not based upon humility, conversion and pardon, and therefore upon sacrifice".<sup>545</sup> Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople asserts that the re-establishment of full communion between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches "will be possible when we have all acquired 'the mind of Christ', 'the love of Christ', 'the faith of Christ', 'the humility of Christ', 'Christ's disposition to self-sacrifice'".<sup>546</sup> If, as Bulgakov claims, Mary

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<sup>543</sup> Bulgakov, "By Jacob's Well," 102.

<sup>544</sup> Edward Idris Cassidy, "That They May All Be One: The Imperative and Prospects of Christian Unity" <http://www.leaderu.com/ftissues/ft9701/articles/cassidy.html> (accessed 20 March 2008).

<sup>545</sup> John Paul II, "Address of John Paul II"

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/2001/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20010505\\_ecumenical-meeting\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20010505_ecumenical-meeting_en.html) (accessed 25 March 2008). This address was given at the Ecumenical Meeting held in the Greek-Orthodox Cathedral in Damascus, Syria on Saturday 5 May, 2001.

<sup>546</sup> Bartholomew I, "Bartholomew of Constantinople: On the union with Rome"

<http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/fathers/bartholomew-union.asp> (accessed 23 July 2010).

is the very personification of humility, Mary is the one shepherding the Churches to the humility of Christ, to His love, and to His sacrifice. Mary's humility, through which the Savior entered the world, is an irreducible element in any genuine spiritual ecumenism and dialogue.

Similarly, "kenosis" is crucial to the restoration of unity among Christians. Contemporary ecumenists affirm that "[t]he encounter with others on our ecumenical journey 'calls for a kenosis – a self-giving and a self-emptying'. A 'ministry of kenosis' is required even if 'such kenosis arouses fear of loss of identity'".<sup>547</sup> Ware urges Orthodox Christians to "strive to make [their] Orthodox witness [regarding Christian unity] more kenotic and more generous".<sup>548</sup> The primary task of this kenotic witness "as an Orthodox minority in the Western world", in his view, is to empty oneself to listen. This challenging call of kenosis, which is worth noting, is best heard in his own words:

Above all, let us as Orthodox be prepared to *listen* to other Christians. To be true witnesses we need to hear as well as to speak, to keep silent as well as to make pronouncements. Too often we offer answers to others before we have taken the trouble to find out what their questions are. Let us, then, listen to our fellow-Christians in the West – and also to the non-Christians; let us enter into their specific experience, their sense of crisis, with all its dilemmas, its anguish and its hesitations. By listening we shall come to understand our own Orthodox inheritance.<sup>549</sup>

Likewise, Jesuit priest Ladislav Orsy asserts that just as "Death is the door to resurrection *Kenosis* is the door to Christian unity".<sup>550</sup> "The different churches and confessions (all of them) must learn also to empty themselves ... in order to receive and

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<sup>547</sup> Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia* (Geneva, WCC, 1994), section I, 23, p. 233.

<sup>548</sup> Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, "The Witness of the Orthodox Church," *The Ecumenical Review* 52, no. 1 (2000): 51.

<sup>549</sup> Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, "The Witness of the Orthodox Church," 50-51.

<sup>550</sup> Ladislav Orsy, "'Kenosis': The Door to Christian Unity," *Origins* 23 (1993): 39.

taste the gift of Christian unity".<sup>551</sup> Applying Bulgakov's theology of kenosis to Mary, John Paul II declares that the kenosis Mary shares through faith in Christ's redeeming death at Calvary "is perhaps the deepest 'kenosis' of faith in human history".<sup>552</sup> Consequently, if, as Bulgakov shows, Mary's kenosis led to her attainment of the fullness of life in the Spirit, then Mary can help believers to follow the path of kenotic diminution that takes them into the depths of deeper communion with God and with one another.

Bulgakov also understands that Mary the Spirit-Bearer retains her own full personal integrity. This suggests that under the Holy Spirit, Catholicity, a loving union of persons in a divine-human fellowship, is engendered in the Church. *Unitatis Redintegratio* reflects this:

All should realise that it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate, preserve, and foster the exceedingly rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches, in order faithfully to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition, and to bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians.<sup>553</sup>

Far from being an obstacle to the Church's unity, such diversity of customs and observances only adds to her comeliness, and contributes greatly to carrying out her mission ... Although it has not always been honored, the strict observance of this traditional principle is among the prerequisites for any restoration of unity.<sup>554</sup>

Bulgakov's thought reminds believers that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit both of unity and of diversity. It encourages and challenges the Churches, East and West, to make every effort to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition. It is here that the Virgin Mary, the Spirit-Bearer, the human creature who holds the Holy Spirit in all its fullness, can help bring about a deeper awareness and response to the Spirit's life in the believer and in the Church. "Mary as the personal habitation of the Holy Spirit", asserts Bulgakov, "is in truth the true personal expression of the Church, the heart of the Church of which Christ is the

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<sup>551</sup> Orsy, "'Kenosis': The Door to Christian Unity," 38.

<sup>552</sup> *RM*, 18.

<sup>553</sup> *UR*, 15.

<sup>554</sup> *UR*, 16

Head. Overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, she becomes the Mother of God, brings forth the Logos, and in and through her this divine motherhood belongs to the whole Church".<sup>555</sup>

At this point it is interesting and important to note that, in a recent interview centred on "The Ravenna Document", Walter Kasper asserted that, for the first time, the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches are approaching the questions, "What is the Church? Where is the Church? What are the structures of the Church?"<sup>556</sup> In response to this question, "what would you say is the biggest obstacle in moving forward to unity [among different Christian Churches]?" Kasper replied, "the 'spirit of possessiveness' is a main obstacle, which can also be seen as lack of willingness to 'metanoia', that is, to conversion. It is also a lack of love, an unwillingness to open oneself to a partner, to learn from and be enriched by the other, and to share with the other".<sup>557</sup> Bulgakov's theology encourages the Church to turn to Mary the Spirit- Bearer, the heart of the Church to learn this ecumenical way of being, which is related to the idea of divine inspiration, which has its very foundation and its precondition in the divine image in the human being.<sup>558</sup> He also opens the door for ecumenical dialogue between the Churches on Mary as a model of ecclesiology and her role in the Church.

Bulgakov also shows that the Divine Incarnation includes the personal descent from heaven of the Son and of the Holy Spirit who eternally reposes upon Him. This emphasises that "Mary is not only the hypostatic humanity of Christ; She is also the hypostatic receptacle of the Holy Spirit".<sup>559</sup> It also underlines the dyadic character of the Church as the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. In Bulgakov's theology,

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<sup>555</sup> Bulgakov, "The Burning Bush," 95.

<sup>556</sup> Gerard O'Connell, "Vatican's top ecumenist hails Orthodox 'breakthrough'" <http://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweeklyFebruary32008/VaticansecumenisthailsOrthodoxbreakthrough/tabid/5365/Default.aspx> (accessed 28 March 2008).

<sup>557</sup> O'Connell, "Vatican's top ecumenist hails Orthodox 'breakthrough'" (accessed).

<sup>558</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 300.

<sup>559</sup> Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, 248.



one "is not possible without the other and any ecclesiology that is monistic, not dyadic, is defective".<sup>560</sup> If this is true, Mary is clearly essential in the Church's understanding of herself as Church. This means that Mary needs to be included in any ecumenical dialogue regarding a true understanding of the Church.

Bulgakov's understanding of Mary's holiness as the fruit of the Holy Spirit working in the sacred history of Israel and coming to fruition in her, and Mary's holiness as the synergy between human freedom and the Holy Spirit, also enables the theology of East and West to speak fruitfully about Mary's Immaculate Conception. Bulgakov remains highly critical of what he considers the Catholic '*ex opere operato*' approach to Mary's holiness as implied in the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. He fears that Mary would be too removed from humankind, so to become "separated from the tree of the old Adam".<sup>561</sup> On the other hand, he and Orthodoxy generally admit an "extraordinary outpouring of the gift of the Holy Spirit, unique in its type",<sup>562</sup> in other words, "a divine supplying for human infirmity".<sup>563</sup>

The work of Bulgakov also opens other possibilities for theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. It raises the questions: a) How does Bulgakov's understanding of Mary's special relationship with the Holy Spirit relate to the Roman Catholic notions of the Holy Spirit? b) What does the Roman Catholic Church think of the role of the Holy Spirit in redemption – in the economy of salvation? c) What are the implications of Mary and the Holy Spirit's relationship for the 'filioque' question? d) What are the implications of the action of the Holy Spirit and the order of the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation/Chrismation and the Eucharist, and the Epiclesis and the Eucharist? The ecumenical questions are therefore: a) What is the

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<sup>560</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 257.

<sup>561</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 63.

<sup>562</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 63.

<sup>563</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 63.

relationship between the Son and the Spirit? Why do they come together? b) What is the role of the Holy Spirit within the economy of salvation? c) What is the "moment" of sanctification of the Mother of God? d) What is the image of the Holy Spirit and the "epiclesis"?

## Conclusion

Bulgakov's challenging enquiry into the theme of Mary and the Holy Spirit springs both from his dogmatic interpretation of the world, which itself is an early response to the emergence of the modern secular age cut off from its spiritual roots,<sup>564</sup> and from his own personal story. Louth considers that such theology "invites the human spirit on a fascinating quest after the nature of things, but it is rooted in the simple turning of the creature towards God, in joy and gratitude".<sup>565</sup>

Bulgakov's vision ranges from the creation of humankind to a consideration of humankind's ultimate destiny. Humans possess within themselves the very "breath of life" (Gen 2:7) and the deep impress of the image of God (Gen 1:26). These lie at the very ontological foundation of human existence. The true-life task of the human being (literally the "earthling", in the Hebrew, *adama*), is the realisation of this image in creative freedom, by conforming itself and the world to the divine world.

However, the restoration and realization of the divine image is a divine initiative which also calls for an essential measure of human co-operation. It is here that Bulgakov connects Mary, the Most Pure, the All-Immaculate One, to the human race and to its restoration and redemption. Her holiness is the full flowering of the holiness of the Church of the Old Testament. He emphasises both Mary's own merit in sinlessness, arguing that

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<sup>564</sup> Arjakovsky, "Review of Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology, by Rowan Williams ed.," 286.

<sup>565</sup> Andrew Louth, "Sergii Bulgakov and the Task of Theology," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 74 (2009): 257.

Mary was subject, as are all humans, to original sin as an infirmity of human nature, but she, unlike all others, was personally sinless. He considers original sin as an illness, expressed most visibly in natural death, which engenders personal sinfulness.<sup>566</sup> However, in Mary this active power of original sin was completely suppressed with the help of the power of the Holy Spirit, assisting but never coercing human freedom.<sup>567</sup> Accordingly, Mary's immaculate sinlessness refers not to her nature, but to her existential condition in overcoming all sin.<sup>568</sup> In this way Mary is not deprived of her own merit in sinlessness.<sup>569</sup> However, although Mary's holiness is truly personal, it is to be regarded also as the accomplishment of the Old Testament Church.

Mary stands at the border between created and uncreated nature because the Holy Spirit brought her to a certain divine humanity. In her intimate union with God's Spirit Mary is intimately connected to the world so that, in her, the world and creation have begun their transfiguration and glorification. Here Bulgakov's soteriological emphasis throughout is clearly on deification and the transformation of the human in contrast to the juridical models of some Western approaches.

One of Bulgakov's uniquely personal strengths as a theologian is his emphasis on the dyadic relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus, Mary's divine Motherhood is connected not only to the mystery of the Incarnation, but also to the activity of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit's overshadowing upon Mary that caused her to become the Mother of God. She became the "Theotokos" because she was united spiritually with the Holy Spirit and thus became the Mother of God. In this regard there is a certain anticipation of the manner in which the Spirit will act in all the believers. Indeed, Mary becomes the archetype of the Christian soul. Like Mary, Christians become enchristened

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<sup>566</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 34.

<sup>567</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 41.

<sup>568</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 10.

<sup>569</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 63.

through the power of the Holy Spirit at their Baptism. Therefore, Mary is justifiably venerated as Mother of the Church and of the Christian soul.

Another of Bulgakov's strengths as a theologian is his vision of God's personal and positive relationship to the world. "A human being is never a thing in God's hands, and grace never deprives him of his freedom".<sup>570</sup> Fallen humanity is not so vitiated as to have no capacity in cooperating with the salvation offered by Christ. "Nothing in spiritual life is done mechanically, automatically, without combat and personal participation."<sup>571</sup> This contributes greatly to a much richer inquiry into Mary's person and her role in the work of the salvation of the human race. While Vatican II rightly presents Mary as the Church's model and excellent exemplar in faith and love, and Paul VI also declares that the Holy Spirit is the Source of Mary's original holiness and abundant gifts, Bulgakov's vision reaches into the depths of the human soul and out into the cosmos, in such a manner that Mary is more than just an inspiring model of faith. Jesus, through His perfect obedience to the Father, completely sanctified and divinized His human nature. So, too, Mary surrenders herself totally to the indwelling Holy Spirit. In so doing, she, also "had to complete the heroic effort of her entire life, which was filled with the most heavy temptations, so that the hour of her most glorious Dormition might come".<sup>572</sup>

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<sup>570</sup> Bulgakov, *The Friend of the Bridegroom*, 92.

<sup>571</sup> Bulgakov, *The Friend of the Bridegroom*, 92.

<sup>572</sup> Bulgakov, "The Burning Bush," 100.

## Chapter 4

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### Alexander Schmemmann on Mary and the Holy Spirit

#### Introduction

Alexander Schmemmann's journal entry of February 27, 1976, in his *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann 1973-1983*, captures his approach to theology: "the Orthodox man begins with the 'end', with the experience, the breakthrough, the very reality of God, the Kingdom, Life – and only afterwards does he clarify it, but in relation to the experience he has had".<sup>573</sup> Hence his theology of Mary and the Holy Spirit, which is the focus of this chapter, along with its implications for ecumenical unity, is rooted in the total and living experience of the Church. Since this great pioneer of Orthodox liturgical theology is not well known to Western Christians, it is necessary to also begin this chapter by briefly introducing the reader to this twentieth century Orthodox liturgical theologian.

Alexander Schmemmann was born into a Russian family in Estonia in 1921.<sup>574</sup> In his early childhood his family moved to France where he was educated in a Russian military school in Versailles.<sup>575</sup> After transferring to a Russian *gimnaziia* or high school, he completed his secondary education at a French lycée and then went to the University of Paris.<sup>576</sup>

Schmemmann's theology, like that of Bulgakov, grows from a deeply religious experience in his early adulthood which remained with him all his life.<sup>577</sup> Reflecting on this experience, he wrote:

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<sup>573</sup> Schmemmann, *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann 1973-1983*, 110.

<sup>574</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 145.

<sup>575</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 145-146.

<sup>576</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 146.

<sup>577</sup> Schmemmann, *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann 1973-1983*, 20.

During my school years in Paris, on my way to the Lycée Carnot, I would stop by the Church of St Charles of Monceau for two or three minutes. And always, in this huge, dark church, at one of the altars, a silent Mass was being said. The Christian West: it is part of my childhood, youth, when I lived a double life. On the one hand it was a worldly and very Russian émigré life; on the other, a secret, religious life. Sometimes I think of the contrast: a noisy, proletarian rue Legendre (a small street in the 19<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement*, in Paris) and this never-changing Mass (... a spot of light on the dark wall ...) – one step, and one is in a totally different world. This contrast somehow determined in my religious experience the intuition that has never left me: the coexistence of two heterogeneous worlds, the presence in this world of something absolutely and totally 'other'. This 'other' illumines everything, in one way or another. Everything is related to it – the Church as the Kingdom of God among and inside us. For me, rue Legendre never became unnecessary, or hostile, or nonexistent – hence my aversion to pure 'spiritualism'. On the contrary, the street, as it was, acquired a new charm that was understandable and obvious only to me, who knew at that moment the Presence, the feast revealed in the Mass nearby. Everything became alive, intriguing: every storefront window, the face of every person I met, the concrete, tangible feeling of that moment, the relationship between the street, the weather, the houses, the people.<sup>578</sup>

Schememann's initiation to Orthodoxy took place not so much at the compulsory religion classes given at both the military and high school, but rather through his active participation in the liturgy at St Alexander Nevsky's Cathedral in Paris as an altar boy and then as a sub-deacon.<sup>579</sup> After university he studied at the St Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris which was still dominated by the personality of Bulgakov, whom he greatly respected, even though he was never attracted by his "sophiological" speculations.<sup>580</sup> Having completed his studies at the Institute, Schememann became an instructor in Church History.<sup>581</sup> In 1946 he was ordained a priest by the then Archbishop Vladimir Tikhonitsky.<sup>582</sup> Schememann joined the faculty of St Vladimir's Orthodox

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<sup>578</sup> Schememann, *The Journals of Father Alexander Schememann 1973-1983*, 19.

<sup>579</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 146.

<sup>580</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 147.

<sup>581</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 148.

<sup>582</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 147.

Theological Seminary in New York in 1951 and was formally appointed dean of the seminary in 1962.<sup>583</sup> He held this position until his death in 1983.<sup>584</sup>

Schmemmann represented the Orthodox Church as an observer at the second session of the Second Vatican Council in 1963.<sup>585</sup> The following excerpt from his essay response to the Council's Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* challenges Roman Catholics to examine their own perception of the Orthodox Church and to have an even greater openness and respect for the tradition of the Christian East:

The decree solemnly proclaims the *equality* of the Eastern tradition yet, at the same time, formulates and regulates it in terms of a Western and even juridical ecclesiology hardly adequate to its spirit and orientations. To a great degree it remains thus a Latin text about the Eastern tradition. The institution of Patriarchates, for example, is not only given an importance it does not have, in fact, in the Eastern Church, but is also defined as a personal jurisdiction of the patriarch over other bishops, which is alien to the eastern canonical tradition, where the Patriarch or any other Primate is always a *primus inter pares*.<sup>586</sup>

Concerned for the fate of Orthodoxy in Russia, Schmemmann, for thirty years gave a weekly sermon on various religious topics in Russian on Radio Liberty to listeners in the former Soviet Union.<sup>587</sup> One of his interested listeners was the Russian novelist and Nobel Prize winner Alexander Solzhenitsyn, with whom he became and remained close friend.<sup>588</sup>

As noted in Chapter One, there are two principal sources for Schmemmann's thoughts on Mary and the Holy Spirit and their implications for ecumenical unity, a lecture on "Mary and the Holy Spirit" and his series of sermons on "The Mother of God". Schmemmann treats the theme of his lecture, Mary and the Holy Spirit, in the context of the

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<sup>583</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 151.

<sup>584</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 151.

<sup>585</sup> *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), 747.

<sup>586</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, "A Response," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), 387-388.

<sup>587</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 153.

<sup>588</sup> Meyendorff, "A Life Worth Living," 153.

contemporary double phenomenon of a revival of interest in the Holy Spirit and a corresponding decline of interest in Mariology. In his series of sermons on the Mother of God he attempts to explain the content and meaning of the Orthodox Church's ancient and continuing veneration of Mary.<sup>589</sup> The sermon series is structured around the principal Mariological feasts of the Nativity of the Mother of God (8 September), the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple (21 November), the Annunciation (25 March) and the Dormition (15 August), and the lesser Mariological feasts of the Assembly (Synaxis) of the Mother of God (26 December) and the Protection of the Mother of God (1 October).

Schememann's Mariological insights in his sermons are important in their exposition on the person of Mary, the one who "has become totally transparent to the Holy Spirit, to the 'joy and peace' of the Kingdom".<sup>590</sup> The Holy Spirit, as Scripture says, 'blows where He will' (Jn 3:8) and we will note Schememann's exposure of false attributions of phenomena and activities to the Holy Spirit. The Divine Spirit is in a certain sense, elusive. However, this study argues that one of the clearest lens through which to contemplate the person and work of the Holy Spirit is pre-eminently the Virgin Mother of Christ. As the disciples asked Christ to show them the Father (Jn 14:8), so the Christian asks Mary to show them the Holy Spirit.

Hence, in this chapter we will focus on Schememann's lecture on "Mary and the Holy Spirit" and his series of sermons on "The Mother of God". As noted earlier, we will consider Schememann's study of Mary and the Holy Spirit and its implications for ecumenical unity under the following headings: 1) The Holy Spirit; 2) Mary; 3) The Mary-Spirit Connection; 4) The Implications for Ecumenical Unity, recognising that there will be some overlap in some areas. We begin by examining Schememann's remarks on: a)

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<sup>589</sup> Schememann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 12, 14.

<sup>590</sup> Alexander Schememann, "On Mariology in Orthodoxy," in *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 65.



a revival of interest in the Holy Spirit and a corresponding b) decline of interest in Mariology, and the connection between c) pneumatology and eschatology. We will next consider d) the person of Mary, as expounded in Schmemmann's series of sermons. We will then examine the connection between e) pneumatology and Mariology, and a number of headings concerning the relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit the same as above. Finally, we will evaluate the implications of these insights for f) ecumenical unity.

## 1. The Holy Spirit

### a) A Revival of Interest in the Holy Spirit and a Decline of Interest in Mariology

Schmemmann claims that there is a renewed theological and spiritual interest in the Holy Spirit today among Christians.<sup>591</sup> This is a result of the appearance of a new thirst for the Holy Spirit and as a reaction to the neat and rigid theologies of the past which emphasised the institutional rather than the spiritual dimension of the Church.<sup>592</sup> Indeed, this interest in the Holy Spirit is not free from the spiritual confusion of our present age.<sup>593</sup> One attributes virtually any movement of the human mind and imagination to the Holy Spirit and justifies all kinds of radicalisms and the current anti-institutional religious mindset through the Spirit.<sup>594</sup> Consequently, this current and confused interest in the Spirit requires theologians to ask the right questions about the Holy Spirit, to deepen their understanding of the person and action of the Spirit.<sup>595</sup>

In contrast, there is a corresponding decline of interest in Mariology.<sup>596</sup> A broader spectrum of "contemporary" theological concerns has eclipsed theological and devotional

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<sup>591</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," in *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 71.

<sup>592</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 71.

<sup>593</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 71.

<sup>594</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 71.

<sup>595</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 71.

<sup>596</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 71.

interest in Mary.<sup>597</sup> Schmemmann sees little mention of the Mother of God in the huge theological works engendered by Vatican II.<sup>598</sup> It appears Christian theology's new concerns and obsession with notions such as world and justice exclude or implicitly condemn its previous emphasis on Mary.<sup>599</sup> He insists that the modern and confused interest in the Holy Spirit, although important and encouraging, will not lead to the Spirit's authentic re-discovery without simultaneous interest in Mary.<sup>600</sup> Moreover, the Mariological decline requires Christian theology to integrate Mariology into its understanding of the Holy Spirit.<sup>601</sup> This will be explored further later in the chapter in the section dealing with Mary and the Holy Spirit.

#### **b) Pneumatology and Eschatology**

Schmemmann admits that the Holy Spirit has, for the most part, been theologically eclipsed in the history of Christian theology.<sup>602</sup> He notes that "[a]t a rather early date, the theology of the Holy Spirit was replaced in theological manuals with the theology of grace".<sup>603</sup> He suggests that a shift from the eschatological inspiration of the early Church is the reason for this theological eclipse of the Holy Spirit.<sup>604</sup> Eschatological" here means "the unique Christian experience of the Kingdom of God, as, on the one hand the Kingdom 'to come,' and, on the other hand, as that same Kingdom present and actualized in Church".<sup>605</sup> He points out that "[t]his eschatology in the early Church constituted the

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<sup>597</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 72.

<sup>598</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 72.

<sup>599</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 71.

<sup>600</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 72.

<sup>601</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 72.

<sup>602</sup> Pope Leo XIII, for example, points to this theological neglect of the Holy Spirit in his encyclical *Divinum Illud Munus* (On the Holy Spirit), promulgated on 9 May, 1897. He asserts that Christians need to be instructed "more diligently and more fully" about the Holy Spirit because they, like some of the Christians in the time of St Paul, acknowledge that they "'have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost' (Acts xix., 2)".

<sup>603</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 73.

<sup>604</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 73.

<sup>605</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 73.

essential dimension of her entire life – sacraments, world, faith, piety – and shaped the entire mind of the Church".<sup>606</sup> It was the Church's attitude towards such things as the world, time, history and society.<sup>607</sup> As theology shifted from the eschatological inspiration of the early Church

This eschatology little by little was reduced to a brief theological chapter – '*de novissimis*' – dealing with the individual fate of man after death. The notions of the Kingdom, the consummation of all things in God, of the new creation and transfiguration, to be sure, remained part of the traditional vocabulary, but they ceased to be both the source and object of theological elaboration.<sup>608</sup>

Schmemmann stresses that eschatology is inseparable from pneumatology by underlining that it is the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that ushers in the new age and "makes the Church and the life in the Church both communion with, and anticipation of, the Kingdom of God".<sup>609</sup> Here he clearly paraphrases Peter's sermon in Acts concerning the outpouring of God's Spirit at Pentecost as the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy of the arrival of the messianic age. In the words of Peter in his address to the crowd of believers at Pentecost: "This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh'" (Acts 2: 16-17). In other words, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost ushers in the new age of the Kingdom of God when God bestows on us God's eschatological gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Paul also continually reminds Christians of the indwelling Spirit in his letter to the Christians at Rome: "the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Rom 8:9). This is very important because if Christians carry the Holy Spirit within their hearts (2 Cor. 22), they are the eschatological people of God. The Kingdom of God both dwells and works within and among them. As Paul affirms: "the Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness; for we do

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<sup>606</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 73.

<sup>607</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 73.

<sup>608</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 73-74.

<sup>609</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 73.

not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26).

For Schmemmann, "it is the very fellowship, communion, *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit, that is the very essence of the new life, of the Kingdom of God. It is He who makes all things new by referring them to the ultimate consummation of all things in God".<sup>610</sup> Others concur that the new life of the Kingdom of God, the Church, is communion with God and with one another in the Holy Spirit. The Church is a foretaste here and now of our ultimate union with God, humanity and all of creation in the splendour of God's Kingdom.<sup>611</sup> If it is true that Christians are "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4), if they all share in the life of the same Spirit, then their shared relationship with the Holy Spirit brings about their unity with one another.<sup>612</sup> This means that any deepening of their communion with one another calls for a deepening of their relationship with the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the more Christians are enabled to recognise who the Spirit is, and the more open they are to the Holy Spirit, the more they will, as we have already noted, "lead a life worthy of the calling to which [they] have been called" (Eph 4:1).

Indeed, "Pentecost is not only the historical source of the Church; it is her very life as the sacrament of the Kingdom".<sup>613</sup> Noting that this is confusedly felt by Christians who are tired of the institutional and non-eschatological aspect of the Church and who are thirsty for the spiritual reality itself, Schmemmann emphasises the danger here of a new dichotomy: "the 'spiritual' versus the 'institutional'; the Holy Spirit versus the Church; the individual subjectivity of the spiritual experience versus catholic faith and discipline".<sup>614</sup> Thus, "one takes the Holy Spirit as a kind of *alibi* for mere dissent and rebellion, anarchy

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<sup>610</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 74.

<sup>611</sup> Second Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission, "The Church as Communion," *Information Service*. 77, no. II (1991): 91. See also, The Joint Working Group, "The Church: Local and Universal," *Information Service*. 74, no. III (1990): 77.

<sup>612</sup> The Joint Working Group, "The Church: Local and Universal," 77.

<sup>613</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 74.

<sup>614</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 74.

and subjectivism, so as to confuse eschatology with human radicalism and utopianism".<sup>615</sup>

Schmemmann's solution to the problem, as will become clear, is Mariology.

## 2. Mary

### a) The Veneration of Mary

Schmemmann claims that knowledge of the profound and unique role played by the veneration of Mary both in Christian faith and in the life of the Orthodox Church is axiomatic to both Christian and non-Christian alike.<sup>616</sup> His emphasis on the role played by the veneration of Mary in both Christian faith and in the life of the Church is captured in the following:

Since earliest times, Church tradition has called [Mary] the Mother of God, the Birth-Giver of God, the Most Pure, the All Holy ... In one of the most widespread and widely used prayers she is praised as 'more honorable than the Cherubim and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim.' There is no service and almost no prayer in which her name is not mentioned. And her presence in art alone demands our attention since no image so permeates Christian art of East and West as the image of Mother and Child. As soon as we enter an Orthodox Church we see this icon in its place of honor next to the central doors of the icon screen (the 'Royal Doors'), and just in front of it a candlestand with a sea of burning candles. Looking up toward the apse, the wall above and behind the altar, the image of Mary is often seen at the center, as if she were the heart of the world, with an inscription: 'All of Creation rejoices in You, O Full of Grace.' In Russia alone there used to be more than three hundred 'wonder working' icons of the Mother of God that were accorded extraordinary veneration. A continuous stream of prayers, praise, petitions, joy, and exceptional devotion flowed to her.<sup>617</sup>

Nevertheless, many continue to question the meaning of the veneration of Mary as no longer self-evident and problematic. Even Christians are asking: "hasn't Mary been given

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<sup>615</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 74.

<sup>616</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 11.

<sup>617</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 11.

too much attention and hasn't her icon overshadowed the icon of her Son in popular piety? Hasn't this praise and devotion been exaggerated beyond all reasonable proportion?"<sup>618</sup>

Schmemmann is concerned to attempt an explanation of the Church's ancient and continuing glorification of Mary, of the one who herself said, "all generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1:48).<sup>619</sup> He emphasises "attempt" because the task is difficult.<sup>620</sup> In the first place, Mary is a difficult subject to speak about precisely because she is the All-Holy and Most-Pure Mother of God.<sup>621</sup> The Hirmos (*Fourth Tone*) of the Feast of the Annunciation states, "Let no unclean hand touch God's living tabernacle".<sup>622</sup> Words also cannot "fully express precisely what, in this singular image of Mother and Child, church consciousness has in all ages seen, understood, and come to love and glorify with such joy and tenderness".<sup>623</sup>

Schmemmann asserts that the New Testament says very little about Mary, the Mother of Christ.<sup>624</sup> He recognises that the New Testament's relative silence about Mary is the main argument presented by those who have a sceptical view of the deep and pivotal role that the veneration of the Mother of God plays in the life of the Church, consequently seeing it as something imported and foreign to the original spirit and teaching of Christianity.<sup>625</sup> The same argument was used by the sixteenth-century Protestants who concluded that the veneration of Mary was idol worship without any basis in Scripture.<sup>626</sup> The same argument is still proposed and the Church is still being told that the celebration of the

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<sup>618</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 12.

<sup>619</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 12.

<sup>620</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 12.

<sup>621</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 12.

<sup>622</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 12. See also, Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 663.

<sup>623</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 12.

<sup>624</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 13. For a well set out list and concise description of the New Testament texts about Mary see Chris Maunder, "Mary in the New Testament and Apocrypha," in *Mary: The Complete Resource*, ed. Sarah Jane Boss (London: Continuum, 2007), 12., See also (Mt 1:1-2:23; Lk 1:26-56; Lk 2:1-52; Mk 3:31-35; Mk 6:3; Jn 2:1-12; Jn 7:41-42; 8:41; Jn 19:25-27; Acts 1:14; Rev 12:1-6; Gal 4:4).

<sup>625</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 13.

<sup>626</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 13.

feasts of Mary's Nativity, her Entrance into the Temple and her Dormition "are human inventions that have tainted the original purity and simplicity of Christian teaching,"<sup>627</sup> being not mentioned in Sacred Scripture.<sup>628</sup> This is Schmemmann's "very serious challenge".<sup>629</sup>

Schmemmann recognises that the problems lie not in the "subject" but in the approach that leads to forming the questions in the first instance; consequently he emphasises the difference between the external and internal approaches to religious phenomena.<sup>630</sup> The external approach depends entirely on proof. He illustrates it as follows: "Prove that God exists, prove that Christ is God, prove that the bread becomes the Body of Christ, prove that there is another world... Prove it, and then I will believe you. But unless you prove it, I will not believe."<sup>631</sup> The unsuitability of this approach is that it is "impossible to prove anything that concerns the inner world and the life of man, his joys and sorrows, his wonder and faith".<sup>632</sup> A significant insight brought to life by Schmemmann is that Jesus did not attempt to prove anything. "He only called people to see, to hear, to accept something they could neither see, nor hear, nor accept".<sup>633</sup>

The internal approach, used by everyone in their everyday lives, comes only through experience and as the fruit of love. He illustrates it as follows: "when we love a person, we see something in him or her that someone who doesn't love them cannot see. Something of their inner being is revealed to us, something hidden from external sight but uncovered by love, intimacy, personal knowledge".<sup>634</sup> By applying this approach to the objections that much of the mystery of the Blessed Virgin Mary is not found in Scripture, Schmemmann suggests that if Orthodox Christianity knew nothing of the mother of Jesus

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<sup>627</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 14.

<sup>628</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 13-14.

<sup>629</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 14.

<sup>630</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 14.

<sup>631</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 14.

<sup>632</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 14.

<sup>633</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 14.

<sup>634</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 15.

Christ except that she existed and that her name was Mary, this would be enough to truly know her, to see in her image, and to find within both Christian faith and the hearts of Orthodox Christians, all that the Church has in all ages seen, heard and come to know of Mary.<sup>635</sup> The Bible does not tell us about Mary's birth or death, however, if she lived, she must have been born and have died.<sup>636</sup> Schmemmann's following two compelling questions underscore the Church's experience of the veneration of Mary as the fruit of love:

Can our love for Christ and our faith in Him be so lukewarm as to have no feeling for the One whose purpose in life was to be His Mother? If we believe in the absolute, divine uniqueness of Christ and His work, then how can we not focus our inner spiritual sight on the woman who gave Him his human life?<sup>637</sup>

All the Church's veneration, love and knowledge of the Mother of God "is a gift that comes solely through personal experience, as the fruit of love".<sup>638</sup> Those who truly desire to understand the Church's veneration of Mary must "come, taste and decide for [themselves] if all this is invention and myth, or if indeed truth, life, and beauty disclose to [them] their own vitality, depth and grace".<sup>639</sup>

The important thing here is that the Church's veneration of Mary the Mother of God is the fruit of love and faith in Christ. It is not a gift achieved by rational analysis but the gift of the mystery of God's love. Awareness of the depth of this mystery appears in surprising places from unlikely sources. It was Martin Luther who declaimed, that: "The veneration of Mary is inscribed in the very depths of the human heart".<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 15.

<sup>636</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 15.

<sup>637</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 15.

<sup>638</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 15.

<sup>639</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 15-16.

<sup>640</sup> Cited in D Armstrong, "Martin Luther's Devotion to Mary" <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=788> (accessed 25 July 2010). Sermon delivered on September 1, 1522.



## b) The Ever-Virgin

"The Church honors Mary's perpetual virginity and daily addresses her in prayer as Virgin: 'Mother of God, Virgin, Mary, full of grace, rejoice, the Lord is with you'".<sup>641</sup> Mary's perpetual virginity, according to Schmemmann, is the miracle of all miracles.<sup>642</sup> Many, however, have great difficulty believing in the Virgin Birth.<sup>643</sup> "It is a source of doubt and confusion for them and justifies their view that Christianity is a collection of superstitions".<sup>644</sup> While the usual response of Christians to these doubts is the virgin birth is a miracle based on faith and beyond understanding, Schmemmann provides a more precise explanation of the answer.<sup>645</sup> As Creator of the world, life and its natural laws, God is all-powerful and capable of reversing these laws.<sup>646</sup> Consequently, God must be capable of performing miracles since a miracle is something that happens beyond the limits of the laws of nature.<sup>647</sup> Also, God as God is infinitely beyond the laws of nature, being all-powerful, omnipotent and totally free to act as God desires.<sup>648</sup>

Drawing on Scripture, Schmemmann highlights a distinctly Christian understanding of the miraculous to explain the miracle of the virgin birth of Christ and Mary's perpetual virginity.<sup>649</sup> He emphasises that the image of Christ portrayed by the Gospels rules out seeing miracles as a means to force someone to believe into faith.<sup>650</sup> In his extreme humility, Christ did not desire to prove that He was God by using miracles (Phil 2:6-8; Mk 15:32; Lk 23:34).<sup>651</sup> Also, to use miracles to force people to believe deprives them of their freedom.

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<sup>641</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 16.

<sup>642</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 18.

<sup>643</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 16.

<sup>644</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 16.

<sup>645</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 16.

<sup>646</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 16.

<sup>647</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 16.

<sup>648</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 16.

<sup>649</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 17.

<sup>650</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 17.

<sup>651</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 17.

Scripture also attests that Jesus did perform miracles.<sup>652</sup> Questions arise:

Then what, may we ask, is the meaning of these miracles which Christ nevertheless chose to reveal to the world? If, according to the Gospels, He performed no miracles wherever people had no faith in Him, if He rebuked the people for expecting and looking for miracles from Him [cf. Mt 16:1-4; Mk 8:11-12], then why did He do them?<sup>653</sup>

For Schmemmann, the answer to this question leads to some understanding of the miracle of Mary's perpetual virginity and the Church's unshakeable faith in this regard.<sup>654</sup> All the miracles in the Gospels were motivated by Christ's love (Mk 9:36). "He had compassion on parents whose young daughter has just died, on a widow who had lost her only son, on those who were celebrating and rejoicing at a marriage and did not have enough wine, on the blind, the lame the suffering".<sup>655</sup> This means that the motive behind Christ's miracles is His love.<sup>656</sup> "And because He loves, He cannot endure the suffering of a human being hopelessly imprisoned by evil".<sup>657</sup>

The unique miracle of Christ's virgin birth and Mary's perpetual virginity is a revealed truth verified only by the Orthodox faith that "Christ is God who because of His love became man and took upon Himself our humanity in order to save it"<sup>658</sup> from its total slavery to nature and the merciless laws of nature. However, human beings are not merely another species, but of God's freely given love of the Spirit.<sup>659</sup> Hence in Christ's birth a new humanity is born that does not come from the flesh but from God, who is betrothed to humanity in the person of the all-pure Virgin Mary.<sup>660</sup> Through her faith and obedience,

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<sup>652</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 18.

<sup>653</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 18.

<sup>654</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 18.

<sup>655</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 18.

<sup>656</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 18.

<sup>657</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 18.

<sup>658</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 19.

<sup>659</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 19.

<sup>660</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 19.

God the Father gives humankind His only begotten Son.<sup>661</sup> For Schmemmann, Christ is the New Adam who "enters the world to be united with us and to lift up the first Adam who was created not 'by nature' but by God".<sup>662</sup> In accepting Christ as God and Savior, Orthodox Christians acknowledge also Mary's perpetual virginity through which human nature and its laws are conquered by the Spirit of Love.

**c) The Nativity of the Mother of God.**

The Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God is a general celebration of the birth of every human being, a special celebration of Mary's birth, and a celebration of all who prepared the way for Mary contributing to her inheritance of grace and beauty.<sup>663</sup> Noting that the Church's veneration of Mary is embedded in Mary's obedience to God's humanly impossible call to become the Mother of Christ, the Son of God, Schmemmann underscores Mary's connection to humanity and the Church's delight in her as the purest and most sublime fulfilment of human history and humanity's quest for God who is the ultimate meaning and content of human life.<sup>664</sup> He points out that "the heart of the Orthodox Christian East's devotion, contemplation, and joyful delight in Mary has always been her Motherhood, her flesh and blood connection to Jesus Christ".<sup>665</sup> This has much in common with Newman's thought, as will become clear, on Mary's intimate maternal relationship to her Divine Child. Humanity has a pivotal role in God's plan of salvation, taking part in the Son of God descending and becoming man so as to incorporate

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<sup>661</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 19.

<sup>662</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 19.

<sup>663</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 22.

<sup>664</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 22.

<sup>665</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 22.

humankind into His Divine vocation.<sup>666</sup> It is Mary who gave Jesus His flesh and blood. "She is the one through whom Christ can always call Himself 'The Son of Man'".<sup>667</sup>

By emphasising that God descended and became man so that humankind could become divine, Schmemmann underscores "the source of that gratitude and tenderness which cherishes Mary as humanity's link to God in Christ."<sup>668</sup> As the angel Gabriel, in his loud cry to Mary in the ancient Akathistos (Acatlist) Hymn, affirms: "Hail, celestial ladder by whom God came down; Hail, O Bridge, leading earthly ones to heaven".<sup>669</sup> In this way, Schmemmann contends that this extraordinary revelation is clearly reflected in the Nativity of the Mother of God, an event not mentioned anywhere in Scripture.

Drawing on the icon of the Nativity of the Mother of God, Schmemmann suggests that the most routine and unremarkable event of the normal birth of a every child into the world and life "is a miracle of miracles, a miracle that explodes all routine, for it marks the start of something unending, the start of a unique, unrepeatabe human life, the beginning of a new person".<sup>670</sup> Indeed, "with each birth the world is itself in some sense created anew and given as a gift to this new human being to be his life, his path, his creation".<sup>671</sup> For this reason, the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God is a celebration of the birth of every human being.

The Orthodox Church celebrates with joy the particular birth of Mary because her most glorious birth marks the beginning of the mystery of Redemption.<sup>672</sup> This is expressed with utmost clarity in Great Vespers, Fourth Tone, *Apolytikion* of the Nativity of the Mother of God : "Thy birth, O Theotokos, has brought joy to all the inhabited earth: for from thee has shone forth the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God. He has loosed us

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<sup>666</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 22.

<sup>667</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 23.

<sup>668</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 23.

<sup>669</sup> Chants of Praise. Third Chant. Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 969.

<sup>670</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 24.

<sup>671</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 24.

<sup>672</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 24. See also, Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 439.

from the curse and given the blessing; he has made death of no effect, and bestowed on us eternal life".<sup>673</sup>

The Church celebrates also Mary's spiritual heredity as the tree of human history's most beautiful and fragrant flower.<sup>674</sup> In Bulgakov's work, as was noted earlier, this is the basis for the Orthodox Church's rejection of the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Likewise, for Schmemmann, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception "makes Mary a miraculous 'break' in this long and patient growth of love and expectation, of this 'hunger for the living God' which fills the Old Testament".<sup>675</sup>

#### **d) The Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple**

The Orthodox commemoration of the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple celebrates humanity's divine meaning and the brightness of its high vocation.<sup>676</sup> Mary's bringing to the temple in Jerusalem by her parents was not an unusual event. Many children were brought by their parents to the temple "as a sign of bringing them into contact with God, of giving their lives ultimate purpose and meaning, of illuminating them from within through the light of higher experience".<sup>677</sup> As attested in the liturgical celebration of the feast, however, when Mary was brought to the temple her parents led her to the Holy of Holies, that is, the mystical inner chamber of the temple.<sup>678</sup> For a period of hundreds of years it was only in the magnificent stone temple in Jerusalem "that a person could come into contact with God. Now however, the priest takes Mary by the hand, leads her into the most sacred part of the Temple and [the Church sings] 'The most pure Temple

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<sup>673</sup> *The Festal Menaion*, 107.

<sup>674</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 24.

<sup>675</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973), 86.

<sup>676</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 27.

<sup>677</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 26.

<sup>678</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 26.

of the Saviour is led into the temple of the Lord'.<sup>679</sup> Recalling the words of Jesus to the Jews in the temple "'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up"<sup>680</sup> and John's affirmation that the temple that Christ was speaking about was "the temple of His Body' (Jn 2:19-21)", Schmemmann emphasises that from now on the human person becomes the temple, "the sacred and divine heart of the world, its 'holy of holies'".<sup>681</sup> Mary is led into the massive stone temple, bringing to completion its true significance and meaning.<sup>682</sup> Life itself became the Temple. This resonates with St Paul's message to the Christians at Corinth: "we are the temple of the Living God; as God said, 'I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people'" (2 Cor 16:11).

#### e) The Annunciation

The narrative of the Annunciation in Luke's Gospel (1:26-28), written in the joyful language of imagination, has been and continues to be an inspiring story.<sup>683</sup> It has also been incorporated into innumerable magnificent paintings, poems and prayers.<sup>684</sup> Hence according to Schmemmann, this gospel narrative contains some eternal truth that has been recognised and deemed to be highly important.<sup>685</sup> He sees this eternal truth contained in the angel's wonderful greeting and message to Mary: "Rejoice!"<sup>686</sup>

Schmemmann observes that countless books on struggle and competition demonstrate that the road to happiness is hatred.<sup>687</sup> There is no mention of the word "joy" in any of them. The very same joy that the angel announced to Mary, however, "remains a pulsating

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<sup>679</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 27.

<sup>680</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 27.

<sup>681</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 27.

<sup>682</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 27.

<sup>683</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30.

<sup>684</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30.

<sup>685</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30.

<sup>686</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30.

<sup>687</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30.

force, that still has power to startle and shake human hearts".<sup>688</sup> One such moment, for Schmemmann, comes in the Church on the eve of the Annunciation when, after the long service has slowly unfolded, the choir sings, "With the voice of the Archangel, we cry to You, O Pure One: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with You!"<sup>689</sup> On hearing this invitation to rejoice, hearts are filled with joy and warmth.<sup>690</sup>

This joy consists above all in the very presence of Mary herself, whose image is known throughout the world and who gazes directly towards those who are looking at her holy icons.<sup>691</sup> Schmemmann sees Mary as "one of the most sublime and purest figures of art and human imagination".<sup>692</sup> He asserts that this joy also consists in Mary's response to the angel, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Lk 1:38), which emphasises her faithfulness, purity, wholeness, faith, total self-giving to God, and her boundless humility.<sup>693</sup> Mary is truly the One in whom all Creation rejoices because it recognises through her that the goal and fulfilment of all life and all love is to accept and live in Christ.<sup>694</sup> In this way, the image of Mary, the Most Pure Mother of God, shows up the lie that continues to pervade the world and reduces humankind to its earthly appetites, baseness and brutality, that says that humankind is "permanently enslaved to the immutable and impersonal laws of nature".<sup>695</sup> Consequently, the Orthodox Church also rejoices with delight and wonder in the image of the Mother of God because it comforts, encourages, inspires, and helps the faithful. In gazing at this image, it is very easy to believe in the world's divine beauty and humanity's divine calling.<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>688</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30.

<sup>689</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30.

<sup>690</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30.

<sup>691</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30.

<sup>692</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30.

<sup>693</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 30-31.

<sup>694</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 87.

<sup>695</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 31.

<sup>696</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 31.

For Schmemmann, the image of the Virgin Mother is Christ's first gift to the Church as the unfolding of all that His teaching and calling means.<sup>697</sup> In this image the Church finds first of all the image of a woman, which is very important, comforting, and redeeming, because the world is "completely and hopelessly male, governed by pride and aggression, where all has been reduced to power and weapons of power, to production and weapons of production, to violence, to the refusal to willingly back down or make peace in anything or to keep one's mouth shut and plunge into the silent depths of life".<sup>698</sup> The image of the Virgin Mother "stands against all of this and indicts it by her presence alone: the image of infinite humility and purity, yet filled with beauty and strength; the image of love and the victory of love".<sup>699</sup> In Balthasar's theology, as we will see in the Sixth Chapter, a Christ-centred life requires attitudes that are quintessentially Marian. For Schmemmann, the image of the Virgin Mother reveals those qualities that have "almost completely been lost in our proud, aggressive, male world: compassion, tender-heartedness, care, trust, humility".<sup>700</sup> Schmemmann underscores Mary's profound humility stating that, "We call her our Lady and the Queen of heaven and earth, and yet she calls herself 'the handmaid of the Lord'".<sup>701</sup>

Schmemmann is concerned that theology itself has been contaminated by the world's concentration on structures and institutions rather than on the content wherein these structures exist and which is their final justification.<sup>702</sup> He reminds the Church of her own accumulated wisdom, which she, and she alone, can offer to the world, by challenging the Church not to debate institutions and structures, but to debate her own mystery in her

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<sup>697</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 31.

<sup>698</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 21.

<sup>699</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 21.

<sup>700</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 22.

<sup>701</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 22.

<sup>702</sup> Schmemmann, "On Mariology in Orthodoxy," 66.



depths, where she finds Mary, the personification of the victorious humility of the Church.<sup>703</sup>

If the image of the Virgin Mother is a gift that the Church receives from Christ, and if this image reveals the qualities of compassion, tender-heartedness, care, trust and humility, then these qualities are integral to the life of the Church. This raises several questions: How much are the Churches, East and West, preoccupied with institutions and structures? Are the two sister Churches prepared to adopt a more dynamic ecclesiology resourced by a renewed Mariology? Are compassion, tender-heartedness, care, trust and humility, recognised as important leadership qualities? How visible are these qualities in the spiritual leaders in both Churches so as to empower the faithful to embrace them? How often are these qualities promoted in the Church? How compassionate, kind, caring, and humble are the two sister Churches to one another? How much do they trust one another?

#### **f) Mary and the Birth of Christ**

The Orthodox contemplation on Mary in the mystery of Incarnation, according to Schmemmann, is the seed from which the Orthodox veneration of Mary grew and developed.

In his words:

It may be said without exaggeration that the growth of the Church's veneration of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, developed like a great tree from a tiny seed, from first contemplating her at the manger in Bethlehem ... All the feasts, prayers, and love the Church now addresses to the Mother of God are rooted in the celebration of Christ's birth ... Precisely here, in the Church's celebration of Christ's birth, in the prayers and hymns of Christmas, that we find the deepest layer of Christian reflection on the Mother of God, our relation to her, our understanding of her example, her person and her place in our religious life".<sup>704</sup>

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<sup>703</sup> Schmemmann, "On Mariology in Orthodoxy," 67.

<sup>704</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 32-33.

We can see here that the Church venerates Mary because she is the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God. We see also that the Church's relationship to Mary and her understanding of Mary in her spiritual life is based on Mary's divine Motherhood. This is clearly expressed by Romanos the Melodist (490-566 A.D.) in his renowned hymn on the Nativity of Christ:

I am not simply your mother, compassionate Saviour; it is not in vain that I suckle the giver of milk, but for the sake of all I implore you. You have made me the mouth and the boast of all my race, and your world has me as a might protection, a wall and a buttress. They look to me, those who were cast out of the Paradise of pleasure, for I bring them back. May all things understand that, through me, you have been born *a little Child, God before the ages*.<sup>705</sup>

An important point for Schmemmann and Orthodoxy is that the Virgin Mary is humanity's gift to God who comes to the world, to humankind, in Christ. Schmemmann underlines this point by citing the following hymn for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ:

What shall we offer Thee, O Christ, who for our sakes hast appeared on earth as man? Every creature made by Thee offers Thee thanks. The angels offer Thee a hymn; the heavens a star; the Magi, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder; the earth, its cave; the wilderness, the manger; and we offer Thee a Virgin Mother.<sup>706</sup>

Schmemmann stresses that all creation does not merely thirst for God or eagerly wait for God's coming, but actually prepares for the coming of the Lord.<sup>707</sup> Consequently, he understands that the meeting of God with humanity is at the heart of Christian faith.<sup>708</sup> He finds the hymn remarkable in that its poetic metaphors reveal the hidden or inner meaning of the reality of the Incarnation which the rational mind is unable to grasp.<sup>709</sup> Hence

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<sup>705</sup> Romanos the Melodist, "Kontakion on the Nativity of Christ" [http://dce.oca.org/assets/files/resources/romanos\\_nativity.pdf](http://dce.oca.org/assets/files/resources/romanos_nativity.pdf) (accessed 13 May 2010).

<sup>706</sup> *The Festal Menaion*, 354.

<sup>707</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 33.

<sup>708</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 34.

<sup>709</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 34.

according to Schmemmann, heaven's gift of the star to Christ signifies that everything that exists is naturally designed to reveal a higher meaning.<sup>710</sup> The world itself is the "symbol" of God, as longing for and anticipation of God.<sup>711</sup> Since poetry and faith both know that the heavens are manifesting God's glory (Ps 19:1), they are able to see in Christ's birth not only that God comes into the world, but that the world goes out to meet God.<sup>712</sup> At the radiant heart of this procession of the world - of the star, wilderness, cave, manger, angels, shepherds and wise men - is Mary.<sup>713</sup> She is its heart and fulfilment, the supreme and most beautiful fruit of God's creation.<sup>714</sup> Schmemmann sums this up as follows:

It is as if faith says to God, 'In Your love for You give us Your Son; and we, in our love for You, give you Mary the Virgin Mother.' In Mary the world is, so to speak, betrothed to God as the fulfillment of their mutual love. The Gospel says, 'God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten son ... the Church answers: 'The world so loved God that it gave Him the one whose beauty and purity reveal the world's deepest meaning and content.'<sup>715</sup>

Clearly, this recalls Bulgakov's thought that Mary is the pre-established centre of the world. Therefore, for Schmemmann, the image of the Virgin Mother and Child manifests the union once again of God and humankind.<sup>716</sup> In this image God's eternal love for the world and the world's eternal love for God are united.<sup>717</sup> Accordingly, it is the only authentic image of the true world, true life and true human being.<sup>718</sup>

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<sup>710</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 34.

<sup>711</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 34. See also, Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 149.

<sup>712</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 34.

<sup>713</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 34.

<sup>714</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 43.

<sup>715</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 34.

<sup>716</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 35.

<sup>717</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 35.

<sup>718</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 35.

### g) The Protection of the Mother of God (Pokrov)

The Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God is especially loved among Russians. It originated in Constantinople as a celebration to commemorate the Byzantine victory over the Slavs who besieged Constantinople.<sup>719</sup> According to tradition, the Mother of God appeared to the congregation in the Blachernae Church in Constantinople during the siege.<sup>720</sup> She was seen by Andrew the Fool and his disciple Epiphanius praying for the city and spreading her veil over the congregation in protection.<sup>721</sup> A translation of the story of Andrew the Fool's vision in the *Greek Life of St Andrew the Fool* reads as follows:

At the fourth hour of the night the blessed Andreas, who used to stand as long as his zeal gave him strength, sometimes until midnight, sometimes until morning, saw the most Holy Mother of God appearing visibly, very tall, from the Royal doors, escorted by an awe-inspiring retinue in which there were, among others, the honorable Forerunner [John the Baptist] and the Son of Thunder [John], holding her by the hand on both sides. Many other holy men in white garments accompanied her, some going before her, others following her, singing hymns and spiritual hymns and spiritual songs. As she approached the ambo [pulpit in the centre of the church] the blessed man went up to Epiphanius and said, 'Do you see the lady and Mistress of the world?' He answered, 'Yes I do, my spiritual Father.' Before their eyes she knelt and prayed for a long while, besprinkling with tears her godlike and immaculate face. Having finished her prayer she went into the sanctuary and prayed there for the people standing around. As she prayed she removed with beautiful dignity the veil that she had on her immaculate head, appearing like a flash of lightning and spread it (it was large and awe-inspiring) with her immaculate hands over all the people that were standing there. For a long time the admirable men saw it stretched out over the congregation, radiating the glory of God like electrum. As long as the most Holy Mother of God was there the veil was also visible, but when she had withdrawn they could no longer see it. No doubt she had taken it away with her, but her favour she left to those who were there.<sup>722</sup>

<sup>719</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 36.

<sup>720</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 35.

<sup>721</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 36.

<sup>722</sup> Cited in Mary Cunningham, "The Mother of God in Early Byzantine homilies," *Sobornost* 10, no. 2 (1988): 62.

In due course this local victory celebration outgrew its original confines and acquired universal scope and meaning.<sup>723</sup> Today the feast of the Protection of the Mother of God has lost its historical connection and the specific details about its origin are largely forgotten. However, the image of a Mother protecting and comforting her afflicted children beneath her veil remains.<sup>724</sup> Mary intercedes for and protects her children in their afflictions as a Mother.

Therefore, for Schmemmann, Mary is the icon of the Church as Mother. She, whose own soul was pierced by a sword of sorrow (Lk 2:25), and who was given by her crucified Son to all humanity as its Mother (Jn 19:27), brings into her own heart all the sorrows, sufferings and tragedies of every human being.<sup>725</sup> Hence Schmemmann places special emphasis on Mary's tears in the vision of the Protection of Mary. He draws on a sermon by Sergius Bulgakov on the day of the Feast to explain the meaning of Mary's tears. Part of the sermon reads as follows:

The Mother of God weeps for the world. What does this mystery mean? The world weeps for itself through her tears. Its suffering and sadness are hers, its tears are her tears. She is Mother! ... If only human eyes could perceive the Mother of God's presence in the world, they would know what transfiguration is mysteriously taking place. If they could only see her tears, their cruel hearts would be shaken into warmth. For no heart is so frozen as to remain unmelted in the face of her loving care.<sup>726</sup>

This is a very important point for ecumenism. If the world's suffering and sadness are Mary's, then the sadness and concern of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches about their division are also hers. Mary is a Mother! What mother does not feel sad about the separation between her two daughters? What mother fails to do all she can to

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<sup>723</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 36.

<sup>724</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 36.

<sup>725</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 36. See also, Alexander Schmemmann, "Mary in Eastern Liturgy," in *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 93.

<sup>726</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 37.

restore the bond that once existed between them? Mary Cunningham agrees with John Chrysostom that the mother "is a vital and unifying force within the family".<sup>727</sup> Consequently, the Mother of God is absolutely essential for furthering the rapprochement between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. Others concur that Mary can bring Christians to a more visible *koinonia*.<sup>728</sup> Indeed, as Schmemmann affirms, healing and new birth can be found in Mary's intercession and protection.<sup>729</sup>

#### **h). The Dormition or Falling Asleep of the Mother of God**

The Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God celebrates the death or falling asleep of the Mother of God. This consists in the union of dream, blessedness, peace, calm and joy.<sup>730</sup> It is very clearly expressed in Andrew of Crete's (c.660-740) homily on Mary's Dormition:

Indeed, if I must speak the truth, the death that is natural to the human race even reached as far as Mary: not that it held her captive as it holds us, or that it overcame her – far from it! But it touched her enough to let her experience that sleep that is for us, if I may out it this way, a kind of ecstatic movement towards the things we only hope for during this life, a passage that leads us on towards transformation into a state like that of God.<sup>731</sup>

The Christian East does not know the circumstances surrounding Mary's death and is unsure as to when and where Mary died. Various embellished stories, however, about the end of Mary's earthly life have been handed down in the Church from early Christianity to the present time.<sup>732</sup> Because these stories are varied there is no obligation for the Church

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<sup>727</sup> Cunningham, "The Mother of God in Early Byzantine homilies," 64.

<sup>728</sup> The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* (Harrisburg: Morehouse, 2005), 81.

<sup>729</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 39.

<sup>730</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 39.

<sup>731</sup> Andrew of Crete, "On the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God," in *On The Dormition Of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 121.

<sup>732</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 39.

to defend their historicity.<sup>733</sup> Consequently, the liturgical focus of the Church's celebration of the Dormition is not on the historicity of Mary's death but on the "essence and meaning of her death".<sup>734</sup>

Hence in his attempt to explain Mary's death, Schmemmann refers to the icon of the Dormition of Mary. He points out that on the day of the liturgical celebration of the feast of Mary's Dormition the icon is "placed in the center of the Church ... as the focus of the entire celebration".<sup>735</sup> His short description of the icon emphasises that both death and what has already truly happened in Mary's death is actually union, joy and life: "The Mother of God has died and lies on her deathbed. Christ's apostles have gathered around her, and above her stands Christ himself, holding His Mother in His arms, where she is alive and eternally united with Him."<sup>736</sup> As Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) affirms, "Her death was life-giving and led to heavenly, immortal life".<sup>737</sup> Both Schmemmann and Gregory Palamas concur with Andrew of Crete that Mary "fell into a natural sleep and tasted death, but did not remain held by it".<sup>738</sup> Schmemmann stresses this point by noting the following words sung by the Church while gazing at the holy icon of Mary's Dormition: "After giving birth you remained a Virgin and after falling asleep you remained alive ... In giving birth you preserved your virginity, in falling asleep you did not forsake the world."<sup>739</sup> He also recalls the words of the ancient and beautiful Office of Praise of the Mother of God or Akathist Hymn: "Rejoice, bright dawn of the mystical Day!"<sup>740</sup> Indeed, light pours from death, the never-ending mystical Day.<sup>741</sup> The Church, in reflecting upon Mary's death, recognises that death is no longer death but the entrance into

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<sup>733</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 39.

<sup>734</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 39-40.

<sup>735</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 40.

<sup>736</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 40.

<sup>737</sup> Palamas, *Mary the Mother of God: Sermons by Saint Gregory Palamas*, 72.

<sup>738</sup> Andrew of Crete, "On the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God," 121.

<sup>739</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 40.

<sup>740</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 40. See also, Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 959.

<sup>741</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 40.

eternal life. Here Mary joyfully meets Her Son. Thus, death is "radiant and authentic Resurrection joy".<sup>742</sup> Mary's death as "all encounter, all love, all continuous movement toward the unfading, never-setting light of eternity and entrance into it".<sup>743</sup> He, therefore, especially underlines that there is no fear in Mary's death since perfect love casts out fear (1 Jn 4:18). In this way, death is conquered from within.

The Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God is the feast of light, hope and joy. "Neither the tomb nor death could hold the Mother of God, who is ever watchful in prayer, in whose intercession lies unfailing hope". It should be noted here that both Churches, East and West, as we have already seen, underline Mary's prayerful role as intercessor in Heaven. In Newman's theology, as will become clear, Mary is our all-powerful Advocate.

It is clearly obvious that Mary in her death remains fully alive. The Orthodox Church understands that Jesus is indebted to Mary from whom He borrows human flesh. As Mary's words in Tone Six for Great Vespers of the Annunciation of the Mother of God affirm: "Let it be unto me according to thy word: and I shall bear Him that is without flesh. who shall borrow flesh from me, that through this mingling He may lead man up to his ancient glory, for he alone has power to do so".<sup>744</sup> Similarly, the Irmos for the Canon of the Dormition of Mary declares: "He who, taking flesh, strangely made His dwelling in thy most pure womb, Himself received thine all-holy spirit, and as a Son paying His due, He gave it rest with Himself".<sup>745</sup>

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<sup>742</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 41.

<sup>743</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 41.

<sup>744</sup> *The Festal Menaion*, 440.

<sup>745</sup> *The Festal Menaion*, 523.



### 3. The Mary-Spirit Connection

#### a) Pneumatology and Mariology

In his discussion on the revival of pneumatology and a decline of Mariology, Schmemmann asserts that this double phenomenon requires their mutual investigation.<sup>746</sup> He insists that it requires the engagement of theologians in the study of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary because he is convinced that they are organically connected with one another in the experience of the Church. He declares: "If indeed it is the Holy Spirit who *reveals* Mary to us, it is Mary who in a unique way is the revelation in the Church of the Holy Spirit".<sup>747</sup> He is also convinced that today's confused interest in the Holy Spirit will not lead to the Spirit's true rediscovery without simultaneous interest in Mary and that the Mariological decline will not be overcome unless it is integrated into pneumatology.<sup>748</sup>

Given Schmemmann's preoccupation with the dangers of a new duality between the institutional and spiritual dimensions of the Church, and the confusion of the Holy Spirit with the spirits of human radicalism and utopianism, Schmemmann claims that pneumatology needs Mariology. At an ecclesiological level Mary is "the very 'epiphany' of spirituality ... the first, the highest and the most perfect fruit of the Holy Spirit in the entire creation".<sup>749</sup> Her very presence in the Church reveals "the true nature and the true effects of the Descent of the Holy Spirit which is *the* source of the Church's life".<sup>750</sup> In other words, as Schmemmann also puts it, "Mariology, properly understood is a kind of 'criterion' for pneumatology, a safeguard against a demoniac confusion of spirits".<sup>751</sup> It is obvious here that Mary is a kind of touchstone for a right understanding of the Church.

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<sup>746</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 72.

<sup>747</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 72.

<sup>748</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 72.

<sup>749</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 75.

<sup>750</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 75.

<sup>751</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 75.

Accordingly, Mary is vitally important in the Churches, East and West, being able to mutually recognise themselves in each other.

Drawing on the First Letter of John, Schmemmann insists that there is a call to "test the spirits to see whether they are of God" (1 Jn 4:1).<sup>752</sup> The way to respond to this call is through the faith and experience of the Church.<sup>753</sup> It is here that Schmemmann sees Mary as "a sure and inspiring criterion for such a test".<sup>754</sup> Further, Schmemmann strongly believes that if Christians do experience a dichotomy between the Church as an institution and the Church as a spiritual reality, it is because they have forgotten Mary in whom "this dichotomy is always transcended and overcome".<sup>755</sup> He underlines Mary's vital importance for a true understanding of the Church stating that the Holy Spirit makes Mary "the personal focus, icon and fulfilment of the Church".<sup>756</sup> We have already noted Bulgakov's theological reasons for the links between Mary and the Holy Spirit and the Church. We will see how Schmemmann makes these links in the next section on the relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, for Schmemmann, "the great ecclesiological crises of our time can find its solution only when we relate again the mystery of the Church to the mystery of Mary, and this means the mystery of the Holy Spirit".<sup>757</sup> Clearly, theology cannot neglect the Holy Spirit or Mary.

## **b) The Relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary**

According to Schmemmann, the unique relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary consists in the revelation of Mary in herself as a person, in her relationship to Jesus Christ

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<sup>752</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 81.

<sup>753</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 81.

<sup>754</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 81.

<sup>755</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 78.

<sup>756</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 78.

<sup>757</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 79.

and to God and to the whole Church.<sup>758</sup> It is archetypal in that it reveals the sanctifying or deifying nature of the Holy Spirit in the Spirit's relationship with the individual person.<sup>759</sup>

Schmemmann understands that Mary's personal Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon her at the Annunciation (Lk 1:35), primarily reveals a personal relationship and fulfils Mary as a person, that is, as a totally unique being.<sup>760</sup> He thus sees the Holy Spirit's role as fulfilling human beings as persons. He emphasises that the Holy Spirit "is to each one the very gift of uniqueness, of that uniqueness which constitutes the eternal and absolute value of each person".<sup>761</sup> Hence for Schmemmann, Mary's personal Pentecost reveals God's unique and personal revelation to individuals. It is "as if each person sees God in a unique face turned to him in an exclusive relationship, unique love, and most personal communion".<sup>762</sup> Consequently, Mary is a gift of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is also a gift for and to each individual believer as the content and the fulfiller of his or her own life.<sup>763</sup> This is also the basis of Bulgakov's theological thought on the consummation of human life as the discovery of one's own true face.<sup>764</sup>

Indeed, Mary is not a symbol or theological idea, but a person whom individual believers know in the Holy Spirit.<sup>765</sup> To know Mary is one of the greatest joys in the Church because this unique friendship and communion is a gift of the Holy Spirit to believers in the Church.<sup>766</sup> Liturgical resonances can be found when the Church expresses similar sentiments in her praise of Mary in the *Irmos* for the First Ode of the canon which is used on many Marian feasts: "I shall open my mouth, and it shall be filled with the

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<sup>758</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 75.

<sup>759</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 75.

<sup>760</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 75.

<sup>761</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 76.

<sup>762</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 76.

<sup>763</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 76.

<sup>764</sup> Williams, *Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology*, 140.

<sup>765</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 76.

<sup>766</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 76.

Spirit, and I shall sing a hymn of praise to the Mother and Queen; with great joy, I shall celebrate and sing her praise".<sup>767</sup>

Schmemmann's approach to the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary emphasises the growth of the Church's knowledge of Mary as a person as the Holy Spirit's ongoing presence and action in the Church.<sup>768</sup> This theological position, as we shall see in the next chapter, has much in common with that of Newman who sees Mary as the Church's model in both receiving and developing divine truth.

The Holy Spirit, according to Schmemmann, does not have an image or name of His own. He agrees with Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022) that the Holy Spirit is "hidden mystery ... treasure without a name".<sup>769</sup> However, by becoming open to the Holy Spirit, reflecting the Spirit's goodness and beauty, becoming fully alive in the Spirit and the true fragrance of the Spirit, human beings become not only fully themselves as persons, but also true icons and names of the Holy Spirit.<sup>770</sup> In this way, Schmemmann can suggest that Mary is in truth "the first icon, the first gift, the first manifestation of the Holy Spirit".<sup>771</sup> Thus, for Schmemmann, the Holy Spirit makes us to know Mary, but the reverse is also true: Mary is the first in the whole of creation to make us know the Holy Spirit.<sup>772</sup> For this reason, "Mariology [is] the first and most important *locus* of pneumatology".<sup>773</sup>

Following the whole eastern tradition, and, indeed with the whole Church, Schmemmann affirms that the Holy Spirit is the "Giver of Life",<sup>774</sup> and the life engendered in Mary was literally the Christ Himself. This is the spiritual template for the spiritual life in all of the believers. The Spirit gives to Mary life in Christ which fulfils Mary in her humanity. Mary's divine motherhood "is the decisive and all-embracing event which

<sup>767</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 960.

<sup>768</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 76.

<sup>769</sup> Cited in Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, 160.

<sup>770</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 77.

<sup>771</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 77.

<sup>772</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 77.

<sup>773</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 77.

<sup>774</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 77.

consumes the totality of her being, yet at the same time, makes and fulfils that being for all eternity"<sup>775</sup> and is archetypal of all relationality between human and divine. For Schmemmann, "to have Christ and 'nothing else' as one's life is the ultimate wholeness, the absolute fulfilment of humanity".<sup>776</sup> Here we see a close connection between the Holy Spirit, Mary and Christ. If Schmemmann's theology is valid, Mariology must occupy a central place in Christian theology. Lossky affirms this thought in the following way: "the Church is the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit"<sup>777</sup> and her mystery is contained "[i]n the two perfect persons – the divine person of Christ and the human person of the Mother of God".<sup>778</sup>

Mary's divine motherhood, according to Schmemmann, is the Holy Spirit's important revelation of the relationship between Mary and of her Christ, which is "revealed to us as an object of eternal contemplation and joy, as that which makes us and is to make us rejoice eternally in the Kingdom of God".<sup>779</sup> On the other hand, it reveals the new creation of the Church and the life of each individual believer in the Church as having Christ and nothing else for its content and fulfilment.<sup>780</sup> Schmemmann emphasises the point that the gift of the Holy Spirit is a gift of wholeness.<sup>781</sup> The Spirit gives Christ to each individual Christian as both his and her own personal life and fulfilment.<sup>782</sup> Although Jesus has a special relationship to Mary as her Son through the Holy Spirit, Mary is truly the icon and epiphany of the Church as life in Christ, as Christ's life in each individual believer, and as wholeness.<sup>783</sup>

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<sup>775</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 77.

<sup>776</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 77.

<sup>777</sup> Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, 156.

<sup>778</sup> Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, 195.

<sup>779</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 78.

<sup>780</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 78.

<sup>781</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 78.

<sup>782</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 78.

<sup>783</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 78.

### c) **The Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God, Mary**

Schmemmann understands that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the last and great day of Pentecost is organically connected with the mystery of Mary. He considers that the Holy Spirit's coming is always the fulfilment of the end, that is, "the Kingdom of God, the fulfillment and consummation of all things in God, the ultimate revelation of 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit'",<sup>784</sup> because it reveals the "last things". The coming of the Holy Spirit as the end is therefore also the beginning of the "new life in Christ, of grace, knowledge, adoption to God and holiness".<sup>785</sup> The first of these "last things" manifested by the Holy Spirit is Mary.<sup>786</sup> Schmemmann emphasises that it is Mary who verifies the Church's knowledge about the kingdom of God.

If we know 'something' about the Kingdom of God, about what it means to be consummated in God, to be deified, to be raised in glory, to be nothing but light, peace, and joy, to be fully one's self and yet to be fully united to God, to be 'nothing else' and yet 'everything,' to be creation and yet to ascend to heaven, immortal and full of life, we know it first of all because in the Church we know Mary.<sup>787</sup>

This existential knowledge and Mary's constant presence in the Church as her prayer, beauty, movement, peace, joy and fullness, are not simply doctrinal "propositions", but experience and knowledge. Consequently, "whenever and wherever Mariology declines, and this means the veneration of Mary and the joy about Mary, there also declines the eschatological joy of the Christian faith".<sup>788</sup> As a result, the Church gives the impression that it is "an agency for social reform and worldly service, and 'secularism' makes it's

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<sup>784</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 79.

<sup>785</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, "Holy Pentecost" <http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsLife.asp?FSID=45> (accessed 19 May 2010).

<sup>786</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 79.

<sup>787</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 79.

<sup>788</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 79-80.

triumphant, although sickening, entrance."<sup>789</sup> Through a lack of eschatological consciousness, the Church becomes "of this world".

Schmemmann strongly suggests that the experience of the 'last things', which includes the Holy Spirit and Mary, is at the heart of the Church's service to the world. In his words,

If we think that we can help the world (not even to speak of its salvation) by the boredom and the verbiage of our social and political pronouncements, of our miserable efforts to out-shout the secular professionals of all kinds of secular 'liberations,' we are, sooner or later, in for a terrible disillusion. For it is the Church's knowledge of the 'last things' that is the only source for her *praxis* in the world. It is faith, hope and love stemming from that knowledge and from that experience that alone can teach the Church and each Christian what they are to do in this ever-changing world and its history.<sup>790</sup>

This finds an echo in John Paul II's Opening Address at the Puebla Conference in Mexico in 1979:

As pastors, you keenly realize that your chief duty is to be teachers of the truth: not of a human, rational truth but of the truth that comes from God. That truth includes the principle of authentic human liberation: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). It is the one and only truth that offers a solid basis for an adequate "praxis."<sup>791</sup>

Clearly, for Schmemmann, the Church is not a secular organisation. By virtue of her very nature she belongs to the Kingdom of God.<sup>792</sup> The Church's mission in the world is to proclaim the Kingdom of God. "[I]t is precisely her knowledge and constant partaking of the 'end' that *relates* the Church to the world, creates that correlation between the *now* and the *not yet* which is the very essence of her message to the world and also the only source

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<sup>789</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 80.

<sup>790</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 80.

<sup>791</sup> John Paul II, "Opening Address at the Puebla Conference"

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP791228.htm> (accessed 26 July 2010).

<sup>792</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy In the West* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979), 10.

of the 'victory that overcomes the world'.<sup>793</sup> If the Kingdom of God is at the heart of the Church's life and mission in the world, then the notions of the Kingdom must once again become the "source and object of theological elaboration".<sup>794</sup>

Schmemmann cogently argues that "[m]ore than anything else, we need today a replunging, a re-immersion into the Church's experience of the eschaton. Any other knowledge is impossible without the Church and is her exclusive gift to the world".<sup>795</sup> He adds that "[t]his immersion, however, will not be possible without the re-discovery of the eschatological dimensions of the mystery of Mary, without our leaning to contemplate and experience in her the mystery of the Kingdom as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit".<sup>796</sup>

#### **4. The Implications for Ecumenical Unity**

Schmemmann's theology of Mary and the Holy Spirit has several important implications for ecumenical unity. In the first instance, it can contribute to a renovation of how Christians live the Church. Like his western equivalents, Schmemmann sees that the Church is essentially a spiritual communion and a way of being, but with an institutional dimension. Anomalous as it is, however, past theologies have paid too little attention to the spiritual reality of the Church. Further, if it is true that there is a new longing among Christians for a deeper knowledge, understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit, then there is a clear call to theologians to focus their efforts on the spiritual reality of the Church.

The renewed consideration of the Holy Spirit which Schmemmann proposes is cognate to the current emphasis on spiritual ecumenism, while theology acknowledges that it is the Holy Spirit who is the inspiration and guide for Christians in their search for full and

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<sup>793</sup> Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy In the West*, 10.

<sup>794</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 74.

<sup>795</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 80.

<sup>796</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 80.



visible communion.<sup>797</sup> Mary's relationship with the Holy Spirit can assist Christians in the search for a deeper understanding and experience of the Holy encountered in the Church. Mary is the archetype of the authentic response.

Schmemmann demonstrates that Mary gives Christians that ability deemed absolutely necessary for the restoration their unity, which is "a calm, clear-sighted and truthful vision of things".<sup>798</sup> Essential to this vision is the meaning of Mary's divine Motherhood, revealed by the Holy Spirit, who reveals and commands this privileged relationship with Christ as an object of unending contemplation and joy for the believers. If Schmemmann is right, Christians should continually contemplate Mary's life in Christ through the Spirit. Further, it must be put on a lamp stand, so to speak, for all to 'see'. The contemplation of Mary's divine Motherhood can bring about conversion among the Churches and communities. Indeed, we have already noted Bulgakov's spiritual encounter with Raphael's Sistine Madonna as a source both of an aesthetic emotion and a new knowledge. Clearly, this kind of contemplation of the divine mysteries, such as Mary's divine Motherhood, has great potential for drawing alienated Christians, led by the Spirit, to a new plane of restored unity, the pre-condition for which is this very conversion of heart. As the modern ecumenists have noted, "[c]onversion is essential for Christian life and there is no authentic ecumenism without conversion, without the desire to let oneself be immersed in the newness of the Kingdom of God."<sup>799</sup> Mary can lead Christians to closer union with one another.

Schmemmann also observes that currently there is a decline in Mariological interest. If this is true, theology must return to Mary. Mary is the Mother of Christ who is God. She

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<sup>797</sup> Kasper, "Unitatis Redintegratio", Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism: A new interpretation after 40 Years," 8.

<sup>798</sup> *UUS*, 2.

<sup>799</sup> Walter Kasper, "Homily for Unity of Christians"

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pchrstuni\\_doc\\_20020125\\_kasper-san-paolo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pchrstuni_doc_20020125_kasper-san-paolo_en.html) (accessed 11 December 2007).

is intimately connected to Christ and to His Mystical Body the Church. Consequently, Mary plays a vital role in the believer's communion with God and with other believers in Christ through the Holy Spirit. She is essential to Christian theology and Christian life. Schmemmann is emphatic that Mariology must not be perceived as weakness and sentimental deviation, stressing that the Mariological focus of the Church must be affirmed and proclaimed. He also believes that study of the various problems which constitute the agenda of our times in the light of the deep implications and insights of Mariology may be the best way to serve the world. As Schmemmann explains:

We have received a gift from God and we can share it with the world, thirsty and hungry, in joy and beauty. Mary is the secret joy of all that the Church does in this world. It is she who can and will purify the world ... She will reveal to us that which we are losing every day, the *mysterium* of the Church, that without which everything in the Church loses all meaning. This is why the Mariological theme is actual. We have not yet started to work on it, but I would suggest that, instead of adding to the world's crowds of specialists in all possible areas, we return with a new interest to the one in who God has given us both 'icon' and 'power' to become that which Christ wants us to be.<sup>800</sup>

Indeed, what advances might be made in the search for full visible communion among Christians if the Mariological focus of the Church was to be affirmed and proclaimed! If the wider span of theological concerns, however, has somehow placed Mariology in the background, then theology has swung too far away from Mary. Mary's re-consideration and re-establishment of her importance in Christian theology and Christian life is a sure means of addressing the issues emphasised in modern times. Mary and her Son's redemptive work are inseparable.<sup>801</sup> She is the Mother of Jesus Christ, who is now at work in the hearts of the faithful through the Holy Spirit.<sup>802</sup>

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<sup>800</sup> Schmemmann, "On Mariology in Orthodoxy," 68.

<sup>801</sup> Vatican Council II, "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)," No. 103.

<sup>802</sup> Vatican Council II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium Et Spes*)," No. 38.

Schmemmann is also very important in his attempt to explain the true meaning and content of the Church's early and ongoing veneration of the Mother of God. He observes that today's Christians question the meaning of Mary's veneration. It is no longer obvious to them and is even looked upon as problematic.<sup>803</sup> It has already been affirmed that the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches share a common bond in their veneration and devotion to Mary. This resonates with the words of John Paul II and Alexij II, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia. John Paul II declared: "The veneration of Mary, which unites East and West so intimately, will serve, I am convinced, the cause of unity. The Most Holy Virgin, already present everywhere in our midst both in so many sacred buildings and in the life of faith of so many families continuously speaks of unity, a unity for which she constantly intercedes".<sup>804</sup> Similarly, Alexij II, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia declared: "The veneration of the Mother of God as 'the zealous intercessor for the Christian race' ... the veneration common to the Orthodox and Catholic Churches – brings us back to the times of the Early Church when there were no divisions between East and West so visible, regretfully in our days".<sup>805</sup> The veneration of Mary is a special witness to apostolic Christianity.

Schmemmann also sees Mary as the Holy Spirit's gift to believers in the Church. Thus Mary is a very important part of their new life in the Holy Spirit. This means that any deepening in their understanding of the very essence of the Church, the 'koinonia' of the Holy Spirit, calls for a renewed interest in Mariology. Mary can bring them to a more visible expression of the 'koinonia' they already share. She knows what it is to lead a life worthy of their calling (Eph 4:1). John Paul II states that

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<sup>803</sup> Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary*, 12.

<sup>804</sup> John Paul II, "Apostolic Letter of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II For The Fourth Century Of The Union Of Brest" [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_19951112\\_iv-cent-union-brest\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19951112_iv-cent-union-brest_en.html) (accessed 13 December 2007).

<sup>805</sup> Alexij II, "Message of Patriarch Alexij II to Pope John Paul II" <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?art=1392&1=en> (accessed 13 December 2007).

Just as Mary's presence in the early community fostered oneness of heart, which prayer strengthened and made visible (cf. Acts 1:14), so the most intense communion with her whom Augustine called the "Mother of unity" (Sermo 192, 2; PL 38, 1013) will be able to bring Christians to the point of enjoying the long-awaited gift of ecumenical unity.<sup>806</sup>

Schmemmann's understands that Mary's consent to the Incarnation meant that the Son of God became visible in the one person of her Son Jesus Christ. Consequently, Mary's free, willing and total commitment to the visible oneness of the person of Jesus and His Mystical Body, the Church, raises some important questions: How willing are the Churches, East and West, to say "yes" to all that they can do, no matter how great or small, towards the restoration of the full visible oneness of the mystical Body of Christ? Is the ecumenical venture of great importance to them? Can theology provide a deeper understanding that Mary "is the Mother of that mystery of unity which Christ and the Church inseparably signify and build up, in the world and throughout history"?<sup>807</sup>

Schmemmann also maintains that the Holy Spirit reveals Himself to individual persons, and that the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the individual person is unique and personal. If this is true, then the Holy Spirit is the source of both unity and diversity in the Church. Scripture attests to this in St Paul's teaching about spiritual gifts to the Christian community in Corinth:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Cor 12:4-7).

If it is the one and same Holy Spirit who reveals Himself to individual persons, then it is the Holy Spirit who binds these individuals together. If the Spirit's relationship with

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<sup>806</sup> (get reference – His Book *Theotokos – Woman, Mother, Disciple*, 2000).

<sup>807</sup> Benedict XVI, "Pope offers message of peace before Christian minority at Mary's house" <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=8170> (accessed 11 May 2010).

each individual person is unique and personal, then each resulting relationship must be unique and personal. This is of particular importance to this study because it affirms that in the Spirit's descent upon each believer in his or her personal Pentecost, the Spirit not only unites them, but also ensures their infinite diversity in the Church".<sup>808</sup>

Schmemmann's understanding of the Holy Spirit as the source of both unity and diversity in the Church raises a number of significant questions for the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, and for all Christians, in their search for Christian unity. What is the unique relationship between the Churches? Are Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians aware of their mutual relationship? How well does each Church know, understand, recognise, embrace and celebrate the rich diversity of the gifts of the Spirit in their own and one other's tradition? Does each Church accept the fact that "the humble openness of each to the other allows for the possibility that the Spirit may speak to one Church through the understandings of another?"<sup>809</sup> Can theology provide a deeper understanding that the "Holy Spirit is the bond of unity in community in the Church, [b]ut at the same time, the Spirit brings about great diversity?"<sup>810</sup> The role of the Holy Spirit as source of unity is celebrated in the Apostichon (Eighth Tone) for the Feast of Pentecost and which echoes in Schmemmann's insight: "In the days of old, pride brought confusion of tongues to the builders of the tower of Babel, but now the diversity of tongues enlightened the minds and gave knowledge for the glory of God".<sup>811</sup>

Finally, the eschatological experience and vision of the early Church, even though it suffered a gradual reduction to a short theological treatise on the final destiny of each

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<sup>808</sup> Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1985), 242.

<sup>809</sup> Paul-Werner Scheele, "The Holy Spirit and Ecumenism"

[http://www.vatican.va/jubilee\\_2000/magazine/documents/ju\\_mag\\_01091997\\_p-49\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/magazine/documents/ju_mag_01091997_p-49_en.html) (accessed 7 December 2007).

<sup>810</sup> Scheele, "The Holy Spirit and Ecumenism" (accessed).

<sup>811</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 894.

person entitled *De Novissimis*<sup>812</sup>, are vitally important if Christians are to understand that it is the *experience* of the Kingdom of God that can empower them in their living of the Church. If the early Christian experience of the Kingdom of God shaped and permeated "the whole Christian faith as its dynamic inspiration and motivation",<sup>813</sup> and if the experience of the Kingdom of God was the lens through which the early Church "judged and evaluated everything in this world",<sup>814</sup> then the re-discovery of this early Christian eschatology has the potential to inspire, motivate and challenge Christians to realize that which they truly are, the Church. Consequently, Christian theology must return to the eschatological experience and vision of the early Church. It must "make truly ours again, that reality [of the Kingdom of God] which alone constitutes the Church and is the source of her faith, of her life".<sup>815</sup>

If Christians are enabled to become more deeply aware of themselves as the eschatological people of God, they might be more willing to allow themselves to be guided by the Spirit (Gal 5:25) who will empower them to "truly lead a life worthy of the calling to which [they] have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:1-3). A renewed understanding and experience of the Church as "the witness and the participant of the saving event of Christ, of the new life in the Holy Spirit, of the presence in 'this world' of the Kingdom to come"<sup>816</sup>, may lead Christians to also re-commit themselves to right relationships with themselves and the Church. Accordingly, theology must return to the eschatology of the early Church. It must lead Christians to a deeper understanding of the Church as a new creation, a new life in the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>812</sup> Bernardo Jungmann, *Tractatus De Novissimis*, Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae Specialis (Ratisbonae [Regensburg]: Friderici Pustet, 1898).

<sup>813</sup> Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy In the West*, 28.,

<sup>814</sup> Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy In the West*, 28.,

<sup>815</sup> Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy In the West*, 83.

<sup>816</sup> Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy In the West*, 136.,

## Conclusion

Schmemmann's theology of Mary and the Holy Spirit is founded in the patristic theological tradition, drawing from the Father's unique and *sui generis* experience of the Church as the new life of the new creation in the Spirit, the presence in this world of the Kingdom of God to come.<sup>817</sup> His Eastern theological approach contrasts to Western theology. He understands the visible, institutional structure of the Church as a structure of presence, whereas the West tends to see it as a structure of power or jurisdiction in the first instance. His eschatology is likewise the experienced *now* of the Kingdom which is to come. For Western eschatology the last things (*eschata*) tend to be death, resurrection, hell and judgement. There are indications, however, that there is a shift in emphasis occurring in Western theology, a movement away from the exclusively futuristic eschatology, and towards an already and not yet eschatology more characteristic of the Eastern Christian approach.<sup>818</sup>

It is the Holy Spirit who inaugurates the Kingdom, and it is in this context that Mary comes to the fore. Schmemmann sees Mary as the Holy Spirit's first manifestation of the reality of the Kingdom. He highlights her fulfilment as a person, as totally herself, in Christ and the Holy Spirit and emphasises her death as the bright joy and dawn of the eternal mystical day. In this way he places Mary at the very heart of the cosmic and eschatological *leitourgia* of the Church, in the Church's total expression of her life and faith as the new creation and the presence of the Kingdom, where the Church always becomes that which she is: "response, adoration, encounter, presence, glory, and, ultimately, a mystical marriage between God and his new creation".<sup>819</sup> Mary stands at the centre as the very expression and content of a movement of love and faithful response to

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<sup>817</sup> Schmemmann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy In the West*, 136.

<sup>818</sup> *LG*, 48.

<sup>819</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, "On Mariology in Orthodoxy," in *Celebration of Faith: The Virgin Mary* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 64.

God.<sup>820</sup> In stressing that Mary is eternally alive in love and self-giving, Schmemmann shows that it is only when the human person accepts and responds in complete love and obedience to God that they become truly human.<sup>821</sup>

Schmemmann understands that the mystery of Mary's motherhood is the very same mystery of her virginity. It was she who brought to God the totality of her love. She is mother precisely because her virginity is the fullness of love. Mary is the Mother of Christ; human love in its fullness accepting God's coming into the world, giving life to the Life of the world. He suggests that all of creation rejoices in her because it recognises that through her the goal and fulfilment of all life and all love is to embrace Christ, to give Him life within itself.<sup>822</sup> In her obedience in love and in her faith and humility, Mary accepted to be that which God intended and created all creation to be: "the temple of the Holy Spirit, the *humanity* of God".<sup>823</sup> Thus, Mary is truly the Virgin Daughter of Israel and humanity's gift to God.<sup>824</sup>

Schmemmann's understanding of Mary and the Holy Spirit is crucial for the unity of Christians. The ecumenical movement is inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. Its heart and soul is an interior change of heart, holiness of life and renewal of the life of the Church. Thus only in the Spirit can Christians be given full visible communion. Schmemmann observes a contemporary and confused interest among Christians in the Holy Spirit. He concedes that this is due to the past theological emphasis in the institutional dimension of the Church and the spiritual confusion of our time. This is a great "service" to both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches – reminding them who they really are. Schmemmann is most concerned that the current and confused interest in the Holy Spirit

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<sup>820</sup> Schmemmann, "On Mariology in Orthodoxy," 64-65. See also, Schmemmann, *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*, 11.

<sup>821</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary in Eastern Liturgy," 92. See also, Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 85.

<sup>822</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 87.

<sup>823</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 83.

<sup>824</sup> Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 86.



might lead to a new dichotomy arising between the spiritual and the institutional, with the spirits of human radicalism and utopianism. He sees Mary as a kind of touchstone for testing the spirits. As the first and the highest and most perfect fruit of the Holy Spirit in the whole creation, Mary's very presence reveals the true nature and effects of the descent or indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He observes, however, a current corresponding decline in Mariological interest. It appears that the wider span of theological concerns has somehow placed Mary in the background. If Schmemmann is right, Mary is essential in ecumenical rapprochement among Christians. Mariology must be connected to pneumatology. Similarly, Christian theology must connect the Holy Spirit to the Church's experience of the eschaton, at the centre of which is Mary.<sup>825</sup>

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<sup>825</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 81.

## Chapter 5

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### John Henry Newman on Mary and the Holy Spirit

#### Introduction

Newman's whole theological approach to Mary is broad and multidimensional with implications for understanding both the relationship of Mary and the Holy Spirit and its significance for ecumenical unity. As he himself says: "when once we have mastered the idea, that Mary bore, suckled, and handled the Eternal in the form of a child, what limit is conceivable to the rush and flood of thoughts which such a doctrine involves? What awe and surprise must attend upon the knowledge, that a creature has been brought so close to the Divine Essence?"<sup>826</sup> Newman's theological approach to the Holy Spirit is also both vivid and surprising. When he considers Mary and her intimate maternal relationship to her Divine Child, he does so using the concrete images of maternal care. Similarly, as Mary mothers the Divine Word made flesh, Newman's approach to the Holy Spirit is similarly vivid and concrete. The Holy Spirit, as "life-giving" Spirit, virtually mothers the creation itself making it a sacramental creation. Newman's most arresting passage on the Holy Spirit must be given in full:

The condescension of the Blessed Spirit is as incomprehensible as that of the Son. He has ever been the secret Presence of God within the Creation: a source of life amid the chaos, bringing out into form and order what was at first shapeless and void, and the voice of Truth in the hearts of all rational beings, tuning them into harmony with the intimations of God's Law, which were externally made to them. Hence He is especially called the "life-giving" Spirit; being (as it were) the Soul of universal nature, the Strength of man and beast, the Guide of faith, the Witness against sin, the inward Light of patriarchs and

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<sup>826</sup> Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, 82-83.

prophets, the Grace abiding in the Christian soul, and the Lord and Ruler of the Church.<sup>827</sup>

The Mary-Holy Spirit connection in Newman, though strong, is embedded in his consideration of both the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and the nature of Mary's holiness in the mystery of the Incarnation and Mary as the Second Eve and her Assumption. It is not as explicit as the other authors under consideration, but it has the same depth. Hidden in his theology, though not fully expressed, is the idea that Mary's intercessory power comes not just from her maternal relationship with her Divine Son, but also from her intimate and privileged relationship with the Divine Creator Spirit. Mary is doubly our Advocate. Both Mary and the Holy Spirit have a maternal care both for the human race and indeed for the whole of creation.

During the examination of Newman's theology, its patristic basis (particularly the work of John Chrysostom) will become clear, therefore our first task is to understand the reasons for this attachment. In his *Historical Sketches*, first published in 1872, twenty seven years after his joining the Roman Catholic Church, Newman tells us that his attachment is founded on his own deep study of their works.<sup>828</sup> He emphasises that they give him a deep insight into their own personality because it is they themselves who are interpreting their own actions.<sup>829</sup> Newman considers their words as the expression of their true inner life, as far as we can know it, because he believes, citing St Luke, that "it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks" (Lk 6:45).<sup>830</sup> For this reason, Newman takes great pleasure in the writings of the Ancient Fathers.

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<sup>827</sup> John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, VIII vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898), 218.

<sup>828</sup> John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Historical Sketches*, III vols., vol. II (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1891), 218.

<sup>829</sup> Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 220.

<sup>830</sup> Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 220-221.

Like the Fathers, Newman gives us a deep insight into his personality through his own recorded history, thoughts, words and actions. One of the things he discloses about himself, which appears to have had a significant influence on his life, theology and spirituality, is his heartfelt love for John Chrysostom, one of the four great Fathers and Doctors of the Christian East. He asks himself why he has such warm love for Chrysostom when so many other great Saints, who deserve and receive his veneration, "exert no personal claim upon [his] heart".<sup>831</sup> For Newman, Chrysostom's charm lies "in his intimate sympathy and compassionateness for the whole world, not only in its strength, but in its weakness; in the lively regard with which he views everything that comes before him, taken in the concrete, whether as made after its own kind or as gifted with a nature higher than its own".<sup>832</sup>

Newman sees Chrysostom's distinctive attribute as "the interest which he takes in all things, not so far as God has made them alike, but as He has made them different from each other".<sup>833</sup> His emphasis on this interest is captured in the following:

I speak of the discriminating affectionateness with which he accepts everyone for what is personal in him and unlike others. I speak of his versatile recognition of men, one by one, for the sake of that portion of good, be it more or less, of a lower order or a higher, which has severally been lodged in them; his eager contemplation of the many things they do, effect, or produce, of all their great works, as nations or as states; nay, even as they are corrupted or disguised by evil, so far as that evil may in imagination be disjoined from their proper nature, or may be regarded as a mere material disorder apart from its formal character of guilt. I speak of the kindly spirit and the genial temper with which he looks round at all things which this wonderful world contains; of the graphic fidelity with which he notes them down upon the tablets of his mind, and of the promptitude and propriety with which he calls them up as arguments or illustrations in the course of his teaching as the occasion requires.<sup>834</sup>

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<sup>831</sup> Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 284.

<sup>832</sup> Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 285-286.

<sup>833</sup> Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 286.

<sup>834</sup> Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 286.

Newman concludes that Chrysostom is a model of discrimination.<sup>835</sup> He loves him on account of his own love "for every one who comes across him, - for persons, ranks, classes, societies, considered as divine works and the subjects of his good offices or good will".<sup>836</sup> The importance of love for the other because of their uniqueness that Newman finds in Chrysostom is a point of ecumenical significance which will be noted later in the chapter.

In his A Letter to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D. on His Recent Eirenicon, Newman expresses an immense respect for the teachings of the Fathers and for their profound influence on them personally. He told his dear friend Pusey: "I am not ashamed still to take my stand upon the Fathers, and do not mean to budge ... The Fathers made me a Catholic".<sup>837</sup> He also told Pusey that he recognised "a process of development in Apostolic truth"<sup>838</sup> which did not supersede the Fathers, but explained and completed them. In regard to his position on the Virgin Mary, he declared: "with the Fathers I am content ... [They] are enough for me. I do not wish to say more than they suggest to me, and I will not say less".<sup>839</sup> It is interesting to note that while the dramatic "conversions" of Bulgakov were based on his life and not his reading, Newman is equally "passionate" but his "conversion" grows from a study of Church History. Similarly, Schmemmann and Newman both look to the Fathers as a source.

Newman revealed his own thoughts on his place in what is now called ecumenism when he wrote in his letter of 26 November 1868 to his Anglican friend Rev W.J.Copeland, who had republished his Oxford Sermons in uniform edition under the title *Parochial and Plain Sermons* earlier in the same year:

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<sup>835</sup> Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 286.

<sup>836</sup> Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 286.

<sup>837</sup> Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, 24. Newman was received into the Roman Catholic Church on October 9, 1845.

<sup>838</sup> Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, 24.

<sup>839</sup> Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, 24.

It did not surprise me to hear that Dissenters had brought my volumes. I have had at various times letters from men among them, more or less influential, who have told me, that without accepting my ecclesiastical principles, not a few fraternised with me so far as ethical and religious sentiment went. I have answered them, that I thought, as things are, the first step towards unity was a union of Feeling, and that if I were prospered to do anything whatever towards laying the necessary foundation, on which higher strata of truth might be deposited at some future day, I should have received a great favour and mercy from the Giver of all good.<sup>840</sup>

Newman's ecumenical intentions are reinforced by Copeland in his preface to *Selections of Parochial and Plain Sermons*, published ten years later in October 1878, stating that the purpose of the Sermons was to promote "mutual sympathy between estranged communions and alienated hearts".<sup>841</sup> Newman understood, as he himself declared in Sermon 10 in *Sermons Bearing Upon Subjects of the Day*, that "the division of the Churches is the corruption of hearts",<sup>842</sup> and that anyone "who attempts to set up God's Kingdom in his [or her] heart, furthers it in the world".<sup>843</sup>

We now proceed to explore Newman's theological insights on the theme of Mary and the Holy Spirit and its implications for ecumenical unity. We begin by examining his exposition on the Indwelling Spirit. After that, we explore his understanding of Mary as the Second Eve and as a Pattern of Faith. We then pass on to consider the Mary-Spirit connection, as Newman expounds Mary's Immaculate Conception and Holiness, the Assumption, and Mary's Intercession. Finally, we will note the implications for ecumenical unity.

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<sup>840</sup> Cited in John Coulson, *Newman: A Portrait Restored* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 114-115.

<sup>841</sup> Coulson, *Newman: A Portrait Restored*, 115.

<sup>842</sup> John Henry Newman, *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909), 133.

<sup>843</sup> Newman, *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day*, 134.

## 1. The Holy Spirit

### a) The Indwelling Spirit

Newman states that Christians are honoured with the surpassing grace of receiving the very presence of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, into their hearts.<sup>844</sup> His own prayer to the Holy Spirit captures this profound truth:

Thou art present in me, not only by Thy grace, but by Thy eternal substance, as if, though I did not lose my own individuality, yet in some sense I was even here absorbed in God. Nay – as Thou hadst taken possession of my very body, this earthly, fleshly, wretched tabernacle – even my body is Thy Temple. O astonishing, awful truth! I believe it, I know it, O my God.<sup>845</sup>

This evokes Bulgakov's insistence that the human person retains his or her own full personal integrity in divine inspiration. It also recalls the emphasis of Schmemmann on the unique and archetypal relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit. As stated before, Newman considers the condescension of the Holy Spirit to dwell in the heart of each individual Christian as incomprehensible as that of the Son to become man.<sup>846</sup> This recalls Bulgakov's insight on the "kenosis" of the Son and of the Holy Spirit who eternally rests upon the Son.

Newman proceeds to exhort Christians to always praise God the Father, the first source of all perfection, in and together with the Son and Holy Spirit, through whose ministrations they have seen how the Father so loved them.<sup>847</sup> He understands that the indwelling Spirit is not simply the Holy Spirit, but also the Spirit of Christ.<sup>848</sup> He argues that Jesus received the consecration of the Holy Spirit at His baptism in order that Christians might see clearly that the Holy Spirit comes from God and passes from Christ to

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<sup>844</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 219-220.

<sup>845</sup> John Henry Newman, *Meditations and Devotions* (London: Longmans, Green and Co Ltd, 1953), 314.

<sup>846</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 218.

<sup>847</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 218.

<sup>848</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 220.

them. That is, the Holy Spirit comes to them "from and instead of Christ".<sup>849</sup> On this point, Newman cites the following examples from Scripture: "God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts" (Gal 4:6); when Jesus breathes on the Apostles after the Resurrection: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20: 22); Jesus' farewell discourse to the Apostles: "if I do go, I will send him [the Advocate] to you" (Jn 16:7).<sup>850</sup>

In his sermon on "The Spiritual Presence of Christ in the Church", Newman further emphasises the indwelling of Christ in those who possess His Spirit by drawing extensively on Scripture; two examples we mention here: "Do you not realise that Jesus Christ is in you" (2 Cor 13: 5); "Abide in me as I abide in you ... I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit" (Jn 15: 4, 5). Newman understands that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian so that Christ may indwell the Christian.<sup>851</sup> He stresses that the Spirit "does not take the place of Christ in the soul, but secures that place to Christ".<sup>852</sup> Thus, for Newman, Christ "is both present and absent; absent in that He has left the earth, present in that He has not left the faithful soul"; or as He says Himself, "The *world* seethe Me no more, but *ye* see Me" (Eph 2: 22).<sup>853</sup>

Newman concludes that the Spirit of Promise is the earnest of our inheritance, the seal and earnest of the unseen Christ (Eph 1:14; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5), noting that the Holy Spirit is more than the pledge of the absent Christ, because "an earnest is not a mere token which will be taken from us when it is fulfilled, as a pledge might be, but a something in advance of what is one day to be given in full".<sup>854</sup> As Newman also affirms in his sermon on "The Gift of the Spirit", the indwelling Spirit is "an earnest and portion of heavenly glory, of the

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<sup>849</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 220.

<sup>850</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 220.

<sup>851</sup> John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol. VI, VIII vols.* (London: Longmans. Green, and Co, 1911), 126.

<sup>852</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol. VI*, 126.

<sup>853</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol. VI*, 126-127.

<sup>854</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 220.



holiness and blessedness of Angels - a present entrance into the next world".<sup>855</sup> Here Newman recalls Bulgakov's understanding of the Holy Spirit as Glory and of Mary as created Wisdom, that is, creation totally glorified and deified.

Newman is, therefore, concerned to emphasise that the divine indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not metaphorical, but real and personal.<sup>856</sup> This evokes Bulgakov's thought that it was not a specific gift that the Father sent down upon Mary at the Annunciation, but the person of the Holy Spirit Himself. It also brings to mind Schmemmann's view of Mary's personal Pentecost as the revelation of God's unique and personal revelation to human beings. Newman insists that Christ is still with us through "the substitution of His Spirit for Himself, and that, both in the Church and in the souls of individual Christians".<sup>857</sup> Here Newman cites a number of examples from the Letters of Paul: "the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Rom 8:9); "do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 6:19). He also notes Paul's clear distinction between the Holy Spirit's indwelling and the Spirit's actions within Christians in these words: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:5), and "it is the very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom 8:35).<sup>858</sup>

At this point, Newman underlines the divine dignity of the Holy Spirit and the infinite value of the Spirit's office of Sanctifier. He argues that the Holy Spirit is God since only God can be personally present at the same time with each Christian.<sup>859</sup> For Newman, this fulfils Jesus' words "that it was expedient that He should depart; Christ's bodily presence,

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<sup>855</sup> John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol III*, VIII vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1910), 263.

<sup>856</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 220-221.

<sup>857</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 221.

<sup>858</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 221.

<sup>859</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 222.

which was limited to place, being exchanged for the manifold spiritual indwelling of the Comforter within us".<sup>860</sup>

Newman proceeds to emphasise the personal nature of the divine indwelling by pointing out that the all-knowing (1 Cor 2:10-11) and omnipresent (Ps 139:7-8) Holy Spirit "is able to search into all our thoughts, and penetrate into every motive of the heart [(Heb 3:12)]."<sup>861</sup> Using the metaphors of light and perfume, he therefore concedes that a consequence of the Holy Spirit's indwelling is that we are in the Spirit and the Spirit is in us (1 Jn 3:24; 4:13): "He pervades us ... as light pervades a building, or as a sweet perfume the folds of some honourable robe".<sup>862</sup> In this way, Christians are brought into a new and wonderful state. Drawing on Scripture, Newman describe this state as follows: "participants of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4); "children of God" (Jn 1:12); "a new creation: everything old has been passed away ... everything is new" (2 Cor 5:17); "special [vessels] dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work (2 Tim 2:21)."<sup>863</sup>

For Newman, this new and wonderful state, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which he also calls regeneration or new birth, is conveyed to a person through the Sacrament of Baptism.<sup>864</sup> He insists that "the original nature of the soul is not destroyed, yet its past transgressions are pardoned once and for ever, and its source of evil stanchied and gradually dried up by the pervading health and purity which has set up its abode in it".<sup>865</sup> As Newman repeatedly remarks, the Holy Spirit is the light and life of the soul.<sup>866</sup> In his sermon on "The Thought of God, the Stay of the Soul", Newman explains that "[w]hen Adam fell, his soul lost its true strength; he forfeited the inward light of God's

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<sup>860</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 222.

<sup>861</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 222.

<sup>862</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 222.

<sup>863</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 223.

<sup>864</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 223. In his sermon on "Faith the Title for Justification", Newman argues that it is possible in some instances for a person, who has true faith, to be regenerated through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit without Baptism. See, Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol. VI*, 153-173.

<sup>865</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 223.

<sup>866</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 314.

presence ... It lost its spiritual life and health which was necessary to complete its nature, and to enable it to fulfil the ends for which it was created".<sup>867</sup> Hence, for Newman, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is "a spring of health and salvation ... a spring of water ... gushing up to eternal life" (Jn 4:14).<sup>868</sup>

Newman considers how grace manifests itself within the regenerate soul. He concedes that the Holy Spirit reveals God to Christians and invites them to know and worship God as Father.<sup>869</sup> The Holy Spirit impresses on them the Father's image that was lost in Adam, and disposes them to seek God's presence through the natural inclination of their new nature (Ezek 36:26-27).<sup>870</sup> The Spirit restores the broken relationship with God that unites all that is holy into one family, thus enabling them to call God "Abba Father" (Mt. 8:15).<sup>871</sup> In this context, Newman emphasises that the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9-15; Lk 11:24), the special possession of Christians and the voice of the Holy Spirit, sanctifies the individual thoughts of Christians, who contemplate God's Name, God's Kingdom and God's Will.<sup>872</sup> As Newman also puts it in his sermon on "The Apostolical Christian", the Christian has "God's will in his heart, God's Name on his lips, God's kingdom in his hopes".<sup>873</sup> He insists that this contemplation leads Christians to adopt God's attitude of forgiveness and loving kindness through the indwelling of the Spirit. In his words:

And, when he goes on to think of himself, he prays, that he may be enabled to have towards others what God has shown towards himself, a spirit of forgiveness and loving-kindness. Thus he pours himself out on all sides, first looking up to catch the heavenly gift, but, when he gains it, not keeping it to himself, but diffusing "rivers of living water" to the whole race of man, thinking of self as little as may be, and desiring ill and destruction to nothing but that principle of temptation

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<sup>867</sup> John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol. V*, VIII vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907), 313.

<sup>868</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 224.

<sup>869</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 224.

<sup>870</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 224-225.

<sup>871</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 225.

<sup>872</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 225.

<sup>873</sup> Newman, *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day*, 289.

and evil, which is rebellion against God;—lastly, ending, as he began, with the contemplation of His kingdom, power, and glory everlasting.<sup>874</sup>

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit also raises the soul to contemplate Christ since the Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ (Jn 16:14) and graciously deigns to shine as a light within the Church and each Christian, reflecting Christ, the Redeemer, in all His perfections, offices and works.<sup>875</sup> The Holy Spirit came to unfold what was still hidden while Jesus was on earth and inspired and formed the Church "superintending and overruling its human instruments".<sup>876</sup>

Being the Eternal Love between the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit "lives in the Christian's heart, as the never-failing fount of charity, which is the very sweetness of the living waters".<sup>877</sup> Accordingly, this divine indwelling replaces doubt, gloom and impatience with joy in the Gospel, hope of heaven, harmony of a pure heart, triumph of self-mastery, sober thoughts and a contented mind.<sup>878</sup> Following Paul, Newman insists that love is "the root of all holy dispositions [cf. 1 Cor 13:4-7; 16:13], and grows and blossoms into them".<sup>879</sup> It is the seed of holiness that grows into all excellences making them what they are.<sup>880</sup> As Newman pointedly remarks, "we do not love because we believe ... nor do we love because we hope ... we love, because it is our nature to love; and it is our nature, because God the Holy Ghost has made it our nature".<sup>881</sup> Thus, for Newman, love is "the motion within us of the new spirit, the holy and renewed heart which God the Holy Ghost gives us".<sup>882</sup>

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<sup>874</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 226.

<sup>875</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 227.

<sup>876</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 228.

<sup>877</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 230.

<sup>878</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol II*, 230.

<sup>879</sup> John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol IV*, VIII vols., vol. IV (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1909), 309.

<sup>880</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol IV*, 311.

<sup>881</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol IV*, 309-310.

<sup>882</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol IV*, 313.

Newman had a particular devotion to the Holy Spirit throughout his life. This is clearly evident in a prayer that forms part of a Novena which he composed in honour of Philip Neri, and in one of his short meditations on the Paraclete, both published three years after his death in his work *Meditations and Devotions*. In the prayer to Philip Neri, Newman asks that he be devoted to the Holy Spirit: "I ask of thee especially to gain for me a true devotion as thou hadest to the Holy Ghost, the Third Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity; that, as He at Pentecost so miraculously filled thy heart with his grace, I too may in my measure have the gifts necessary for my salvation".<sup>883</sup> In his meditation on the Paraclete, he writes: "O my dear Lord, how merciful Thou hast been to me. When I was young, Thou didst put into my heart a special devotion to Thee. Thou hast taken me up in my youth, and in my age Thou wilt not forsake me".<sup>884</sup>

Newman's devotion to the Holy Spirit is not just a sentiment, it rests on the divinely revealed truth (dogma) that the Holy Spirit indwells the heart of each individual Christian. Newman's devotional reflections on the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from his theological propositions. As Peter Willi points out, Newman equated the principle of dogma with the principle of holiness.<sup>885</sup> He observes that the search for truth and the striving for holiness were "two driving forces in Newman's life of faith, complementing and conditioning one another. For him, truth was never an abstract doctrine without any relation to real life. Man is touched by truth in his whole existence and is transformed by it to the degree that he recognises and accepts its binding character".<sup>886</sup> Newman himself in his *Apologia* wrote: "dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion: I know no

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<sup>883</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 120.

<sup>884</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 311.

<sup>885</sup> Peter Willi, "Newman as a Convert and Counsellor of Converts" <http://www.newmanfriendsinternational.org/newman?p=171> (accessed 27 July 2010).

<sup>886</sup> Willi, "Newman as a Convert and Counsellor of Converts" (accessed).

other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery".<sup>887</sup>

In the same way that Newman treats the Holy Spirit, his consideration of Mary is not based on sentiment but is dogmatically grounded. Bearing in mind that when speaking of Mary, Newman has his one-time Protestant brethren in view, he is careful to place Mary in the theological tradition of the Fathers and Church History, rather than in the devotional ethos of 19th century Catholicism.

## 2. Mary

### a) Mary, the Second Eve

Newman declares that the first and fundamental way in which the ancient Church approached Mary was as the Second Eve.<sup>888</sup> He maintains that this view of Mary in the early Church implies the following: Eve had a very important position in the covenant that God made with Adam; the destiny of every human being rested on Adam, who was the representative and the head of the human race; when Adam fell, all humanity fell; if Adam had not fallen even though Eve had fallen, every human being would have inherited the supernatural privileges that God gave to Adam as the first father of the human race; Eve had a special place of her own both in relation to the human race (cf. Gen 3:20) and in its trial and fall in Adam.<sup>889</sup> Newman argues that Eve played a positive, active and causal role in the fall of the human race because she listened to the serpent, she offered the fruit

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<sup>887</sup> John Henry Cardinal Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua: Being a History of his Religious Opinions*, ed. Martin J. Svaglic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 54.

<sup>888</sup> John Henry Cardinal Newman, "A Letter addressed to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., On the Occasion of his Eirenicon," in *Difficulties of Anglicans* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1920), 31.

<sup>889</sup> John Henry Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, ed. Boyce Philip (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing Publishing, 2001), 206-207.

to Adam and he ate it.<sup>890</sup> Consequently, Eve, too, had her share of the punishment of sin (Gen 3:16).

Newman understands that when God passed sentence on the three parties involved in the sin - the serpent (Gen 3:14-15), the woman (Gen 3:16), and the man (Gen 3: 17-19) – God was announcing a future event in which the serpent, the woman and the man were to meet again.<sup>891</sup> However, "it was to be a second Adam and a second Eve, and the new Eve was to be the mother of the new Adam".<sup>892</sup> Hence the seed of the woman and the woman mentioned in this section of the sentence pronounced on the serpent – "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed" (Gen 3:15) – is Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, and His Mother Mary.<sup>893</sup>

Drawing on the parallelism between Eve and Mary, established by the Church Fathers, Newman explains that Mary was not merely a physical instrument of the Incarnation, but "an intelligent, responsible cause of it".<sup>894</sup> He maintains that Mary

co-operated in our salvation not merely by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon her body, but by specific holy acts, the effect of the Holy Ghost within her soul; that, as Eve forfeited privileges by sin, so Mary earned privileges by the fruits of grace; that, as Eve was disobedient and unbelieving, so Mary was obedient and believing; that, as Eve was a cause of ruin to all, so Mary was a cause of salvation to all; that as Eve made room for Adam's fall, so Mary made room for our Lord's reparation of it .<sup>895</sup>

Newman underscores Mary's active co-operation by her faith and obedience in the mystery of human redemption by adducing the testimony of the three Fathers, Justin Martyr (c.100-c.165), Irenaeus (c.140-c.200), and Tertullian (c.160-c.220). Their respective testimonies can be summarised in this way: "We know that He, before all

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<sup>890</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 207.

<sup>891</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 207.

<sup>892</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 207.

<sup>893</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 207-208.

<sup>894</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 212.

<sup>895</sup> John Henry Newman, *The New Eve* (Oxford: Newman Bookshop, 1952), 16.

creatures, proceeded from the Father by His power and will ... and by means of the Virgin became man, that by what way the disobedience arising from the serpent had its beginning, by that way also it might have an undoing"<sup>896</sup> (Justin); "Eve had believed the serpent; Mary believed Gabriel"<sup>897</sup> (Tertullian); "the knot of Eve's disobedience received its unloosing through the obedience of Mary; for what Eve, a virgin, bound by incredulity, that Mary, a virgin, unloosed by faith"<sup>898</sup> (Irenaeus).

Newman specifically points out that Irenaeus calls Mary the "advocate" of Eve, which is the special title and role of the Holy Spirit.<sup>899</sup> Irenaeus says that "'by obedience she was the cause or occasion ... of salvation to herself and the whole human race'; that by her the human race is saved; that by her Eve's complication is disentangled; and that she is Eve's advocate, or friend in need".<sup>900</sup> Similarly, Tertullian declares that "Mary 'blotted out' Eve's fault", and "brought back ... the human race, to salvation".<sup>901</sup> Newman is fully aware of the accusation that Roman Catholics ascribe titles and roles that belong to Jesus alone to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He himself wrote: "It is supposed by critics, Protestant as well as Catholic, that the Greek word for Advocate in the original was Paraclete; it should be borne in mind, then, when we are accused of giving Our Lady the titles and offices of her Son, that St Irenaeus bestows on her the special Name and Office to the Holy Spirit".<sup>902</sup>

In addition to the above testimony, Newman draws on the following Fathers: Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386); Ephrem the Syrian (c.306-378),<sup>903</sup> also known as the "Harp of the Holy Spirit"; Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 315-403); Jerome (c.347-420); Augustine (354-430); Peter Chrysologus (ca. 380-ca.450), and Fulgentius (468-533). Their respective testimonies can be summarised in this way: "Since through Eve, a Virgin, came death, it

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<sup>896</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 209.

<sup>897</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 210.

<sup>898</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 211.

<sup>899</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 214.

<sup>900</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 214.

<sup>901</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 213.

<sup>902</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 160.

<sup>903</sup> Most scholars concur that Ephrem died in 373.



behaved that through a Virgin, or rather from a Virgin, should life appear"<sup>904</sup> (Cyril); "Through Eve, the beautiful and desirable glory of men was extinguished; but it has revived through Mary"<sup>905</sup> (Ephrem); "Eve became a cause of death to men... and Mary a cause of life ... that life might be instead of death"<sup>906</sup> (Epiphanius); "Death by Eve, life by Mary"<sup>907</sup> (Jerome); "through woman death became our portion, so life was born to us by woman"<sup>908</sup> (Augustine); "Blessed art thou among women; for among women, on whose womb Eve, who was cursed, brought punishment, Mary, being blest, rejoices, is honoured and is looked up to. And woman now is truly made through grace the Mother of the living, who had been by nature the mother of the dying"<sup>909</sup> (Peter Chrysologus); and, "In the wife of the first man, the wickedness of the devil depraved her seduced mind; in the mother of the Second man, the grace of God preserved both her mind inviolate and her flesh"<sup>910</sup> (Fulgentius). Indeed, according to Boyce, Newman "regards Mary as the counterpart of Eve: as the latter collaborated with Adam in our fall from grace, Mary co-operated with Christ in restoring our lost privileges. The Virgin Mary ... conquered the tempter by obeying in faith, thus undoing the harm of Eve's transgression and failure".<sup>911</sup>

## b) Mary Pattern of Faith

Newman sees Mary as a model of faith.<sup>912</sup> In the first three paragraphs of his famous University sermon *The Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrine*, delivered in St Mary's Church in Oxford on the Feast of the Purification in 1843, he demonstrates how

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<sup>904</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 216.

<sup>905</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 216-217.

<sup>906</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 218.

<sup>907</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 218.

<sup>908</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 219.

<sup>909</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 220.

<sup>910</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 222.

<sup>911</sup> Philip Boyce, "Introduction," in *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, ed. Philip Boyce (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing Publishing, 2001), 52.

<sup>912</sup> John Henry Newman, "Newman Reader-Oxford University Sermons" <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/oxford/index.html> (accessed 27 May 2010).

Mary is "our pattern of Faith, both in the reception and in the study of Divine Truth".<sup>913</sup> Drawing on Sacred Scripture, which he acknowledges says very little about Mary, Newman ponders both Zachariah's response to the angel Gabriel's message to him in the Temple and Mary's response to the Angel Gabriel's message to her at the Annunciation. He observes that Zachariah questions Gabriel's message (Lk 1:18), whereas Mary says: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word" (Lk 1:38). In other words, Zachariah does not believe Gabriel's message (Lk 1:20). He does not see how Elizabeth will bear him a son (Lk 1:13) because Elizabeth was incapable of bearing children (Lk 1: 7) and they were both very old (Lk 1:7, 18). Mary, on the other hand, believes that she, a virgin, will conceive a son in her womb by the Holy Spirit (Lk 1: 26-38). For Newman, Elizabeth's greeting to Mary at the Visitation, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb ... And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord" (Lk 1:42, 45), which follows as a result of Mary's response of faith to Gabriel's message, clearly alludes to the difference between Zachariah's response and Mary's faith-filled response to the message of the angel.

Mary's faith, argues Newman, did not consist in simply accepting God's providences and revelations.<sup>914</sup> Luke tells us twice that Mary "pondered" them (Lk 2:19, 51). She pondered the message of the angel to the shepherds that the child in the manger is "a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (Lk 2:11), and Jesus' reply to both her and Joseph after she told him that they had been anxiously searching for him (Lk 2:48). Jesus said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Lk 2:49). Accordingly, at the wedding feast in Cana, Mary expected that Jesus would do something about the wine running out and said to the servants, "Do whatever he

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<sup>913</sup> Newman, "Newman Reader-Oxford University Sermons" (accessed).

<sup>914</sup> Newman, "Newman Reader-Oxford University Sermons" (accessed).

tells you" (Jn 2:5). In other words, Jesus' first miracle at Cana is a direct result of Mary's faith and her reflection on it.<sup>915</sup>

Hence Mary not only believed, possessed and assented to God's truth, she dwelt upon it, used it and developed it.<sup>916</sup> Balthasar takes up this theme, as will become clear in the next chapter. Newman's theory on the development of doctrine is echoed in the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*:

This tradition which comes from the apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (cf, Lk 2:19; 51), through the intimate understanding of spiritual things they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth. For, as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her.<sup>917</sup>

Accordingly, for Newman, Mary symbolises

not only the faith of the unlearned, but of the doctors of the Church also, who have to investigate, and weigh, and define, as well as to profess the Gospel; to draw the line between truth and heresy; to anticipate or remedy the various aberrations of wrong reason; to combat pride and recklessness with their own arms; and thus to triumph over the sophist and the innovator.<sup>918</sup>

Newman considers that Mary must, in her knowledge, have excelled the greatest of philosophers and of theologians, arguing that if Mary had received a vast incomprehensible holiness within her when she lived closely with her Son for thirty continuous years, she must have gained a great, profound, diversified and thorough knowledge of creation, the

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<sup>915</sup> Thomas O'Loughlin, "Newman on *doing* theology," *New Blackfriars* 76, no. 890 (1995): 93.

<sup>916</sup> Newman, "Newman Reader-Oxford University Sermons" (accessed).

<sup>917</sup> Vatican Council II, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), 116, par. 8.

<sup>918</sup> Newman, "Newman Reader-Oxford University Sermons" (accessed).

universe, history and theology.<sup>919</sup> Mary had the unique privilege of communicating face to face with her Son, the Word and Wisdom of God, for thirty continuous years. She was "able to ask Him any question which she wished explained ... knowing that the answers she received were from the Eternal God, who neither deceives nor can be deceived".<sup>920</sup>

### 3. The Mary-Spirit Connection

#### a) Mary's Immaculate Conception and Holiness

Newman argues that the Immaculate Conception of Mary is to be understood in the light of Mary as the Second Eve, recalling the patristic view that Mary holds that office in the restoration of the human race which Eve held in the downfall of the human race.<sup>921</sup> He considers that Eve was created innocent and sinless and was endowed with a large grace in order to enable her to stand against the wiles of the devil.<sup>922</sup> This divine gift, which was over and above her human nature, which she received from Adam, had been given to Adam also before Eve, when he was created.<sup>923</sup> Here Newman draws on the work of renowned theologian and Anglican Bishop George Bull who declares that "Adam was created in grace, that is, received a principle of grace and divine life from his very creation".<sup>924</sup> Bull also states that "our first parents in the state of integrity, had in them something more than nature, that is, were endowed with the divine principle of the Spirit".<sup>925</sup> In other words, Adam and Eve were not simply natural man and woman, but also supernatural man and woman since they were endowed with the supernatural gift of the indwelling Spirit. Newman's exposition on the Indwelling Spirit and its relationship to the spiritual nature of Adam has already been considered earlier in this chapter.

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<sup>919</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 33.

<sup>920</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 34.

<sup>921</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 223.

<sup>922</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 223. See also, Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 64.

<sup>923</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 223.

<sup>924</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 224.

<sup>925</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 224.

According to Newman, "Mary was as fully endowed as Eve".<sup>926</sup> She was to cooperate with the divine Redeemer in the salvation of the human race, where Eve had cooperated with Adam in the fall of the human race.<sup>927</sup> Eve had been deceived by the serpent (Gen 3:13; 2 Cor 11:3), but Mary was to conquer the serpent (Gen 3:15).<sup>928</sup> Because Mary had a significant role in the economy of redemption, she, at least, had the grace that Eve had, and while Eve was raised above her human nature through the indwelling gift of divine grace, Mary had a greater grace still. For Newman, "holiness and Divine favour go together".<sup>929</sup>

Newman recognised that grace is "a real inward condition or superadded quality of soul",<sup>930</sup> inferring that if Eve had received this supernatural interior gift from the first moment of her creation, Mary, too, had this gift when she was conceived. This inference, for Newman, is the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception which declares that "together with the nature which she inherited from her parents, that is, her own nature, [Mary] had a superadded fullness of grace, and that from the first moment of her existence".<sup>931</sup> Mary is thus the first sinless human being since the aboriginal parents of the race, clothed by God at the very moment of her existence in that spiritual robe of grace and holiness which God had given to Adam when he was created.<sup>932</sup>

Newman understands that it was holiness that united Adam to God. He explains that since God alone is holy, God is both above and separate from all creatures. In God's loving-kindness, however, God has imparted, in various degrees to human beings, God's great attributes, the first and most essential one being holiness. Therefore Adam was gifted at his creation with God's grace to unite him to God and to make him holy. Consequently,

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<sup>926</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 224.

<sup>927</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 224.

<sup>928</sup> Francis Friedel, *The Mariology of Cardinal Newman* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1928), 303.

<sup>929</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 120.

<sup>930</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 225.

<sup>931</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 226.

<sup>932</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 6. See also, Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 143.

God's holy grace is "the connecting principle between God and man".<sup>933</sup> Newman emphasises this point by recalling Paul's words in his letter to the Hebrews: "[without holiness] no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). He recognises that when Adam disobeyed God he lost the gift of God's holiness.<sup>934</sup> He repeatedly insists that this holy grace is the indwelling Spirit. In his sermon on "The Law of the Spirit", for example, he says that when Adam had fallen he "forfeited the presence of the Holy Spirit ... he lost his righteousness and he knew he had lost it".<sup>935</sup>

This supernatural unmerited grace, according to Newman, was restored to Mary as a free gift from God at the moment of her conception to prepare her to become the Mother of the Redeemer so that, with the help of this original grace, she might grow in grace and be full of grace at the Annunciation to receive her Lord into her bosom.<sup>936</sup> Newman underscores this great blessedness when he asks:

Who can estimate the holiness and perfection of her, who was chosen to be the Mother of Christ? If to him that hath, more is given, and holiness and Divine favour go together ... what must have been the transcendent purity of her, whom the holy spirit condescended to overshadow with His miraculous presence? What must have been her gifts, who was chosen to be the only near earthly relative of the Son of God, the only one whom He was bound by nature to revere and look up to; the one appointed to train and educate Him, to instruct Him day by day, as He grew in wisdom and stature? .... what, think you, was the sanctified state of that human nature, of which God formed His sinless Son; knowing as we do, 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh', and that 'none can bring a clean thing out of an unclean'?<sup>937</sup>

Recognising that those who come near to God must also be holy, Newman's constant refrain is that no person came as close to God as Mary who carried the sinless Son of the

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<sup>933</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 26.

<sup>934</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 26.

<sup>935</sup> John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol V*, VIII vols. (London: Longmans. Green and Co, 1907), 146.

<sup>936</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 228.

<sup>937</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 120. See also, Friedel, *The Mariology of Cardinal Newman*, 274.

Eternal Father in her womb and accompanied Him from His birth to His death on the Cross.<sup>938</sup> He considers that Mary, as far as a human being could, reflected her Divine Son's holiness by living closely with Him for thirty years.<sup>939</sup> Indeed, according to Francis Friedel, "Newman sees in the daily life of Jesus and Mary a ground for their mutual resemblance. Jesus resembled Mary because He was her Son; she had been prepared in advance with an incomparable measure of grace. She is in turn perfected to the resemblance of divine holiness by her continual intercourse with the Divine Word".<sup>940</sup> Hence, for Newman, Mary is truly the Mirror of Holiness or Justice. She reflected "the attributes of God with a fullness and exactness of which no saint, or hermit, or holy virgin, can even remind us".<sup>941</sup> The following words of Newman's prayer to Mary reflect this: "In thee, O Mary, is fulfilled, as we can bear it, an original purpose of the Most High ... thy very face and form, dear Mother, speak to us of the Eternal".<sup>942</sup> Clearly, there is some kind of divine-human exchange happening here. It is almost too deep to fathom, but the fact of it is crucial for appreciating the unique holiness of Mary, a holiness above and beyond other human beings, yet utterly human.

Newman suggests that one of the consequences of Mary's holiness is that when Mary was on earth, it drew people to her and made them love her, because grace, unlike sin, is beautiful and attractive.<sup>943</sup> Newman's further reflection on this point endears us to Mary:

her beautiful sinless soul ... looked through her eyes, and spoke through her mouth, and was heard in her voice and compassed her all about; when she was still or when she walked, whether she smiled or was sad, her sinless soul, this it was which would draw all those to her who had any grace in them, any remains of grace, any love of holy things. There was a divine music in all she said

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<sup>938</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 120.

<sup>939</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 30-31.

<sup>940</sup> Friedel, *The Mariology of Cardinal Newman*, 275.

<sup>941</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 31.

<sup>942</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 148.

<sup>943</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 17.

and did – in her mien, her air, her deportment, that charmed every true heart that came near her.<sup>944</sup>

Newman, himself, was attracted to Mary. In his account of the history of his religious opinion from 1841 to 1845 in his autobiographical *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, he declares:

In spite of my ingrained fears of Rome, and the decision of my reason and conscience against her usages, in spite of my affection for Oxford and Oriels, yet I had a secret longing love of Rome the Mother of English Christianity, and I had a true devotion to the Blessed Virgin, in whose College I lived, whose Altar I served, and whose Immaculate Purity I had in one of my earliest Sermons made much of.<sup>945</sup>

A striking feature of Newman's testimony of his devotion to Mary concerns the nature and foundation of Marian devotion. He states that he had a *true* devotion to Mary. For Newman, true Marian devotion glorifies Christ. He repeatedly emphasises that true devotion is intimately connected to the worship of Christ. This emphasis can be seen in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845), written while he was considering moving from the Anglican Church to the Roman Catholic Church, and in his sermon "The Glories of Mary for the Sake of her Son", delivered three and a half years after he became a Roman Catholic. In his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* he asserts that "if we take a survey at least of Europe, we shall find that it is not those religious communions which are characterised by devotion towards the Blessed Virgin that have ceased to adore her Eternal Son ... [but] those very bodies ... which have renounced devotion to her".<sup>946</sup> And in the above sermon, as the title suggests, he declares "that the glories of Mary are for the sake of Jesus ... we praise and bless her as the first of creatures,

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<sup>944</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 18.

<sup>945</sup> Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua: Being a History of his Religious Opinions*, 152.

<sup>946</sup> John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1914), 426. See also, Newman, "A Letter addressed to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., On the Occasion of his Eirenicon," 92.



that we may duly confess Him as our sole Creator".<sup>947</sup> Newman's thought is clearly echoed in Paul VI's *Marialis Cultus* which teaches that devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is an integral element of Christian worship.

## b) Mary's Assumption

Newman argues that Mary's Assumption flows from her Immaculate Conception and her Divine Motherhood. Mary was taken up soul *and* body into heaven soon after she died because she was truly sinless and also because she is the Mother of Jesus, who is God. As regards her death, Mary had to die because she was mortal. Although she did not inherit Adam's sin, she was subject to the laws of fallen Nature, and inherited its evils, excluding sin.<sup>948</sup> Since all humans die, Mary died. Her divine Son died.<sup>949</sup>

Like Jesus, Mary was exempt from "the ravages of disease and infirmities that weaken and deform the body".<sup>950</sup> She was spared the physical suffering Jesus endured, however she suffered in her mind and soul (Lk 2:35).<sup>951</sup> Her suffering increased at the prolonged absence of Jesus as she waited to see His face. Since Mary's waiting for Christ's face was "like purgatory ... except with merit and not for sin ... she died from love".<sup>952</sup> Her soul longed to see God.<sup>953</sup> It felt an intense longing for love and made great efforts to "part from the body which was still holding it captive".<sup>954</sup> Thus, when Mary's soul separated from her body Jesus raised up Mary's body without corruption from the tomb.<sup>955</sup> It was

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<sup>947</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 131-132.

<sup>948</sup> John Henry Newman, *Sermon Notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman 1849-1878* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1913).

<sup>949</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 61.

<sup>950</sup> Boyce, "Introduction," 73. See also, John Henry Newman, *Sermon notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman 1849-1878* (Birmingham: Gracewing Publishing, 2000), 104-105.

<sup>951</sup> Newman, *Sermon notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman 1849-1878*, 104-105. See also, Boyce, "Introduction," 73.

<sup>952</sup> Newman, *Sermon notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman 1849-1878*, 105. Check pages (2000)

<sup>953</sup> Newman, *Sermon notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman 1849-1878*, 105. Check pages (2000)

<sup>954</sup> Friedel, *The Mariology of Cardinal Newman*, 318. See also, Newman, *Sermon notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman 1849-1878*, 105. Check pages (2000)

<sup>955</sup> Newman, *Sermon notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman 1849-1878*, 105. Check pages (2000)

"speedily united to her soul again, and raised by our Lord to a new and eternal life of heavenly glory".<sup>956</sup>

Newman offers several reasons for believing in the Assumption of Mary. Because many bodies of the Saints of the Old Testament were raised and came out of their tombs after Jesus' resurrection (Mt 27:52-53), Mary, too, was raised from her tomb by the power of God.<sup>957</sup> He stresses this point by asking the questions:

Can we suppose that Abraham, or David, or Isaias, or Ezechias, should have been thus favoured, and not God's own Mother? Had she not a claim on the love of her Son to have what any others had? Was she not nearer to Him than the greatest of the Saints before her? And is it conceivable that the law of the grave should admit of relaxation in their case, and not in hers?"<sup>958</sup>

Thus, for Newman, "our Lord, having preserved her from sin and the consequences of sin by His Passion, lost no time in pouring out the full merits of that Passion upon her body as well as her soul".<sup>959</sup> Also, Jesus loved His Mother too much to let her body remain in the tomb.<sup>960</sup> In addition, she was transcendently holy, full and overflowing with grace.<sup>961</sup> Moreover, we hear nothing of both the body and bodily relics of Mary.<sup>962</sup> For this reason, Newman sees Mary as the Mystical or Hidden Rose (*Rosa Mystica*), the most beautiful of all flowers of holiness and glory sprung up by the power of God's grace from the earth, whose sacred body is now in heaven.<sup>963</sup>

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<sup>956</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 61.

<sup>957</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 61-62.

<sup>958</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 62.

<sup>959</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 62.

<sup>960</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 64.

<sup>961</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 64.

<sup>962</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 66.

<sup>963</sup> Newman, *Meditations and Devotions*, 65-67.

### c) **Mary's Intercession**

Before we can appreciate the full significance of the theme of intercession in the relationship of Mary and the Holy Spirit, we must examine Newman's thoughts on intercession generally but briefly. Intercession, according to Newman, is "offered for each other and for the whole, and for the self as one of the whole".<sup>964</sup> It is a sharing in the unique mediation of Christ.<sup>965</sup> As the Catholic Catechism puts it: "Christian intercession participates in Christ's, as an expression of the communion of saints. In intercession, he who prays looks 'not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others,' even to the point of praying for those who do him harm".<sup>966</sup> The practice of mutual intercession among Christians in the early Church, asserts Newman, united them together into one body and gave them the solace of a spiritual fellowship.<sup>967</sup> Moreover, their public prayers were of an intercessory nature because when they prayed for the wellbeing of the whole Church, they prayed "for all the classes of men and all the individuals of which it was composed".<sup>968</sup> Thus, intercession is also a sign of the life of a Church universal in its scope embracing all.<sup>969</sup>

Newman argues that the practice of mutual intercession among Christians was simply the continuation of the tradition established at the very beginning of the life of the Church as the Church itself was founded in atmosphere of prayer.<sup>970</sup> Drawing on Scripture, he affirms that the Apostles and others, including Mary, joined together in continuous prayer while waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14). Also, at Pentecost they were all together in one place (Acts 2:1). Similarly, the first converts devoted themselves to the prayers (Acts 2:42). The whole Christian community also prayed for Peter while he was in

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<sup>964</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol III*, 352-353.

<sup>965</sup> Boyce, "Introduction," 80.

<sup>966</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 364.

<sup>967</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 261-262. See also, Friedel, *The Mariology of Cardinal Newman*, 329.

<sup>968</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 262.

<sup>969</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol III*.

<sup>970</sup> Friedel, *The Mariology of Cardinal Newman*, 331.

prison (12:5).<sup>971</sup> Likewise, Paul instructed Timothy to offer prayers of supplication, intercession and thanksgiving for everyone (1 Tim 2:1).<sup>972</sup> Newman argues that the spiritual bond between Christians does not cease with life, but also extends to the souls in Purgatory and the saints in heaven.<sup>973</sup> As the Council of Trent affirms: "it is good and useful suppliantly to invoke [the Saints], and to have recourse to their prayers".<sup>974</sup> Newman observes that the early Church testifies to the practice of praying for the dead.<sup>975</sup> Also, according to the Book of Revelation, an angel in Heaven offers a large quantity of incense with the prayers of all the Saints on the golden altar before the throne of God (Rev 8:3).<sup>976</sup> Moreover, the spirits of the just also take part in the sacred communion, thereby blessing and helping Christians on earth (Heb 12:22-24a).<sup>977</sup>

Drawing again on Scripture, Newman argues that holiness is the vital force of the power of intercession because it is the indwelling Spirit Himself who intercedes for Christians and the saints in accordance with God's will (Rom 8:26-27). James declares that the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective (Jas 5:16), and John insists that God answers our prayers "because we obey His commandments and do what pleases Him" (1 Jn 3:22).<sup>978</sup> Newman gives some examples of great holy intercessors as follows: Abraham (Gen 18:22-33), Moses (Ex 32:9-14) and Elijah (1 Kings 17:1-7; 18:1, 41-45).<sup>979</sup> Hence the holier a person is, the more powerful and effective is that person's intercession.<sup>980</sup> Accordingly, Mary's intercession is especially powerful because she is the

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<sup>971</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 262-263.

<sup>972</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 263.

<sup>973</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 263-264. See also, Boyce, "Introduction," 82.

<sup>974</sup> *The Council of Trent The Twenty-Fifth Session: The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*, trans. J Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 234.

<sup>975</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 263. See also, Friedel, *The Mariology of Cardinal Newman*, 332.

<sup>976</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 264.

<sup>977</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 264-265.

<sup>978</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 265. See also, Friedel, *The Mariology of Cardinal Newman*, 334.

<sup>979</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 265.

<sup>980</sup> Boyce, "Introduction," 83.

Mother of God, the holiest of all creatures.<sup>981</sup> Newman's constant refrain is that Mary as the Mother of Jesus is the closest human being to God, the All-Holy Creator.<sup>982</sup>

Newman's summary of these considerations underscores Mary's active and powerful role as our Advocate in Heaven:

I consider it impossible then, for those who believe the Church to be one vast body in heaven and on earth, in which every holy creature of god has his place, and of which prayer is the life, when once they recognises the sanctity and dignity of the Blessed Virgin, not to perceive immediately, that her office above is one of perpetual intercession for the faithful militant, and that our very relation to her must be that of clients to a patron, and that, in the eternal enmity which exists between the woman and the serpent, while the serpent's strength lies in being the Tempter, the weapon of the Second Eve and Mother of God is prayer.<sup>983</sup>

Because Mary acted as an Advocate, a friend in need, when she was on earth, she continues to be our Advocate in heaven because the good deeds of those who die in the Lord follow them (Rev 14:13). Similarly, because Mary crushed the serpent on earth, she continues to do so in her glorious state in heaven through prayer.<sup>984</sup> Citing Gregory of Nyssa's (c. 330-395) account of Gregory the Wonderworker's (c. 213-c.270) vision, Newman shows Mary saving Gregory from intellectual error concerning theological doctrine, as he was deeply pondering it:

In such thoughts [says his namesake of Nyssa] he was passing the night, when one appeared, as if in human form, aged in appearance, saintly in the fashion of his garments, and very venerable both in grace of countenance and general mien. Amazed at the sight, he started from his bed, and asked who it was, and why he came; but, on the other calming the perturbation of his mind with his gentle voice, and saying he had appeared to him by divine command on account of his doubts, in order that the truth of the orthodox faith might be revealed to him, he took courage at the word, and regarded him with a

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<sup>981</sup> John Henry Newman, "Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman," ed. Boyce Philip (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing Publishing, 2001), 83.

<sup>982</sup> Boyce, "Introduction," 54.

<sup>983</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 267.

<sup>984</sup> Friedel, *The Mariology of Cardinal Newman*, 336.

mixture of joy and fright. Then, on his stretching his hand straight forward and pointing with his fingers at something on one side, he followed with his eyes the extended hand, and saw another appearance opposite the former, in shape of a woman, but more than human ... When his eyes could not bear the apparition, he heard them conversing together on the subject of his doubts; and thereby not only gained a true knowledge of the faith, but learned their names, as they addressed each other by their respective appellations. And thus he is said to have heard the person in woman's shape bid 'John the Evangelist' disclose to the young man the mystery of godliness; and he answered that he was ready to comply in this matter with the wish of 'the Mother of the Lord', and enunciated a formulary, well-turned and complete, and so vanished. He, on the other hand, immediately committed to writing that divine teaching of his mystagogue, and henceforth preached in the Church according to that form, and bequeathed to posterity, as an inheritance, that heavenly teaching, by means of which his people are instructed down to this day, being preserved from all heretical evil.<sup>985</sup>

Responding to the Protestant objection to the Roman Catholic Church's teaching that Mary alone has destroyed all heresies in the world, Newman proceeds to argue that this truth is verified now, as then, especially by Mary's intercession.<sup>986</sup> As Newman explains, "[s]he is the great exemplar of prayer in a generation which emphatically denies the power of prayer *in toto*, which determines that fatal laws govern the universe, that there cannot be any direct communication between earth and heaven, that God cannot visit His own earth and that man cannot influence His providence".<sup>987</sup> In other words, as Boyce puts it, Newman sees Mary as "the greatest human exemplification of that gift conferred by God on creatures whereby they can beseech Him on behalf of others for his graces and blessings – something that is even more urgent 'in a generation, which emphatically denies the power of prayer *in toto*'".<sup>988</sup>

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<sup>985</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 268-269.

<sup>986</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 269.

<sup>987</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 269-270.

<sup>988</sup> Boyce, "Introduction," 87.

Newman further underscores Mary's role in Heaven as our Patroness or Paraclete, "a loving Mother with clients",<sup>989</sup> by pointing out that Gregory of Nyssa speaks of Justina, a Christian virgin who, having recourse to Mary's protection, obtained the conversion of Cyprian, a heathen magician, who employed his skills in an attempt to lure her to himself.<sup>990</sup>

#### 4. The Implications of Ecumenical Unity

Newman's broad and vivid approach to Mary and the Holy Spirit inspires Christians to become more actively engaged, both theologically and spiritually, in the work of ecumenism. In the first instance, Newman's refreshing use of the Fathers of the Church, and especially in what he calls John Chrysostom's "discriminating affectionateness" is echoed in the Second Vatican Council's exhortation to Catholics to "understand, venerate, preserve, and foster the exceedingly rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches, in order faithfully to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition and to bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians".<sup>991</sup> This exhortation promotes the catholicity and the unity of the Church because, as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity declares, the Church's unity "'is realised in the midst of a rich diversity' and that legitimate diversity is a dimension of the catholicity of the Church".<sup>992</sup>

Newman's theology, and indeed his Mariology, is catholic because it provides common ground for ecumenical dialogue through its broad and multidimensional scope and its scriptural and patristic foundation. This catholic dimension of theology must be encouraged and it comes to light in Cardinal Walter Kasper's recent and surprising remark

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<sup>989</sup> Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 418.

<sup>990</sup> Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 418. Newman, *Sermon Notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman 1849-1878*, 93. See also, Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VIII vols., vol. III (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 422.

<sup>991</sup> *UR*, 15.

<sup>992</sup> Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "The Ecumenical Dimension in the Formation of those engaged in Pastoral Work" [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/general-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_19950316\\_ecumenical-dimension\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/general-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19950316_ecumenical-dimension_en.html) (accessed 24 April 2009).

in a sermon addressed to Anglicans, Protestants and Catholics at the Two Cathedral's Service in Liverpool on Pentecost Sunday 2010:

We are right when we say that the walls of division do not reach up to heaven; there is more that unites us than what divides us. We have the same Bible as the Word of God and the guide of our life, we are baptised in the one Triune God and bestowed with the same Spirit, we share the same hope in eternal life, we confess the same Apostolic Creed and we celebrate the same feasts, like the feast of Pentecost today. But we have to be honest. This common heritage is today fading and fragile among many Christians.<sup>993</sup>

No theologian more than Newman had a more vivid recognition that the Holy Spirit indwells Christians, and that this indwelling Spirit invites them into a relationship with the Father and the Son through that same Holy Spirit and unites them into one body, giving them the "solace of a spiritual intercourse".<sup>994</sup> Such an understanding of the indwelling Spirit truly encourages Christians to enter into the ecumenical process, a process which Walter Kasper calls "an adventure of the Holy Spirit".<sup>995</sup> Newman's thought is clearly echoed in *Unitatis Redintegratio* when it urges Catholics to "remember that the more purely they strive to live according to the gospel, the more they are fostering and even practicing Christian unity. For they achieve depth and ease in strengthening mutual brotherhood to the degree that they enjoy profound communion with the Father, the Word and the Spirit".<sup>996</sup> Newman himself in his sermon on "The State of Grace" declares that the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit will both stimulate Christians and make their devotion healthy:

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<sup>993</sup> Walter Kasper, "Homily on the Feast of Pentecost, Sunday 23 May 2010"

[http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/userfiles\\_rcaol/file/Archbishop%20Patrick%20Kelly/Cardinal%20Kasper's%20Homily%20for%20the%20Two%20Cathedrals%20Service.pdf](http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/userfiles_rcaol/file/Archbishop%20Patrick%20Kelly/Cardinal%20Kasper's%20Homily%20for%20the%20Two%20Cathedrals%20Service.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2010).

<sup>994</sup> Newman, *Mary: The Virgin Mary in the Life and Writings of John Henry Newman*, 262.

<sup>995</sup> Walter Kasper, "Presentation by Card. Kasper: The Church's future: ecumenism, evangelization"

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20041121\\_kasper-ecumenismo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20041121_kasper-ecumenismo_en.html) (accessed 29 July 2010).

<sup>996</sup> UR 7.



O fearful follower of Christ, how is it thou hast never thought of what thou art and what is in thee ... Fall down in astonishment at the glories which are around thee and in thee, poured to and fro in <sup>997</sup>such a wonderful way that thou art (as it were) dissolved into the kingdom of God, as though thou hast nought to do but to contemplate and feed upon that great vision ... All the necessary exactness of our obedience, the anxiety about failing, the pain of self-denial, the watchfulness, the zeal, the self-chastisements which are required of us, as little interfere with this vision of faith, as if they were practised by another, not by ourselves.<sup>998</sup>

Indeed, Newman understands that the divine indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the power behind obedience and the source of every Christian virtue.<sup>999</sup>

This has special significance for ecumenism, as Kasper affirms, "There is no cheap ecumenism; ecumenism has its price and requires courageous risks. The ecumenical pilgrimage is a pilgrimage in growing holiness and sanctification".<sup>1000</sup> This raises the questions: What understanding do individual Christians have of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? How much are they aware of the Holy Spirit's indwelling in them? Do they know "how" to co-operate with the grace of the indwelling Spirit? How do they understand grace? Is it "something" or "someone"? If Mary is the holiest of all creatures, what does she teach Christians about the "momentous possibilities" for personal sanctification?

Personal sanctification also evokes the concept of deification or theosis, which in the Christian East, is central to its theological and mystical tradition. This, in turn, raises the questions: Should the juridical models of some Western approaches to theology be renewed? In what way can the concept of deification in the Christian East enrich the Christian West? Does the Roman Catholic Church have the same strong emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit as that in the Orthodox Church?

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<sup>997</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mary for Today* (Slough: St. Paul Publications, 1987).

<sup>998</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol IV*, 146.

<sup>999</sup> James Reidy, "Newman as a Master of the Spirit," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 8, no. 4 (2005): 64.

<sup>1000</sup> Kasper, "Homily on the Feast of Pentecost, Sunday 23 May 2010" (accessed).

Newman's understanding that the Church was founded in an atmosphere of prayer and is built on prayer, and that the practice of mutual intercession among Christians unites them together in a spiritual fellowship, encourages Christians to remain faithful to the prayers. Newman himself challenges Christians to this as reflected in his following words:

How can we complain of difficulties, national or personal, how can we justly blame and denounce evil-minded and powerful men, if we have but lightly used the intercession offered up in the Litany, the Psalms, and in the Holy Communion? How can we answer to ourselves for the souls who have been lost and are now waiting for judgment ... seeing that, for what we know, we were ordained to influence or reverse their present destiny and have not done it? <sup>1001</sup>

This theological position is ecumenically significant. As Walter Kasper affirms, "The unity of the Church is not our own work; the unity of the Church ultimately is a gift of the Spirit. We cannot 'make', we cannot organise, we cannot manipulate or enforce it. But we can pray and we should pray for it".<sup>1002</sup> If, as Newman declares, Mary is an all-powerful intercessor, Mary can help Christians to reach the goal of ecumenism, which is, as Walter Kasper puts it, "unity within diversity of all believers in Jesus Christ".<sup>1003</sup> Newman's own note at the end of his reponse to Pusey reflects this: "May the bright and gentle Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary, overcome you with her sweetness, and revenge herself on her foes by interceding effectually for their conversion".<sup>1004</sup>

## Conclusion

Newman's theological approach to Mary and the Holy Spirit, firmly grounded on Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, is guided by his insistence

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<sup>1001</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol III*, 365.

<sup>1002</sup> Kasper, "Homily on the Feast of Pentecost, Sunday 23 May 2010" (accessed).

<sup>1003</sup> Kasper, "Homily on the Feast of Pentecost, Sunday 23 May 2010" (accessed).

<sup>1004</sup> Newman, "A Letter addressed to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., On the Occasion of his Eirenicon," 118.

on what he calls the dogmatic principle.<sup>1005</sup> Newman argues that the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of each individual Christian. This divine indwelling, which he names grace, is the very foundation of the Christian life. The indwelling Spirit brings the believer into communion with the Father and the Son and enables the soul to fulfil the ends for which it was created. Such an understanding of grace helps Christians understand that it is the very presence of the Holy Spirit within them that establishes their personal relationship with the Father and the Son. The Christian truly participates in the life of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – by the power of the same Holy Spirit. This understanding of grace sits very well with that of Orthodox theology. Both rest on a deep reading of the doctrine of deification in the Greek Fathers.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Christians is the fundamental source and ground of unity. It is the Spirit who unites individual Christians in whom it dwells. For Newman, "the heart of every Christian ought to represent in miniature the Catholic Church, since one Spirit makes both the whole Church and every member of it to be His Temple. As he makes the Church one, which, left to itself, would separate into many parts; so he makes the soul one, in spite of its various affections and faculties, and its contradictory aims".<sup>1006</sup>

The indwelling Spirit is the ultimate source of all holiness. The divine indwelling sets the soul in motion; gives Christians good thoughts and desires; and enlightens, purifies and prompts them to seek God. In stressing that the Spirit lives within Christians as the never-failing wellspring of love, Newman reminds us that "we love because it is our nature to love, and it is our nature because the Holy Spirit has made it our nature".<sup>1007</sup> Love has a paramount place in the spiritual life and it "is the immediate fruit and evidence of

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<sup>1005</sup> Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 325. See also, Thomas Norris, *Newman and his Theological Method* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1977), 136-137.

<sup>1006</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol IV*; Newman, *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day*, 131-132.

<sup>1007</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol IV*, 310.

regeneration ... the motion of the new spirit, the holy and the new heart that the Holy Spirit gives us".<sup>1008</sup>

Correspondingly, Newman stresses Mary's vital role in the mystery of human redemption emphasising that she actively co-operated with God the Holy Spirit through her faith and obedience in the salvation of the human race. With the ancient councils he declares that Mary is truly the Mother of God and considers her privileges in the light of her being understood as the Second Eve, a key element of the apostolic Tradition reaching far back to Justin Martyr and the Apologists. In this way, the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, as they came to be expressed in the Latin Churches, were implied in Antiquity. This understanding of Mary is important ecumenically in that it appeals to the teaching of the undivided Church

Newman sees Mary as a model of faith in the reception and the study of God's truth, emphasising her faith, her pondering of God's truth in her heart and her use and development of it. He underscores Mary's unique privilege of personal face-to-face communication with her Son for thirty continuous years and is insistent that Mary is truly the Mirror of Holiness, reflecting back God's divine attributes more perfectly than any other creature, and therefore, drawing people to her and making them love her because grace is itself beautiful and attractive. His devotion to both Mary and the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from his theological propositions.

Newman reminds Christians that the Church was founded in an atmosphere of prayer and is built on prayer. This is a great service to both Eastern and Western Christians Churches – reminding them to devote "themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). This, in itself, is ecumenically significant because it deepens the spiritual relationship and true bond of union, which

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<sup>1008</sup> Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons Vol IV*, 363.

Newman asserts, exists between Christians on earth and the Saints in heaven through the practice of mutual intercession. For Newman, Mary is our all-powerful Advocate in heaven. He considers that holiness is the vital force of intercession, as an availing power, because it is the indwelling Spirit, the Supreme Intercessor, who intercedes for Christians. Since Mary is the holiest of all creatures, her intercession is all-powerful. She is *Panagia*, the "All Holy One" as the Christian East calls her.

## Chapter 6

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### Hans Urs von Balthasar on Mary and the Holy Spirit

#### Introduction

We cannot consider Balthasar's insights on Mary and the Holy Spirit and their implications for ecumenical unity without reference to the thought of Swiss mystic and spiritual writer, Adrienne von Speyr (1902-1967), with whom he had worked in close collaboration for twenty-seven years.<sup>1009</sup> In his forward to his work *First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*, Balthasar asserts that Speyr had a great influence on his theological thought.<sup>1010</sup> Regarding this relationship, he writes, "On the whole I have received far more from her, theologically, than she from me, though, of course, the exact proportion can never be calculated".<sup>1011</sup> He goes on to say, "I also strove to bring my way of looking at Christian revelation into conformity with hers".<sup>1012</sup> In a later work *Our Task: A Report and a Plan*, he gives an account of their common theological work. After reiterating the influence of Speyr on his work since he first met her in 1940, he declares that his views and projects "are so interconnected with what came from her that the two can never be neatly separated".<sup>1013</sup> Clearly, there is reason to take into account Adrienne von Speyr's influence on Balthasar's theology.

Within the scope of the present study, this chapter will focus on four particular Marian areas: a) Annunciation; b) Mariology; c) Memory of the Church; d) Mary and the Cross. These will be considered under the headings: 1) The Holy Spirit; 2) Mary; 3) The Mary-

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<sup>1009</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*, trans. Lawry Antje and Englund Sergia (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 11.

<sup>1010</sup> Balthasar, *First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*, 11.

<sup>1011</sup> Balthasar, *First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*, 13.

<sup>1012</sup> Balthasar, *First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*, 13.

<sup>1013</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Our Task: A Report and a Plan* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984), 95.

Spirit Connection; 4) The Implications for Ecumenical Unity, recognising that there will be some overlap in some areas. We begin by 1) Examining the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Son and to Mary as presented in the context of the Annunciation. 2) After that, we examine a number of Balthasar's general remarks on Mary in the doctrine and devotion of the Church and consider his reflection on Mary as the Memory of the Church. 3) We then pass on to explore several features of Mary's "Yes" at the Annunciation in the context of the Gospel account of the Annunciation and in the setting of the Cross, as Balthasar expounds on Mary's consent in relation to the Passion of Christ and to the drama of Redemption. 4) Finally, we will note the implications for ecumenical unity.

## **The Holy Spirit**

### **a) The Annunciation**

Applying Bulgakov's notion of a "trinitarian inversion", that is, the Son becoming man through the Holy Spirit,<sup>1014</sup> Balthasar declares that at the Annunciation the indivisible Spirit of both the Father and the Son carries the Son, "the 'seed' of the Father",<sup>1015</sup> into the Virgin Mary's womb. He emphasises that the Son *allows* himself to be carried by the Holy Spirit. The Son, consciously and willingly, "entrusts himself to the activity of the Spirit in accord with the Father's will".<sup>1016</sup> Influenced by Speyr, Balthasar underscores that the Son's letting himself be carried by the Holy Spirit is an expression of the Son's love and obedience to the Father:

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<sup>1014</sup> Brendan Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (New York: New City Press, 2000), 82.

<sup>1015</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Credo: Meditations on the Apostles' Creed*, trans. David Kipp (New York, N.Y.: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990), 45. See also, Hans Urs von Balthasar, *In the Fullness of Faith: On the Centrality of the Distinctively Catholic*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 82-83.

<sup>1016</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, V vols., vol. III (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 186. See also, Balthasar, *Credo: Meditations on the Apostles' Creed*, 45.

We see the Son "letting things happen" and are inclined to think of it as passivity - for instance, he allows himself to be carried by the Holy Spirit into the womb of the Virgin<sup>37</sup> - but this is only the "economic" expression of the fact that, in God, he, the "Eternally Begotten", ceaselessly allows himself to be begotten;<sup>38</sup> in his perfect, divine freedom he regards the execution of the Father's will as the best expression of his filial love.<sup>39</sup> What, in God, is his "allowing things to happen", becomes, in human terms (intelligible to the creature), that obedience which is the hallmark of Jesus' life.<sup>1017</sup>

The event of the Incarnation itself is already the beginning of the Son's soteriological or saving obedience to the Father.<sup>1018</sup> In this respect, Balthasar often draws attention to the relationships of mother and Child. Correlative to the Son's "letting things happen", Balthasar speaks also, about Mary's "letting happen". As we continue with Balthasar's insights into the mystery of Mary, we will show, more fully later in this chapter how Jesus' attitude of "letting things happen" echoes his Mother's pre-existing disposition of "letting happen". For example, speaking in the context of the Son's obedience to the Father and of Mary's word of assent, Balthasar writes that "the Mother will, in anticipation, adopt the attitude of her Child, and this not only for a time but as embodying it forever: to be pure answer to whatever the Father disposes".<sup>1019</sup>

This "anticipation" is evidenced also in the relationship between the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit. As Balthasar ponders on the meaning of the Angel's greeting to Mary as "full of grace", he considers that the Spirit, who carries the seed of God to implant it in Mary's virginal womb, is already present in Mary. For the Holy Spirit has fashioned her and inspired her *yes* after the pattern of Jesus' self-surrender to the will of the Father

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<sup>1017</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Last Act*, V vols., vol. V (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 517. The three footnotes 37, 38, 39 in this citation are from the respective pages 45, 48, 59 of Adrienne von Speyr's work *The World of Prayer* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985).

<sup>1018</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 184.

<sup>1019</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 31.



(Mt 26:39).<sup>1020</sup> On this point, he is clearly echoing Speyr's words: "[t]he Spirit that was to overshadow her was already present in her, and it is he who enabled her to speak her word of assent with him".<sup>1021</sup> Speyr elaborates on this as follows:

Mary's assent, being a word of grace, is in a special sense an act of the Holy Spirit and that is why she was able to give God her spirit and her body. The Spirit that was to overshadow her was already present in her, and it is he who enabled her to speak her word of assent with him. When the Spirit came to overshadow her, it lit upon the Spirit already alive within her, and her assent is contained, as it were, within the assent of the Spirit. Thus immersed in the Holy Spirit, it becomes a true, free and independent expression of her own spirit. It was in the first place an expression of her spirit, her spiritual word, without her knowing, or even suspecting, as yet, how fully it was to be the expression of her body, her bodily word. Her spiritual assent expands through the Holy Spirit to embrace the assent of her body; and this was possible because her assent was unbounded, a malleable material which God could shape as he pleased.<sup>1022</sup>

In his turn, Balthasar emphasises that Mary's *fiat* is grace; and that grace enables Mary to give her consent: "Coming from God, this yes is the highest grace; but, coming from man, it is also the highest achievement made possible by grace: unconditional, definitive self-surrender".<sup>1023</sup> Once again, he unmistakably echoes the sentiments of Speyr:

Her assent is above all things grace. It is not simply her human answer to God's divine offer ... It is the answer of grace in her spirit to the foundation of grace on which her life is built. But it is at the same time the answer expected of grace, the answer she did not fail to give when she heard the voice of God.<sup>1024</sup>

Balthasar reiterates in a striking and profound passage that Mary's *fiat* can only come from God:

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<sup>1020</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 352. See also, Balthasar, *In the Fullness of Faith: On the Centrality of the Distinctively Catholic*, 83.

<sup>1021</sup> Adrienne von Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord* (London: The Harvill Press, 1956), 10.

<sup>1022</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 10-11.

<sup>1023</sup> Balthasar, *First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*, 51.

<sup>1024</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 10.

This God who pulls down the barriers erected by men does not want to keep his own total lack of barriers to himself: he wants to bring this absolute positivity into the world, and communicate it, like rain and dew falling on the soil, to the earthly realm itself. Somewhere on earth there must ring out, in response to his word, not a half answer but a whole one, not a vague answer but an exact one. It must ring out precisely where he comes to earth. He must be accepted and adopted by the earth; otherwise his coming would be irrelevant to it. If he is to bear what is ours he must be one of us; he cannot bear it from outside, only from inside. And so he must be let in, not only physically ... but 'with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength'. By the power of heaven, the earth must accept the arrival of grace so that it can really come to earth and carry out its work of liberation. On its own the earth would be unable to do this ... The word of consent, however, that is necessary if heaven is to be accepted by earth, is a 'Yes' beyond all separation, all divisions and distinctions; it is a 'Yes' that knows no conditions and boundaries. Such a word of consent can only be given to earth from heaven's treasure house of love.<sup>1025</sup>

This recalls Bulgakov's vision of God's personal and positive relationship to the world. It recalls also his ideas that: the Holy Spirit made Mary God's earth from which sprang the New Adam; Mary is the summit and glory of creation; Mary is the pre-established centre of the world, and that there is a "communion" between Mary and the Holy Spirit while they always remain distinct. Likewise, it evokes Schmemmann's emphasis on Mary as humanity's gift to God, the supreme and most beautiful fruit of all creation, and the unique and personal relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit.

This congruence between Balthasar and the Orthodox writers comes about because they see no opposition between theology and mysticism, and employ both academic and mystic insights in their work. Balthasar and Bulgakov especially read the tradition but theirs in a mystical reading. This is a very important ingredient in the work of all these theologians, but for Balthasar and Bulgakov in particular. Mysticism has sometimes caused problems for the more defined theological approach to the tradition. The

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<sup>1025</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *"You Crown the Year with Your Goodness"* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 267.

theologian as mystic, however, is able to bring the tradition to life in a particular way. It is at the mystic level that Christians of different traditions can meet, and from there go on to recognise their congruence at the level of school or systematic theology.

For Balthasar, it is through the grace of Mary's Immaculate Conception that Mary "offers fundamentally no obstacle to the indwelling of God".<sup>1026</sup> Her immaculate conception is essential for the boundlessness of her consent because "anyone affected in some way by original sin would be incapable of such a guileless openness to every disposition of God".<sup>1027</sup> Mary was chosen by God to be the Mother of Jesus who is God. Consequently, she "is the only one capable of excluding from her yes every conscious or unconscious limitation – something the sinner always includes. She is infinitely at the disposal of the Infinite".<sup>1028</sup> Mary, equally, cannot be the Immaculate Conception without being totally receptive and open to God. As Speyr puts it, "the creature cannot give his assent without being redeemed, and equally cannot be redeemed without giving his assent".<sup>1029</sup>

Balthasar underscores that Mary was conceived immaculately because as standing in the place of the human race she "had to utter the full, unadulterated word of assent from Israel to God in order that his word might find a place where he could in his incarnation descend to earth".<sup>1030</sup> John Saward's comment encapsulates Balthasar's thoughts: "Here at last, by the grace of the Immaculate Conception, is the all-pure Daughter of Sion, unreservedly ready to give herself to God".<sup>1031</sup> Admittedly, the Christian East has another point of view. It affirms all of this, but without appealing specifically to "immaculate

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<sup>1026</sup> John Saward, "Mary and Peter in the Christological Constellation: Balthasar's Ecclesiology," in *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd, 1986), 111.

<sup>1027</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, trans. Walker Adrian (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 105.

<sup>1028</sup> Balthasar, *First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*, 51.

<sup>1029</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 14.

<sup>1030</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Elucidations* (London: S.P.C.K., 1975), 71.

<sup>1031</sup> John Saward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter* (London: Collins, 1990), 65.

conception".<sup>1032</sup> We have already noted the Orthodox view of original sin as an inherited corruption and mortality and the Roman Catholic interpretation of original sin as an inherited guilt.

## 2. Mary

### a) Mariology

Balthasar acknowledges the longstanding tensions within the Church regarding the significance of Mary in both the doctrine and devotion of the Church.<sup>1033</sup> This is particularly the case in recent decades.<sup>1034</sup> Some firmly believe that there can never be "too much" of Mary: *de Maria nunquam satis*.<sup>1035</sup> Others see such an excess as posing a twofold threat: first, to the hierarchy of the truths of the Christian faith organised around the mystery of Christ and of the Holy Trinity; secondly, to ecumenical dialogue with the churches of the Reformation, "most of which regard the veneration of Mary as a perilous excrescence on the organism of Christian devotion".<sup>1036</sup> Balthasar notes, however, that there is no tension with the Eastern Church regarding Marian veneration.<sup>1037</sup> Speaking in the context of the presence of Mary in the heart of the Church, Balthasar affirms that this reality is deeply experienced in the Christian East: "To experience the reality of this presence one has only to look at the Eastern Church in which a living Marian principle permeates and perfumes the whole life of the Church".<sup>1038</sup> This is a positive point of contact between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

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<sup>1032</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 259-260.

<sup>1033</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 99.

<sup>1034</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 99.

<sup>1035</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 99.

<sup>1036</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 99. For an interesting study on the hierarchy of truths in the context of ecumenism, see The Joint Working Group, "The Notion of "Hierarchy Of Truths": An Ecumenical Perspective," *Information Service*. 74, no. 3 (1990).

<sup>1037</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 99.

<sup>1038</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church*, trans. A Emery, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 159.

According to Balthasar, the tendencies in the Church – following the principle, "of Mary never enough", or judging that such devotion is an extreme which detracts from the necessary emphasis on Christology and the doctrine of the Trinity, represent one-sided extremes.<sup>1039</sup> The venerable axiom, "of Mary never enough" does not imply that Mariology consists in an increase of dogmas, feasts and devotions. Rather, it is a realisation of the uniqueness of Mary's position and dignity in the mystery of the Redemption.<sup>1040</sup> Balthasar emphasises that "such an understanding would only bring out more clearly how Mary is embedded in the truths concerning Christ and the Trinity".<sup>1041</sup> It is crucial to a deeper understanding of Christ and the Trinity.

In his message to the participants in the International Convention on the Occasion of the Centenary of the Birth of Hans Urs von Balthasar, already noted above, Benedict XVI also admitted to reservations about the '*de Maria nunquam satis*' attitude. Still, he concludes that he has come to understand "that it was not a matter of pious exaggerations, but of truths that today are more valid than ever. Yes ... it is necessary to go back to Mary if we want to return to that 'truth about Jesus Christ', 'truth about the Church' and the 'truth about man'".<sup>1042</sup> Benedict's testimony reflects the typical struggle involved in coming to a balanced Mariology, along with a positive appreciation of Balthasar's understanding of Mary as deepening our understanding of the mystery of Christ and the Trinity.

Balthasar argues that Scripture tells us much more about Mary than about any other woman.<sup>1043</sup> He identifies twelve scriptural scenes involving Mary: the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38); Mary's pregnancy (Mt 1 and Lk 1); the Visitation, the Magnificat (Lk 1:39-56); the Birth of Christ (Mt 2:1-12; Lk 2:1-20); the Presentation in the Temple (Lk 2:21-40);

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<sup>1039</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 99-100.

<sup>1040</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 99.

<sup>1041</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 100.

<sup>1042</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*, trans. Salvator Attanasio and Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 105-106.

<sup>1043</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 100. See also, Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*, 135.

the Flight into Egypt (Mt 2:13-23); the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple (Lk 2:41-52); the Wedding Feast at Cana (Jn 2:1-11); the Dismissal of his Mother and brothers (Mt 12:46-50; Mk 3:31-35; Lk 8:19-21); the Blessing of the believers (Lk 11:28); Mary at the foot of the Cross (Jn 19:25-28); Mary at prayer with the Church (Acts 1:14).<sup>1044</sup>

Regarding Pentecost, Balthasar understands it as of special significance for Mary.<sup>1045</sup> Drawing on the insights of Roman Catholic priest and theologian Romano Guardini (1885-1968), he maintains that at Pentecost, through the light of the Holy Spirit, Mary now receives the answer to the mysteries of Jesus' life, which she experienced and lived through in faith and love and which are lovingly preserved in her memory and heart. She can hold together in her mind two truths about Jesus without breaking down or becoming confused: Jesus is the son of Yahweh, God the Father, and Jesus is her own son.<sup>1046</sup> Furthermore, in the unity of these two judgments – Jesus is God and man – Mary recognises the inexpressible content of her unique vocation.<sup>1047</sup>

Moreover, Mary's relationship to her Son underscores the genuineness of his humanity. As Balthasar pointedly remarks, "if Christ is artificially detached from his Mother ... he becomes something abstract; he becomes one who falls down from heaven like an aerolite and then goes back up without having become rooted concretely in the past or future tradition of human beings".<sup>1048</sup> This same point is repeatedly echoed by Adrienne von Speyr: "if [Mary] is taken away, all you are left with is an abstract Redeemer";<sup>1049</sup> "[w]here Mary is absent ... Christ too becomes unreal and abstract. If you deprive him of

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<sup>1044</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 299. See also, Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 70.

<sup>1045</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 37-41.

<sup>1046</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 39. See also, Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 96.

<sup>1047</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 39.

<sup>1048</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 120.

<sup>1049</sup> Cited in Saward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 61.

his love for his mother, it is as if you would deprive him of the terrestrial basis of his love".<sup>1050</sup>

Balthasar emphasises that each of the scriptural scenes, which he calls the "Marian mysteries", is intimately connected with Mary's Son - in particular with "Christ's Incarnation, his childhood, his public activity, his Passion, [and] the prolongation of his life in the Church".<sup>1051</sup> Furthermore, these Marian mysteries, although not placed next to one another in Scripture, are connected to one another in a network of relationships.<sup>1052</sup> This connection is vividly illustrated by his comparison of the individual scenes with a hall of mirrors,<sup>1053</sup> and with stars in a constellation.<sup>1054</sup> By means of these metaphors, Balthasar can suggest that these individual scenes "endlessly illuminate, augment, and deepen one another",<sup>1055</sup> and that "they become brighter and deeper the closer they are brought together".<sup>1056</sup> For example, "'the Spirit' and the 'power of the Most High' that comes upon Mary in the annunciation (Lk 1:35) points to the 'Spirit' and the 'power from on high' that comes upon the Church in the risen Christ and at Pentecost (Lk 24:49 and Acts 1:8)".<sup>1057</sup> Two central mysteries, one of which we have already noted and the other which will become clear, are Mary's *yes* at the Annunciation and her renewed *yes* at the Cross.<sup>1058</sup>

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<sup>1050</sup> Cited in Johann Roten, "The Two Halves of the Moon: Marian Anthropological Dimensions in the Common Mission of Adrienne von Speyr and Hans Urs von Balthasar," in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, ed. David L. Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 80.

<sup>1051</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 100.

<sup>1052</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 100.

<sup>1053</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 100.

<sup>1054</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 299.

<sup>1055</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 100.

<sup>1056</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 299.

<sup>1057</sup> Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 70.

<sup>1058</sup> Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 70.

## b) Mary, the Memory of the Church

Reflecting on Pope John Paul II's description of Mary as "the memory of the Church",<sup>1059</sup> Balthasar comments that, because Mary surrendered her whole being to God in her consent at the Annunciation, her memory "was the unsullied tablet on which the Father, through the Spirit, could write his entire Word".<sup>1060</sup> Drawing on Luke's Gospel, he points out that the evangelist twice tells us that "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk 2:19; 51). She is thus presented as continually pondering the words of the shepherd (Lk 2:19) and the explanation Jesus himself gave for remaining behind in Jerusalem (Lk 2: 51).<sup>1061</sup> On this point, Balthasar argues that it was precisely because these words were so difficult fully to understand that Mary had cause repeatedly to reflect deeply on them.<sup>1062</sup> This evokes Newman's point that Mary turned these things over in her heart, and his view of Mary as a model of faith in the development of Divine Truth. Balthasar appears to suggest that, at the Annunciation, Mary did not previously understand her unique role within the saving plan of God because she asked what the angel's greeting could mean (Lk 1:29).<sup>1063</sup> The greeting of the angel means that God had destined a unique grace for Mary.<sup>1064</sup> As the words of the Angel in Ode VI of the Canon for the Annunciation affirms: "'Hail!' You alone, in fact, O Pure One, were predestined to be the mother of the Son of God".<sup>1065</sup>

For Balthasar, though Mary is frequently involved in mysteries that are too difficult for her to understand, rather than submitting to the confusion she experiences as a result, she treasures the mysteries deep inside her heart so that she can continually think about

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<sup>1059</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 33.

<sup>1060</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 45.

<sup>1061</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 33-34.

<sup>1062</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 34.

<sup>1063</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 34.

<sup>1064</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 34.

<sup>1065</sup> Ode VI. Theophane, Canon for the Annunciation, TM, 2 682. Cited in Giovanna Parravicini, *Mary Mother of God: Her Life in Icons and Scripture*, trans. Peter Heinegg (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori/Triumph, 2004), 66.



them.<sup>1066</sup> He notes that the word "pondering" in Luke's scriptural reference, "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart (Lk 2:19)", is translated from the Greek word, *sympallein*, meaning "to throw together, to compare, and hence to consider from all possible angles".<sup>1067</sup>

Given that Mary does not understand everything fully from the Annunciation onwards, she has continually to make an effort to think about "all these things" in order to grasp their meanings as well as she can.<sup>1068</sup> Her "keeping" "makes her heart and memory into a treasure chest",<sup>1069</sup> just as her pondering "suggests something more present and dynamic, more life-giving, than a mere mental warehousing of words".<sup>1070</sup>

Mary's pondering stems from her own unique experience of the Incarnation and reminds us of it: Mary, a virgin, is told she would conceive a son through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, and her son is described by the angel as the Son of Yahweh, the Most High.<sup>1071</sup> Balthasar underlines the depth of this mystery: "[H]ow was a Jewess to understand that Yahweh had a son?" and that she was, in fact, pregnant.<sup>1072</sup> Early Christian echoes of her attitude can be heard in the words of Andrew of Crete as he affirms that the mystery of the Incarnation is beyond human understanding:

O incredible things! God amid the limbs of a woman, 'he who has his throne in the heavens and his footstool on the earth,' God is contained in a womb, he who is above the heavens and dwells together with the eternity of the Father! And what could be more unbelievable than this, to see God in human form, without deviating from his own divinity.<sup>1073</sup>

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<sup>1066</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 34. See also, Hans Urs von Balthasar, *You Have Words of Eternal Life: Scripture Meditations* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, c 1991), 102.

<sup>1067</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 34.

<sup>1068</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 34.

<sup>1069</sup> Balthasar, *You Have Words of Eternal Life: Scripture Meditations*, 102.

<sup>1070</sup> Balthasar, *You Have Words of Eternal Life: Scripture Meditations*, 102.

<sup>1071</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 34-35.

<sup>1072</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 34.

<sup>1073</sup> Andrew of Crete, *Homily on the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God*, TM, 2, 413. Cited in Parravicini, *Mary Mother of God: Her Life in Icons and Scripture*, 62.

As Mary continually ponders in her heart the mystery of the Incarnation she is drawn into a contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity as integral to her experience at the Annunciation.<sup>1074</sup> Because she is filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, her continual pondering on what has occurred is not a stumbling in the dark. Rather, it is for her a growth in insight.<sup>1075</sup> Her non-comprehension, as Adrienne von Speyr has it, is "not an empty void, a black abyss, but an occasion for opening her soul wider to God – the source of fruitfulness".<sup>1076</sup>

Mary's pondering deepens as Jesus grows, leaves home, establishes a new family (Mt 12:46-50; Mk 3: 31-35), is arrested, condemned to death and crucified.<sup>1077</sup> Her growing understanding of the mystery of her Son's life is clearly evident at the wedding at Cana: she knows that she can intercede for the poor because Jesus can help them.<sup>1078</sup> There is no need for her to be discouraged if Jesus refuses, since she understands his parables about the persistent friend (Lk 11:5-13) and the unrighteous judge (Lk 18:1-8), and that she should leave everything to Him (Jn 2:5). Furthermore, at the Cross, she knows that she must say *yes* to the incomprehensible event of the Cross.<sup>1079</sup> Balthasar's insights regarding Mary's *yes* at the Cross will be pursued further on in this chapter.

### **3. The Mary- Spirit Connection**

#### **a) Mary's Yes at the Annunciation**

Mary's *fiat*, her *yes* or consent to the will of God, at the Annunciation, according to Balthasar, is pure, unlimited and definitive.<sup>1080</sup> It "is an act of perfect self-surrender to

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<sup>1074</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 35.

<sup>1075</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 36.

<sup>1076</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 94.

<sup>1077</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 35.

<sup>1078</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 36.

<sup>1079</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 36.

<sup>1080</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, V vols., vol. IV (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 352.

God in faith. Nothing is extorted from God, nor is any claim made vis-a-vis him".<sup>1081</sup> As Adrienne von Speyr puts it, "Mary spread[s] her answer like a carpet under the feet of [God's] word".<sup>1082</sup> She pronounces *yes* to God without hesitation and without reservation.<sup>1083</sup> As a result, "[i]n her sight there could be no other use of her body and spirit than to be at the service of God".<sup>1084</sup> For Balthasar, the act of placing one's whole life at the disposal of God, without limits, is perfect faith.<sup>1085</sup> Furthermore, it can be described as perfect holiness since a creature who gives its self totally to God, without conditions or restrictions, is totally open to the Holy Spirit.<sup>1086</sup>

Thus, for Balthasar, Mary's *yes* includes her whole person, body and spirit. The Word of God requires a total unconditional receptivity and openness to God, thereby offering him a place in a human being in order to become flesh.<sup>1087</sup> Mary's perfect act of faith is not only faith in God's Word, but also the whole-hearted disposition of her entire being.<sup>1088</sup> The question arises even on the physical level: how is Mary's body involved in her consent? Balthasar's answer is radical: "the Handmaid's consent echoes right through her, down to the lowliest and most unconscious fibres of her being; her whole self, in its materiality, from its lowest level upward, makes itself a womb for the Wholly Other, for God's self-utterance".<sup>1089</sup>

The striking aspect of his answer to such a question concerns the extent to which Mary's whole person is the womb for the union of the Word of God with humanity. He thus raises the mystery of Mary's involvement beyond a biological dimension only, even though this is necessarily present. The holistic nature of Mary's response must be

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<sup>1081</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 354.

<sup>1082</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 17.

<sup>1083</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 17.

<sup>1084</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 17.

<sup>1085</sup> Balthasar, *In the Fullness of Faith: On the Centrality of the Distinctively Catholic*, 80.

<sup>1086</sup> Balthasar, *In the Fullness of Faith: On the Centrality of the Distinctively Catholic*, 80.

<sup>1087</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 104. Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*, 20.

<sup>1088</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Von Balthasar Reader*, ed. Medard Kehl and Werner Lossner, trans. Robert J. Daly and Fred Lawrence (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980), 213.

<sup>1089</sup> Balthasar, "You Crown the Year with Your Goodness", 189.

considered. Her response cannot be divided "into two parts: one spiritual, her acceptance of faith; the other bodily, her passive utilization as womb for God becoming man".<sup>1090</sup> Such an understanding of the reality of Mary's involvement is an essential antidote to any temptation or tendency to drain the mystery of the Church of its concrete theandric life. It works against any approach that would in effect lead to the dangerous disembodiment of the Church from its connection to the Incarnate Word.<sup>1091</sup>

Balthasar insists that Mary's receptivity and openness to God in faith is an activity on the highest level.<sup>1092</sup> The slightest hesitation on the part of Mary would have meant that she was not totally open to God.<sup>1093</sup> Consequently, the Word of God could not have become flesh. Regarding Mary's motherhood of Jesus, Balthasar observes that she is the mother of the messianic Son of God.<sup>1094</sup> Scriptural resonances are found in the Gospel passages related to the Father's affirmation of Jesus as His Son. At Jesus' Baptism and Transfiguration, God declares, "'This is my Son, the Beloved'" (Mt 3:17; 17:5). In this context, Balthasar stresses that the Father of Jesus is God.<sup>1095</sup> Consequently, in order to be the Mother of Jesus the Son of God, Mary must be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, and her whole being, both body and soul, must say *yes* to the overshadowing Spirit.<sup>1096</sup>

Balthasar's description of Mary's consent at the Annunciation is presented in terms of "her spiritual and physical readiness".<sup>1097</sup> As already noted, when Mary says *yes* she declares her readiness to let the Word of God become flesh in her.<sup>1098</sup> This is to say that Mary's body, soul and spirit are totally open to God.<sup>1099</sup> She gives her whole life to God.

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<sup>1090</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Explorations in Theology II: Spouse of the Word," (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 163.

<sup>1091</sup> Adrienne von Speyr, *Mary in the Redemption* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1979), 70.

<sup>1092</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 105.

<sup>1093</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 105.

<sup>1094</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 106.

<sup>1095</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 105-106.

<sup>1096</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 106.

<sup>1097</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352.

<sup>1098</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 106.

<sup>1099</sup> Balthasar, *"You Crown the Year with Your Goodness"*, 189.

For her part, Speyr affirms that Mary "did not simply will what God willed, she gave her assent to be used, formed and transformed".<sup>1100</sup>

Thus, Mary's *yes* at the Annunciation is her unconditional assent to the all-embracing saving plan of God.<sup>1101</sup> To this degree, it is her "once-for-all Yes".<sup>1102</sup> It is so pure, so unlimited and definitive, that it includes everything that was to happen to her Son.<sup>1103</sup> In other words, as Balthasar repeatedly points out, Mary gives her consent not only to the Incarnation, but also to all its consequences.<sup>1104</sup> He notes that the greatest consequence is the Cross.<sup>1105</sup> Similarly, Speyr asserts that Mary's assent is not just to her Son's conception. It includes everything that was to happen to Jesus after his birth.<sup>1106</sup> In consenting to become the Mother of the Incarnate Son of God and Redeemer, Mary's *yes* extends to the death of her Son on the Cross.<sup>1107</sup> Here, Speyr's reflection is couched in telling metaphors by expressing Mary's assent in terms of a seed, and the piercing of a dam: "[Mary's] Yes, as in every promise, goes far beyond what she can see or foresee. Assent is a seed whose flowering cannot be foretold".<sup>1108</sup> Speyr goes on to say, "with her Yes she pierces the dam and, to a certain degree, does so without knowing what she is doing".<sup>1109</sup>

Balthasar views Mary's unreserved *yes* to a physical and spiritual maternal relationship to her Son in terms of his whole saving mission.<sup>1110</sup> Regarding the bond between Mother and Son, Balthasar points to the two-way relationship involved. Like every human son,

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<sup>1100</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 11.

<sup>1101</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 300.

<sup>1102</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352.

<sup>1103</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352.

<sup>1104</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 354.

<sup>1105</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 354.

<sup>1106</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 69.

<sup>1107</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 116.

<sup>1108</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 14.

<sup>1109</sup> Speyr, *Mary in the Redemption*, 26.

<sup>1110</sup> See Saward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 61.

Jesus receives from his mother.<sup>1111</sup> Jesus' disposition to be of service to others and to take upon himself the sin of the world echoes his Mother's pre-existing readiness to be the handmaid of the Lord.<sup>1112</sup>

#### **b) The Scene of the Annunciation.**

The scene of the Annunciation, according to Balthasar, presents an event that is both totally christological and trinitarian.<sup>1113</sup> He argues that the angel Gabriel announced to Mary "not just the incarnation but fundamentally the entire mystery of the Trinity".<sup>1114</sup> The scene clearly suggests the first full revelation of the Trinity with the respective involvements of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Balthasar, in making this seemingly extreme claim, draws attention to the structure of the scene, noting the explicit reference to each of the three divine persons in Gabriel's announcement to Mary: the angel brings to Mary the greeting of the "Lord" (Lk 1:29); she will give birth to the "Son of the Most High" (Lk 1:32); the "Holy Spirit will overshadow her" (Lk 1:35).<sup>1115</sup> The Trinity, argues Balthasar, must be revealed at the Annunciation as the Son of God becomes man.<sup>1116</sup> He concedes that the Trinity cannot be revealed through the verbal announcement of the angel to Mary on its own.<sup>1117</sup> It must also be enacted in an intimately personal manner within a human saturated with the same unconditional faith that characterised Abraham.<sup>1118</sup>

Mary's *yes* sums up the Abrahamaic faith of the Old Testament, and is the beginning of a community of New Testament faith. In her "paeon to grace", her *Magnificat*, Mary acknowledges that God has looked upon her lowliness and has accomplished in her the

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<sup>1111</sup> Balthasar, *Elucidations*, 69.

<sup>1112</sup> Balthasar, *Elucidations*, 69.

<sup>1113</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 106.

<sup>1114</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 35.

<sup>1115</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 106.

<sup>1116</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 106.

<sup>1117</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 106.

<sup>1118</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 106.

great things that God had promised to Abraham and to his descendants.<sup>1119</sup> In other words, Mary is totally aware that the promise that God made to Abraham and to his descendants is being fulfilled within herself, in the divine child in her womb. As a result, Mary's perfect act of faith at the Annunciation raises the Abrahamaic faith of the Old Testament to the experience of the Trinity.<sup>1120</sup> Her experience of the Trinity lies at the foundation of New Testament faith in the Church. But this original faith in God's self-communication is possible only in the person of Mary. Her supreme expression of Abraham's faith, the faith of the true Israel of God, anticipates, in microcosm, the character of the Church as the mystical body of Christ. As Balthasar also puts it, "[t]he community which binds God to man in her when he becomes a Child of man is the foundation of a community which binds us all together as children of God, a community which we call God's Church".<sup>1121</sup> All this has its origin in the unique personal reality of Mary herself. Consequently, "there is, parallel to the life of Jesus, a life of Mary".<sup>1122</sup> From the moment of his conception, Jesus is drawing his Mother "into the role that is bestowed on her at the Cross: to be the archetype of the Church".<sup>1123</sup> He has this effect, in the words of Speyr, by taking "her with him step by step along the road, preparing her for ever new and greater expansion, so that her spirit might continue to adapt itself to his ever-widening circle. He shape[s] and form[s] her so that her individual spirit might become the spirit of the Church".<sup>1124</sup>

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<sup>1119</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 9. See also, Seward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 65.

<sup>1120</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 107.

<sup>1121</sup> Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*, 21.

<sup>1122</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 107.

<sup>1123</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 107.

<sup>1124</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 138.

### c) Mary's Yes in the setting of the Cross

Balthasar suggests that Mary suffers deeply in her spirit as she follows her Son carrying his cross on the way to Golgotha.<sup>1125</sup> She experiences the deep pain of not being able to relieve Jesus of even the smallest amount of suffering.<sup>1126</sup> She has to leave the whole burden of the sins of the world to him. In this, she mysteriously knows that his burden far surpasses all the burdens of the world.<sup>1127</sup> Balthasar emphasises that Mary "has to let it happen, and can only offer him this *letting happen* which as such cannot accomplish anything".<sup>1128</sup> He asserts that Mary's "*letting happen*" is not a despairing experience because her thoughts are focused not on her ability or inability but entirely on Jesus.<sup>1129</sup> As Speyr puts it, "[Mary] suffers as a person, but suffers in the Son. She does not suffer her own suffering but the suffering laid upon the Son".<sup>1130</sup> Balthasar, recognising that Mary does not rebel against God who lets these evil things happen, nor does she rebel against humankind which is deliberately inflicting great pain and suffering on her Son, goes on to make a eucharistic connection with the remark, "She lets it all happen in the context of a consent which no longer has any active power, but which is like an infinite – eucharistic – dissolution".<sup>1131</sup>

### d) Mary at the Foot of the Cross – the Passion Scene

Balthasar continues his reflection on the Passion scene with an exposition of the character of Mary's assent to the divine will consent. Caught up in the drama of redemption, the Virgin Mother of Jesus is empowered to a new motherhood by the Son

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<sup>1125</sup> Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*, 97.

<sup>1126</sup> Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*, 97.

<sup>1127</sup> Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*, 97.

<sup>1128</sup> Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*, 97.

<sup>1129</sup> Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*, 97.

<sup>1130</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 79-80.

<sup>1131</sup> Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*, 97.



himself as he falls into the silence of death.<sup>1132</sup> At this point, Balthasar draws attention to the two themes: the faith of Abraham in the Old Covenant, and Mary's faith at the Annunciation. He detects the unity of these two paradigmatic instances of faith in Mary at the foot of the Cross. In his attempt to penetrate more deeply into the significance of Mary's consent within the drama of the passion, he contemplates the scene from the two perspectives of Jesus and of his Mother.

According to Balthasar, the Passion scene holds within it a twofold presupposition. It recalls the unreserved faith of Abraham, and yet conveys a sense of how his faith has already been fulfilled and surpassed in Mary at the Annunciation.<sup>1133</sup> Mary, standing at the foot of the Cross, evokes the unreserved character of Abraham's faith in his readiness to sacrifice his own son, Isaac, to the demands of God's will. Mary, too, is prepared to surrender back to God the very gift that God has made to her.<sup>1134</sup> Her "once-for-all Yes" is a perfect expression of Abraham's faith, therefore, the faith of the true people of God, "the fruit of Israel's positive history".<sup>1135</sup> As Seward puts it, "Mary is Israel in person, Israel at its most perfect and beautiful".<sup>1136</sup>

Hence, for Balthasar, the covenant that God made with Abraham has not been made in vain. It "becomes concrete reality beneath the Cross, with the same actuality as it had in Nazareth thirty-three years before".<sup>1137</sup> That is to say, the perfection of Old Testament faith is found present and active, both at Nazareth and at Calvary, in the faithful person of Mary.<sup>1138</sup> Abraham believed in God, despite the apparent impossibility of the divine promise that he would have a son in his old age by his wife Sarah. Likewise, Mary believed in God in the face of impossibility, when Gabriel announced that she, a virgin,

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<sup>1132</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358-361.

<sup>1133</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352.

<sup>1134</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 104.

<sup>1135</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352.

<sup>1136</sup> Seward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 65.

<sup>1137</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352.

<sup>1138</sup> Aidan Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth: A Guide Through Balthasar's Dramatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 173.

would conceive the Son of God by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, just as Abraham agreed to sacrifice his son Isaac on Mount Moriah, Mary consents to the sacrifice of her Son Jesus on Mount Calvary – although, unlike Abraham, she has to give back to God the very gift that was originally promised.<sup>1139</sup>

Like Bulgakov, Balthasar links Mary with the Old Testament. Both concur that Mary is truly the Virgin Israel. Bulgakov differs from Balthasar in that he underscores that Mary's appearance in the world was the great work of the Old Testament Church, thus stressing the "power and sense of the Old Testament preparation of humanity for the incarnation of God".<sup>1140</sup> On the other hand, according to Leahy, Balthasar maintains that the Old Testament "clearly manifests the upward movement of earth toward God. It is a covenant-history that unfolds, making room for communion with God".<sup>1141</sup> Such an understanding fosters Mary's connection with the whole of humanity, thus opening the way for Roman Catholic-Orthodox dialogue.

Balthasar understands Mary at the Cross suffering to an extreme degree as she consents to God's will at work in her dying Son.<sup>1142</sup> Jesus has prepared his Mother for the naked faith she will need at the foot of his Cross, as the sword that Simeon prophesised must pierce her soul (Lk 2:35).<sup>1143</sup> Those occasions in the course of his life when Jesus rejected, or distanced himself from his Mother are a reflection of Simeon's prophecy. Balthasar lists five such occasions: at the age of twelve when his parents find him in the Temple, he says to his Mother, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Lk 2:39). Then, at the wedding feast at Cana, when his Mother tells him they have no wine, he replies, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come" (Jn 2:4). Similarly, when his Mother and brothers

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<sup>1139</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 104.

<sup>1140</sup> Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, 54.

<sup>1141</sup> Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 109.

<sup>1142</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352.

<sup>1143</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 107-110.

come to visit him, he points to the disciples, with the words, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt 12:49-50). Likewise, when a woman in the crowd praises the breasts that nursed him, he says, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Lk 11:28). Finally, he addresses his Mother from the Cross, "Woman, behold, your son"(Jn 19:26).<sup>1144</sup> Regarding this action of Jesus, Balthasar acknowledges that it is usually understood primarily as Jesus placing his Mother in the care of John, the Beloved Disciple.<sup>1145</sup> He suggests that it also has a second theme of Jesus abandoning his Mother because Mary has to be united with Jesus in a common abandonment in order to become spiritually ready to assume her role as archetype of the Church.<sup>1146</sup> We will consider this point in more detail towards the end of this chapter when we pass on to explore Mary's renewed *yes* at the Cross.

Balthasar maintains that Jesus, in the above instances, humbles his Mother with the intention of incorporating her more deeply into his own humiliation.<sup>1147</sup> Balthasar describes the Son's humiliation on the Cross in stark terms: "he is nothing but naked flesh and blood, representing the flesh and blood of all others who die forsaken".<sup>1148</sup> In this, he echoes Speyr's insight: Jesus "allowed his Mother to be wounded because she was his Mother and was to share spiritually and physically in his mission".<sup>1149</sup>

Balthasar understands Mary's role at the foot of the Cross in radical terms. She must, in the end, say *yes* to her Son's earthly failure and to the Father's abandonment of the Son because when she said *yes* to the Incarnation she "consented a priori to her child's whole

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<sup>1144</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 330. See also, Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 108-109.

<sup>1145</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 109.

<sup>1146</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 109.

<sup>1147</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 330.

<sup>1148</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 330.

<sup>1149</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 78.

destiny".<sup>1150</sup> Furthermore, as already indicated above, Mary will experience the horrific darkness of alienation from God when she is explicitly abandoned by her dying Son, by consigning her to the care of the Beloved Disciple.<sup>1151</sup>

Balthasar's constant refrain is that Mary's consent is directly linked to the saving work and mission her Son: it "is responsible for the earthly existence of Jesus, who perfects the Old Covenant and brings the promise of the New and Eternal Covenant; it prefigures the coming Church of Jesus; and it has a decisive role to play on the Cross".<sup>1152</sup> In this way, Mary mediates between the faithless in the Old Covenant and those who will come to faith in the New Covenant through the grace of Christ's redemption.<sup>1153</sup> For Balthasar, these "faithless" in the Old Covenant are those who have embraced the ways of the Gentiles.<sup>1154</sup> The biblical example here is the chief priests, who, in answer to Pilate's question as to whether Jesus, their King, should be crucified, declared: "'we have no king but Caesar' (Jn 19:15)".<sup>1155</sup>

In all of this, Balthasar is attempting to situate Mary's mediatory role in redemption. He admits that this is a difficult task. It requires first of all, "to exclude the theory that, reflecting on the New Covenant concluded on the Cross, sees Jesus ... as the 'divine factor' and Mary as the representative of consenting [humanity]".<sup>1156</sup> In this kind of scheme, "the two would be related as fashioning act and fashioned potency."<sup>1157</sup> In contrast, Balthasar highlights the fact that "[i]n the realm of objective redemption, Mary would do by anticipation what every individual has to do subjectively in appropriating the

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<sup>1150</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 109.

<sup>1151</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 109.

<sup>1152</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352.

<sup>1153</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352.

<sup>1154</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352.

<sup>1155</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 352-353.

<sup>1156</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 353.

<sup>1157</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 353.

redemption".<sup>1158</sup> This theme is taken up by John Paul II in his weekly General Audience in Rome on April 9, 1997, as he explains:

The collaboration of Christians in salvation takes place after the Calvary event, whose fruits they endeavour to spread by prayer and sacrifice. Mary, instead, co-operated during the event itself and in the role of mother: thus her cooperation embraces the whole of Christ's saving work. She alone was associated in this way with the redemptive sacrifice that merited the salvation of all [humanity]. In union with Christ and in submission to Him, she collaborated in obtaining the grace of salvation for all humanity.<sup>1159</sup>

As noted in Chapter Two, *Lumen Gentium* affirms that Mary "suffer[ed] grievously with her only-begotten Son ... and united herself with a maternal heart to His sacrifice, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth".<sup>1160</sup> Both Balthasar and the Second Vatican Council here concur with Arnold of Chartres (1144-56), a disciple and friend of St Bernard that Mary cooperated with her Son in the objective redemption on Golgotha: "[a]t the death of Jesus, Mary united her will to that of her Son, so much so, that they both offered one and the same sacrifice".<sup>1161</sup> He later says that "whosoever had been present on Mount Calvary, to witness the great sacrifice of the Immaculate Lamb, would there have beheld two great altars, the one in the body of Jesus, the other in the heart of Mary; for, on that mount, at the same time that the Son sacrificed his body by death, Mary sacrificed her soul by compassion".<sup>1162</sup>

Balthasar notes an objection to his theory: "the Christology presupposed here undervalues the humanity of Christ: Christ is fully empowered to ratify the covenant in the name of and on behalf of mankind".<sup>1163</sup> In response, he argues that even though this is

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<sup>1158</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 353.

<sup>1159</sup> John Paul II, "Mary's co-operation is totally unique," *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English*, 16 April 1997, 7.

<sup>1160</sup> *LG*, 58.

<sup>1161</sup> Cited in Alphonsus de' Liguori, "The Glories of Mary," *The Christian Remembrancer*. 30 (1855): 456.

<sup>1162</sup> Cited in Liguori, "The Glories of Mary," 458.

<sup>1163</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 353.

correct, it may well be true, on the other hand, that it "does not take sufficient account of the fact that Mary's consent, a perfect representation of Old Covenant faith, was a precondition of the possibility of the Incarnation".<sup>1164</sup> To the extent that the consent of Mary was required in order for the Incarnation to happen, "it cannot be simply swallowed up in the human Yes of Jesus".<sup>1165</sup>

An essential point for Balthasar is Mary's active role in the Incarnation. He refers to the teaching of the Church Fathers on the *connubium* (marriage) of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus in Mary's womb at the Annunciation. He points out that this teaching is clearly developed in Augustine and Gregory the Great. It spoke of Mary only as the "place" where the Son of God is united with human nature, while, at the same time, "it continually and increasingly emphasised the Virgin's active role in this union".<sup>1166</sup>

Balthasar cites the following words of Aquinas (1225-1274):

It was appropriate that the Blessed Virgin should be told that she would conceive the Messiah ..., for thus it was made plain that there was to be a spiritual marriage between the Son of God and human nature. So, at the Annunciation, the Virgin's consent was awaited, for it represented human nature in its entirety.<sup>1167</sup>

For Balthasar, the objective relationship between the Virgin's consent and the covenant God made with all humanity is even clearer when Aquinas says: "The Blessed Virgin's consent, which was elicited by the Annunciation, was the act of a single person, yet overflowing [*redundans*] for the salvation of the multitude, indeed, of all human nature".<sup>1168</sup> Balthasar captures the thoughts of Aquinas when, writing of the spiritual marriage between the Son of God and human nature, he observes that this is "a real two-

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<sup>1164</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 353.

<sup>1165</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 353.

<sup>1166</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 353.

<sup>1167</sup> Cited in Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 353.

<sup>1168</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 353-354.

sided mystery of love through the bridal consent of Mary acting for all the rest of created flesh".<sup>1169</sup>

Thus, the formation of the hypostatic union in Mary requires her free consent and co-operation.<sup>1170</sup> God does not violate human freedom.<sup>1171</sup> "God does not overpower ... [Mary] ... but respects her dignity as a person".<sup>1172</sup> Balthasar concludes that "Mary *has* a 'potentiality', but it is not passive or material: it represents the highest act that a creature can perform in love of God. It is the firm, responsible readiness to accept the will of God with all its consequences".<sup>1173</sup> Hence Mary is the epitome of human receptivity to God's Word and Son.<sup>1174</sup>

Balthasar's attempt to situate Mary's mediatory role in redemption requires the total exclusion of the following: God is indebted to Mary; "Mary exercises any 'morally determining influence' on the redemptive acts of Jesus";<sup>1175</sup> and, Mary, as Mother, has rights over her Son, rights that she gave up so that Jesus' redemptive sacrifice on the Cross could take place.<sup>1176</sup> These propositions misinterpret the nature of Mary's *yes* which "is an act of perfect self-surrender to God in faith".<sup>1177</sup> Her assent, in the words of Speyr, "concealed no preferences, no wishes, no desires; she did not treat with God. She wished in God's grace to be accepted only for what [God] wanted of her. God alone was to dispose of her word. If God reached down to her, her only answer could be blind abandonment, without reckoning or calculating the consequences."<sup>1178</sup>

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<sup>1169</sup> Seward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 66.

<sup>1170</sup> Balthasar, "Explorations in Theology II: Spouse of the Word," 315.

<sup>1171</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 297.

<sup>1172</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 354.

<sup>1173</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 354.

<sup>1174</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 354.

<sup>1175</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 354.

<sup>1176</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 354. See also, Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 313.

<sup>1177</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 354.

<sup>1178</sup> Speyr, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, 11-12.

Balthasar's constant refrain is that Mary says *yes* to the coming Redeemer not for herself alone, but for all who stand in need of the salvation of Israel.<sup>1179</sup> She utters her *yes* to the Incarnation "in the name of the entire human race".<sup>1180</sup> Consequently, she is in solidarity with sinners, whether they will receive Jesus or not.<sup>1181</sup> For Balthasar, Mary's solidarity is only possible through the grace of her Immaculate Conception. As he explains, "[s]in brings about isolation and *thwarts* effective solidarity (there was no solidarity among those who shared '*in eadem damnatione*' in Lk 23:40), whereas innocence makes it possible to be open to suffering with others, and to be ready, in love, to embrace such suffering".<sup>1182</sup> Like Jesus, Mary "is in solidarity with them, unconditionally, precisely *because* she is 'immaculately conceived' and hence, in love, infinitely at their disposal, infinitely available."<sup>1183</sup> Accordingly, Mary is given the "last place" behind the last sinner beneath the Cross. Humanity's anticipated redemption, appearing in Mary, lies deep within the Father's redemptive design.<sup>1184</sup>

#### e) The Passion Scene from the Perspective of Jesus

Balthasar sees the Son on the Cross totally abandoned by humanity and by God as He hangs between heaven and earth. He considers that the Son's unfamiliar and utterly horrific experience of abandonment by God on the Cross means that the Son suffers humanity's inner darkness and separation from God on its behalf and in its place.<sup>1185</sup> The Son's suffering is deeper than that of any sinner because only He knows "who the Father

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<sup>1179</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 355.

<sup>1180</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 354-355.

<sup>1181</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 355.

<sup>1182</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, 324.

<sup>1183</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 355.

<sup>1184</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 356.

<sup>1185</sup> Balthasar, "You Crown the Year with Your Goodness", 85. See also, Saward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 44.



really is and what it means to be deprived of him, to have lost him (to all appearances) forever".<sup>1186</sup>

The darkness of sin that descends upon the Son who now carries it within Him prevents Him from seeing any meaning to His suffering.<sup>1187</sup> "He has no sense of it achieving anything. For sin, in the face of God's freely given love is meaningless and groundless".<sup>1188</sup> He knows only that He is forsaken by the Father and in this darkness He no longer knows why (Mt 27:46).<sup>1189</sup> He must not know why because his knowing would give Him some comfort on the Cross which He cannot receive because the relationship between God and the sinful world must be purified.<sup>1190</sup> Why does not knowing purify the relationship? This will become clear at the end of this section.

Since the Son is carrying the darkness of sin, He cannot know that at the end of His suffering standing before Him, in the person of Mary, redeemed humanity is incarnationally present.<sup>1191</sup> In this way, Balthasar can suggest that, on the Cross, Jesus bears the sins of the whole world (1 Jn 2:2), but makes room for Mary's very different contribution: "What she has to do is painfully to let his suffering happen, by her own suffering letting his suffering happen in her".<sup>1192</sup> On this point, he is clearly echoing the words of *Lumen Gentium*:

the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and loyally persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross. There she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, suffering grievously with her only-begotten Son. There she united herself with a maternal heart to his sacrifice, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this Victim which she herself brought forth.<sup>1193</sup>

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<sup>1186</sup> Balthasar, *"You Crown the Year with Your Goodness"*, 85.

<sup>1187</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 356.

<sup>1188</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 356.

<sup>1189</sup> Balthasar, *"You Crown the Year with Your Goodness"*, 84.

<sup>1190</sup> Balthasar, *"You Crown the Year with Your Goodness"*, 84.

<sup>1191</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 356.

<sup>1192</sup> Cited in Aidan Nichols, "Von Balthasar and the Co-redemption" <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/balthasa/coredemp.html> (accessed 15 January 2010).

<sup>1193</sup> *LG*, 62.

On the other hand, the Son sends Mary forth as His Mother and as the anticipation of His redemptive achievement, into a new and initially alien relationship. For Balthasar, this relationship is alien because the Son "has always made a clear distinction between [Mary's] fundamental antecedent purity and the lostness of sinners".<sup>1194</sup> The Son imposes on his pure Mother another son, John, who is a member of the lost human race (Jn 19:26).<sup>1195</sup> Since Mary is always there in her purity, the Son's own redemptive achievement seems superfluous.<sup>1196</sup> "It is not due to him that she is what she is, for she was thus before him. In this way, the Father who determined to give him this Mother in the first place has kept the Son from seeing his own redemptive achievement."<sup>1197</sup> Balthasar, recognising that darkness hides the goal of the Son's gratuitous suffering, that is incarnationally present in Mary, and that the Son Himself bids farewell to it, goes on to make a connection with the Son's Eucharist with the remark, "Only thus, in the pure *gratis* of grace, in the pure superfluity [*Überflüssigkeit*] of love, can the Son be eucharistically poured out beyond measure [*über-verflüssigt*]; only thus can he become all the world's sin".<sup>1198</sup> As Balthasar also puts it elsewhere, the Son, in love and obedience, "drinks deeply of the darkness of man's God-forsakenness ... God's anger strikes him instead of the countless sinners, shattering him as by lightening and distributing him among them; thus God the Father, in the Holy Spirit, creates the Son's Eucharist".<sup>1199</sup>

Given that the entire project of the Incarnation is present at the Cross in the person of Mary, and given that sinners try to banish God to the divine world and to keep this world to themselves, "[i]t is all the more terrifying for the Son, therefore, in the darkness of his anguish, to see that this whole work, which has begun to be realized in Mary, is pointless

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<sup>1194</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 356-357.

<sup>1195</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 356-357.

<sup>1196</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 357.

<sup>1197</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 357.

<sup>1198</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 357.

<sup>1199</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 348.

(because of his gratuitous suffering) and doomed to failure".<sup>1200</sup> Balthasar is concerned to see the Son accompanied by a witness to God's atoning action, which robs the Man of Sorrows (Isaiah 53) of all hope of completing His mission. Why? As Balthasar explains:

The Son bears sinners within himself, together with the hopeless impenetrability of their sin, which prevents the divine light of love from registering in them. In himself, therefore, he experiences, not their sin, but the hopelessness of their resistance to God and the graceless No of divine grace to this resistance. The Son who has depended [*sich verlassen*] entirely on the Father, even to becoming identified with [sinners] in their lostness, must now be forsaken [*verlassen*] by the Father. He who consented to be given [*vergeben*] everything from the Father's hand must now feel that it was all 'for nothing' [*vergebens*].<sup>1201</sup>

Thus, forgiveness comes at the end of total pointlessness. It "does not come as a return for some achievement: it comes because any such achievement was impossible".<sup>1202</sup>

#### **f) Passion Scene from the Perspective of Mary**

Balthasar first ponders on Mary's poverty in Nazareth which he considers to be threefold.<sup>1203</sup> In the first instance, Mary could not give her assent to God's call through any independent act of self-dedication because she had been betrothed to Joseph.<sup>1204</sup> Also, her consent was not a decision that she was anxiously expecting to make because she had been given away to the overshadowing Spirit (Lk 1:35). It was "more like a natural, self-giving arising from a long-accepted availability".<sup>1205</sup> And, finally, Mary is fruitless, unfecundate, surpassing the barrenness of the Old Testament women Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth.<sup>1206</sup> For Balthasar, the Holy Spirit placed the seed of the Father's Word into this "thrice-poor

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<sup>1200</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 357.

<sup>1201</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 349.

<sup>1202</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 349.

<sup>1203</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358.

<sup>1204</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358.

<sup>1205</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358.

<sup>1206</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358.

womb" so that Mary would fulfill all the paradoxical promises that state that the barren woman bears seven sons (1 Sam 2:5; cf. Is 54:1; Ps 113:9).<sup>1207</sup>

Balthasar proceeds to observe that at the Annunciation, the Word of God was conceived in silence. Now, at the Cross, the same Word has Himself fallen silent, being the lamb that is led to the slaughter and silent before its shearers (Is 53:7; Mt 26:63; Acts 8:32f.).<sup>1208</sup> He is scattered beyond all measure to sinners for whom He suffers. Mary, however, remains the poverty of the dispossessed womb.<sup>1209</sup> The Son distances himself even further from Mary. Hidden behind and in the multitude of sinners, Mary "is the only one able to receive the seed of God, eucharistically multiplied – thousands-fold into her womb".<sup>1210</sup>

Thus, for Balthasar, Mary's first conception at the Annunciation, when she was the vessel of the Holy Spirit that she might become the virginal Mother of the Son, is repeated and perfected at the foot of the Cross.<sup>1211</sup> In the utter forsakenness and darkness they both experience at the Cross, Mary becomes the equally virginal Bride of the Lamb, the Son of God, and the womb of the Church.<sup>1212</sup> "Mary begins by being the Mother, but at the Cross, she finishes by becoming Bride, the quintessence of the Church".<sup>1213</sup> She allows herself to lose "not only her Son but also her own status as mother of the Savior in order to become, in losing him, the Mother of the faithful".<sup>1214</sup> Her *fiat*, in faith and in obedience, at the foot of the Cross, "is a nuptial womb ... where the Son of God can not only take existence but

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<sup>1207</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358.

<sup>1208</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358.

<sup>1209</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358.

<sup>1210</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358.

<sup>1211</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358.

<sup>1212</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 358.

<sup>1213</sup> Saward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 76.

<sup>1214</sup> Edward Oakes, *Pattern of Redemption: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 259.

also found a truly universal Church".<sup>1215</sup> Indeed, according to Nichols, Balthasar perceives that

the God-man did not want the Church to consent to, and share in, his atoning Sacrifice simply after the event, when it was all over. He wanted the Church to be contemporary with the event, so that from the very beginning the sacrifice of Calvary was inseparably that of Head and members. Even in the utter dereliction of Calvary he did not wish to act without the accompaniment of the Church. And this Mary provided".<sup>1216</sup>

Balthasar sees the Son's silence of death as the true hour of the birth of the Church, "the indefinable moment in which the 'new man' is conceived and born of the Church's womb, a womb that has become so poor that, spiritually, it shares the Son's death".<sup>1217</sup> Here, at the Cross, the Word who falls silent in death "is empowered to make his whole body into God's seed".<sup>1218</sup> Accordingly, "the Word finally and definitively becomes flesh in the Virgin Mother, Mary-Ecclesia".<sup>1219</sup> Furthermore, Mary's "physico-spiritual answer is more fruitful than all the attempts on the part of the sinful world to fructify itself-attempts that are doomed to sterility".<sup>1220</sup>

For Balthasar, the paradoxical loving union of the Abandoner and Abandoned at the Cross "was necessary so that Mary – who henceforth will form the centre of the Church – may know by experience the mystery of Redemption and can transmit it to her new children".<sup>1221</sup> He believes that "[s]pecifically Christian humility cannot be learnt except by formal and repeated humiliations. Just as Christ humbled himself as far as the Cross so he

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<sup>1215</sup> Seward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 73.

<sup>1216</sup> Nichols, "Von Balthasar and the Co-redemption" (accessed).

<sup>1217</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 359.

<sup>1218</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 361.

<sup>1219</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 361.

<sup>1220</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama. Theological Dramatic Theory. The Action*, 316.

<sup>1221</sup> Seward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 72.

could exercise the mission of the Father, so he humbles his Mother and confers her ecclesial mission by a final humiliation."<sup>1222</sup>

Balthasar underscores Mary's total selflessness by allowing herself to lose everything including her own Son so that all that is hers may be given over to each and every individual Christian with the remark: "Mary-the Church keeps no grace for herself; she receives grace in order to transmit it. This is what a mother does. We are the children of Mary's fruitfulness, and her fruitfulness has been given her that she might receive and fulfil the fruitfulness of her Spouse".<sup>1223</sup>

#### **4. The Implications for Ecumenical Unity**

The work of Balthasar stirs the soul of ecumenism. It calls each individual Christian and the Church as a whole to interior conversion, spiritual renewal, newness of attitudes and the renewal of the Church, which "essentially consists in an increase of fidelity to her own calling".<sup>1224</sup> His view of Mary as essential to spiritual ecumenism is reflected in his following statement:

Perhaps it is particularly necessary for our times to look at Mary. To see her as she shows herself, not as we like to imagine her. To see her, above all, in order not to forget her essential role in the work of salvation and in the Church. She really shows herself and defines herself as the archetypal Church, upon whose form we should form ourselves. We: that means every single Christian and it means, perhaps even more, our image of what the Church is. We are for ever concerned with reshaping and improving the Church in according with the demands of our time, following the criticism of opponents and our own models. But do we not thereby lose sight of the one fulfilled standard, indeed the Model? Should we not constantly keep our eyes fixed on Mary in our reforms, not in any way to multiply the Marian feasts, devotions or indeed

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<sup>1222</sup> Seward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 72.

<sup>1223</sup> Cited in Nichols, "Von Balthasar and the Co-redemption" (accessed).

<sup>1224</sup> UR, 6

definitions, but rather simply to know what Church, what ecclesial Spirit, and what ecclesial behavior is?<sup>1225</sup>

In the first instance, Balthasar's theology reveals Mary's transparency to Christ – her total unconditional active receptivity and openness to God, her "letting things happen". This, in itself, is ecumenically significant because it is totally theocentric.<sup>1226</sup> It encourages Christians to be open and attentive to their common origins, not only in an historical sense, but in a spiritual sense of being open to the presence of the risen Christ.<sup>1227</sup> Balthasar reminds Christians, and the Church as a whole, that their lives should be centred in Christ. Drawing on the words that Ephrem the Syrian (c.306-373) placed in Mary's mouth and addressed to her Son, Balthasar maintains that Mary desires Christians to recognise the depth of God's love in the work of God's incarnation and redemption:

While I gaze on your outward form which can be seen with physical eyes, my spirit comprehends your hidden form. With my eyes I see the form of Adam, in your hidden form I see the Father dwelling in you. It is only to me that you have shown your glory in both forms. May the Church, too, like your mother, see you both in your visible and in your mysterious form.<sup>1228</sup>

Accordingly, Mary, whose *fiat* at the Annunciation was formed by the Holy Spirit, is the supremely Christ-centred person. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I affirms that "transformation begins with the awareness that God is at the centre of all life".<sup>1229</sup> If this is true, Mary can inspire this kind of genuine transformation. She is "the surest way for every person to true Christ-centredness".<sup>1230</sup> This advances rapprochement between

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<sup>1225</sup> Cited in Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 164-165. See also, Roten, "The Two Halves of the Moon: Marian Anthropological Dimensions in the Common Mission of Adrienne von Speyr and Hans Urs von Balthasar," 81.

<sup>1226</sup> Christopher Schonborn, "Hans Urs von Balthasar's Contribution to Ecumenism," in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, ed. David Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 255-256.

<sup>1227</sup> Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 190.

<sup>1228</sup> Balthasar, *Mary for Today*, 41-42.

<sup>1229</sup> Bartholomew I, "Transformation calls for metanoia" <http://www.ecupatria.org/> (accessed 21 July 2008).

<sup>1230</sup> John Saward, *Christ is the Answer: The Christ-Centred Teaching of Pope John Paul II* (New York: Alba House, 1995), 27.

Eastern and Western Christians. Inner transformation, which requires a change in attitudes and assumptions, and which only results from God's grace, according to Bartholomew I, "paves the way for respect towards every human being, irrespective of differences ... Through inner transformation, these differences are welcomed, honoured and embraced as unique pieces of a sacred puzzle; they constitute part of the deeper mystery of God's wonderful creation".<sup>1231</sup>

Balthasar also shows that a Christ-centred life requires attitudes such as self-abandonment, openness, attentiveness, patient waiting, giving of oneself in service of others, faith, obedience, love, receptivity, solidarity, allowing things to happen, humility, contemplation and faithfulness, all quintessentially Marian. Indeed, as Balthasar stated early in the post-conciliar crisis, "One is ashamed for a Christianity, which today is ashamed of its own Mother".<sup>1232</sup>

Balthasar considers that, far from being a theological flight from the facts of life, or a "lure" into a theological utopia,<sup>1233</sup> a theology of Mary derives from the most challenging aspects of the Gospel, and has a special relevance to the Churches' concern for Christian unity. He affirms, "We recover our greatest, most serious concerns in Mary's attitude, but as part of something larger: her Son's concern that God's name be glorified on earth, that His kingdom come and His will be done on earth as in heaven",<sup>1234</sup> and that all may all be one, as He and the Father are one, so that the world may believe that the Father sent Him (Jn 17:21).

Like Newman, the Fathers, and indeed the theologians of the Orthodox tradition, Balthasar sees Mary as the theologian of theologians because Mary is *Theologos* in her very self. She makes a place in herself from the beginning for God's word with her *fiat*;

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<sup>1231</sup> Bartholomew I, "Transformation calls for metanoia" (accessed).

<sup>1232</sup> Nichols, "Von Balthasar and the Co-redemption" (accessed).

<sup>1233</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 124.

<sup>1234</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 124.



ponders it in the silence of her heart; lets it grow; brings it to the world in human form, and entrusts it to humanity.<sup>1235</sup> Mary is the prototype or model of the whole theology of the Church.<sup>1236</sup> She reveals "a theology at prayer, reflecting the unity of faith and knowledge and an attitude of objectivity allied with one of reverence and awe".<sup>1237</sup> She is totally involved in that which is revealed, moving in the circuit of divine invitation and human response.<sup>1238</sup> Balthasar is emphatic that such theology "*must be the fundamental act of every theologian whether layman or 'professional'*".<sup>1239</sup> As Evagrius Ponticus (345-399) affirms, "[i]f you are a theologian, you will pray truly. And if you pray truly, you are a theologian".<sup>1240</sup> In the Orthodox tradition, according to Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev,

A true Christian theologian is one who is able to be silent until the Holy Spirit touches the strings of his soul. And it is only when the human word falls silent and the word of the Spirit emerges from his soul, that true theology is born. From this moment 'a lover of words' is transformed into a 'lover of wisdom', a rhetorician into a theologian.<sup>1241</sup>

Balthasar laments the tragic divorce between theology and holiness (or mysticism or spirituality) which began in the Middle Ages.<sup>1242</sup> Such separation, according to Balthasar, results in the saints of the mystical tradition and spiritual writers being increasingly ignored by theologians. As Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, now Benedict XVI, affirms:

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<sup>1235</sup> Antonio Sicari, "Hans Urs von Balthasar: Theology and Holiness," in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, ed. David Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 130.

<sup>1236</sup> Sicari, "Hans Urs von Balthasar: Theology and Holiness," 130.

<sup>1237</sup> Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 175.

<sup>1238</sup> Sicari, "Hans Urs von Balthasar: Theology and Holiness," 130-131.

<sup>1239</sup> Sicari, "Hans Urs von Balthasar: Theology and Holiness," 130.

<sup>1240</sup> Cited in Hilarion Alfeyev, "Theological Education in the 21st Century"

[http://en.hilarion.orthodoxia.org/6\\_20](http://en.hilarion.orthodoxia.org/6_20) (accessed 3 June 2010).

<sup>1241</sup> Alfeyev, "Theological Education in the 21st Century" (accessed).

<sup>1242</sup> Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 175. See also, Victoria Harrison, *The Apologetic Value of Human Holiness: Von Balthasar's Christocentric Philosophical Anthropology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 108.

Talk of the connection between theology and holiness is not sentimental or pietistic, but has its foundation in the logic of things and has on its side the testimony of all history. Athanasius is not thinkable without the new experience of Christ had by Abbot Anthony; nor Augustine without the passion of his road toward Christian radicality; nor Bonaventure and the Franciscan theology of the thirteenth century without the enormous new reactualization of Christ in the figure of Francis of Assisi; nor Thomas Aquinas without the passion of Dominic for the Gospel and evangelization; and we could continue this throughout the whole history of theology.<sup>1243</sup>

Hence, for Balthasar, "[w]hen a science calling itself theology ceases to stand in the following of the apostolic witness and, thereby, in the mission of Jesus and in the sanctity that supports it, then that science has ceased to be of importance for the believing Church".<sup>1244</sup>

Balthasar's understanding of Mary as *Theologos* is ecumenically important. Mary can encourage Western theology to renew itself in rediscovering itself, thus fostering both spiritual ecumenism and theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. Indeed, as Ratzinger said about Balthasar in his homily at his funeral, "From Mary, finally and foremost, he learned that the origin of all fruitfulness in the Church is contemplation, without which action becomes empty activity. He learned that God's word dwells in silence and in waiting, and only in these can it grow to its greatest fertility".<sup>1245</sup> Theology must follow Mary, who reveals contemplation as the Church's "inner spring that gives unconditional fruitfulness to all her external actions".<sup>1246</sup>

As indicated above, Balthasar also encourages the Church to turn to Mary to understand itself and the life of the Spirit dwelling in its depths, by inviting each individual Christian and the Church as a whole to a deeper recognition of the Marian principle within

<sup>1243</sup> Cited in Sicari, "Hans Urs von Balthasar: Theology and Holiness," 125.

<sup>1244</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Theology and holiness," *Communio* 14 (1987): 348.

<sup>1245</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "Homily at the Funeral of Hans Urs von Balthasar," in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, ed. David Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991).

<sup>1246</sup> Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 168.

the life and mystery of the Church.<sup>1247</sup> As Ratzinger has it, "the Church learns concretely what she is and is meant to be by looking at Mary. Mary is her mirror, the pure measure of her being".<sup>1248</sup> Balthasar underscores Mary's importance to the renewal of the Church, stating that

Without Mariology Christianity threatens imperceptibly to become inhuman. The Church becomes functionalistic, soulless, a hectic enterprise without any point of rest, estranged from its true nature by the planners. And because, in this manly-masculine world, all that we have is one ideology replacing another, everything becomes polemical, critical, bitter, humourless, and ultimately boring, and people in their masses run away from such a Church.<sup>1249</sup>

This is exactly what Orthodox theologians say about the tragic consequences that follow from a neglect of the Holy Spirit. In the Main Theme Address at the Opening of the Fourth Assembly at the World Council of Churches at Uppsala in 1968, Metropolitan Ignatios Hazim of Latakia said:

Without the Holy Spirit, God is far away, Christ stays in the past, the Gospel is a dead letter, the Church is simply an organisation, authority a matter of dominion, mission a matter of propaganda, the liturgy no more than an evocation, Christian living a slave morality. But in the Holy Spirit, the cosmos is resurrected and groans with the birth-pangs of the Kingdom, the Risen Christ is there, the Gospel is the power of life, the Church shows forth the life of the Trinity, authority is a liberating service, mission is a Pentecost, the liturgy is both memorial and anticipation, human action is deified.<sup>1250</sup>

In the same way that it was through Mary and the Holy Spirit that the Divine Word came enfleshed into the world as the Divine Man, as the one who is from Mary "the root and descendant of David", and "the bright morning star" of the Holy Spirit (Rev 22:16), so

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<sup>1247</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 123-124. See also, Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 165.

<sup>1248</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 66.

<sup>1249</sup> Cited in Leahy, *The Marian Profile: In the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 166.

<sup>1250</sup> Cited in Thomas Norris, "On Revisiting Dei Verbum," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 66 (2001): 330.

in the continuing presence of the Saviour of the world, in His Body the Church, Mary and the Holy Spirit together continue to offer Christians a living experience and understanding of the Church of the Word made flesh. This is poetically and prophetically proclaimed in the Book of Revelation when the seer cries "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come'". (Rev 22:17).

Using the ancient iconographical Marian image of Mary's mantle, Balthasar reminds Christians that it is Mary who can show them how they can be both wholly effective presence and wholly humble service:

From the Cross the Son hands his mother over into the Church of the apostles, from now on her place is there. In a hidden manner her virginal motherhood holds sway throughout the whole sphere of the Church, gives it light, warmth, protection; her cloak makes the Church into a protective cloak. It requires no special gesture from her to show that we should look at the Son not at her. Her very nature as handmaid reveals him.<sup>1251</sup>

Balthasar is also insistent that the Holy Spirit always points to Jesus: "The Holy Spirit never points to himself, never puts himself in the light. He is always the Spirit of the Son and of the Father. On their love his light falls, without disclosing its source as such".<sup>1252</sup>

Balthasar's vision of Mary, which evokes the Orthodox experience of the reality of Mary's presence in the heart of the Church, brings separated Christians closer to each other and is essential in ecumenical dialogue. It raises the questions: If Mary is "the archetypal Church" what does she teach us about Ecclesiology? Can the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches produce a Marian Ecclesiology that can form the basis of dialogue? What is the relationship between the poor, barren, accepting Virgin and the Church?

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<sup>1251</sup> Balthasar, *Elucidations*, 72. See also, Roten, "The Two Halves of the Moon: Marian Anthropological Dimensions in the Common Mission of Adrienne von Speyr and Hans Urs von Balthasar," 79-80. See also, Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 111.

<sup>1252</sup> Cited in Saward, *The Mysteries of March: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, 37-38.

## Conclusion

Balthasar's theology of Mary and the Holy Spirit, which cannot be separated from the mystical insights of Adrienne von Speyr, underscores Mary's pure, boundless and definitive assent to the all-embracing saving plan of God. Such theology, according to Christoph Schönborn, "has a rare ecumenical breadth, and it is able to further greater unity among the confessions as hardly any other theology in the twentieth century".<sup>1253</sup>

At the Annunciation Mary surrenders her whole being, body and soul, to God. Like the Son, who allows himself to be carried by the Holy Spirit into her virginal womb, Mary allows the Holy Spirit to overshadow her, the Holy Spirit who is already present in her and has fashioned her and inspired her "fiat" after the very pattern of her Son's self-surrender. She is totally receptive and open to God. In giving her assent in the Holy Spirit, which is both the highest grace and the highest achievement made possible by grace, Mary places her whole life at the disposal of God, without reservation or reserve, to be used, formed and transformed as God pleases. This, for Balthasar, is perfect holiness and perfect faith.

Balthasar recognises that Mary's "fiat" is the fulfilled expression of Abraham's faith and that of Israel as a whole. The Abrahamic faith of the Old Testament is therefore raised to the experience of the Trinity thereby inaugurating a New Testament ecclesial or communitarian faith given in the very existence of Mary herself. Accordingly, the unreserved faith of Abraham, fulfilled and surpassed in Mary, is concretely realised at Nazareth and Calvary in the person of Mary, who speaks not only in the name of Israel, but also in the name of the entire human race, standing in complete solidarity with all those in need of the salvation offered in the new Israel, the tribe of Christians. The unreserved scope of her assent derived from the grace of her Immaculate Conception.<sup>1254</sup>

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<sup>1253</sup> Schönborn, "Hans Urs von Balthasar's Contribution to Ecumenism," 255.

<sup>1254</sup> Seward, "Mary and Peter in the Christological Constellation: Balthasar's Ecclesiology," 110-111.

Balthasar understands that Mary's role in the drama of human redemption is to "allow it to happen" (cf. Lk 1:38). She continually ponders, or contemplates, in the silence of her heart the mystery of the Incarnation and the mystery of the Trinity as integral to her experience at the Annunciation. Her pondering deepens and her understanding grows as she experiences and lives through the mysteries of her Son's life. At Pentecost she recognises fully through the Holy Spirit that Jesus is both God and man.

Beginning in the Annunciation, Mary is initiated through formal and repeated distancings by her Son into a new role at the Cross as archetype of the Church through a final humiliation of her abandonment – "just as the Son is abandoned by the Father, so, too, he abandons his Mother, so that the two of them may be united in a common abandonment. Only thus does she become inwardly ready to take on ecclesial motherhood toward all of Jesus' new brothers and sisters".<sup>1255</sup> Accordingly, the Church is, for Balthasar, "the gathering of believers around those who have been established in hierarchical offices, with Mary in their midst".<sup>1256</sup>

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<sup>1255</sup> Ratzinger and Balthasar, *Mary: The Church At The Source*, 109-110.

<sup>1256</sup> Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*, 112.

## *Chapter 7*

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### **Conclusion**

#### **Introduction**

With a view to contributing to their search for restored visible communion, this study has grown out of an ecumenical concern to find and evaluate the elements of a common theological and spiritual patrimony shared by Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians. It rests upon the conviction that both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches are sister Churches supported by the one mystical life, and it proposes that this common patrimony, indeed this sharing in holy Tradition, can be clearly seen in the relationship of Mary the Mother of Jesus and the Holy Spirit of God. It has further uncovered the significance of the Virgin Mother as both the Mother of the Divine Redeemer and as the Mother of all Christians, and using analysis and comparison, it explores the theologies of Sergius Bulgakov, Alexander Schmemmann, John Henry Newman and Hans Urs von Balthasar and their understanding of the relationship of Mary and the Holy Spirit. It has brought these four theologians together in dialogue, all drawn from the traditions of both and Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic theology, in order to determine to what degree their insights can serve as signposts for the achievement of ecumenical unity through a particular emphasis on both Mary and the Holy Spirit.

#### **a) Reflection and Summary of the Study and Principal Findings**

The Introduction and Background of this study affirmed that the Second Vatican Council made the divided Church a special object of concern because a division between Churches contradicts the will of Christ, is a great scandal for the world, and inflicts serious

damage on the proclamation of the Good News to the world. It further noted that Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism exhorts all Catholics to actively participate in the ecumenical movement, which is the work of the Holy Spirit and whose soul is spiritual ecumenism, and further demands that an ecumenical spirit pervade the whole of Catholic theology. It was also observed that Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* both affirms and encourages diversity in theology by suggesting that the various Eastern and Western theological formulations may complement one another. Clearly the Decree shows deep respect for the theological heritage of the Christian East.

This study confirmed that the ecumenical dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches began positively using, as a basis, the elements that unite both Churches. The study then demonstrated through a number of statements by the Pope and hierarchs of both Churches that the theme of the relationship of Mary and the Holy Spirit is one of the topics that can show that what unites Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians is far greater than what divides them.

This study has attempted to bring together all the foregoing considerations, thereby making an original contribution to scholarly theology by providing an example, or working model, of how to do theology and to answer specific theological questions using the work of theologians who come from different traditions and that addresses the same question, and then evaluating the results in an ecumenical context. It chose the theme of Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit through which to examine the mystical union of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches because Mary is the common Mother of both Churches; her relationship to the Holy Spirit is unique, and as such brings about communion for all Christians uniting them in Christ. As Paul VI first declared, it is the same Holy Spirit who overshadowed Mary who is at work in a special way within the ecumenical movement.



From a reading of Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium* and several themes in Paul VI's *Marialis Cultus*, which themselves are pervaded by an ecumenical spirit, several themes emerged in Chapter Two as fundamental to Catholic Mariology. We have seen that these themes find an echo in the work of all the four theologians to a greater or lesser extent. In Chapter Three Bulgakov's insistence that Mary is the Most Pure, the All-Immaculate One, the Spirit-Bearer, the personal image of the Holy Spirit is dominant. This is clearly reminiscent of LG, 52-53, 56, 59 and MC, 26. We have also seen his emphasis on Mary's personal sinlessness; her inheritance of the accumulated holiness of the whole Old Testament Church; her unique and exceptional blessedness; her progressive growth in the power of the Spirit; her limitless humility and new spiritual birth; her glorification and deification; and, her ongoing connection with the world. This is plainly reminiscent of LG, 53, 55-58, 64, 66, 68 and MC 26. In Chapter Four Schmemmann's underlining Mary's place at the heart of the cosmic and eschatological *leitourgia* of the Church where Mary stands as the very expression and content of a movement of love and faithful response to God and his emphasis on Mary as "the first, the highest and the most perfect fruit of the Holy Spirit in the entire creation"<sup>1257</sup> develops the theme. This is obviously reminiscent of LG, 53, 55, 59 and MC, Introduction, 25. Newman's insistence that Mary is the New Eve who actively co-operated with the Indwelling Spirit, the source of holiness, through her faith and obedience in the salvation of humankind, and that she is our all-powerful Advocate in Heaven is the leading idea in Chapter Five. This is clearly reminiscent of LG, 52, 56-59, 62 and MC, 26. Finally, in the Sixth Chapter we heard Balthasar's conviction that Mary's pure, boundless, holistic and definitive assent to the all-embracing saving plan of God is both the highest grace and the highest achievement made possible by grace. Clearly

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<sup>1257</sup> Schmemmann, "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 75.

reminiscent of LG, 52-53, 56, 63-68 and MC, 26, Balthasar insists that Mary truly reveals herself and defines herself as the archetypal Church.

To appraise these creative approaches, this study organised the work of Bulgakov, Schmemmann, Newman and Balthasar around four main headings – The Holy Spirit, Mary, the Mary-Spirit Connection, The Implications for Christian Unity – in an attempt to better compare their theologies on Mary and the Holy Spirit and their implications for ecumenical unity. The insights of these four theologians are well within the parameters of Catholic Mariology and reveal a mutual exchange of gifts. That, in itself, is an ecumenical exercise, that Walter Kasper and John Paul II affirm as "mutual enrichment".<sup>1258</sup> The creative approaches of these theologians, drawn from the traditions of East and West, reveal an understanding of Mariology that is of great importance and usefulness to ecumenical reconciliation.

During the course of our work several key insights have emerged and can be summarised as follows. In the first instance, all four theologians agreed that Mary was not simply a passive instrument of the Incarnation, but actively co-operated in a unique way through faith and obedience in the work of Redemption. In Bulgakov's theology, Mary, the New Eve, does not hide her face from God, but obediently goes forward to meet the Lord. We have also seen a particularly strong emphasis on the application of divine inspiration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Similarly, Schmemmann rejoices in Mary's response to the angel Gabriel – "Here am I the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Likewise, Newman underscores Mary as the counterpart of Eve. Also, Balthasar strongly insists upon the holistic nature of Mary's once for all *fiat*.

Also, all four theologians concurred that Mary is in fact the Mediatrix of all Grace or Mother of Grace. Bulgakov insists that the Annunciation is the fountainhead of salvation,

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<sup>1258</sup> Walter Kasper, "Prolusio of Cardinal Walter Kasper: Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement" [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20011117\\_kasper-prolusio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20011117_kasper-prolusio_en.html) (accessed 25 June 2010).

recognising that Mary was made the earth of God by the Holy Spirit, the earth from which sprang Jesus the New Adam. Moreover, he emphasises Mary's growth in the Spirit. Further, he insists that Mary is the Spirit-Bearer and the fullest manifestation and naming of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, Schmemmann's approach stresses that it is Mary who gave Jesus His flesh and blood and who is now at work in the hearts of the faithful through the Holy Spirit. He places emphasis on Mary as the image of the Church as Mother, interceding for, protecting and comforting her afflicted children beneath her protecting maternal veil. Also, like Bulgakov, he underlines that Mary is the Holy Spirit's most perfect fruit in the whole creation. Likewise, John Henry Newman, in a particularly vivid way portrays Mary as the one who bore, suckled, and handled the Divine Child, and who is thus the "Mirror of Sanctity", our all-powerful "Advocate". Using different language, but to the same end, Balthasar underscores Mary's acceptance of "the arrival of grace so that it can really come to earth and carry out its work of liberation".<sup>1259</sup> He places special emphasis on Mary's "letting things happen" and her renewed *fiat* at the foot of the Cross where she is empowered to a new motherhood by her Son; where she becomes the Bride, the very personification and embodiment of Holy Church.

The theologies of each of the four theologians impact on the practice of spiritual ecumenism. Bulgakov understands that Mary's creative, responsible, self-determining, and audacious life lived in the Spirit, entails humility and kenosis, the virtue that is as Orsy affirms, "the door to Christian unity".<sup>1260</sup> Bulgakov stresses that Mary is not only the hypostatic humanity of Christ, but also the hypostatic receptacle of the Holy Spirit, emphasising the dyadic character of the Church as the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, recognising that "one is not possible without the other, and any ecclesiology

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<sup>1259</sup> Balthasar, *"You Crown the Year with Your Goodness"*, 267.

<sup>1260</sup> Orsy, "'Kenosis': The Door to Christian Unity," 39.

that is monistic, not dyadic, is defective".<sup>1261</sup> Like Bulgakov, Schmemmann emphasises that Mary, the first and fullest manifestation of the Holy Spirit, calls herself "handmaid of the Lord" (Lk 1:38). He insists that Mary is a kind of touchstone for a true understanding of the Church, emphasising that Mary is the first and the fullest manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the source of the life of the Church; the presence in this world of the Kingdom of God to come. Newman, along with Bulgakov and Schmemmann, understands that Mary cooperates fully with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the ultimate source of all holiness. Finally, like Bulgakov, Schmemmann and Newman, but particularly like Schmemmann, Balthasar stresses that in the continuing presence of Christ in the Church, Mary and the Holy Spirit together continue to offer Christians a living experience and understanding of the Church of the Word made flesh. Further, he underscores attitudes, all quintessentially Marian, that are essential to living a Christ-centred life. Also, like Newman, the Fathers, and indeed the theologians of the Orthodox tradition, Balthasar insists that Mary is the theologian of theologians.

Furthermore, the theologies of each of the four theologians create new possibilities for theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Bulgakov's work raises ecumenical questions concerning the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit, the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation history, the "moment" of sanctification of the Mother of God, and the image of the Holy Spirit and the epiclesis. Similarly, Schmemmann's theology raises ecumenical questions about the mutual relationship between the two Churches. He calls for a renovation of how Christians live the Church, and underlines Mary's role in the mystery of unity, and the importance of the Holy Spirit in ecumenism. Also, the work of Newman raises fundamental ecumenical questions concerning the indwelling of the Holy Spirit beyond the juridical models of some Western

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<sup>1261</sup> Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 257.

approaches to theology, leading to the concept of deification as the work of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, Balthasar's theology raises ecumenical questions about Mary as the archetypal Church, and the relationship between the poor, barren, accepting Virgin and the Church.

#### **b) Discussion and Implications of Findings.**

This study appraises Mary's active co-operation in the Redemption, understanding it as the unique human element of co-operation in the work of salvation. As noted in our earlier discussion of the work of Alexander Schmemmann, the Christmas Liturgy of the Byzantine Church reminds the Father that humanity's gift to the Logos – Redeemer, is a Virgin Mother, Mary of Nazareth. While it is not really necessary to remind God of this mystery, it is certainly necessary to remind Christians at large, whose understanding of both Mary and of humanity's part in Christ's redemptive work, is often either sentimental or anaemic, or both. Humanity participates, as a graced but free agent, through Mary of Nazareth, who is therefore seen as the archetype of all who come to respond to the offer of grace in Christ. It is not too much to claim that, in Western Christianity, the question of the nature of grace and redemption has haunted the churches ever since the era of Augustine and Pelagius. Catholic and Orthodox Mariology in dialogue, however, can assist Western Christians, in particular, to transcend the divisive debates and approaches of the past which went so far as to rend asunder the very unity of the Churches of the West.

This realisation demands that all Christians, within their particular traditions, not only acknowledge notionally, but actually turn to Mary, including her as an indispensable element in their prayer, theology and spiritual life. Henry St John asserts that according to Père Yves Congar, who was particularly concerned for Continental Protestantism, "the root of division among Christians is the virtual denial that, under God's grace, human beings

can co-operate in their own salvation".<sup>1262</sup> He notes that Congar demonstrates that through a careful philosophical analysis of the concepts of person and nature, as used and embodied in the ancient creeds, there is a fundamental difference of interpretation which begins where Protestantism and Roman Catholicism separate. He notes that Congar diagnosed the problem as follows:

This difference is due to a misunderstanding and a false emphasis, which, though not plainly heretical, is Monophysite in tendency because its effect is to minimise and distort the place and function of the sacred humanity of Christ in the work of redemption, a tendency as old as the heresy itself, but which in this context, has its origin in the basic notion, inherent in protestant thought, of the incapacity of fallen human nature to co-operate in its own salvation.<sup>1263</sup>

Henry St John also points out that Congar believed that this initial misconception, which is concerned with the very source and purpose of the Incarnation itself, results in further misconceptions about the Church and the Blessed Virgin Mary. These misconceptions concern the nature of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. They make it difficult to understand how Christ's salvation is mediated to the world, and Mary's role in this as the main human co-operator after her Son to bring about the Incarnation. These misconceptions also make it difficult to further understand the continuation of Christ's incarnate life in the Mystical Body, the Church, which is implemented through Mary's merits and intercession.<sup>1264</sup>

It could not be clearer that when Christians are reminded of Mary's active human co-operation in the Redemption, it is impossible to lose sight of the truth that humanity is saved by the sacred humanity of Christ. This in turn brings into the light a true understanding concerning the Church and the Blessed Virgin Mary. According to Alvin

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<sup>1262</sup> Henry St John, "Introduction," in *Christ, Our Lady and the Church: A Study in Eirenic Theology* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1957), xiii.

<sup>1263</sup> St John, "Introduction," xii.

<sup>1264</sup> St John, "Introduction," xiii.

Kimel, Reformed theologians such as Thomas Torrance, James Torrance and Colin Gunton have sought to recover the meaning and primacy of the sacred humanity of Christ.<sup>1265</sup> To achieve this, these theologians also need to recover the true meaning of Mary, without whom the spectre of a Monosphyite Christology is again raised.

Catholic and Orthodox Mariology, in dialogue, can also assist the Roman Catholic Church, especially, in its ecumenical mission. As Miravalle stated in an interview with Zenit on the occasion of the release of John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*:

In regards to the Orthodox, our sister Churches, their generous liturgical celebration of the role of the Mother of God in our salvation is something for the Western Church to emulate and rediscover. Their common liturgical entreaty, 'O Mother of God, save us,' captures the heart of Mary's unique role in the salvific mission of her Son". In fact, Patriarch Bartholomew issued a 1998 Lenten encyclical on the role of the Mother of God in salvation, which went almost completely unnoticed in the West.<sup>1266</sup>

The ancient Byzantine Akathistos Hymn of praise to the Mother of God, for example, associates Mary closely with Christ and affirms her role in the redemption of humankind, praising her as the one who brought "pardon to the world"<sup>1267</sup> or as the one who "saved the world from the flood of sin".<sup>1268</sup>

To Christian ears outside the Orthodox and Catholic tradition, it may be uncomfortable to hear Mary praised in these terms. Lawrence Cross points out that the hymn "certainly seems to attribute powers to Mary that strictly belong to God, but only

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<sup>1265</sup> Alvin Kimel, "Grace Oecumenical " <http://pontifications.wordpress.com/grace-oecumenical> (accessed 28 June 2010).

<sup>1266</sup> Mark Miravalle, "Why Now is the Time for a Dogma of Mary Co-redemptrix" [http://www.fifthmariandogma.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=216&Itemid=582](http://www.fifthmariandogma.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=216&Itemid=582) (accessed 13 July 2010). See also, Bartholomew I, "Orthodox Patriarch on Maternal Mediation" (accessed).

<sup>1267</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 962.

<sup>1268</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 963. See also, Lawrence Cross, "St Mary in the Christian East" [http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt\\_](http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt_) (accessed 1 December 2008).

because she is "Theotokos".<sup>1269</sup> He also points out that "the verses beginning 'hail,' are a special genre whose epithets describing and praising Mary are not meant to be exact theological statements".<sup>1270</sup> He stresses that "[t]he sole author of man's salvation is the Holy Trinity in Jesus Christ, yet the Virgin plays a unique instrumental role, alike to no one, short of the Godhead itself".<sup>1271</sup> Indeed, according to Cross, "[i]n praising her the Byzantine (Syrian) poet seeks to please the Deity, to whom she is not only instrumentally essential in the work of salvation, but to whom she is also the dearest being in all his creation ... God's love for Mary is creation's joy".<sup>1272</sup> As has been noted in this study, Luther declaimed that "[t]he veneration of Mary is inscribed in the depths of the human heart",<sup>1273</sup> and Balthasar declared that "One is ashamed for a Christianity, which today is ashamed of its own Mother".<sup>1274</sup>

This study finds that the theme and belief in Mary as "Mediatrice of all Grace" or "Mother of Grace", is deeply embedded in the dogmatic theology of the Orthodox and Catholic churches, taking on a clear ecumenical perspective. Mary's pre-eminent relationship with the Holy Spirit and her Divine Son makes her the "Mother of Grace", which is to say, one who because of her historical "fiat" played a true part in the eruption of divine, Trinitarian life into the soul of fallen humanity. This is expressed with utmost clarity in Small Vespers, Saturday of the Fourth Tone, *Apostichon* of the Theotokos of the Byzantine Rite:

Unveil to us the boundless sea of your mercy and goodness and thereby wash away our sins, O All-Blameless One; for as the Mother of God you have authority over creation, and by your power you bring all things to pass according to your will. For the

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<sup>1269</sup> Cross, "St Mary in the Christian East" (accessed).

<sup>1270</sup> Cross, "St Mary in the Christian East" (accessed).

<sup>1271</sup> Cross, "St Mary in the Christian East" (accessed).

<sup>1272</sup> Cross, "St Mary in the Christian East" (accessed).

<sup>1273</sup> Cited in Armstrong, "Martin Luther's Devotion to Mary" (accessed).

<sup>1274</sup> Nichols, "Von Balthasar and the Co-redemption" (accessed).



grace of the Holy Spirit clearly abides in you, and unceasingly co-works with you in all things, O All-Blessed One.<sup>1275</sup>

When we speak about the work of Redemption, we are speaking about a work of extraordinary love. We are reminded by Kallistos Ware that "[l]ove cannot exist in isolation, but presupposes the other".<sup>1276</sup> Mary and the entire human race after her, is the "other" or the "Thou" in the restored relationship between the Godhead and humankind which we commonly call the Redemption, but it is the accession of Mary and the power of the Holy Spirit which gives the world its Redeemer.

It is clear now that the communion of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary of Nazareth, that intimate union of the Spirit and the Bride as imaged in Revelation 22:17, is the very template of the spiritual life for all human souls. From the Annunciation to Calvary, Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit and her surrender to the purposes of God, is one of unconditional self-abandonment. This is the same path which all the lovers of God must take and which defines the very nature of the spiritual life. But no one has ever so completely offered to God their mind, will and body as did the Mother of Christ, or opened themselves so absolutely to the power of the Holy Spirit.

An area for further study within this theme would be to attempt a comparative theological artistic exegesis of the iconography of the Virgin in Eastern and Western tradition, particularly of those mysteries involving Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit and those expressing her divine Motherhood regarding the Church and its believers. As a prelude to such a study the appendix to this thesis is offered as a suggestive beginning.

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<sup>1275</sup> Cited in George Gabriel, *Mary: The Untrodden Portal of God* (Ridgewood: Zephrah, 2005), 161.

<sup>1276</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 28.

## Conclusion

The Second Vatican Council strongly exhorted all Roman Catholics to be concerned about and actively involved in ecumenism. It demanded that an ecumenical spirit should pervade the whole Church. It also affirmed and encouraged various theological methods and ways of expressing revelation and specifically showed deep respect for the spiritual heritage of the Christian East. This study, which, in itself, is a concrete gesture towards the restoration of unity among separated Christians, especially, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians, demonstrates that such an examination, which takes into account the theologies of both traditions, East and West, and which examines in particular the relationship between Mary and the Holy Spirit and the implications for ecumenical unity, contributes to a deeper understanding of the Blessed Virgin Mary both as Mother of God and Mother of all Christians.

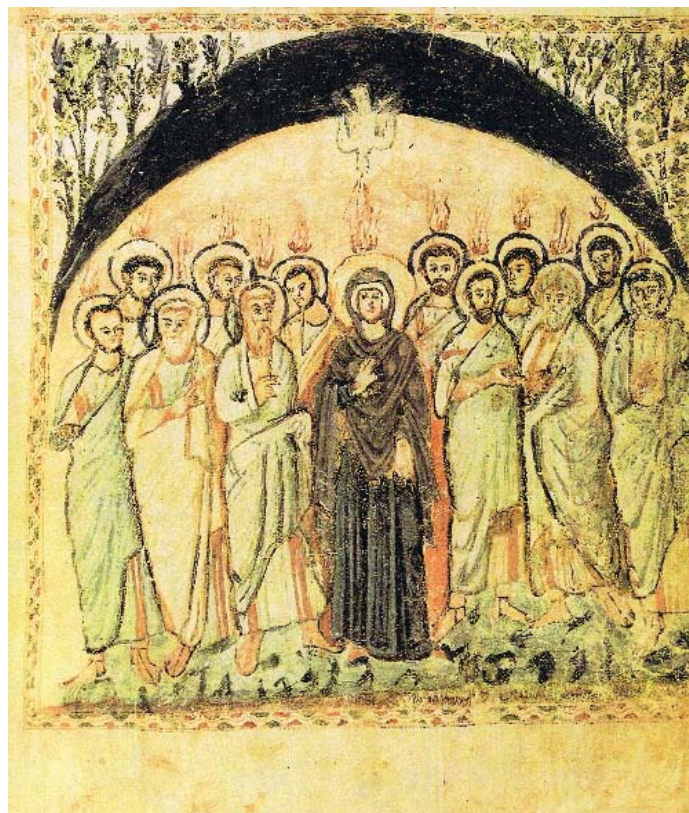
Furthermore, this study has brought me personally, as a Roman Catholic, to a greater knowledge and understanding of the Orthodox East. It has further convinced me as a Roman Catholic that, in the words of the Decree on Ecumenism, "it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate, preserve, and foster the exceedingly rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches, in order faithfully to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition, and to bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians".<sup>1277</sup> Moreover, it has deepened my appreciation and love for both Mary and the Holy Spirit and has furnished me with a greater understanding of how to live a more audacious life in the Spirit, thus of itself furthering Christian unity.

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<sup>1277</sup> UR, 15.

## EPILOGUE

The old proverb says that a picture tells more than a thousands words. On the theme of Mary and the Holy Spirit this is overwhelmingly true when contemplating the earliest surviving icon of Pentecost from the Rabula Codex of AD 586.<sup>1278</sup> The artist who created this sacred image was a considerable theologian.



Mary the Mother of Jesus stands in the centre of the icon clothed with a deep blue tunic under the royal purple mantle and veil. The latter is her maphorion which is adorned with a golden star on her forehead. The Holy Spirit is descending upon her in the visible form of a dove while something resembling "tongues, as of fire," (Acts 2:3) hovers over her. In the words of William Wordsworth, she appears as "Our tainted nature's solitary

<sup>1278</sup> *The Crucible of Christianity: Judaism, Hellenism and the Historical Background to the Christian Faith*, ed. Arnold Toynbee (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 284-285.

boast",<sup>1279</sup> precisely because of her intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit. As venerable as the Apostles are, who also receive the Holy Spirit in the form of a flame, no one of them can compare to the Mother of Jesus who, as the hymn to the Theotokos from the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom proclaims, is "Higher in honor than the Cherubim and more glorious without compare than the Seraphim".<sup>1280</sup>

Standing in the middle of the Apostles Mary is the leading figure of the group. Graphically Mary has greater substance than the surrounding Apostles, who are almost line drawings in comparison to her royally clothed figure. All this suggests that Mary, the first and the fullest manifestation of the Holy Spirit, is herself a living, unifying force. That she alone stands within a background of flame underlines her unique relationship with the Most Holy Spirit, whose flame hovers only above the heads of the Apostles. The separate flames resting on and above the heads of Mary and the Apostles, and the different postures of Mary and the Apostles, reveal that the unity of the Church exists not in uniformity, but unity in glorious diversity.

As Tony Kelly reminds us, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed is "itself ... an instrument of unity"<sup>1281</sup> expressing the belief that the Church has four defining marks; One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. This icon of Pentecost virtually adds a fifth, One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Marian. The iconographer has captured this in art, while the continuing theological and devotional tradition has amplified the theme as we have found it in the four theologians examined here. Finally, the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger stresses that

the Church is not an apparatus, nor a social institution, nor one social institution among many other others. It is a person. It is a woman. It is a Mother. It is alive. A Marian understanding of the

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<sup>1279</sup> William Wordsworth, "The Virgin" <http://maryourmother.net/Wordsworth.html> (accessed 29 July 2010).

<sup>1280</sup> Raya and Vinck, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, 285.

<sup>1281</sup> Tony Kelly, *The Creed by Heart: Re-learning the Nicene Creed* (Blackburn, Victoria: Harper Collins Religious, 1996), 176.

Church is totally opposed to the concept of the Church as a bureaucracy or a simple organisation. We cannot make the Church, we must be the Church. We are the Church, the Church is in us only to the extent that our faith more than action forges our being. Only by being Marian, can we become the Church. At its very beginning the Church was not made, but given birth. She existed in the soul of Mary from the moment she uttered her *Fiat* ... the Church should be awakened in our souls. Mary shows us the way.<sup>1282</sup>

Mary gazes out upon the viewer, her right hand raised in blessing and her left hand extended towards the viewer, highlighting her universal role in the distribution of the graces of Redemption to the human family. It is as if "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'" (Rev 22:17) to the communion in the Holy Trinity and in one another.

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<sup>1282</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II," *L'Osservatore Romano (Weekly Edition in English)*, 23 January 2002, 5.

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## *Appendix*

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# EASTERN AND WESTERN ICONOGRAPHY

## **Illustrative of Mary and the Holy Spirit both in the Story of Salvation and in Artistic Theology**

### Illustrations

#### **A. Specific References to Mary and the Holy Spirit**

- a) Annunciation
- b) Visitation
- c) Pentecost

#### **B. Allusions to Mary and the Holy Spirit**

- a) The Wedding at Cana
- b) The Crucifixion
- c) Ascension
- d) Mother and Child Enthroned
- e) Hodegetria
  - Virgin of the Passion
  - Our Lady of Perpetual Help
- f) Pokrov – The Protecting Veil of the Mother of God

**A. Specific References to Mary and the Holy Spirit**

- a) Annunciation
- b) Visitation
- c) Pentecost



## EASTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

## ANNUNCIATION

- i) 12<sup>th</sup> century (1110-30) *The State Tretakov Gallery, Old Russia. Novgorod.*  
The Annunciation of Ustyug.



<http://all-photo.ru:8100/icon/index.en.html?img=19186&big=on>

- ii) 12<sup>th</sup> century – (end – Constantinople) *St Catherine's Monastery Sinai.*



Helen Evans, *St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt: A Photographic Essay* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 76.

iii) 14<sup>th</sup> century – (early – Constantinople) *National Museum, Ohrid.*



Helen C. Evans, (ed) *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 178.

iv) 14<sup>th</sup> century (early) *Chora Church (Kariye Museum), Istanbul.*



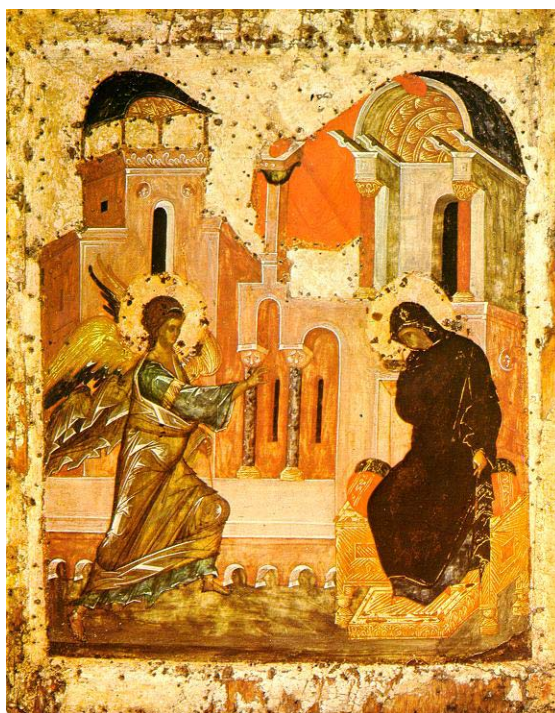
[http://www.thais.it/speciali/Kariyecamii/md\\_res/022.jpg](http://www.thais.it/speciali/Kariyecamii/md_res/022.jpg)

- v) 14<sup>th</sup> century (late – third quarter) *Holy Cross Church, Pelendri, Cyprus. Double Annunciation, at the well and at the house.*



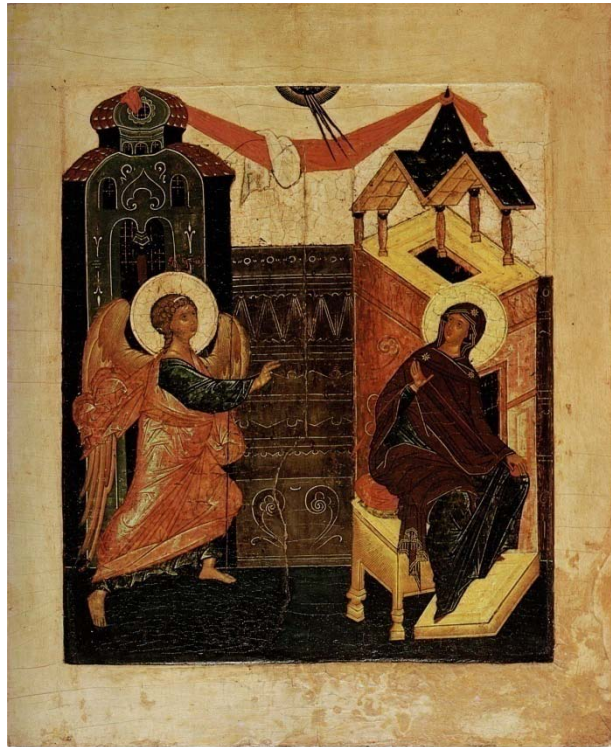
Andreas Stylianou & Judith A. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus: Treasures of Byzantine Art*. Second Edition (Nicosia, Cyprus: A. G. Leventis Foundation, 1997), 229.

- vi) 14<sup>th</sup> century *Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow (Moscow School)*



[http://www.rollins.edu/Foreign\\_Lang/Russian/annunc.jpg](http://www.rollins.edu/Foreign_Lang/Russian/annunc.jpg)

vii) 16<sup>th</sup> century *Icon Museum, Recklinghausen (Moscow School)*



Leonid Ouspensky & Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press), 171.

## WESTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

## ANNUNCIATION

- i) 5<sup>th</sup> century – *Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome.*



Averil Cameron, "The Early Cult of the Virgin." In *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, edited by Maria Vassilaki Skira (Milan: Skira, 2000), 11.

- ii) 6<sup>th</sup> century – *Euphrasian Basilica in Porec, Croatia*



<http://nickerson.icomos.org/porec/k/k-.jpg>

- iii) 13<sup>th</sup> century (1220) – *Annunciation at the Well of San Marco in Venice.*



North transept: Annunciation at the Well. Plate 41.  
 Otto Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice: The Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Volume Two: Plates* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1984), plate 41.

- iv) c. 1295 – *Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome.*



*Santa Maria Maggiore: Basilica Patriarcale: Roma*

v) c. 1295 – *Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome.*



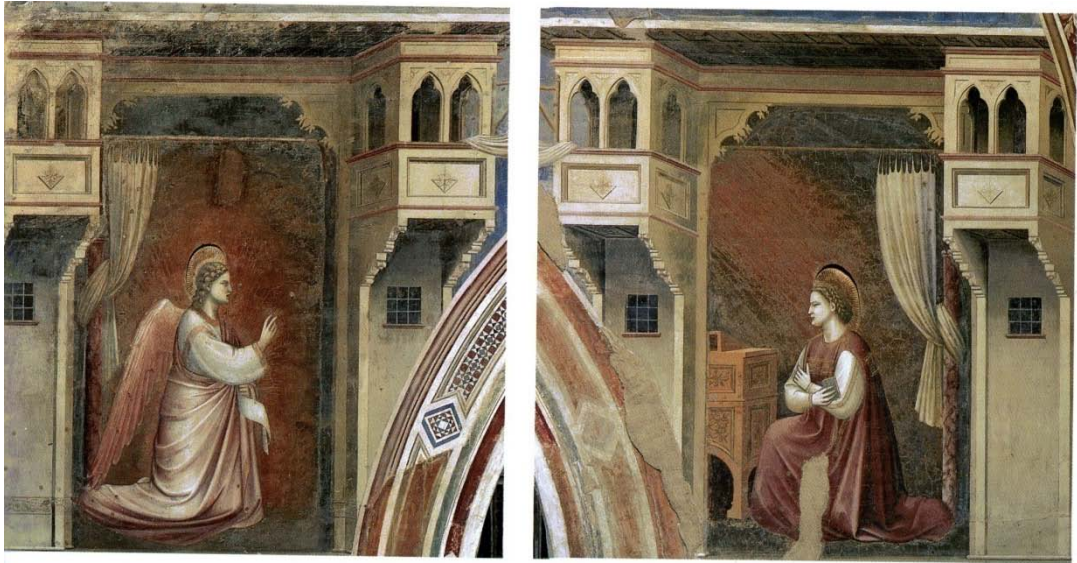
Mosaic by Pietro Cavallini (b. ca. 1250, Roma, d. 1330, Roma)

<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/c/cavallin/mosaic/annuncia.html>

vi) 14<sup>th</sup> century (early) *Arena Chapel at Padua.*



Luciano Bellosi. *Giotto* (Antells, Florence: Scala, 2003), 32.



Bellosi, *Giotto*, 41.

vii) 1393 *The Portiuncula Chapel, Assisi*



[www.paradoxplace.com/.../Assisi%20District.htm](http://www.paradoxplace.com/.../Assisi%20District.htm)



viii) Late 1430's *Convento di San Marco, Florence.*



Magnolia Scudiere, *The Frescos by Angelico at San Marco* (Florence-Milan: Giunti, 2004), 44.



Laurence Kanter & Pia Palladino, *Fra Angelico* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 184.

## EASTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

## VISITATION

i) 14<sup>th</sup> century (third quarter). *Church of the Holy Cross, Pelendri.*



Andreas Stylianou & Judith A. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus: Treasures of Byzantine Art*. Second Edition ( Nicosia, Cyprus: A. G. Leventis Foundation, 1997), 230.

## VISITATION ICONOGRAPHY – CHRISTIAN WEST

## VISITATION

i) 6<sup>th</sup> century – *Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč, Croatia.*



<http://images.google.com.au/images?q=visitation+porec&hl=en&btnG=Search+Images>

ii) 12th century – (early) *Barcelona, Museum of Catalan Art*



Carlo Volpe, *Art of the Western World: Early Christian to Medieval Painting* (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1962), plate 9.

iii) 13<sup>th</sup> century *San Marco in Venice*



The Visitation

Joseph rebukes Mary

Maria Andaloro et al., *San Marco: The Mosaics: The Inscriptions: The Pala D'Oro*  
New York: Rizzoli, 1991, 78.



Otto Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice: The Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Vol 11: Plates* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press [for] Dumbarton Oaks, 1984), 152.

iv) 1310's      Giotto's Visitation – North Transept, lower Church, Assisi.

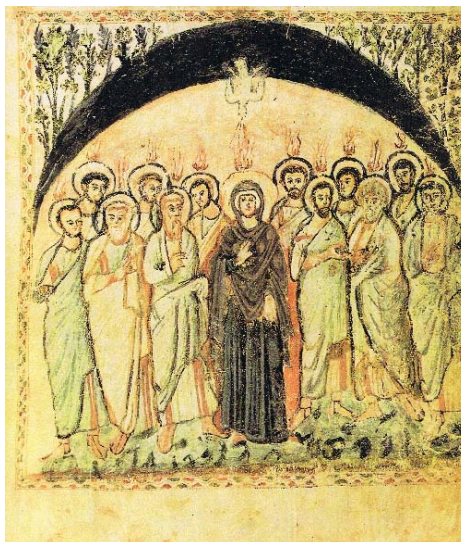


[http://www.foerderkoje.de/stk\\_objekte/visitation\\_giotto.jpg](http://www.foerderkoje.de/stk_objekte/visitation_giotto.jpg)

## EASTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

<b>PENTECOST</b>
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- i) 6<sup>th</sup> century *Rabbula Gospels, Laurentian Library, Florence.*



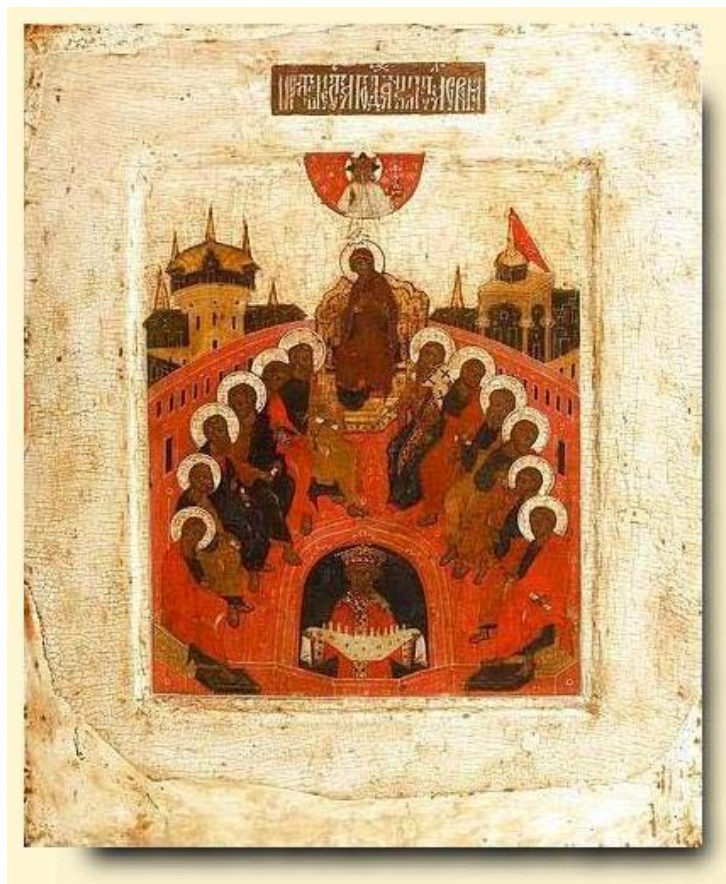
Arnold Toynbee, ed. *The Crucible of Christianity: Judaism. Hellenism and the Historical Background to the Christian Faith* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1969), 285.

- ii) 15<sup>th</sup> century *Russian, Novgorod School.*



Leonid Ouspensky & Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983), 206.

iii) Early 17<sup>th</sup> century *The Pentecost. Russian, Stroganov School.*



<http://www.templegallery.com/getfullpage.php?stockno=336>

## WESTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

<b>PENTECOST</b>
------------------

i) 12<sup>th</sup> century *West Dome of Pentecost, San Marco, Venice*



Otto Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice 1: The Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*.  
Vol 2: Plates (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 4.

ii) 1304-1306 *The Pentecost. Giotto. The Arena Chapel at Padua.*



[http://www.artchive.com/artchive/g/giotto/giotto\\_pentecost.jpg](http://www.artchive.com/artchive/g/giotto/giotto_pentecost.jpg)



iii) 14<sup>th</sup> century (1308-11) *The Descent of the Holy Spirit. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena.*



[http://www.myriobiblos.gr/afieromata/pnevma/icons\\_en.html](http://www.myriobiblos.gr/afieromata/pnevma/icons_en.html)

**B. Allusions to Mary and the Holy Spirit**

- a) The Wedding at Cana
- b) The Crucifixion
- c) Ascension
- d) Mother and Child Enthroned
- e) Hodegetria
  - Virgin of the Passion
  - Our Lady of Perpetual Help
- f) Pokrov – The Protecting Veil of the Mother of God

## EASTERN CHRISTIANITY

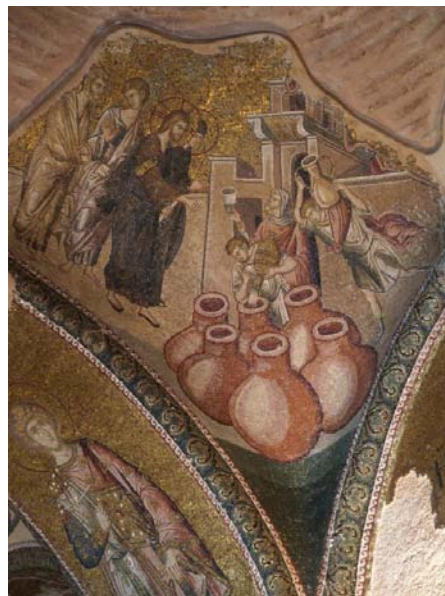
## WEDDING AT CANA

- i) 1310- 1320 **Church of St. Nicholas Orphanos, Thessaloniki.**  
The Wedding Feast at Cana.



Savvas Agouridis, "The Virgin Mary in the Texts of the Gospels," In *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin Mary in Byzantine Art*, edited by Maria Vassilaki (Milan: Skira, 2000), 60.

- ii) 14<sup>th</sup> century (c. 1315) *St Saviour in Chora (Kariye Museum), Istanbul, Turkey.*



<http://www.cambridge2000.com/gallery/images/P40212757e.jpg>

## WESTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

<b>WEDDING AT CANA</b>
------------------------

i) 1304-06 *Arena Chapel, Padua. The Marriage at Cana.* (Giotto – fresco)



<http://art.pro.tok2.com/Bible/CLater/07Cana/giot.jpg>

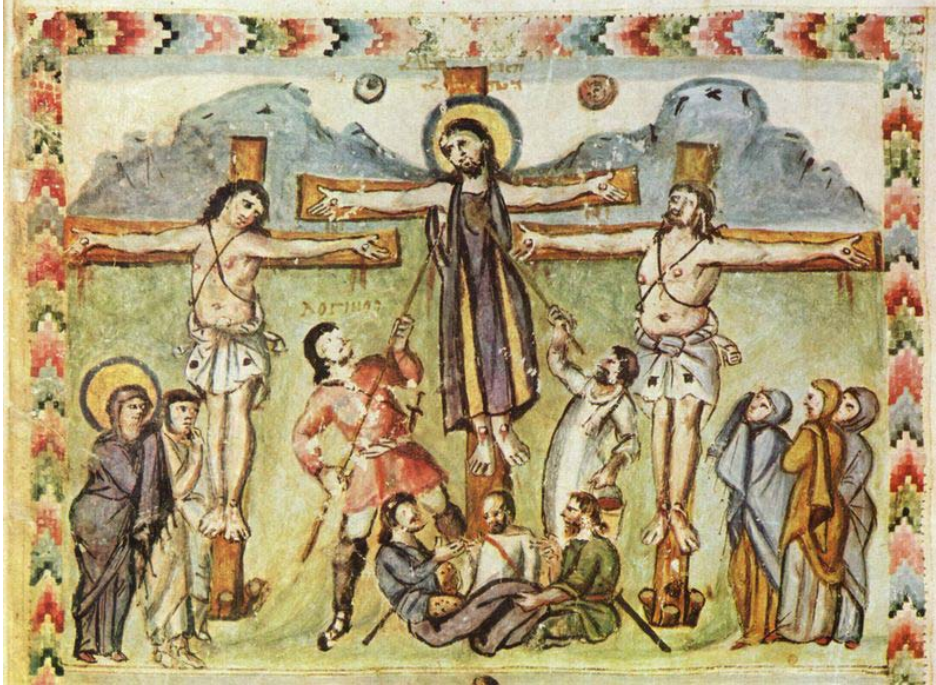
ii) 1308-11 *Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena*



Wedding at Cana **DUCCIO** di Buoninsegna (b. ca. 1255, Siena, d. 1319, Siena)  
EASTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

## THE CRUCIFIXION

i) 6<sup>th</sup> century *Rabbula Gospels. Laurentian Library, Florence.*



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Meister\\_des\\_Rabula-Evangeliums\\_002.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Meister_des_Rabula-Evangeliums_002.jpg)

ii) Early 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Crucifixion. *Monastery of Hosios Loukas in Phokis, Greece.*



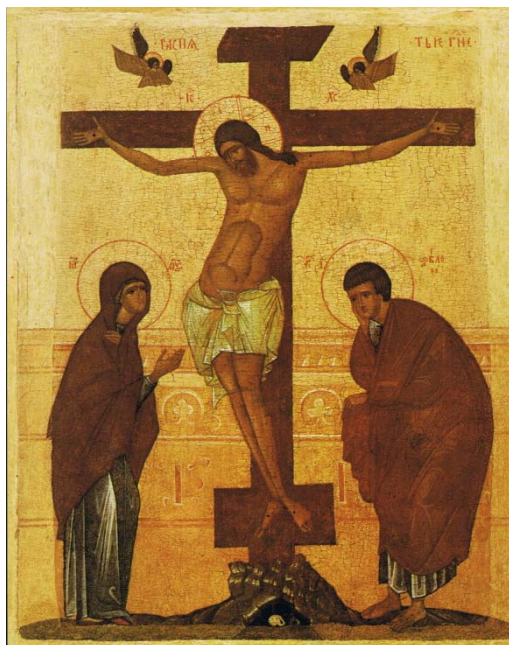
Nano Chatzidakis, *Greek Art: Byzantine Mosaics*. Translated by Alexandra Doumas (Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 1994), 86

- iii) Late 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Crucifixion. *Daphni Monastery, Greece.*



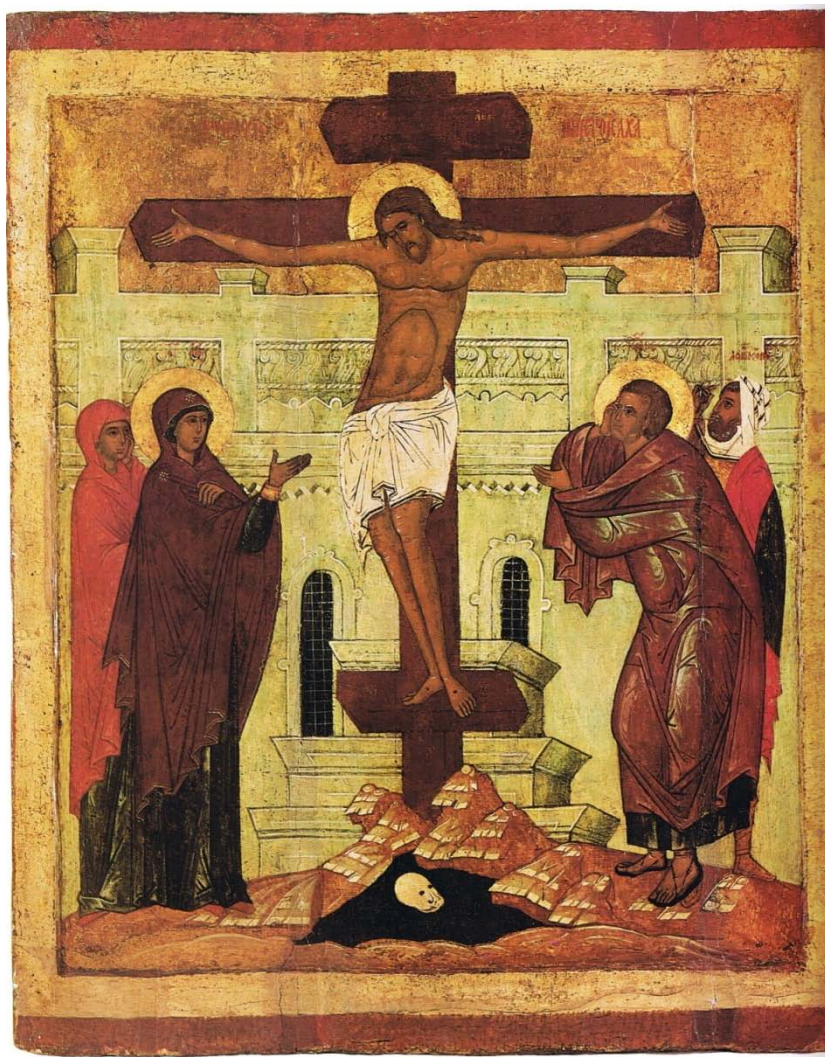
Chatzidakis, *Greek Art*, 133.

- iv) Late 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Crucifixion. *Andrei Rublev Museum of Early Russian Art, Moscow.*



Viktor Nikitich Lazarev, *The Russian Icon: From Its Origins To The Sixteenth Century*. Translated by Colette Joly Dees (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 267.

v) 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Crucifixion. *National Museum, Paris.* (Russian)



Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983), 182,

## WESTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

**THE CRUCIFIXION**

- i) 8<sup>th</sup> century *Chapel SS Quirico e Giulitta in Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome.*



[http://www.hp.uab.edu/image\\_archive/cr-03/cr-01/index.html](http://www.hp.uab.edu/image_archive/cr-03/cr-01/index.html)

- ii) 12<sup>th</sup> century (1118-25) *San Clemente, Rome.*



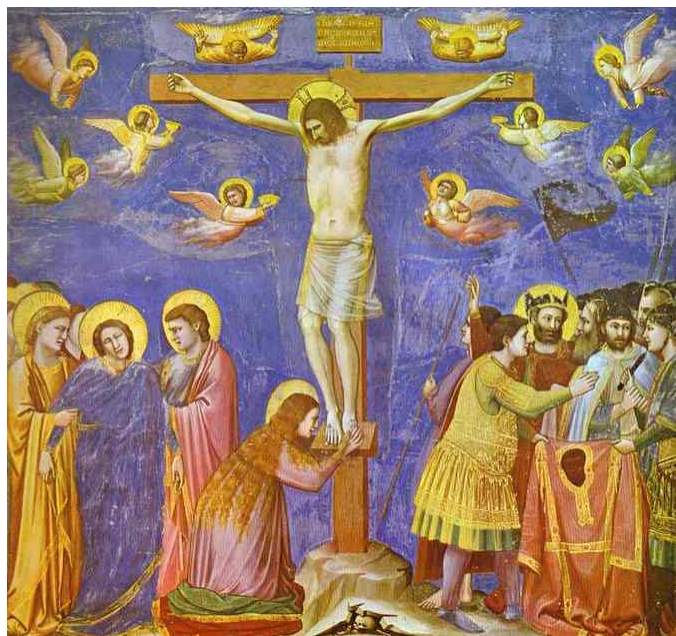
<http://www2.siba.fi/~kkoskim/imbas/roma/themepage.php?lang=en&action=2&themeid=sclement>





<http://www2.siba.fi/~kkoskim/imb/roma/themepage.php?lang=en&action=2&themeid=sclement>

iii) 14<sup>th</sup> century (1304-1306) *Cappella degli Scrovegni, Padua, Italy*



<http://www.abcgallery.com/G/giotto/giotto61.html>

## EASTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

## ASCENSION

- i) 6<sup>th</sup> century *Rabbula Gospels*. – *Laurentian Library, Florence*.



<http://www.stmaron.org/images/Ascension.jpg>

- ii) c. 1300 *Gallery of icons in the Church of St. Clement, Ohrid, Macedonia*.  
(Probably Michael Astrapas or Eutybios, Thessalonikan painters working at Ohrid.)



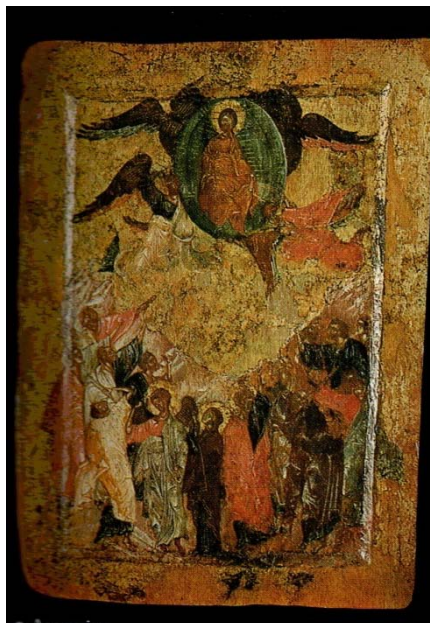
Manolis Chatzidakis, Gordana Babić, "The Icons of the Balkan Peninsula and the Greek Islands," in *The Icon*, (London: Studio Editions, 1981), 168-169.

- iii) 14<sup>th</sup> century *Church of the Holy Cross, Pelendri, Cyprus.*



Andreas Stylianou & Judith A. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus: Treasures of Byzantine Art*. Second Edition (Nicosia, Cyprus: A.G. Leventis Foundation, 1997), 226.

- iv) Late 14<sup>th</sup> century. *Byzantine: School of Constantinople. (icon)*



*Masterpieces of Byzantine and Russian Icon Painting: 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Century* (London: Temple Gallery, 1964), 21.

- v) 16<sup>th</sup> century. *The Isabelle Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Mass. The Ascension.*



Leonid Ouspensky & Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983), 195.

## WESTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

## ASCENSION

i) 9<sup>th</sup> century *Lower Church, San Clemente, Rome*



*San Clemente Roma* (Milano: Kina Italia S.p.A., 1987), Fig. 30.

ii) 13<sup>th</sup> century *Central Dome The Basilica of Saint Mark, San Marco, Venice*



Guido Perocco, *The Basilica of Saint Mark* (Venice: Edizioni Storti Venezia, 1974-1985), 43.

- iii) 14<sup>th</sup> century (1304-06) *Cappella Scrovegni (Arena Chapel), Padua*. Giotto.  
UIO



<http://www.textweek.com/art/ascension.htm>

## EASTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

<b>MOTHER AND CHILD ENTHRONED</b>
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- i) 6<sup>th</sup> century (?) Constantinople (?) *St Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai.*



Robin Cormack, "Icon of the Virgin and Child Between Archangels Accompanied by Two Saints,"  
*In Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, edited by Maria  
 Vassilaki (Milan: Skira, 2000), 163.

- ii) 9<sup>th</sup> century *Apse Mosaic. St Sophia, Constantinople.*



Robin Cormack, "The Mother of God in the Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople," In *Mother  
 of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, edited by Maria Vassilaki (Milan:  
 Skira, 2000), 109.

- iii) Early 11<sup>th</sup> century *Monastery of Hosios Loukas in Phokis, Greece.*



Robin Cormack, "The Mother of God in Apse Mosaics," In *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, edited by Maria Vassilaki (Milan: Skira, 2000), 100.

- iv) Mid 11<sup>th</sup> century The Enthroned Virgin and Child. *St. Sophia at Ochrid.*



Euthymios Tsigaridas, "The Mother of God in Wall-Paintings," In *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, edited by Maria Vassilaki (Milan: Skira, 2000), 126.



## WESTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

<b>MOTHER AND CHILD ENTHRONED</b>
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- i) 6<sup>th</sup> century – *Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy*



<http://www.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/italy/ravenna/santapollinare/nuovo3.html>

- ii) 6<sup>th</sup> century *The Widow Turtura fresco. Catacomb of Comodilla.*



Charles Barber, "Early Representations of the Mother of God," In *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, edited by Maria Vassilaki (Milan: Skira, 2000), 254.

iii) 8<sup>th</sup> century *St Clemente, Rome, Madonna and Divine Child*



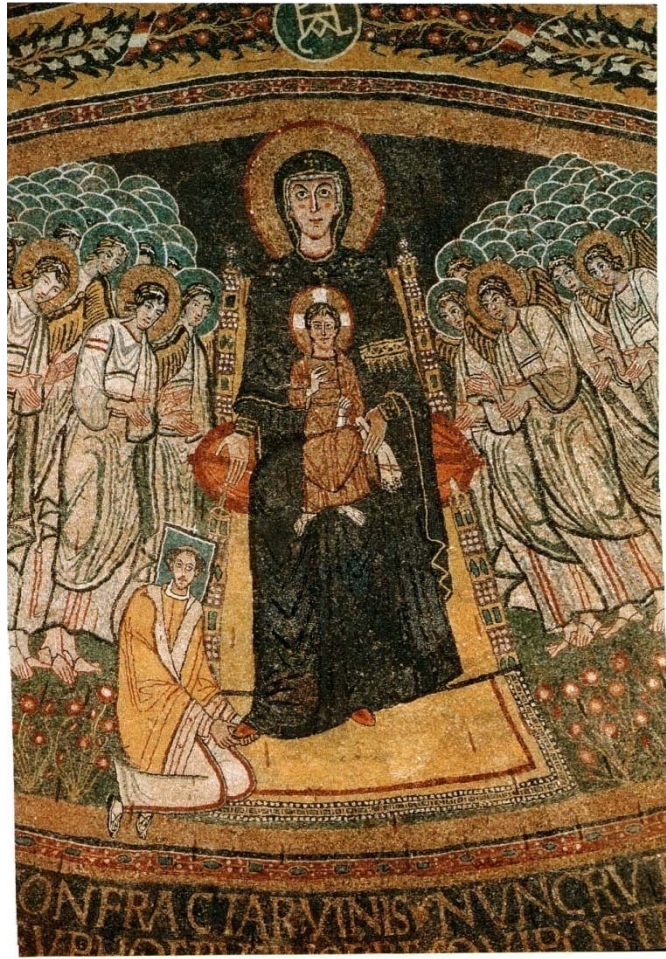
*San Clemente Roma* (Rome: Collegio S. Clemente, 1987), fig. 34.

iv) 9<sup>th</sup> century *Chapel of San Zeno, Santa Prassede, Rome.*



Robin Cormack, "The Mother of God in Apse Mosaics." In *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan: Skira, 2000), 97.

v) 9<sup>th</sup> century *Santa Maria in Domnica, Rome.*



Cormack, "The Mother of God in Apse Mosaics," 98.

## HODEGETRIA

### Virgin of the Passion/Our Lady of Perpetual Help

- i) 16<sup>th</sup> century **Virgin of the Passion.** *St Catherine's Monastery, Mt Sinai, Egypt.*



<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/catherines2-39.htm>

- ii) 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century **Our Lady of Perpetual Help** St Matthew's Church, Rome. (School of Crete).



[http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Our\\_Mother\\_of\\_Perpetual\\_Help](http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Our_Mother_of_Perpetual_Help)

## EASTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

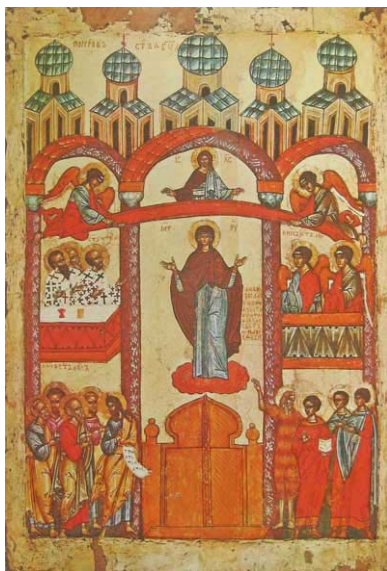
<b>POKROV – The Protection of the Mother of God.</b>
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- i) c. 1399 *The Museum of History and Architecture, Novgorod, Russia.*



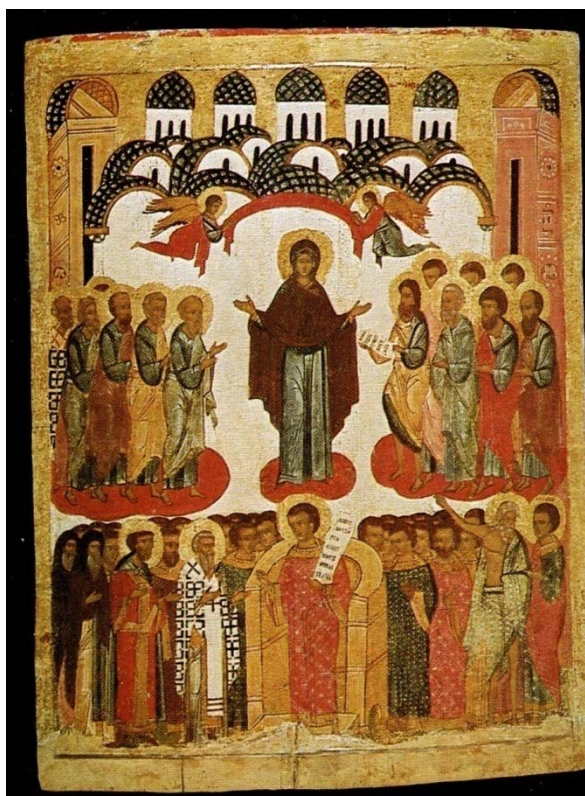
[http://www.icon-art.info/masterpiece.php?lng=en&mst\\_id=559&top\\_id=101&mode=img](http://www.icon-art.info/masterpiece.php?lng=en&mst_id=559&top_id=101&mode=img)

- ii) Early 15<sup>th</sup> century *The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia*



[http://www.icon-art.info/masterpiece.php?lng=en&mst\\_id=184&top\\_id=101&mode=img](http://www.icon-art.info/masterpiece.php?lng=en&mst_id=184&top_id=101&mode=img)

iii) Late 15<sup>th</sup> century *Novgorod School*



*Masterpieces of Byzantine and Russian Icon Painting: 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Century* (London: Temple Gallery, 1964), 29.

iv) Late 15<sup>th</sup> – early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries *The Museum of History and Architecture, Novgorod, Russia*



[http://www.icon-art.info/masterpiece.php?lng=en&mst\\_id=580&top\\_id=101&mode=img](http://www.icon-art.info/masterpiece.php?lng=en&mst_id=580&top_id=101&mode=img)

## WESTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

<b>MADONNA OF MERCY – (Mary's Mantle)</b>
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- i) 15<sup>th</sup> century (1444-1464) *Madonna of Mercy. Central panel from the Misericordia Altarpiece, Sansepolcro, Italy*



<http://www.abcgallery.com/P/piero/piero11.html>.

- ii) 15<sup>th</sup> century (c. 14720) *Church of Ognissanti, Florence. Ghirlandaio, Domenico.*



<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/g/ghirland/domenico/1early/2ogniss1.html>

# EASTERN AND WESTERN ICONOGRAPHY

## Schema

**A. A schema of specific references to Mary and the Holy Spirit drawn from:**

- a) Annunciation
- b) Visitation
- c) Pentecost

**B. A schema of allusions to Mary and the Holy Spirit drawn from:**

- a) The Wedding at Cana
- b) The Crucifixion
- c) Ascension
- d) Mother and Child Enthroned
- e) Hodegetria
  - Virgin of the Passion
  - Our Lady of Perpetual Help
- f) Pokrov- the protecting Veil of the Mother of God



## EASTERN and WESTERN CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

## A SCHEMA

EASTERN ICONOGRAPHY	WESTERN ICONOGRAPHY
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ANNUNCIATION</b></p> <hr/> <p>i) 12<sup>th</sup> century (1110-30) <i>Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow</i> + The Annunciation of Ustyug (icon)</p> <p>ii) 12<sup>th</sup> century (end - Constantinople) <i>St Catherine's Monastery Sinai</i> (icon)</p> <p>iii) 14<sup>th</sup> century (early Constantinople). <i>National Museum, Ohrid</i> ( Bi-lateral icon)</p> <p>iv) 14<sup>th</sup> century (early) <i>Chora Church (Kariye Museum), Istanbul</i>. Annunciation at the <u>Well</u> (mosaic)</p> <p>v) 14<sup>th</sup> century (third quarter) <i>Church of the Holy Cross, Pelendri, Cyprus</i> (fresco) Double annunciation, at the well and at the house.</p> <p>vi) 14<sup>th</sup> century <i>Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow</i> (icon)</p> <p>vii) 16<sup>th</sup> century <i>Icon Museum, Recklinghausen (Moscow School)</i> (icon)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ANNUNCIATION</b></p> <hr/> <p>i) 5<sup>th</sup> century <i>Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome</i> (Arch mosaic)</p> <p>ii) 6<sup>th</sup> century <i>Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč Croatia</i> (mosaic)</p> <p>iii) 13<sup>th</sup> century (1220) <i>Annunciation at the well of San Marco in Venice</i> (mosaic)</p> <p>iv) 1295 <i>Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome</i> (Apse mosaic) Giacomo Torriti</p> <p>v) 1295 <i>Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome</i> (mosaic) Pietro Cavallini</p> <p>vi) 14<sup>th</sup> century (early) <i>Arena Chapel, Padua</i> (fresco) Giotto</p> <p>vii) 1393 <i>The Portiuncula Chapel, Assisi</i> (fresco)</p> <p>viii) Late 1430's <i>Convento di San Marco, Florence</i> ( fresco) (north corridor) Fra Angelico</p>

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>VISITATION</b></p> <hr/> <p>i) 14<sup>th</sup> century <i>Church of the Holy Cross, Pelendri, Cyprus</i> (fresco)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>VISITATION</b></p> <hr/> <p>i) 6<sup>th</sup> century.....<i>Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč, Croatia</i> (mosaic)</p> <p>ii) 12<sup>th</sup> century (early) <i>Barcelona, Museum of Catalan Art</i> (fresco)</p> <p>iii) 13<sup>th</sup> century <i>San Marco in Venice</i> (mosaic)</p> <p>iv) 1310's <i>Giotto's Visitation – North Transept, lower Church, Assisi</i> (fresco)</p>



EASTERN ICONOGRAPHY	WESTERN ICONOGRAPHY
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE WEDDING AT CANA</b></p> <hr/> <p>i) 1310-1320 <i>St Nicholas Orphanou, Salonika</i> (fresco)</p> <p>ii) 14<sup>th</sup> century (early) <i>Chora Monastery, Constantinople</i> (mosaic)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE WEDDING AT CANA</b></p> <hr/> <p>i) 1303-1305 <i>Arena Chapel, Padua</i> (fresco) Giotto</p> <p>ii) 1308 -11 <i>Siena. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo</i> (fresco) Duccio di Buoninsegna</p>





EASTERN ICONOGRAPHY	WESTERN ICONOGRAPHY
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MOTHER AND CHILD ENTHRONED</b></p> <hr/> <p>i) 6<sup>th</sup> century (?) Constantinople (?) <i>St. Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai</i> (encaustic icon)</p> <p>ii) 9<sup>th</sup> century <i>St. Sophia, Constantinople</i> (Apse mosaic)</p> <p>iii) Early 11<sup>th</sup> century <i>Monastery of Hosios Loukas in Phokis, Greece</i> (mosaic)</p> <p>iv) Mid 11<sup>th</sup> century <i>St Sophia at Ochrid</i> (fresco)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MOTHER AND CHILD ENTHRONED</b></p> <hr/> <p>i) 6<sup>th</sup> century <i>Sant' Apollinare, Ravenna, Italy</i> (mosaic)</p> <p>ii) 6<sup>th</sup> century <i>The Widow Turtura. Catacombs of Comodilla</i> ( fresco)</p> <p>iii) 8<sup>th</sup> century <i>Church of St Clemente, Rome.</i> (fresco)</p> <p>iv) 9<sup>th</sup> century <i>Chapel of San Zeno, Santa Prassede, Rome</i> (mosaic)</p> <p>v) 9<sup>th</sup> century <i>Santa Maria in Domnica, Rome.</i>(mosaic)</p>

**HODEGETRIA**

Virgin of the Passion/Our Lady of Perpetual Help

- i) 16<sup>th</sup> century *St Catherine's Monastery, Mt Sinai, Egypt. Virgin of the Passion*  
(icon)
  
- ii) 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Century *St Alphonsus' Church, Rome.* (School of Crete)  
*Our Lady of Perpetual Help*



EASTERN ICONOGRAPHY	WESTERN ICONOGRAPHY
<p>POKROV – The Protecting Veil of the Mother of God</p> <hr/> <p>i) c. 1399 <i>The Museum of History and Architecture, Novgorod, Russia</i> (icon)</p> <p>ii) Early 15<sup>th</sup> century <i>The Tretakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia</i> (icon)</p> <p>iii) Late 15<sup>th</sup> century <i>Novgorod School</i> (icon)</p> <p>iv) Late 15<sup>th</sup> – early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries <i>The Museum of History and Architecture, Novgorod, Russia.</i> (icon)</p>	<p>MADONNA OF MERCY – Mary’s Mantle</p> <hr/> <p>i) 15<sup>th</sup> century <i>Central panel from the Misericordia Altarpiece, Sansepolcro, Italy.</i> (mixed tempera on panel) Piero della Francesca</p> <p>ii) 15<sup>th</sup> century <i>Church of Ognissanti, Florence</i> ( fresco) Domenico Ghirlandaio</p>