

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

BY GREGORY ALASTRUEY

TRANSLATED BY

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IMPRIMATUR ✠ Joseph Cardinal Ritter
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

COUNTLESS AUTHORS have sung the praises of Mary in poetry and in prose throughout the centuries. Devotion to Mary has been characteristic of the Christian faithful since the earliest days of the Church. In recent years, however, professional theologians have returned to this theme with a renewed zeal and with great success in clarifying the theological foundations for the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The present treatise is a scholarly work and a noteworthy contribution to the ever-increasing library of Mariological literature. If it had been translated with great exactness from the original Spanish, it would have been an excellent reference work of Mariology for the professional theologian. However, the book has been translated with a view to a larger reading public. To this end, many repetitions have been deleted and numerous lengthy citations have been abbreviated. Involved passages have been summarized as much as possible in the interests of clarity and brevity.

I am grateful to Sister Mary Imelda, O.P., former Mother General of the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois, for her confidence in asking me to prepare this work for publication. I am sincerely indebted to Father Jordan Aumann, O.P., of the Dominican Province of St. Albert the Great, for selecting this work for translation and for editing the entire manuscript and checking the translation.

May the reading of these volumes be the means of drawing countless souls to a deeper love of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother.

Sister Mary Janet, O.P.

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THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Mary's Birth and Early Life

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The Name of Mary

THE name of Mary was given to the Blessed Virgin by her parents, Joachim and Ann, and it is commonly admitted that this name was suggested through divine inspiration. Moved interiorly by the Holy Spirit, her parents preferred the name of Mary to all others.¹ We meet only one woman in the Old Testament who bore the name of Mary—Miriam, the sister of Moses—who was held in great veneration by the Hebrews. Moreover, because of that veneration, no other woman was given the name, Mary, nor do we read that the names of Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were given to others. But the strictness of this discipline was gradually relaxed, so that by the time of Christ there were many women named Mary.² The name, Miriam, is translated as Mary in the Septuagint. We also find it in the writings of the Evangelists, and it was used from the beginning of the Christian era to designate the Mother of God.

The name, Mary, has many meanings, according to the various etymologies accepted by the writers. Some derive the name from the Egyptian word, *mery* or *meryt*, meaning *much loved*. According to others, like Lauth, the name, *Mirjam* comes from *minurjuma*, *minur* being the equivalent of *star*, so that *minurjam* signifies *star of the sea*. Others maintain that the name of Mary is derived from the Syriac word for *lady*, but this interpretation cannot be held, since the feminine form of this word would not be Mary, but Martha.

In the opinion of most writers, the name of Mary is derived from the Hebrew, but some consider it a compound word and others say it is a simple one. Thus, the following interpretations are proposed: *bitter sea*, from the compound word, *marjam*; *rebellion or obstinacy*, from the root *marah*; *drop of the sea*, from the root *marar*, which

interpretation is found in the *Onomasticon* of St. Jerome and in many Latin and Greek writers of the Middle Ages; *master of my race*, from the root *harah*, meaning to conceive or to beget; *star of the sea*, whose etymology is perhaps taken from the Hebrew words for sea and light, from which resulted light of the sea. This interpretation is very popular and is attributed to St. Jerome. However, many believe that the interpretation proposed by St. Jerome is not *star of the sea*, but *drop of the sea*, and that the copyists inadvertently changed a letter, because there is no Hebrew word for star which is similar to the first syllable of the name, Mary.

Hope, an interpretation by Philo,³ is allegorical rather than etymological. Other interpretations are: *lofty or sublime*, from the root *ram*, which means surpassing; *enlightened, enlightener, or that which enlightens*, from the word *or* in the Hiphil form, which means to give light; *fleshy or robust*, from the word *marā*, which, according to the concept of beauty among the Orientals, would imply a beautiful and robust body. This interpretation is favored by Bardenhewer, principally because it can be applied to the spiritual beauty of the Blessed Virgin. *Bitterness, sorrow, bitter, or afflicted*, from the root *marar*, is an interpretation accepted by the old rabbis and accepted by some modern experts of Hebrew.⁴ *Myrrh*, from the word *mar*, says Knabenbauer, can be accepted, since so many young women took the names of trees and plants. Thus Esther was known by the name of myrtle and Susanna is from the name, lily.⁵

Although there are many etymologies, it is difficult to judge which is preferred. However, all of the interpretations enumerated are applicable to the Blessed Virgin and they express her prerogatives in a notable way. Thus, Mary is *much loved* by God, for He bestowed upon her pre-eminent gifts of nature and of grace. She is truly *Lady* and *Queen* of the universe. She is a *sea* of graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit. She is the *bitter sea* by reason of the cruel pains she suffered in the passion and death of her Son. Hence, St. Bonaventure says: "Mary is the sea abounding in graces and suffering bitterly with her Son."⁶

Rebellion or *obstinacy* apply to the power of the devil, whom she hurled down and trampled under foot by her immaculate conception and divine maternity. *Master of my race* refers to the highest office for

which she was chosen: to conceive and to bear God. She is the *star of the sea* because she acts as the light of heaven toward those who navigate in the midst of this tempestuous life and she directs their course by the example of her virtues and by means of her protection. She gave birth to Christ, who is the hope of the world, and she is our *hope*. As Ecclesiasticus says: "She is the mother of holy hope."⁷ She is *lofty or sublime* by being raised to the dignity of the Mother of God, which exceeds all dignities possible to a creature. She was *enlightened* by the Father of light, from whom the whole race descends, and *enlightened* by her Son, true sun of justice, whom she received into her heart, bore in her womb, and nourished. For this reason she is described in the Apocalypse as "a woman clothed with the sun."⁸ She is an *illuminator*, for she gave us the true light which illumines the world with its rays and brightness. The term, *robust*, fully corresponds to the singular beauty of the Blessed Virgin over all the daughters of men, and it expresses that fullness of grace which the Son heaps upon His Mother. And she can be called *myrrh*, for myrrh is an aromatic substance with a mild odor, and this becomes the Blessed Virgin because of the fragrant odor of her virtues and graces. Myrrh also suggests sorrow and in Sacred Scripture it is customary to express pain, suffering, wounds, and even death itself in this way. This most perfectly fits the Blessed Virgin, who offered God all her miseries and sorrows—with the exception of sin—and, with her Son, offered her soul pierced by the same sword of sorrow.

Mary's Ancestry

It is one thing to be of the tribe of Juda, the tribe to which David belonged, and another to be of the family of David, that is, of the race and generation of David. Not all those who were of the tribe of Juda bore their origin from David, since Juda had many sons, from whom other families originated.

Julian, Celsus, and Faustus erroneously affirm that Mary was not from the tribe of Juda but from that of Levi, because her father,

Joachim, was a priest of the tribe of Levi and because she was related to Elizabeth, who was descended from the daughters of Aaron,⁹

THESIS: *The Blessed Virgin Mary was of the tribe of Juda and of the family of David.* This is a matter of faith.

Sacred Scripture. Scripture expressly states that Christ was descended from the family of David, for we read in St. Matthew: "What do you think of Christ? Whose son is He? They said to him, David's." At Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the Jewish children cried out: "Hosanna to the Son of David."¹⁰ Likewise in St. Luke we read that the angel, in announcing the mystery of the Incarnation, said to her: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord will give Him the throne of David, His father."¹¹ The Apocalypse says of Christ: "Behold, the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, has overcome"; and Christ says of Himself: "I am the root and the offspring of David."¹²

From these proofs it is clearly seen that the Messiah was of the house of David. This origin is not only deduced by reason of legal filiation with St. Joseph, who was of the family of David,¹³ but chiefly by reason of His natural filiation with the Blessed Virgin, His Mother, who was also of the family of David. Therefore, the Davidic origin of Christ is according to the flesh, as the Apostle attests in his Epistle to the Romans when he says: "Concerning his Son who was born to him according to the flesh of the offspring of David";¹⁴ and in Timothy: "Remember that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and was descended from David."¹⁵ Christ, conceived by the Holy Spirit, could not have belonged to the family of David had He not taken flesh from Mary, His Mother, who was of the house of David.

The Fathers. Tertullian argues that the flesh of Christ was of the family of David through the flesh of Mary, who was of the family of David. St. Augustine says: "Since the Apostle has told us that Christ proceeds from the family of David according to the flesh, we certainly cannot doubt that the Blessed Virgin herself had a blood relationship to the family of David."¹⁶

The Liturgy. The Office of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

speaks of the nativity of the glorious Virgin Mary, who was born of the tribe of Juda and of the distinguished race of David.

Theological Argument. 1) According to Jewish law, daughters of good families were supposed to marry a man from the same tribe,¹⁷ and it was always understood that the man had to be not only from the same tribe, but also from the same family. St. Joseph was of the house and family of David; therefore, so also was the Blessed Virgin. Hence, St. Bernard says that it was fitting that not only St. Joseph, but Mary as well, should be of the house of David; otherwise, she would not have been espoused with a man of the house of David.¹⁸

This reason does not seem adequate for those who deny the obligation of the law since the Babylonian captivity, which made the separation and distinction of tribes impossible. Actually, the law was not observed in regard to territory, as we can see in the case of St. Joseph, who was a native of Bethlehem, but lived in Nazareth, the territory of the tribe of Zabulon. From this fact, we can conjecture a similar practice with regard to marriage.

2) Christ is not the son of Joseph according to the flesh, but nevertheless His genealogy is traced through the lineage of St. Joseph, which proceeds from Abraham and David. The only reason for tracing the lineage of Christ through St. Joseph is because he belonged to the same family as Mary, of whom Christ was born according to the flesh.

This second argument does not seem valid, because to trace the lineage of Christ through St. Joseph, it sufficed that Mary and Joseph be truly married, and that Christ be born a legitimate son of a legitimate mother, the spouse of St. Joseph. Simply by reason of the true matrimony, Christ could be called a son of David, even if Mary, His Mother, had not been of the lineage of David.¹⁹

THESIS: *The Blessed Virgin was of sacerdotal stock.*

Sacred Scripture. We read in St. Luke that the angel said to Mary: "And behold, Elizabeth thy kinswoman also has conceived a son in her old age."²⁰ Elizabeth was of sacerdotal stock, for we also read in St. Luke: "In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zachary, of the course of Abia; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth."²¹ Consequently,

her origin was of the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron, who was high priest in the time of Moses; and for the same reason, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was related to Elizabeth, was of a sacerdotal race.

The Fathers. St. Augustine says: "It was fitting that the flesh of the Master be generated not only of royal stock, but also of a priestly one."²²

Theological Argument. It was fitting that the royal tribe of Juda and the priestly tribe of Levi be united through marriage in the lineage of Mary, to indicate that Christ, true King and High Priest, would be born of her. It was not considered contrary to the law that the royal tribe of Juda and the priestly tribe of Levi should intermarry, because although those of the priestly tribe could not possess property in the land of Israel, they could marry a woman from any tribe. However, the woman's goods could not be turned over to the priestly tribe, and thus, there was no confusion over inheritance, which was precisely what the law prohibited. Thus, we see that Aaron, the high priest, chose as his wife a woman of the tribe of Juda.²³

It is worth noting that the relationship between Mary and Elizabeth was on the maternal side, because if the Blessed Virgin Mary had descended from the paternal side of Levi and not from that of Juda, we would have to say that she was of the tribe of Levi, since the distinction of tribes and families was determined from the masculine side and not from the feminine side. This would not be in agreement with St. Matthew, St. Luke, or the Apocalypse, which affirm conclusively that Christ was of the tribe of Juda and of the family of David, and that the Davidic origin of Christ arises from the fact that Mary, His Mother, traces her origin from the line of David. Nor would it be in conformity with the Apostle, who denies that Christ was of the tribe of Levi by showing that He was not a levitical priest, when he says: "For He of whom these things are said is from another tribe, from which no one has ever done service at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord has sprung out of Juda, and Moses spoke nothing at all about priests when referring to this tribe."²⁴

The Doctors do not agree in determining the degree of kinship between Mary and Elizabeth. Some, with Maldonatus, teach vaguely that the father or grandfather of Elizabeth, a priest of the tribe of Levi, married a woman of the tribe of Juda and the family of David. Elizabeth, who was related to the Virgin through the family of David,

though not through the lineage of Levi, was born of this marriage. Others, like St. Antoninus, say that Mary and Elizabeth were the daughters of two sisters, Anne and Hismeria, whose parents Eck identifies as Stolanus and Emerentia.

Niceforus Calixtus, citing the martyr Hippolytus and Baronius, says that three daughters—Mary, Sobe, and Anne—were born of the priest, Mathan, and his wife, Mary. Mary was married in Bethlehem and gave birth to Salome; Sobe also married in Bethlehem and was the mother of Elizabeth; Anne was married in Galilee and of her was born Mary, the Mother of God. Toledo believes that this is one of the most probable theories because of its antiquity and the authority of Hippolytus. Nevertheless, we cannot propose it as certain, but we can say only that although the Blessed Virgin Mary was of the tribe of Juda, and Elizabeth was of the tribe of Aaron, they were related through their mothers, grandmothers, or great grandmothers.

The Parents of Mary

Since Sacred Scripture does not mention anything about the parents of the Blessed Virgin, either in the Old or the New Testament, we must deduce from Tradition whatever we know about them. At the same time, we must remember that many apocryphal legends or stories served as sources for the Greek writers of the Middle Ages and for later writers. The principal writings of this kind are the *Protoevangelium*, which is falsely attributed to St. James (second century); *The Book of the Nativity of the Virgin*, which is also erroneously attributed to St. James, and of which, as some say, St. Cyril of Alexandria was the author; another *Book of the Birth of the Virgin*, which Seleucus falsely attributed to St. Matthew; *The Book of the Nativity of Mary*, found in the works of St. Jerome; etc.

Some authors assert that the exact names of the Virgin's parents are not known, and that the names, Joachim and Anne, are mystical or symbolic, since the name, Anne, means grace and the name, Joachim, means preparation of the Lord, which fit Mary's parents perfectly. But the most common and most probable opinion is that Joachim and Anne are their real names.

St. Epiphanius calls Joachim and Anne the parents of Mary, and St. John Damascene says: "Joachim married Anne, the chosen one, a woman worthy of all manner of praise. As that other Anne who, being sterile, bore Samuel after making a vow to offer her son to God, so also this Anne, by her prayers and promises to God, received the grace to become the mother of the Mother of God."²⁵ Modestus, Bishop of Jerusalem in the beginning of the seventh century, hailed Mary as the daughter of Joachim and the Mother of God. Benedict XIV concludes from the foregoing testimony: "The common opinion of the Western and Eastern Church throughout the centuries, that the parents of the Blessed Virgin were called Joachim and Anne, seems reasonable, chiefly because there are no solid reasons to the contrary."²⁶

The ancient apocryphal writings not only say that the Blessed Virgin's parents were wealthy, but that they owned extensive lands and orchards. They even assert that their ancestors ruled all of Palestine. Other writers considered them poor, because if they had been wealthy, they would not have consented that their daughter marry an artisan. With such insufficient evidence, it would perhaps be better to say that Mary's parents were of a moderate and humble state which was perfectly compatible with the possession of a certain amount of worldly goods.

Indications of their moderate economic condition are as follows: When Mary arrived in Bethlehem, the time for her delivery having arrived, she found no room in the inn and was obliged to give birth in a stable. In order to take care of the needs of his family, St. Joseph had to work as a carpenter. At the presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple, the Blessed Virgin offered a pair of turtle doves, which was the offering of the poor, but had they been rich, they would have offered a lamb as a holocaust. Finally, it would seem repugnant that the ancestors of Jesus be wealthy when He, the King of glory and the Lord of majesty, became poor so that we might become rich.²⁷

The Blessed Virgin's parents were undoubtedly remarkable for their piety and holiness of life. St. John Damascene says: "O blessed couple, Joachim and Anne! All creatures are indebted to you."²⁸ St. Euthymius, Patriarch of Constantinople, says that Joachim and Anne were distinguished in nobility and wisdom and observed the law perfectly. Consequently, it was fitting that they should blossom into

the most eminent holiness and virtue who were granted the privilege of bringing into the world the one who was to be the Mother of God and of instructing her in holiness and piety. Moreover, united more closely through their daughter to the Holy Family, and brought nearer to God, they should participate more abundantly in grace.

There are reasonable grounds for great veneration of Mary's parents in both the Eastern and Western Church. It is well known in the Oriental Church that the Emperor Justinian I built a basilica in honor of St. Anne at Constantinople in 550. In Jerusalem, in 636, another church was built in honor of St. Anne and in 705, another was built in Constantinople by Justinian II. These are not the only churches built in honor of St. Anne in the East, but there are others, such as the famous church in Quersoneso.

In the Western Church, devotion to St. Anne goes back at least to the eighth century, according to the *Pontifical* of the reign of St. Leo III. At his command the story of St. Joachim and St. Anne was painted in the Basilica of St. Paul.²⁹ In the later centuries churches and altars and various monuments were constructed in honor of St. Anne. The feast of St. Anne was placed in the calendar and in the martyrology. She was the first saint invoked in the litany of the saints, and at the end of the fifteenth century, devotion to her had become so widespread and popular in Western Europe that some feared (an exaggerated fear) that the devotion to the mother would obscure the memory of her daughter.

The Birth of Mary

Two known prodigies are said to have preceded the birth of Mary: the miraculous disappearance of the sterility of her parents and the divine revelation made to them of her conception and future dignity.

That the sterility of the Blessed Virgin's parents disappeared miraculously is an ancient and constant belief of all the faithful, although Serry considers it uncertain and doubtful. St. John Damascene, speaking of St. Anne, says: "With good reason Anne filled with the Holy Ghost, says to all with a happy and joyful spirit: 'Rejoice with me, my sterile womb has given birth to the seed of the promises and I nourish

at my breast the fruit of benediction. I am freed of the sorrow of sterility and I put on the happy robes of fertility.' Euthymius says that whereas Joachim and Anne had lamented and wept because of their sterility, now they receive her who wipes away all their tears, and an ineffable joy replaces their tears and lamentations. Calixtus says that the names of Mary's parents were Joachim and Anne, and that they fulfilled the law carefully; but they were approaching old age without descendants because Anne was sterile.³⁰

There are also arguments of convenience. Illustrious men, considered the best among the Jewish people, were born of parents whose sterility miraculously disappeared, as in the case of Isaac, Samuel, and John the Baptist. But who is holier among the Jewish people and among the whole human race than Mary? Secondly, God willed that Mary's parents, by their resignation, prayers, and pious works, should become worthy to give birth to her who would bear the Lord. Finally, the miracle of Mary's conception was to be the first of a series of miracles. "Why," asks St. John Damascene, "was she born of a sterile woman? Because it was fitting that she who was to be the origin of prodigies should begin by a prodigy and gradually progress from the humblest to the sublime."³¹

As to the revelation made to Joachim and Anne concerning the conception of Mary, St. Epiphanius attests: "We know from the history of Mary and from Tradition that it was announced to Joachim, her father, in the desert."³² St. John Damascene says that the angel announced to her parents the conception of her who was to be born.³³ It was surely fitting on the part of Mary that her conception should be announced, lest she seem to yield to others, such as John the Baptist and Isaac, whose births were foretold.

It was also fitting that her conception be announced, as far as her parents were concerned, so that, having been assured by the angel of God's goodness and mercy, they would thank Him and would care for her diligently, instructing her in holiness.

Did other miracles accompany the conception and birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or did all occur naturally? Prescinding for the moment from her immaculate conception, we may consider the moment of Mary's conception, the time spent in her mother's womb, and her actual birth.

We must reject the error of those who, moved by a false zeal of piety, stated that Mary was conceived by Joachim and Anne, not by the marital act, but simply by a kiss, as was affirmed by some Greeks. This error was condemned by the Holy See in 1677.³⁴

Concerning the formation of Mary's body in her mother's womb, Poza believes that it was the work of a moment, and if we can believe this author, the same opinion was held and published before 1448 by a Parisian Doctor named Philip Malla and by James Granados in his book, *De Conceptione Mariae*. Amadeus, Bishop of Lausanne, held that the body of the Blessed Virgin was perfected in six hours; Mary of Agreda says that it developed in seven days. Vega is of the same opinion, stating that Mary's body was formed in a short time and that it was endowed with rationality and many other prerogatives.³⁵

Regarding Mary's birth, Theophilus Raynaud denied that at the birth of the Blessed Virgin, her mother was exempt from pain and the other discomforts which usually accompany delivery.

THESIS: The Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived by Joachim and Anne naturally, by seminal generation.

St. Bernard says: "No one should say that she was conceived by the Holy Spirit and not by man. This is unheard of. . . . If it is lawful to state the mind of the Church, I say that the glorious Virgin conceived of the Holy Ghost but was not herself conceived by Him; that she gave birth as a virgin, but that she was not herself born of a virgin."³⁶

Theological Argument. 1) It was a singular privilege of Christ to be conceived by a woman outside the marriage act,³⁷ which privilege or miracle is demanded by the dignity of the hypostatic union. Moreover, the Blessed Virgin had need of redemption through Christ, because she was descended from Adam through human generation. Flesh formed by the power of the Holy Ghost would not be subject by generation to the law of original sin.

2) Again, it was fitting that the Virgin be generated from Adam, and according to the law of nature, so that the Mother and the Son would be of human flesh. Otherwise, if the Virgin had been formed of a virgin mother, as Christ was by her, one could suspect that she was not of human flesh. The dignity of Christ's person required that

He be born of a virgin, but if Mary also had been conceived by a virgin, it would have raised a doubt concerning her humanity, and then it would not have been easy to prove the humanity of her Son.

THESIS: The body of the Blessed Virgin Mary was formed in the womb of her mother in the usual manner.

In the *Index* of 1640 we read that John of Poza asserted that the bodies of Jesus and of His Mother were, from the first instant of their conception, endowed with bones, nerves, flesh, and cartilage, just as they possessed at twenty or thirty years of age. The *Index* then orders that these and similar things which surpass the power of nature should be suppressed and deleted. There is no need to assert that the body of the Blessed Virgin was formed in such a short time in the womb of her mother and with such perfection.

Concerning the animation and growth of Mary's body before birth, the teaching of theologians is not unanimous. Some insist that Mary's body, from the first moment of her conception, though not perfectly developed, was sufficiently organized to receive her soul. They considered this rapid organization a special privilege of the Mother of God, since, according to natural law, the organization of a fetus does not take place until at least eighty days after conception. Henry of Ghent and others consider the miraculous formation of Mary's body to be without any historical basis. They maintain that Mary's body was endowed with life on the eightieth day after her conception. Both of the foregoing opinions are based on the Aristotelian theory, held by Scholastics until the seventeenth century; namely, that the human embryo is not animated until it is apt for the reception of the soul.

The common teaching of Catholic philosophers and theologians is that the rational soul is created by God and infused into the body at the moment of conception. Accordingly, we maintain that the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary was endowed with life at the moment of her conception and that her body grew and was perfected according to the laws of nature and in the customary period of time. Contenson says that it is not fitting to imagine ridiculous miracles, which please certain innovators but are not recognized by the Fathers of the Church, nor does the glory of Mary need fictitious and fantastic honors, since she abounds in so many true honors.³⁸

THESIS: The birth of the Blessed Virgin did not inflict pain on the mother.

Cardinal Lepicier teaches that we must affirm that because of the dignity and perfection of the Immaculate Virgin, God bestowed on St. Anne what would have been granted a woman in the state of innocence, that is, to give birth without pain, though she was deprived of this privilege because of original sin. This is not a gratuitous statement, for St. John Damascene says that it was fitting that a miracle prepare the way for the greatest of miracles; namely, the conception of Christ by Mary without the aid of man. Therefore, when we say that St. Anne gave birth to the Mother of God without the loss of her integrity, we do not mean to exclude any rupture or opening, since even in the state of innocence, women would have given birth in the normal fashion and Mary alone gave birth to Christ miraculously, without any of the dilations of the uterus naturally involved in delivery. Hence, we maintain that in giving birth to Mary the womb of St. Anne opened in a natural but painless fashion, for it was not fitting that the birth which was to give such happiness and joy to the world should inflict pain on St. Anne. In this case we may say that God lifted the curse of the pain of childbirth. St. Bernard says that what has been granted to a few should not be denied to Mary, and history states that the mothers of many saints bore them without pain, as in the cases of St. Teresa, St. Lydwina, and St. Stanislaus Kotska. We must conclude that this privilege should likewise be granted to the mother of the Blessed Virgin.³⁹

David J. M. Shea 11th X 11-1986

The Childhood of Mary

There is little to be said in regard to the childhood and adolescence of the Blessed Virgin, that is, of her life from the age of three until her marriage to St. Joseph. While the Evangelists are silent on this point, the apocryphal books describe the life of the Blessed Virgin during this period as full of prodigies. Although we cannot admit all that is narrated, many things may be judged as substantially true because they are based on ancient tradition and accepted by the Fathers of the Church.

It is common opinion that Mary was offered in the Temple by her parents, since the Church celebrates the feast of the Presentation to commemorate the offering of Mary by her parents. However, theologians do not agree on the significance of the name and feast of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple. Serry and Billuart say that under the title and name of the Presentation is celebrated that generous act of the Blessed Virgin whereby she bound herself at a tender age by the vow of virginity and consecrated herself to God by the profession of a more perfect life. It is believed that this was done in the Temple. On the other hand, the prayer of the Church for the feast of the Presentation seems to contradict this and to indicate that the offering was not made by the Blessed Virgin herself, but by others, since the prayer says that she was presented, and not that she presented herself.

The opinion which should be accepted as most certain is that which affirms that the feast of the Presentation commemorates the offering of the Blessed Virgin in the Temple by her parents so that she might be dedicated to the service of God and there be properly trained. Pope Benedict XIV says: "Not wishing to separate ourselves even a little from the common teaching of the Church, we say that the Blessed Virgin was presented in the Temple in order to be perfectly educated there."⁴⁰ This must not be understood as though she could not have been adequately instructed by the holy example of her parents, but that her life would seem holier if she were separated from the world, and her life in the Temple and the service to which she would be dedicated would inspire and instill greater piety in her.

Many of the Greek and Latin Fathers and ecclesiastical writers are of this opinion. St. John Damascene states that she was born in Joachim's house and was later brought to the Temple; there enriched by the Holy Spirit, she became the abode of all the virtues.⁴¹ St. Euthymius says that Zachary received her and placed her in the holy of holies, she who is holier than the saints.⁴² Escolarius, after extolling the virtues of the Blessed Virgin, says that she practiced the virtues from the first moment of her entrance into the Temple at the age of three and that through her education under the high priest and an angel, she progressed in the beauty of age and virtue.⁴³ Denis the Carthusian says that it was fitting that the chosen one, who was to conceive the Lord of the Temple, should herself be consecrated in

the same Temple and there obey the Lord and spend her childhood in pious exercises and be instructed in sacred doctrine.

It was not unusual for the Hebrews to consecrate women to God so that they could perform services fitting to their sex in the Temple. We read in Leviticus: "The man that shall have made a vow, and promised his soul to God, shall give the price according to estimation."⁴⁴ But if a man or woman were consecrated wholly to God, they could not be freed except by death, for we read in verses 28 and 29: "Anything that is devoted to the Lord, whether it be man or beast, or field, shall not be sold, neither may it be redeemed. . . . And any consecration that is offered by man, shall not be redeemed, but dying, shall die."

Now Scripture infers that since the time of Moses and Aaron there were women appointed to the service of the Temple: "The skillful women also gave such things as they had spun, violet, purple, and scarlet, and fine linen"; and: "He made also the laver of brass, with the foot thereof, of the mirrors, of the woman that watched at the door of the tabernacle."⁴⁵ For this reason St. Ambrose says: "We also read that virgins were assigned to the Temple of Jerusalem. But the Apostle Paul says: 'All these things happened to them as a type, and they were written for our correction, upon whom the final age of the world has come'" (I Cor., 10:11).⁴⁶

That all these women consecrated to God and dedicated to the ministry of the Temple not only frequented it constantly, but lived there, is sufficient proof that in the Temple there were dwellings for men and women, as is evident from the life of Samuel, who from a tender age ministered in the Temple.⁴⁷ It is also evident from the case of Josaba, the daughter of King Joram and sister of Ochozias, who, to free Joas, the son of Ochozias, from the anger of Attalia, hid him in the house of the Lord for six years.⁴⁸ Again, there is the case of Anna, the prophetess, who "never left the Temple with fastings and prayers, worshipping night and day."⁴⁹ Josephus refers to the dwellings for women in the Temple, and Origen speaks of a tradition "that there was a place in the Temple where virgins were permitted to live and pray to God, but married women were not allowed to live there."⁵⁰ Cornelius de Lapide writes:

There were in Israel women who, worshipping God and disdaining the vanity of the world and desiring only to please God, consecrated

themselves to Him. They came daily to the courtyard to pray and to hear the commandments of God. This custom continued after the erection of this solemn tabernacle and especially after the construction of the Temple, when certain dwellings were constructed at the door or atrium of the tabernacle, like Anna the prophetess.⁵¹ . . . From the time of her presentation at the age of three, the Blessed Virgin lived among these women and was educated there. It was like a religious community of devoted women, the type and shadow of our religious women today.⁵²

The same teaching is held by authors of our time, such as De la Broisse⁵³ and Morineau, who said: "It seems that this point of history is firmly established. It is not a question of the infallibility of the Church, but this truth emerges from the apocryphal gospels, in spite of the fantasies with which it is surrounded. The Greek Fathers did not preach otherwise concerning Mary's infancy, so that one could say that it comes from the first generation of Christians. Thus, the feast of the Presentation, older in the Eastern Church than in the Roman, has a firm traditional foundation. Moreover, there is nothing unlikely in her sojourn in the Temple. Women could dedicate themselves to the Lord. Without taking part in liturgical services as such, they could embroider, take part in the chant and in certain ceremonies. There were buildings reserved for them. It was there that Joachim and Anne brought their child."⁵⁴

It is likely that the Blessed Virgin's parents had vowed to consecrate their child to God and they fulfilled this vow by offering Mary in the Temple, imitating Anna, the mother of Samuel, who being sterile, had vowed to offer to God the son who would be born to her. St. John Damascene expressly teaches this when he says: "Just as the ancient Anna, suffering from sterility and having made a vow, gave birth to Samuel, so this other Anne, by her prayers and promise to God, merited to bear the Mother of God."⁵⁵

According to accounts in the apocryphal books, the presentation of Mary in the Temple was not without pomp, and wonderful things happened at her dedication and during her stay in the Temple. In accordance with the promise made by her parents, Mary was taken to the Temple at the age of three, accompanied by many young Hebrew girls, carrying torches; and she was attended by the primates of Jerusalem and by singing angels. There were fifteen steps leading to the

Temple, which Mary, though a small child, climbed without any help. At the door she was received by the priests and levites who were associated with the high priest. After kissing her, they led her to the third step of the altar.

The apocryphal writers mention many wonders connected with Mary's stay in the Temple. For example, she did not eat ordinary food, but was fed by angels; she did not live in the common dwelling, but in the holy of holies, in which the high priest was allowed to enter only once a year. Having completed her eleventh year, the high priest wished to arrange a marriage for her and by divine inspiration he called together suitable men of the tribe of Juda. Each carried a staff, but the only one which blossomed was Joseph's, and the Holy Spirit came down upon him alone in the form of a dove. This made it clear that Joseph had been chosen by the Holy Spirit as spouse and guardian of Mary's virginity.

These public and prodigious signs which are said to have happened while Mary was in the Temple are uncertain or even false. If so many honors and prodigies had surrounded the infancy and childhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary, she would have acquired great renown among the Jews and her name would have been venerated by the members of her tribe, who undoubtedly would have surmised that she was to be the Mother of the Messias. In that case, the Jews would not have offered as an insult to Christ the lowly condition of His Mother, in order to belittle His miracles, wisdom, and virtues; nor would they have said: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary. . . . Then where did he get all this?"⁵⁶

The accompaniment of young girls with burning torches is nothing but an unfounded conjecture, perhaps taken from our use of candles in sacred ceremonies. The procession of the primates of the city accompanying the child not only supposes that Joachim belonged to a noble family, which can readily be granted, but that he was very wealthy, to the point of being numbered among the important people of the city, who, in order to honor him, would have been present at the offering of his daughter. But Joachim was not wealthy; he was of moderate means.

Although St. Antoninus and St. Bernardine of Busti say that the Blessed Virgin climbed the fifteen steps of the Temple without any help, there are no ancient documents of any value which enable us to

accept this story without distrust, chiefly because it is not at all certain that there were fifteen steps leading to the Temple.

Concerning the accompaniment of an angelic choir at the time of Mary's presentation in the Temple, Trombelli says that the angels rejoice and sing because of our good acts and that they would with greater reason do so at Mary's presentation, but that he would demand many ancient and serious proofs before believing that the angels were visible and that their songs were heard by men.

The story of the nourishing of the Blessed Virgin by the hands of the angels has no foundation whatever, for although certain writers such as Gregory of Nicodemia, Cedrenus, and John of Cartagena affirm it, they are not to be believed, for they took this account from the apocryphal books.

Mary's entrance into the holy of holies cannot be accepted as true because the Apostle says that only the high priest was allowed to enter the holy of holies, and that only once a year.⁵⁷ This reservation was still in force among the Jews during the time of Philo, as he states in the book, *De Legatione ad Cajum Imperatorem*. It does not seem likely that the priests and levites would admit to the holy of holies a little girl whose eminent virtues and purity were evident, but whose sublime dignity to which God had destined her was still concealed.

The tradition of the blossoming staff and the appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove in choosing St. Joseph as Mary's spouse was widely accepted in the early centuries. However, it is very difficult to admit this prodigy, since the Latin Fathers are completely silent on this point. If we find any remnants of it among the Greek Fathers, it is evident that they were over-credulous in accepting it from the apocryphal books. Moreover, unfounded and unnecessary miracles cannot be accepted. It was unfounded and unnecessary because Mary's marriage to St. Joseph was to be different, was provided for in a different manner. It would not be far from the truth were we to say that this dream of the apocryphal author was taken from the Book of Numbers, in which we read that God confirmed by the miracle of the blossoming rod, the priesthood conferred on Aaron: "Whomsoever of these I shall choose, his rod shall blossom. . . . He returned on the following day and found that the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi, was budded: and that the buds swelling, it had bloomed blossoms, which spreading the leaves, were formed into al-

monds."⁵⁸ Notwithstanding, the Church has permitted that St. Joseph be portrayed with a blossomed rod in his hand, not to confirm the account in the apocryphal books, but to draw the faithful to imitate, under this symbol, the excellent virtues, especially perpetual virginity, of the chaste spouse of the Mother of God.

Apropos of this, Cardinal Dubois says that the art of the Middle Ages was inspired by the *Golden Legend* of James of Voragine, who drew greatly on the apocryphal books. Giotto's frescoes at Padua and the miniature portraits scattered in museums and libraries illustrate the story summarized above, but remain a dead letter for one who meditates on them, if he does not know the legend. As for explaining the lily placed in Joseph's hand by recent painters, it is likely that these painters are ignorant of the legend that has long been forgotten and simply wish to call attention to the virginity of Mary's chaste spouse.⁵⁹

The Betrothal and Marriage of Mary and Joseph

According to many interpreters of Sacred Scripture, one must distinguish two acts in the celebration of marriage among the Jews, at least in the last centuries before Christ: the betrothal and the solemnization of the nuptials. Betrothal among the Jews was not the same as ours, which is a solemn promise of future marriage. In the Old Law, the betrothal constituted a true marriage. Even before the nuptials, the betrothed enjoyed the marriage rights, although the bride did not live with her husband immediately after the espousal, but continued to live in the paternal home until she was conducted to the house of her husband where the solemn nuptials were celebrated. During the period of betrothal, the bride and groom could use the marriage right if they wished. This was not considered fornication, but the true marriage act, and the offspring was considered legitimate. The groom had to give his bride a bill of divorce if he didn't wish to take her as his wife later. In case of infidelity that could be proved legally, the bride was stoned as an adulteress.⁶⁰

It is certain that Mary was betrothed to St. Joseph. Thus, we read in Scripture: "When Mary His Mother had been betrothed to Joseph,

before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit." 61 "The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary." 62

THESIS: A true marriage existed between Mary and Joseph.

Pelagian denied that Mary and Joseph were really married because the marriage was not consummated, and this constitutes the essence of a true marriage. Wycliff also held this opinion. Among Catholics, Gratian, Medina, and Freisen (who asserts that the marriage contract is essentially a promise of future carnal union) also maintain that there was no true marriage between Mary and Joseph.

Canisius believed that the existence of a true marriage between Mary and Joseph can be defended in accordance with one's judgment. Suárez 63 held it to be a matter of faith and as such, accepted by all theologians. Vázquez and Pope Benedict XIV cautiously call it certain, so that the contrary opinion should be considered temerarious.

Sacred Scripture. St. Matthew says: "Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, and of her was born Jesus who is called Christ"; and "Joseph, her husband, being a just man. . . . Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take Mary thy wife." 64 In St. Luke we read: "And Joseph also went from Galilee out of the town of Nazareth, into Judea to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem . . . to register, together with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child." 65 Thus, we see that Joseph was called the spouse of Mary, and Mary, the spouse of Joseph, titles which could not properly be applied except to people united by a true bond of matrimony.

Joseph is called the father of Christ in St. Luke: "And His father and mother were marvelling at the things spoken concerning Him"; 66 and in verse 48: "And when they saw Him, they were astonished. And His mother said to Him, 'Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, in sorrow Thy father and I have been seeking Thee.'" Similarly, Jesus is called the son of Joseph: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary?" 67 "The Jews therefore murmured about Him because He had said, 'I am the bread that has come down from heaven'; and they kept saying, 'Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?'" 68 Moreover, Mary and Joseph are called the parents of Jesus: "And when His parents brought in the Child, Jesus"; "His parents were wont to go every year to Jeru-

salem"; "The boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents did not know it." 69 Since we are certain through faith that Jesus did not originate from Joseph, there can be no other reason for these titles, except that Joseph was, by a true and public marriage, the husband of Mary, who engendered Christ according to the flesh.

We read in St. Matthew: "When Mary, His Mother, had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit"; and in St. Luke: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God . . . to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph." 70 Commenting on these words, Palmieri argues that either the nuptials had been completed or they had not yet been solemnized. If it was the former, it was a true marriage according to the Jews; if the latter, the betrothal itself constituted true marriage among the Jews, since the leading of the bride to her husband's house or the celebration of the wedding gave the couple the right to use the power already agreed upon and accepted. And if matrimony consisted in the granting of this power, then the Blessed Virgin Mary was married to St. Joseph. With regard to the latter, if something was lacking to the marriage, such as the solemnization of the nuptials, it was because they had not as yet done so. Otherwise, according to the law, Joseph should have given Mary a bill of divorce.⁷¹

The Fathers. Origen says: "Christ had to be born of a virgin who not only had a husband but, as St. Matthew says, who was given to a man, although the man did not know her. . . . Her virginity was concealed from the prince of this world (the devil); it was hidden by Joseph, by the marriage, and because it was thought that she knew man." 72 St. Basil says that although Joseph treated Mary with all the love and attention proper to married couples, he abstained from the marital act. St. Ambrose states that it matters not that Holy Scripture frequently refers to her as a wife, for that does not refer to the loss of her virginity, but merely testifies to her marriage. St. Augustine says even more clearly: "You argue against my opinion because I called Joseph Mary's husband, as the Gospel attests, and you try to prove that there was no true marriage because there was no marital act. Then, according to you, if a husband and wife cease to have sexual relations, this cessation would be equivalent to a divorce." 73 In another passage he says that because of their true marriage, both deserve to be called Christ's parents.

Some of the Fathers seem to use phrases which indicate that Mary

and Joseph were only betrothed and not united by a true bond of matrimony. Thus, St. Gregory the Great says that God willed that Mary should take a husband, but without solemnizing the nuptials; St. Hilary says that it is better to speak of Mary as the Mother of Christ, which she was, than the wife of Joseph, which she was not; St. Jerome says that Joseph was Mary's guardian rather than her husband; St. Bernard says that the Evangelists refer to Joseph as a just man, not because he was her husband, but because he was a man of virtue. However, these and similar expressions should be interpreted in the sense of a consummated marriage, since the Fathers only wished to point out that the Mother of God preserved her virginity intact and that there was no consummation of the marriage. For that reason they carefully refrained from using the words, wife, husband, and marriage, because although these terms can refer to persons who preserve virginity in an unconsummated marriage, they seem to infer the idea of a consummated marriage.

Theological Argument. 1) A true marriage is one which attains its perfection. But the marriage between Mary and Joseph attained that perfection, both in its primary and essential perfection and in its secondary and accidental perfection, or at least, in part.

The first perfection consists in its very form, from which it receives its species; while the second perfection of a thing attains its end. Now the form of matrimony consists in a certain inseparable union of souls, by which husband and wife are pledged by a bond of mutual affection that cannot be broken. The end of matrimony is the begetting and upbringing of children: the first of which is attained by marital intercourse; the second, by the duties of husband and wife, by which they help one another in rearing their offspring. Thus we may say of the first perfection that the marriage of the Mother of God and Joseph was absolutely true, because both consented to the nuptial bond, but not expressly to the bond of the flesh, save on the condition that it was pleasing to God. For this reason the angel calls Mary the wife of Joseph, saying to him: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife,"⁷⁴ on which words Augustine comments: "She is called his wife from the first promise of her espousals, whom he had not known nor ever was to know by carnal intercourse."⁷⁵

But as to the second perfection which is attained by the marriage act, if this refers to carnal intercourse by which children are begotten, this marriage was not consummated. Wherefore Ambrose says on Luke

1:26-27: "Be not surprised that Scripture calls Mary a wife. The fact of her marriage is declared, not to insinuate the loss of virginity, but to witness to the reality of the union." Nevertheless, this marriage had the second perfection, as to upbringing of the child. Thus Augustine says: "All the nuptial blessings are fulfilled in the marriage of Christ's parents: offspring, faith and sacrament. The offspring we know to have been the Lord Jesus; faith, for there was no adultery; sacrament, since there was no divorce. Carnal intercourse alone there was none."⁷⁶

2) Many arguments of convenience prove the true marriage of Mary and Joseph. The principal ones are: first, that Christ would not be rejected by the Jews as illegitimate, for if in spite of thinking Him born legitimately, they rejected Him as the son of a workman,⁷⁷ what would they have done if it could be proved that He was illegitimate? Secondly, in order to trace Christ's genealogy through the father, as was the custom, for if St. Joseph had not been the husband of Mary, they could not have derived the lineage of Christ from him, for neither by flesh nor by matrimonial right would he have been His father. On the other hand, since Mary was the true spouse of Joseph according to law, which prescribed that female heirs should marry a kinsman, the origin of Mary and her Son from the race of David was well established. Thirdly, that Joseph, with Mary, might serve as helper and guardian of the Child Jesus and provide Him the necessities of life. Fourthly, so that the birth of Christ would be hidden from the devil under the veil of matrimony lest the devil attack Christ before it was time for Him to suffer or manifest His power. Although the devil, by his natural wit and intelligence, could recognize that Mary remained whole and incorrupt after childbirth, nevertheless he did not discover this, but believed that she had given birth in a natural way and he did not investigate further. St. Basil says that the devil was deceived by Mary's public betrothal because he knew that it had been prophesied that a virgin would conceive and bring forth a son.⁷⁸ Fifthly, so that Mary would be free of the disgrace of having lost her virginity and from the punishment of being stoned, if the Jews had seen her bring forth a child outside of wedlock. Sixthly, the testimony of Joseph would prove her purity and the virgin birth. Thus, St. Bernard states that as that doubting Thomas is a most firm witness of the resurrection of Christ, so Joseph, by marrying and caring for Mary, is a most faithful witness of her purity.⁷⁹

3) Like every contract, marriage is perfected essentially by the mutual consent of the contracting parties. Thus Pope Eugene IV, in his decree *Pro Armenis*, states that the efficient cause of matrimony is generally the mutual consent expressed by words, and this applies to matrimony among all peoples under every law, natural, Mosaic, or Christian. In addition to the consent of the contracting parties, which constitutes marriage *in fieri*, many other things can be distinguished in matrimony, for example: the conjugal bond which results from the contract and constitutes marriage *in facto esse*; the radical right and power with its correlative obligation in both parties to the marriage act; the proximate right to the marriage act; and the actual use of this right.

It is true that marriage cannot be understood without some relation to the marital act. First, because marriage by its very nature is ordained to the procreation of children; secondly, because the union of souls by the mutual love of the spouses, although it may be a condition for a successful marriage, does not constitute marriage. If marriage consisted only in a union of love and cohabitation, says Hugh of St. Victor,⁸⁰ marriage would exist between brothers and sisters and even between persons of the same sex, not through any carnal act, but through mutual love and cohabitation.

The use of the marital act is not of the essence of marriage. The *Roman Catechism* teaches that besides the consent expressed by word of mouth by the two parties, the use of the marital right is not necessary for true marriage. Our first parents, before the Fall, were joined in true marriage, without sexual relations, according to the testimony of the Fathers. These same Fathers taught that marriage consists in the consent and not in the marital act.

Nor does proximate right to coition pertain to the essence of matrimony. This right presupposes the legitimate union of man and wife, and even after marriage has been contracted, the spouses could agree, temporarily or perpetually, not to use this right, but true marriage would still exist. The radical right to the marriage act is not distinguished from the marriage bond, for this is the basic root of all the rights and obligations of married couples regarding the marriage act and the other ends of marriage.

Consequently, we must say that the marriage of Mary and Joseph, although a most chaste one, cannot be understood without some

reference to the marital act. The consent of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph in the celebration of their marriage would not refer to the use of the marriage act or even the proximate right to that act, but it would necessarily refer to the indissoluble marriage bond, without which marriage could not exist, and to the radical right to the marriage act which is included in the nature of marriage. We cannot infer from this that the consent of the Blessed Virgin could not extend to that radical right to coition without tending implicitly to the marriage act itself. Sánchez says that the implicit consent to the marriage act can be understood in two ways: first, on the part of the contract, and in this sense the implicit consent to the marriage act was necessary since the marriage contract is intrinsically ordained to the marital act; secondly, on the part of the contracting party, and in this sense the implicit consent to coition is not necessary; consequently, although the contracting party does not intend to consent to coition, a true marriage exists.⁸¹

This explanation does not satisfy many authors and they assert that the Blessed Virgin's consent did not refer either implicitly or virtually to the marriage act because this act is not a necessary effect of the matrimonial bond nor of the radical right. The marriage act is neither virtually nor tacitly contained in the marriage bond nor in the radical right. Therefore, although the consent required for matrimony has as its object the marriage bond and radical right, which is one with the essence of matrimony, it does not have to refer either implicitly or tacitly to the marriage act, although it is connoted *in obliquo*.⁸² All of this demonstrates the fact that the Blessed Virgin's marriage did not in the least affect her virginity.

THE S I S : *The time of Mary and Joseph's marriage.*

Calmet, Knabenbauer, Van-Steenkiste, Fillion, and Campana hold that the marriage was solemnized after the Annunciation and that, therefore, the Virgin conceived Christ after her betrothal but before the nuptials were solemnized. We read in St. Luke: "The angel Gabriel was sent . . . to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph."⁸³ This indicates that they were espoused, and that this is what was meant, we conclude from St. Matthew, where Joseph, worried on discovering the pregnancy of the Virgin Mary, was assured by the angel: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to thee Mary,

thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit." ⁸⁴ The words "to take" signify to solemnize the betrothal by marriage. Again, in St. Matthew: "Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit." ⁸⁵ Here the words signify that they had not as yet celebrated the nuptials, at which time the husband brought his wife to live in his home. Among the Jews, the nuptials were celebrated when the husband received his wife and brought her to his home. Joseph received Mary, his wife, and led her to his home after the Annunciation and virginal conception, that is, after the angel had instructed him on the mystery of the Incarnation and assured him of the fidelity and integrity of Mary. ⁸⁶ Immediately after the Annunciation, Mary went in haste into the hill country, into a city of Juda to visit Elizabeth. Holy Scripture does not mention that Mary was accompanied by anyone on this journey, but if the marriage had been solemnized, Mary would not have made the journey of three or four days without St. Joseph.

Cornelius a Lapide, Suárez, Maldonado, Benedict XIV, Palmieri, and Lepicier believe that Mary and Joseph were married before the Annunciation and that she conceived Christ after being betrothed and married. Had Mary not been married before the Annunciation, since she immediately went to Elizabeth and remained there for about three months, she would not have been married until three months after the conception of her Son, at which time gestation is manifest in the womb. According to this hypothesis, the Blessed Virgin would have been noticeably pregnant before becoming Joseph's wife and would have given birth to her Son six months after her marriage. This would entail a loss of prestige by the mother and her Son, and one of two things might be said by unbelievers: either the Virgin had conceived in adultery, or she had acted contrary to the law and had carnal relations with her husband before the celebration of the nuptials. This union before the nuptials, although legitimate and valid, was looked upon as unchaste and dishonest.

Noticing the external signs of pregnancy and being ignorant of the mystery, Joseph wished to put Mary away privately. ⁸⁷ This secret separation would have preserved the Virgin's honor if it had taken place after the nuptials, but not before them. After the nuptials, people could have thought ill of Joseph, but not of Mary who, giving birth at a legitimate time, would not have lost her reputation of chastity. If, on the contrary, the separation had taken place before

the nuptials, the Virgin's disgrace would have been very grave, because the fact that the bridegroom would put her away before the nuptials would have given the impression that she had conceived by someone else. ⁸⁸

THESES: The ages of Mary and Joseph at the time of their marriage.

There are two opinions among ecclesiastical writers with respect to Mary and Joseph's ages at the time they married. Calixtus, Christopher de Castro, St. Bonaventure, Suárez, Vázquez, and many moderns believe that Mary was about fourteen or fifteen years old when she married St. Joseph. St. Albert the Great, Cajetan, Serry, and Billuart say that the Blessed Virgin was older when she married; St. Albert says at least twenty-five years old and Cajetan considers twenty-four or perhaps nineteen reasonable because, as Suárez says, she needed a strong and perfect body, in order to conceive her Son. Serry and Billuart believe that she was even older. Although there is nothing certain regarding their ages, the first opinion is most common and the most probable, since the Fathers tell us that it was the Jewish custom to marry off one's daughters when they were young. Mary's nuptials were not deferred; rather, there was a special reason for hastening them, so that the desires of the patriarchs and fathers would be fulfilled sooner.

With regard to Joseph's age, the ancients held that he was already old. St. Epiphanius believes that he took Mary as his wife when he was about eighty years of age; ⁸⁹ Gerson says that Joseph was about seventy. The most common opinion is that Joseph was not old when he married the Blessed Virgin, but that he had attained to the perfect age of man, that is, around thirty or at most forty years of age.

The Virgin Mary was given to St. Joseph in marriage so that he would be her protector and the guardian of her chastity and that her Child could be attributed to her husband by those who did not know the mystery worked in her. Therefore, it is not likely that he was an old man. Moreover, he was to help, feed, and educate her Child, and to be her companion.

According to Janssens, one does not have to reject the statues and paintings that portray him as a man advanced in years. Neither is it necessary to reject those which show him as a young man, holding the Child Jesus in his arms. ⁹⁰

By what means was the marriage of Mary and Joseph arranged?

We may surmise that the marriage of Mary and Joseph was not verified without the special disposition of God, since the Church, on the Feast of the Solemnity of St. Joseph, says: "O God, who in Thine unspeakable providence, didst vouchsafe to choose blessed Joseph for Thy most holy Mother's spouse." But how was divine providence fulfilled?

According to the apocryphal accounts, Joseph was chosen the spouse of Mary by the miracle of the blossoming rod, but this account has been rejected. Others say that it was by divine inspiration. Thus, St. Gregory Nazianzen says that under divine inspiration the priests took counsel and decided to give the Virgin in marriage to the man who would best guard her virginity.⁹¹ Others resort to the ministry of an angel, like Trombelli, who asserts that although the Gospels are silent on the point, it must be believed that it was by express sign of an angel, inasmuch as the redemption of the world and the education of Mary's Son depended on it.

However, it would seem better to say that Mary contracted marriage with Joseph because, as the only child and heir of her parents' goods, she had to marry Joseph in virtue of the prescription of the Mosaic precept: "Let them marry to whom they will, only so that it be to men of their own tribe. . . . For all men shall marry wives of their own tribe and kindred; and all women shall take husbands of the same tribe, that the inheritance may remain in the families and that the tribes be not mingled one with the other, but remain so, as they were separated by the Lord."⁹² St. Jerome proves this by saying that Mary and Joseph were of the same tribe, and according to the law they were obliged to marry within the same tribe. St. John Damascene states it more clearly when he says that Joseph, who was of the tribe of David and a just man, would not have married the holy Virgin if she had not been of the same tribe. Hence, Lepicier concludes that God arranged the marriage of Mary with Joseph by no other means than the fixed prescription of the Mosaic law. Through the mediation of Moses, God sanctioned that law in preparation for this singular marriage, from which so much good was to come to the human race.

Mary, Mother of God

*

Predestination to the Divine Maternity

ACCORDING to the etymology of the word, predestination means to determine to do something before actually doing it, or to direct or destine one thing to another before carrying it through. Predestination can be understood in a wide sense or in a strict sense. Taken in a wide sense, it designates the pre-ordination or intention of doing something at a future date; in the strict sense, it denotes the divine pre-ordination of things which will be accomplished through grace. Thus, St. Thomas says that predestination in its proper sense is a certain divine pre-ordination from all eternity of those things which are to be done in time through the grace of God.¹

By its very nature, predestination is directed to the supernatural union of the soul with God. This union is twofold: one, according to operation, which attains its ultimate perfection in the beatific vision; and the other, according to being, through which God is united to a creature in its very subsistence, so that it can be said properly that God is man hypostatically.

Although predestination in men is understood principally as the predestination to beatitude or eternal life, which is attained by grace and merits, in Christ it devolves on the hypostatic union itself, from which flow connaturally all the gifts of grace and all the prerogatives that exist in Him. That is why St. Thomas, when treating of the mystery of the Incarnation, proposes the question of the predestination of Christ as the Son of God.²

By analogous reasoning, since the divine maternity approaches the hypostatic order and is the root and foundation of the other graces and prerogatives which were given to the Virgin, we shall first study

her predestination to the divine maternity and then her predestination to grace and glory.

THESES: *The Blessed Virgin was predestined to the divine maternity.*

Magisterium of the Popes. In the Bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, by Pope Pius IX, we read: "From the very beginning, and before time began, the Eternal Father chose and prepared for His only-begotten Son a Mother in whom the Son of God would become incarnate and from whom, in the blessed fullness of time, He would be born into this world. Above all creatures did God so love her that truly in her was the Father well pleased with singular delight."

Sacred Scripture. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made." ³ "I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the firstborn before all creatures." ⁴ Again, in his Bull *Ineffabilis*, Pope Pius IX says: "The very words with which the Sacred Scriptures speak of Uncreated Wisdom and set forth His eternal origin, the Church, both in its ecclesiastical offices and in its liturgy, has been wont to apply likewise to the origin of the Blessed Virgin, inasmuch as God, by one and the same decree, had established the origin of Mary and the incarnation of Divine Wisdom."

Fathers and Doctors. St. Augustine says that before He was born of her, He knew His Mother in her predestination. St. Bernard says that an angel was sent to the Virgin Mary, a virgin in flesh, in mind, in will; a virgin, as the Apostle describes her, holy in soul and in body. And she was not found by chance, but she was chosen from the beginning of time, foreknown and prepared by the Most High, guarded by the angels, foretold by the patriarchs, and promised by the prophets.

Theological Argument. Predestination is the eternal divine preordination of those things which, by the grace of God, will be accomplished in time. Therefore, if the Blessed Virgin, by the singular grace of God, became the Mother of God in time, it is evident that she must have been predestined to it from all eternity.

THESES: *The predestination of the Blessed Virgin as Mother of God depends on the prevision of Adam's sin in such a way that if*

Adam had not sinned, Mary would not have been predestined to the divine maternity.

It is evident that the Blessed Virgin, by reason of her predestination to the divine maternity, cannot be separated from Christ in this predestination, since Mother and Son are correlatives which exist with a simultaneity of nature and knowledge. Hence, we must say that God predestined, in one and the same decree, the Incarnation and the divine maternity of the Virgin, as the liturgy clearly states: "O almighty and merciful God, who from all eternity hast, in the spirit of sanctification, predestined according to the flesh, Thine only-begotten, co-equal and consubstantial Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: and has singled out before all ages the most holy and acceptable Virgin Mary to be His Mother." ⁵

It is likewise indubitable that the Incarnation of the Word was decreed by God for the redemption of the human race, as Sacred Scripture clearly attests: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost"; ⁶ "But when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." ⁷ We confess this same doctrine in the *Credo*: "For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven." It follows that Christ not only actually came as a Redeemer, of human lineage, and that the Blessed Virgin was thereby the Mother of the Redeemer, but they were both predestined—Christ as the Redeemer of men and Mary as the Mother of the Redeemer—since the order of execution manifests the order of intention.

Therefore, the question is whether Christ, with His Mother Mary, was predestined in the order of intention, before all creatures, for the glory of Christ, the exaltation of human nature, and the beauty of the whole universe, independent of the foreknowledge of sin, so that in the actual decree and historical reason for the Incarnation He appears primarily as Head of all the universe and Firstborn of all creation, and then as Redeemer of the human race, consequent upon the prevision of sin; or whether the Incarnation was prepared purely and simply as a remedy for sin, in such wise that it was decreed only after the foreknowledge of sin, so that Christ would appear in the intentional decree of the Incarnation primarily as Redeemer of the human race, and Mary as Mother of the Redeemer.

Opinions. The Scotists affirm that the decree of the Incarnation was formulated prior to the prevision of sin, for the glory of Christ and beauty of the universe, and that Christ was predestined as Redeemer after the prevision of sin and the fall of Adam. In this case, although Christ would not have assumed a passible, but a glorious body, it would not follow that it would not be necessary to choose a mother who would bear Him and give Him birth, but He would have proceeded glorious from her womb.

Thomists generally maintain that the Incarnation, having been decreed by God after the prevision of Adam's sin, was ordained exclusively to the redemption of the human race, so that if there had been no sin, the Incarnation would never have been realized. Therefore, Christ appears in the intentional decree of the Incarnation as a Redeemer, and Mary, as Mother of the Redeemer.

Suárez attempts to reconcile these two opinions by establishing a double decree of the Incarnation, in harmony with the double total motive: one absolute, namely, the glory of Christ, and the other hypothetical, namely, the redemption of the human race in the event of Adam's sin. Molina also tried to reconcile the two opinions, postulating one decree which comprised both, in which the creation and redemption, with some mutual dependence, are decreed by God. The Carmelites of Salamanca, while teaching that the redemption of man is the only adequate motive for the Incarnation, classify the divine decrees in such a way that Christ was willed simply, as *finis cuius gratia*, and the salvation of man was willed as *finis cui*.

Magisterium of the Popes. *Ineffabilis Deus* of Pope Pius IX states:

God ineffable . . . having foreseen from all eternity the lamentable wretchedness of the entire human race which would result from the sin of Adam, decreed, by a plan hidden from the centuries, to complete the first work of His goodness by a mystery yet more wondrously sublime through the incarnation of the Word. This He decreed in order that man who, contrary to the plan of divine mercy, had been led into sin by the cunning malice of Satan, would not perish; and in order that what had been lost in the first Adam would be gloriously restored by the second Adam. From the very beginning, and before time began, the Eternal Father chose and prepared for His only-begotten Son a Mother in whom the Son of God would become incarnate and from whom, in the blessed fullness of time, He would

be born into this world. Above all creatures did God so love her that truly in her was the Father well pleased with singular delight.

The Fathers. St. Augustine says that if there had been no transgression on our part, our redemption would not have followed, since there would have been no need of redeeming the sinner. He then asks why Mary should be the Mother of the Savior, if there was no need for salvation.⁸ St. Andrew of Crete exclaims that if there were no Cross, Christ would not have come to earth, nor the Virgin, nor would the second birth of Christ have been realized.⁹ Eadmer says that she was made the Mother of God more for sinners than for the just, since her own Son said that He did not come to call the just, but the sinners, and the Apostle also said that He came to save sinners.¹⁰

Theological Argument. The divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin was not decreed except through the incarnation of the Word. But since the Incarnation, by being ordained exclusively to the redemption of the human race, would not have existed had Adam not sinned, neither would the divine maternity have existed.

THESIS: The Virgin Mary was predestined to be the Mother of God by the gratuitous will of God, prior to any prevision of merit.

Vázquez asserts that Mary was chosen to be the Mother of God after the prevision of her merits.¹¹ This opinion is commonly rejected by theologians, headed by Suárez, who says that it is certain that the Blessed Virgin was chosen and predestined from all eternity to the dignity of the Mother of God before the prevision of her merits.¹²

All the merits of the Blessed Virgin are founded on the graces bestowed on her and their consequences. But all these graces derive from the divine maternity as their root and foundation; therefore, Mary was predestined to this motherhood gratuitously and before all prevision of any kind of merit.

The notable prerogative of the immaculate conception, since it refers to the first instant of the Blessed Virgin's life, necessarily precedes all her merit. Now, the immaculate conception was bestowed on Mary in view of her maternity, so that she was predestined to the former because she was chosen for the latter.

THESIS: In the order of execution the Blessed Virgin did not merit the divine maternity de condigno.

It is one thing to merit some dignity and another to merit the disposition necessary for the worthy reception of that dignity. If there is no physical connection between the disposition and the dignity, but only a moral and congruous relation, they can be separated. Therefore, although one is worthily disposed to receive a dignity, it may happen that the dignity is in no way due to the individual. Thus, the doctorate disposes one more for the episcopacy, but the dignity is not due an individual on that account.

It is certain that the Blessed Virgin was worthily disposed to be the Mother of God. Thus, the Church proclaims her in her liturgy: "O God . . . you preserved the Virgin Mother immaculate at her conception so that she might be a fitting dwelling place for Your Son."¹³ She was immune from all sin and adorned, from the first moment of her conception, with pre-eminent habitual grace, a most worthy disposition for the divine maternity. Further, her extraordinary graces and growth in virtue, her works and condign merits, by which grace and virtue were augmented up to the time of the conception of her Son, all contributed to this disposition. On her part (*ex opere operantis*), the Blessed Virgin obtained this disposition for divine maternity by works and merits. Hence, Gotti says that as the just man, by works performed in grace, merits *de condigno* an increase in that grace, so the Blessed Virgin, by the fervent acts of charity which she performed, merited *de condigno* that high degree of sanctity so that she rather than any other was chosen as the Mother of God.¹⁴ Therefore, the question is whether the Blessed Virgin merited the divine maternity *de condigno* or *de congruo*.

Opinions. Gabriel Biel affirms that the Blessed Virgin merited the divine maternity *de condigno*.¹⁵ Janssens believes that the merit was not strictly *de condigno* but that she came as close as possible to it.¹⁶

St. Bonaventure, distinguishing between merit *de congruo*, *de digno*, and *de condigno*, affirms that the most Blessed Virgin merited to be the Mother of God surely, not by any merit *de condigno*, but *de congruo* before the annunciation and *de digno* after it. He applies the merit *de digno* to that work which is not in itself equal in dignity to the reward, but which obtains it through the mercy of God, who accepts such a work for such a reward.¹⁷

Loeza denies *de congruo* merit of the divine maternity, both in a strict sense or of retribution (for which some promise of the maternity

as a reward would be necessary—a promise we do not find in Sacred Scripture) and in a wide sense or of imputation (for it is not likely that the Blessed Virgin, in her humility, would have requested the divine maternity which, on the other hand, she accepted when the angel announced it, as something unexpected).¹⁸

The surest and most common opinion is that the Blessed Virgin merited the divine maternity *de congruo*. Among the defenders of this opinion, some, like Sylvius, Billuart, and Paquet, understand merit *de congruo* improperly speaking; others, like Gonet, Hugon, and Bittremieux, refer to merit *de congruo* properly speaking.

The Fathers. St. Augustine, addressing the Blessed Virgin, exclaims: "Who art thou who will conceive? Whence did you merit it? From whom have you received it? How shall He who made thee be formed in thee? Whence, I ask, such a great blessing for thee? Thou art a virgin; thou art holy; thou hast taken a vow. Thou hast merited much, but thou hast received much. But how did you merit this? Let the angel answer. Tell me, angel, whence comes this to Mary? I have already said, when I saluted her: *Ave, gratia plena*."¹⁹

Theological Argument. 1) Merit *de condigno* must be proportionate to the reward. But the Blessed Virgin could not merit the divine maternity condignly because her merits were of an inferior order of grace and, therefore, were disproportionate to the divine maternity, which belongs to the hypostatic order.

2) The Blessed Virgin's merit *de condigno* proceeded from sanctifying grace, which gave all her acts a supernatural dignity. Now, such meritorious acts are ordained to the increase of that grace and to the attainment of glory, so that they are compensated in full value by that increase of grace and glory. Thus, St. Thomas says: "The meritorious works of man are properly ordained to beatitude, which is the reward of virtue and consists in the full fruition of God."²⁰

3) For merit *de condigno*, besides the dignity of the work, God's promise is required to give a reward to the works accepted by Him. And it is clear that the most Blessed Virgin was not promised the divine maternity as a reward for her good works, since neither Tradition nor Scripture tell us so.

4) If the Blessed Virgin had merited the divine maternity condignly, she would also have merited the hypostatic order and the incarnation of the Word, for although the Incarnation could have

been realized without her maternity (the Word could have assumed human nature without the work of a woman), the divine maternity could not have existed without the Incarnation. And as the merit *de condigno* of the Incarnation is impossible to any creature, it is logical that the divine maternity could not be merited condignly.

THESIS: *The Blessed Virgin Mary, in the order of execution, merited the divine maternity de congruo, both in the strict and wide sense.*

The thesis must be understood of the merit of the divine maternity taken inadequately, which consists in the corporal conception and birth of the Son of God, for if it is understood in a total and adequate sense, it must be said that the Blessed Virgin was adorned with the dignity of Mother from the first moment of her existence. She was Mother of God before the conception and birth of Christ, not actually, but in the divine predestination or morally. In this sense the divine maternity is prior, at least in nature, to every meritorious action of the Blessed Virgin.²¹

The Fathers frequently state that the Blessed Virgin merited to become the Mother of God. Thus, St. Epiphanius asks why anyone would impugn that incorrupt virginity which has merited being the abode of the Son of God. St. Jerome proposes her as a model whose purity was so great that she merited becoming the Mother of the Lord. St. Peter Damian says that she was so fashioned by Eternal Wisdom to be made worthy to receive Him in her womb. St. Augustine reminds us that the Virgin Mary was given so much grace in order to merit to conceive and give birth to the sinless One. But since the merit of which the Fathers speak cannot be *de condigno*, it must be *de congruo*.

The Liturgy. The final antiphon of the Easter season greets Mary happily, saying: "O Queen of heaven rejoice, alleluia. For He whom thou didst deserve to bear, alleluia, has risen as He said, alleluia."

Theological Argument. Taken in the wide sense, merit *de congruo* rests on impetration. The Blessed Virgin, as well as the patriarchs and fathers of the Old Testament, desired and begged with fervent prayers that the promise of the Redeemer be fulfilled. Now, Cajetan says that it is becoming that God hear the prayers of those who obey Him, and in this sense also, it can be explained how Mary merited *de congruo* to bear Christ.²²

Strictly speaking, merit *de congruo* is based on the proportion of friendship and the works which the friend performs in the state of grace. Now, the Blessed Virgin was eminently pleasing to God and enjoyed His divine friendship. Hers was a most lofty sanctity which, after her immaculate conception and through the grace with which she was enriched, increased with every act until she gave the angel her answer, so that she could be the Mother of God in preference to all others. Therefore, she merited this dignity *de congruo* in the strict sense also.

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THESIS: *The Blessed Virgin was predestined to glory antecedent to the prevision of her merits.*

Opinions. Thomists in general, and those from other Schools, such as Suárez and Bellarmine, who deny the election of the predestined to glory consequent to their merits (because they defend, with Báñez, Alvarez, and Gonet, predestination before the foreseen merit, or they wish, like Satolli, that glory be decreed together with infallible future merits, under the influence of efficacious grace) seem obliged with greater reason to affirm the same doctrine concerning the Blessed Virgin. The Molinists, maintaining in general that predestination follows the merits of grace, also maintain that Mary's predestination to glory was decreed after her foreseen merits. Lercher softens this opinion by saying that the Blessed Virgin was predestined before the foreseen merits to the glory due her as the Mother of God, but since Mary accumulated innumerable merits during her life, for which she deserved an increase of glory, she was predestined to this glory after her foreseen merits.²³

Other theologians, such as Ockam, Gabriel, and chiefly Catharinus, maintain that God predestined to glory, antecedent to all merit, very few souls, and among them, the Blessed Virgin, St. John the Baptist, and the apostles. Vega approaches these theologians by saying that the election of all the predestined for glory, except Christ and Mary, is not anterior to, but posterior to the prevision of merits.²⁴

Theological Argument. 1) The divine maternity is, with relation to the rest of the Virgin's prerogatives, what the hypostatic union is with regard to the graces and gifts with which the human nature of Christ was adorned. Now, if Christ was chosen and predestined antecedent to the prevision of His merits to the highest degree of

glory, as becomes the only Son of the Father, the Blessed Virgin also was elected antecedent to her merits for the divine maternity and for a glory superior to all the saints, as becomes the Mother of God.

2) The Blessed Virgin was adorned by God with a most singular grace, was confirmed in grace, made immune from all sin, even venial sin, and enriched with special helps by which she would progress in the exercise of all the virtues and accumulate immense merit, gifts which are, with respect to Mary's glory, a means for the attainment of the end. Now, order always demands that the end be determined before the means to the end be decreed and, therefore, Mary was predestined to glory antecedent to all her merits.

THESIS: The Blessed Virgin was predestined to the divine maternity before being predestined to such grace and glory.

Sálaraz denies this thesis by saying that if the election of the most Blessed Virgin to the divine maternity is placed before the prevision of her grace and glory, this choice would necessarily precede the merits of Christ and, therefore, one would have to say that Mary was chosen and elevated to the glory of the divine maternity absolutely, by the liberality of God and without the merits of Christ.

The Fathers and Doctors. St. Ambrose says that Mary was not wanting in that which fitted her to be the Mother of Christ.²⁵ St. Bernard affirms that the Creator of men, to become man, had to be born of man, and had to choose for Himself, among all, so great a Mother; even more, He had to create her as He knew would be fitting and pleasing to Him.²⁶ St. Thomas says: "In every genus, the nearer a thing is to the principle, the greater the part it has in the effect of the principle. . . . The Blessed Virgin Mary was nearest to Christ in His humanity, because He received His human nature from her. Therefore, it was due her to receive a greater fullness of grace than others received."²⁷

Theological Argument. The order of execution always reflects and manifests the order of intention. If, then, in the order of execution, the Blessed Virgin received the grace and glory necessary to be prepared to be the Mother of God, it is clear that in the order of intention she had to be chosen beforehand for this office of Mother. It is no obstacle to this doctrine to maintain that in this case the maternity would not have been given to Mary through the foreseen merits

of Christ since, in the order of intention, all the merits of Christ are posterior to the election and predestination of Mary to the divine maternity, since they are posterior to the Incarnation and, therefore, to the causes which concurred in its realization. Lorca says that just as Christ could not merit His incarnation, the creation of His soul, nor the production of His humanity, so neither could He merit the causes nor the instruments which fulfilled and executed these things. All this had to be separate from the merits of Christ and, in general, all that could be considered antecedently a means in the execution of the Incarnation, among which is the causality of the Blessed Virgin, on which is based the relation of her maternity.²⁸

THESIS: The Blessed Virgin Mary would not have existed had she not become the Mother of God.

Sacred Scripture. Mary is never mentioned separate from Christ, but is always a Mother intimately united with her Son.²⁹ Terrien, commenting on this method of speaking of Sacred Scripture, says that he has but one answer from the Gospel concerning the existence and maternity of the Virgin, and it is: Mary of whom was born Jesus, and who is the Christ, and more briefly: Mary of Jesus.³⁰

The Fathers. St. Ephrem asks: "If God were not to become man, why would He have created Mary?"³¹ St. John Damascene says that she had a life superior to nature, but not for herself, because she was not born for herself, but came into this life to possess God.³²

Theological Argument. Had the most holy Virgin not been the Mother of God, she would not have been the same individual that she is, since in view of the divine maternity, she was adorned by God with such supernatural and natural perfection of body and soul that, had she not possessed these, she would have been another person. And if it be said that the actual existence of the Blessed Virgin did not depend on her predestination to the divine maternity because she was born by the natural generation of her parents, which pertains to the order of natural providence and not to supernatural predestination, Müller offers two answers. First, over and above the fact that natural conception and generation depend on God in many ways, by the fact that the soul is created and infused by God in the body, it should be noted that in the creation and infusion of the soul of the Blessed Virgin, God was guided by His design of preparing a

worthy Mother for His Son, who was to be born in time. If this design had not existed, God would not have infused this particular soul in the body. Secondly, there is the ancient tradition to the effect that Joachim and Anne were sterile and miraculously conceived her as an answer to continual prayers.³³

Corollary. From what has been said, we may conclude that the predestination of the Blessed Virgin embraces many effects which do not fall under the predestination of the rest of men. The predestination of Mary embraces not only the divine maternity and, through it, all the supernatural graces and prerogatives from her immaculate conception to her glorious assumption into heaven, but also her very existence and the natural gifts of body and soul which adorn her.

In the rest of the predestined some effects, such as grace and glory, are derived from predestination; others, instead, pertain to the order of natural providence, such as their existence and their natural gifts, which predestination presupposes and orders to their end. For that reason Cajetan distinguishes between the effects of predestination. Some effects, such as grace and glory, and in general the end and means as such, are not only ordained but produced by predestination. Others are only ordered by predestination.³⁴

Campana beautifully describes Mary's predestination when he says that it is clear that as in Jesus, so in Mary, everything is an effect of providence governing the supernatural order. It is clear that in Mary, not only the divine maternity, not only her extraordinary gifts of grace, but her existence, soul, body, faculties, and every least thing, is dependent on her predestination. If Mary was not to be the Mother of God, she would not have existed. In Mary the divine maternity permeated her entire essence. Hence, who cannot understand her singular position in the scale of created beings, coming right after Jesus?³⁵

Annunciation of the Divine Maternity

From all eternity and independent of the prevision of merits, Mary was chosen and predestined to the dignity of the Mother of God. As the time appointed by God for the Incarnation drew near, it was

announced to Mary that she would conceive Christ. St. Luke records the event as follows:

The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David, His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I do not know man? And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin, Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren, because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.³⁶

Although the Annunciation was not absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of the mystery of the Incarnation, since the Word could have assumed flesh without it, nevertheless, it was more fitting that it be announced. It was not fitting that the Wisdom of God dwell in Mary's womb and that she be ignorant of that which was being effected in her. Moreover, it was fitting that Mary be a most certain witness of such an unusual conception, and this required that she be instructed previously concerning so great a mystery. On the other hand, it is certain that God could have accomplished the Incarnation in the Virgin's womb without asking her consent, just as He formed Eve from Adam while the latter slept.

THE S I S : The Incarnation should have been announced supernaturally to the Blessed Virgin in order to obtain her consent, without which the Incarnation would not have been effected.

Sacred Scripture. In the Gospel account³⁷ the Blessed Virgin's consent is asked concerning the Incarnation, since the angel does not intimate that the divine decree would be fulfilled without her wishing it. He explains God's plan, and when Mary proposes her vow of virginity as an obstacle, he answers her objection and does not leave, until Mary, convinced that her virginity will be left intact, responds: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word."

The Fathers. St. Ambrose says that God does not work in His elect as does the artist on insensible and inanimate matter. He requires our consent, which the angel also obtained from the Virgin when she said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."³⁸

St. Bernard addresses Mary in the following words: "The angel awaits your answer, for the moment is at hand when he must return to God, who sent him. And we, too, O Lady, await the word of compassion; we who are wretchedly weighed down by the sentence of condemnation. Behold the price of our salvation is offered to you; if you give your consent, we shall be freed at once. We have all been created by the eternal word of God, but we are dead. By your brief answer we are to be restored, in order to return to life. This, O loving Virgin, Adam and his wretched descendants beg of you, having been cast out of paradise; this, Abraham and David implore and all the fathers also, your ancestors, as well as those who dwell in the valley of death. The whole world, on bended knee, begs for this answer, and not without reason, for on your word depends the consolation of the wretched, the redemption of captives, the deliverance of the condemned, and the salvation of all the sons of Adam. O Virgin, give your answer quickly. Speak, O Lady, speak the word which the earth, heaven, and hell are awaiting."³⁹

St. Laurence Justinian, commenting on the words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," says that her answer filled heaven with joy, the angels with happiness, the captive world with hope, the devils with terror; made the messenger happy and renewed the promise of the grace of liberty to those detained in limbo. With loving eagerness and hands raised to heaven, they awaited the answer. Their desire for merciful liberty had made their waiting exceedingly long and they were fearful lest, through humility, the Virgin would withhold her consent. But on learning Mary's answer, they burst forth in songs

of praise to the Lord, saying: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people."⁴⁰

Theological Argument. 1) The hypostatic union is a kind of spiritual marriage contracted by the Word, not only with the human nature which He assumed, but also with all humanity. But marriage requires the mutual consent of the contracting parties. The consent of the Word to the work of the Incarnation appears in the act of freely assuming our flesh; the consent of human nature cannot be looked for in the singular nature taken by the Word, since this did not exist before the hypostatic union, and consent had to precede it. No one was better qualified among all creatures to represent the human race and to consent to the Incarnation in its name than the Blessed Virgin, since she, as the chosen Mother, is the second Eve. As the first Eve was associated with the first Adam in the fall, Mary is associated with the second Adam in the work of salvation. She is the spiritual mother of the living in the order of grace, the purest fruit and most select member of Adam's family.⁴¹

Pope Leo XIII says: "The ways of divine wisdom are identified with religion. The eternal Son of God, about to take upon Himself our nature for the saving and ennobling of man, and about to consummate thus a mystical union between Himself and all mankind, did not accomplish His design without obtaining the free consent of her who was to become His Mother. She was the representative of all mankind, according to the illustrious and learned opinion of St. Thomas, who says that, 'the Annunciation was effected with the consent of the Virgin standing in the place of humanity.'"⁴²

2) Similarly, it was fitting that the work of the restoration of the human race after the sin should resemble the work of ruination. Therefore, as the latter was caused by the consent of a woman, so the restoration had to begin with the consent of another woman. St. Peter Chrysologus uses this argument in proving the restoration of man through Mary's consent. Moreover, Mary was not only destined to be the Mother of God, but also to conceive Him worthily. And although she was well prepared for the divine maternity by the fullness of grace with which God had enriched her and by the exercise of all the virtues, a more actual and immediate preparation was needed. This was effected when she received the divine message with

a lively faith, obedience, profound humility, piety, and an intense love of God, thus attaining graces and gifts in abundance. For this reason St. Bernardine of Siena says that by her consent to conceive the Son of God, the Virgin merited more than all angelic and human creatures do by their acts, impulses and thoughts.⁴³

3) God does not draw to His friendship any person who has attained the use of reason, without that person's consent. So also, since Mary, as the spouse of the Holy Ghost, was to be elevated by this mystery to a unique union with God, it was necessary, according to the gentle dispositions of divine providence, to obtain Mary's voluntary consent.⁴⁴ Moreover, the Annunciation shows Mary's participation in the Incarnation and the restoration of a fallen world, since God Himself deigned to await for her consent before assuming flesh in her womb. With what great reason, therefore, should we trust in her intercession. Nor is the dependence on this mystery of the free consent of the Blessed Virgin opposed to the infallibility of the divine decree on the Incarnation, since, as Billot says, God holds man's heart in His hand and carries it wherever He pleases, so that our will consents freely but infallibly. If the execution of an eternal decree depends on the contingent act of a creature, this conclusion must not be deduced, namely, that the outcome is uncertain and that what God wills, even by His absolute will, may sometimes not come to pass. God, in His eternal and efficacious plan, not only proposes to do a thing, but also to do it in a certain manner, dependent on certain causes which, although contingent, were so prepared in His foreknowledge and eternal providence that it will certainly come about.⁴⁵

THE S I S : *The Annunciation was fittingly made by an angel.*

Although God Himself could have announced this mystery to the Blessed Virgin immediately or could have done so through a prophet or some pious man, it was fitting that He do so through an angel. First, because it is the ordination of God that divine things should come to man by means of angels, and there was no reason to exempt His Mother from this law, for although she surpassed the angels in dignity and grace, by what concerns the present condition of life, she was inferior to them as a creature on earth and not among the blessed as they were. Secondly, as human perdition was begun by the evil spirit's conversation and deception of Eve, the reparation of the human race

should begin by the angel's speaking to Mary and communicating the heavenly message of the Incarnation. Thirdly, as virginity is connatural to the angels, an angel should be sent to Mary, who lived a truly angelic life.⁴⁶ Fourthly, not a man stained with sin, but an angel who is free from all sin, is the most fitting messenger to be sent to the Virgin who was also exempt from all stain of sin. Fifthly, since God chose to assume human nature rather than angelic nature, it was fitting that an angel be sent to the Virgin so that the angelic nature would not be totally excluded from participation in this great mystery. Finally, it must not be forgotten that from the beginning of the world God used the ministry of angels for the welfare of men. He revealed many things through them. It was, therefore, fitting that the mystery of the Incarnation be announced to Mary by an angel.

THE S I S : *The angel Gabriel was rightly chosen as the messenger of so great a mystery.*

It is evident from the Gospel account that the angel Gabriel was the messenger of the Incarnation.⁴⁷ Why was he chosen from among the almost infinite number of angels to carry out this mission? Two reasons can be cited. First, the very name of Gabriel, according to its etymology, seems to signify man of God or strength and power of God. If it signifies man of God, Gabriel is rightly sent to announce the mystery of the Incarnation, which is none other than God made man; if it is interpreted as strength or power of God, he would also have been chosen to announce Christ, who was to fight the devil and gain complete victory over him. Secondly, because of the ministry exercised by Gabriel in the Old Testament; when God was pleased to reveal the time of the Incarnation, He sent Gabriel to announce it, as we read in the Book of Daniel.⁴⁸

THE S I S : *It was fitting that the angel appear to the Blessed Virgin in visible form.*

Sacred Scripture. The Gospel of St. Luke relates the entry of the angel to the place where Mary was kneeling, his conversation with her, and his departure; all of which indicates that the angel appeared in visible form.

The Fathers. St. Jerome says that the angel Gabriel came down to her in the form of a man and that she was amazed and afraid and

could not answer his salutation since she had never been greeted by any man.⁴⁹

Theological Argument. St. Thomas proves the fittingness of the corporeal apparition of the angel by these three reasons: "First, in regard to that which was announced, for the angel came to announce the Incarnation of the invisible God. Wherefore, it was fitting that, in order to make this known, an invisible creature should assume a form in which to appear visibly, since all the apparitions of the Old Testament are ordered to that apparition in which the Son of God appeared in the flesh. Secondly, it was fitting as regards the dignity of the Mother of God, who was to receive the Son of God not only in her mind, but in her bodily womb. Therefore, not only her mind, but also her bodily senses should be refreshed by the angelic vision. Thirdly, it is in keeping with the certainty of that which was announced, for we apprehend with greater certainty that which is before our eyes than that which is in our imagination."⁵⁰

THE S I S : The Annunciation took place in a fitting order.

St. Thomas says that there was a three-fold purpose in the Annunciation.

First, to draw her attention to the consideration of a matter of such moment. This he did by greeting her by a new and unusual salutation . . . which salutation he began by asserting her worthiness of the conception, by saying: "Full of grace." Then he announced the conception in the words: "The Lord is with thee." Then he foretold the honor which would result to her from it: "Blessed art thou among women." Secondly, he intended to instruct her about the mystery of the Incarnation, which was to be fulfilled in her. This he did by foretelling the conception and birth, saying: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb," etc., and by declaring the dignity of the Child conceived, saying: "He shall be great"; and further, by making known the manner of conception, when he said: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." Thirdly, he intended to lead her mind to consent, by the example of Elizabeth and by the argument of the divine omnipotence.⁵¹

It should be noted that the angel confirms the annunciation of the future conception by the example of Elizabeth, not in order to influence the Blessed Virgin, as if she were doubtful and incredible, for she

could not doubt, but to corroborate this thing which in itself was so unusual. The same thing was done at Saul's anointing as a king: "And this shall be a sign unto thee, that God hath anointed thee to be prince,"⁵² So also, the angel gives Mary a sign in confirmation of the truth of the great mystery: "And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age."⁵³

The Divine Maternity of the Blessed Virgin

We must consider two things under this title: the fundamental dogma or truth of the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin and the conception and birth of Christ.

THE S I S : The Blessed Virgin is truly the Mother of God.

It is certain that Mary is the Mother of Christ, for we read in St. Matthew: "Arise, and take the Child and His Mother";⁵⁴ and in St. John: "And on the third day a marriage took place at Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there."⁵⁵ Actually, one is truly a mother from whose substance a child is conceived and born. Therefore, Christ is the Son of the Blessed Virgin, because she conceived and gave birth to Him, as all mothers do, of her very flesh. Our question, however, is whether the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Christ, is and can be called the Mother of God.

Errors. The Gnostics and Manichaeans taught that the body of Christ was only apparent or, if it was real, it came from heaven in such a way that it passed through the Blessed Virgin as through a channel, without having been conceived and formed by her. As a result, they reduced the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin to an apparent maternity.

The Valentinian error concerning the heavenly origin of Christ's body was revived in the sixteenth century by Simon Mennon, leader of the Anabaptists, who obstinately asserted that the body of Christ emanated from the seed of the heavenly Father and not from the substance of Mary. Schwenkfeld also denied the maternal origin of Christ, maintaining that His flesh and blood were spiritual and wholly divine.

Lastly, Michael Servet dared to assert that Christ's body was the body of the deity, and that His divine flesh was generated from the substance of God. According to Canisius, this doctrine was common to all the Anabaptists, and they defended their teaching that Christ brought a spiritual body from heaven and received nothing from Mary.⁵⁶

The Monophysites maintained that the Word was united to the humanity in nature and that consequently there was one nature in Christ, made up of the deity and humanity. Therefore, Christ was not truly God, and Mary could not be called the Mother of God.

The Nestorians denied the hypostatic union of the Word with His humanity and, consequently, the personal unity of Jesus Christ. They placed in Him two persons, that of the Word and that of Christ-man, joined together morally, extrinsically, or accidentally by the indwelling of the Word in man as in a temple, by the conformity of love and will, by the office of instrument to the Word on the part of His humanity, and the honor which redounded from the Word. Christ can be called God only by reason of a moral union between the Person of the Word and the person of man. As a result, it is true that the Blessed Virgin was the Mother of the man, Christ, but not the Mother of God. However, the Nestorians conceded that Mary could be called Mother of God in an improper sense, so far as the man Christ, whom she engendered, was united to the Word of God in a special way and merited divine honors. In the same way, a woman who gives birth to a child who later becomes a priest or a saint may be called the mother of a priest or the mother of a saint.

The early Protestants, such as Luther, Calvin, Bucer, and Bullinger, did not deny Mary's divine maternity, although their closest followers showed traces of Nestorian teaching. Modern Protestants, who call themselves orthodox, while professing the divinity of Christ, abhor the title, Mother of God, given the Blessed Virgin, and call her the Mother of the Lord. Nevertheless, "at the present time there are Protestants who acknowledge the dignity of the Virgin Mother of God and are moved to reverence and honor her fervently."⁵⁷ The Liberal Protestants, Rationalists, and Modernists reject the divinity of Christ, whom they consider merely a man, though a most perfect man, and hence they also deny the divine maternity.

Teaching of the Church. The Council of Ephesus declared: "If any-

one does not confess that God is truly Emmanuel, and that on this account the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God (since according to the flesh she gave birth to the Word of God made flesh), let him be anathema."⁵⁸

The Lateran Council teaches: "If anyone does not confess, in accordance with the Holy Fathers, that Mary, ever virgin and immaculate, was properly and truly the holy Mother of God, because in the last days she conceived of the Holy Ghost without seed and gave birth without corruption to the very Word of God, her virginity remaining intact even after parturition, let him be anathema."⁵⁹

The Third Council of Constantinople refers to previous declarations by various councils and then states its own confession that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, was begotten "of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, properly and truly the Mother of God according to humanity."⁶⁰

The same doctrine was stated by Pope John II in a letter to the senators of Constantinople,⁶¹ by Pope Paul IV in his ordinance, *Cum quorundam*,⁶² and by Pope Benedict XIV in the Constitution *Nuper ad nos*.⁶³ Lastly, Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical, *Lux Veritatis*, states: "From this principle of Catholic doctrine, which We have treated thus far, there necessarily follows the dogma of the divine motherhood which we attribute to the Blessed Virgin Mary; not, as St. Cyril reminds us, that the nature of the Word and His divinity took the principle of its birth from the holy Virgin, but that He took from her that sacred body, perfected by an intelligent soul, to which the Word of God was hypostatically united. But if the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary is God, certainly she who bore Him should rightly and deservedly be called the Mother of God. If there is only one Person in Jesus Christ, and that divine, surely Mary should be called not only Mother of Christ as man, but also Mother of God."⁶⁴

Sacred Scripture. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost, salutes the Blessed Virgin: "And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?"⁶⁵ The word Lord, *Kyrios*, is equivalent to God. In the same Gospel, the angel announces the mystery of the Incarnation to Mary with these words: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High. . . . And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be

called the Son of God."⁶⁶ It seems that the words "He shall be called" express what He is who will be born, whose Mother the Blessed Virgin will be. He is the Son of the Most High, the Son of God, God.

In the Epistle to the Romans we read: "Concerning His Son who was made to Him of the seed of David, according to the flesh";⁶⁷ and in the Epistle to the Galatians: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."⁶⁸ Therefore, He who was begotten by the Father from all eternity and He who was to be conceived of the Virgin in time was one and the same. And as He is the Word of God, it follows that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God.

In other places in Sacred Scripture it is expressly stated that Mary is the Mother of Christ or the Mother of Jesus.⁶⁹ But if Jesus Christ is true God, then Mary is the Mother of God in a proper and true sense.

The Fathers. The traditional teaching on the divine maternity of the Virgin is divided into three periods. During the first three centuries, the name Mother of God or *Theotokos* does not appear in the writings of the Fathers, although Mary's divine maternity was stated in equivalent expressions. The Fathers of this epoch, writing against the Gnostics, stressed that the Word of God really took flesh from Mary. Thus, St. Ignatius asserts that Christ was conceived by Mary in her womb, according to the decree of God, from the seed of David, surely, but by the Holy Ghost.⁷⁰

Aristedes says that the Christians trace their origin to Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is believed that He is the Son of the Most High, who in the Holy Spirit descended from heaven for the salvation of men and was born of the Holy Virgin without corruption.⁷¹

According to St. Justin Martyr, Christ is the Son of God and was made man through the Virgin, according to the will of the Father.⁷² St. Hippolytus says that the Word descended from heaven to the Virgin Mary so that, incarnate in her and made man in all but sin, He would save Adam, who had perished.⁷³ St. Irenaeus says that the Son of God was born of the Virgin,⁷⁴ and Tertullian says that the Virgin gave birth to Emmanuel, God with us.⁷⁵ In another passage he says that not being born of a Virgin, He would have had God for His Father without a mother, so being born of the Virgin He could have a woman as His mother without a man for His father.⁷⁶

The Fathers of the fourth century frequently used the title *Theotokos*, Mother of God, and other synonyms, in reference to the Blessed Mother. While it is probable that Origen used this name before any other,⁷⁷ we certainly find it in St. Alexander of Alexandria, who states explicitly that Christ took true flesh "from Mary, the Mother of God."⁷⁸ Eusebius of Cesarea, in his *Vita Constantini*, makes frequent reference to Mary as *Theotokos* when he says that St. Helen erected beautiful monuments in Bethlehem to the Mother of God. St. Athanasius says that the Word took flesh of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and became man for us.⁷⁹ St. Ephrem prays to Mary as Mother of God, Queen of the world, and hope of those who despair. St. Gregory Nazianzen says: "If anyone does not believe that Mary is the Mother of God, he is far from God."⁸⁰ St. Ambrose asks: "What is more noble than the Mother of God?"⁸¹

In the fifth century, when Nestorius openly denied the divine maternity of the Virgin, St. Cyril defended the Catholic dogma, saying that the expression Mother of God was perfectly familiar to the ancient Fathers, and the Council of Ephesus solemnly condemned the impious teaching of Nestorius and defined the truth that the Blessed Virgin Mary is really and truly the Mother of God.

Common belief of the faithful. Long before the Council of Ephesus, the faithful regarded the Blessed Virgin as the true Mother of God. This is evident, first of all, from the testimony of the ecclesiastical writers and even from that of the heretics. Thus, John of Antioch tried earnestly to dissuade Nestorius from attacking the title *Theotokos*, which no ecclesiastical writer had rejected and which many used explicitly. Alexander of Hierapolis, a bitter enemy of St. Cyril and a fervent partisan of Nestorius, admitted that the name *Theotokos* had already been used by the faithful for some time and that "she is imprudently called Mother of God by the orthodox."⁸² Theodoret attests: "The most ancient heralds of the orthodox faith taught the faithful to name and believe the Mother of the Lord *Theotokos*, according to the apostolic tradition."⁸³ The Emperor Constantine, in his prayer to all the saints, referred to by Eusebius of Cesarea, calls Mary the maiden Mother of God. Finally, Julian the Apostate, as St. Cyril attests, reproached the Christians for calling Mary the Mother of God.⁸⁴ Since the title *Theotokos* is of such notable antiquity, it is not surprising that the people of Constantinople caused a commotion

when Anastasius, a Nestorian priest, attacked the title of Mother of God in a sermon or that the faithful, on hearing the decision of the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus, accompanied them to their lodgings with lighted torches.

The churches built before the Council of Ephesus in honor of the Mother of God, and called by this title, are also proof of this truth. As for the Oriental Church, it is said that Bishop Theonas (282-300) built a large church in Alexandria, which was enlarged and consecrated to the Mother of God by his successor, Alexander III (373-380). Moreover, Euty chius, patriarch of Alexandria, attests that a church was built to the Mother of God in that city by Theophilus Alexandrinus (384-412). In Palestine, the Church of the Nativity, called by St. Jerome the Church of the Grotto of the Savior, which lasted until the time of Constantine, was also a shrine in honor of the miraculous conception of Christ by the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Lastly, in Asia Minor, the Council of Ephesus, which solemnly defined the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin, was celebrated (431) in the Church of St. Mary, which was consecrated to the Virgin under the title of Mother of God.

In the Western Church, the tradition is held in high esteem which attributes to St. Peter the building of a church or chapel for the cult of the Blessed Mary, Mother of God.⁸⁵ Moreover, in 1900 the following inscription was discovered under the ruins of St. Mary Liberator in the Roman Forum: "To the ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God." Gisar believes that the church was built at the beginning of the fourth century.⁸⁶

Theological Argument. 1) The Holy Virgin is truly the Mother of Christ. Therefore, she is the Mother of God, since Christ is truly God.

A woman is the mother of the one whom she has conceived and brought forth. But if the Virgin conceived and gave birth to God, she is truly His Mother. Now Christ, by reason of the hypostatic union, is a divine Person subsistent in a divine and a human nature. If, then, all that belongs to both natures can be attributed to this divine Person, it is clear that to the divine Person, and therefore to God, can be attributed everything that belongs to Christ in His human nature. Now, according to His human nature, Christ was conceived and born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. But, as St. Thomas says: "conception and birth are attributed to the person and hypostasis in regard to the na-

ture in which it is conceived and born. Since, therefore, the human nature was assumed by the divine Person in the very beginning of conception, it follows that it can be said truly that God was conceived and born of the Virgin."⁸⁷

2) Generation or birth refers to the person; it is never said that the human nature is born, but that a man is born. Neither is it said that a woman is the mother of a nature, but of a person. The reason for this is that generation or birth bespeaks a relation to being; hence, birth is ordered to existence. But being pertains properly to subsisting things, while the nature is the form by which something exists.⁸⁸ But the only person conceived and born of the Virgin Mary was the Word of God in a human nature.

3) The Blessed Virgin was truly the Mother of the terminus of her conception. The terminus of this conception is the Person of the Son of God, subsisting in human nature. Therefore, the Blessed Virgin is truly the Mother of God.

4) It could be denied that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God if the divine Word had not assumed humanity in a hypostatic union, or if He had assumed it after His birth or after conception but before His nativity. The first supposition is the Nestorian heresy; the second destroys the divine maternity because then the maternity would have had as its terminus a human person and not a divine hypostasis subsisting in a human nature; the third also attacks the divine maternity, which requires not only that the Blessed Virgin gave birth to God, but that she conceived Him.⁸⁹

5) It does not pertain to the function of the mother even in natural generation to constitute the hypostasis of the son nor to produce physically the spiritual soul, but only to supply the material of the body begotten by her. This the Blessed Virgin supplied to the Son of God incarnate in her, as does any other mother. On this point St. Thomas states that in order to be a true mother, it is not necessary that the son take from her body all the constituent elements of his being, for man is composed of body and soul and is more a man in soul than in body. He does not receive his soul from his mother, but it is created immediately by God. Thus, as a woman is called the mother of a man because he gets his body from her, so also the Blessed Virgin must be called the Mother of God if His body was taken from her. And it can be called the body of God if it is assumed in the unity

of the person of the Son of God. Asserting then, that the human nature was assumed by the Son of God in the unity of Person, we must say that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God.⁹⁰

We must note carefully the following points. The two formulas, *Mary is the Mother of Christ* and *Mary is the Mother of God*, coincide exactly. Although the Nestorians asserted that there were two persons in Christ—one human and the other divine—and that therefore Mary could be called the Mother of Christ, but not the Mother of God, in the Catholic sense both formulas are equivalent, since there are not two persons in Christ, but the Person of Christ is the very same as the divine Word, born of the Father from all eternity and of the Virgin in time. Thus, St. Thomas says that the Blessed Virgin is called the Mother of God, not because she is the Mother of the Godhead, but because she is the Mother, according to His humanity, of the Person who has both a divine and human nature.⁹¹

Neither should it be said that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of the deity. This declaration, although true in a material sense, since God and the deity are one and the same, *secundum rem*, is nevertheless false in the formal sense, because maternity and filiation refer only to the supposit, and this should be expressed by a concrete and not by an abstract term.

The Greek term *Theotokos* is not entirely equal to the Latin word *Deipara*, because to give birth or to produce include conception as well as childbirth; and the word *parere* means only to give birth. Had Mary given birth to the Word of God, but conceived a human nature, which after childbirth was assumed by the Word, then etymologically she should be called *Deipara* but not *Theotokos*. However, to give birth, in the ordinary sense, supposes conception of the person to whom birth is given, and in this respect the expressions can be called the same. The same can be said of other words used by the Church, such as *Dei Genitrix* and *Mater Dei*.

From what has been said, we see how profoundly dogmatic is the title *Theotokos*, because this one word contains a full profession of the Catholic faith in the principal dogmas which refer to the incarnation of the Word. The name *Theotokos* actually includes: the profession of Christ's human nature, because the Blessed Virgin, by her generative action, could not impart anything but human nature to her

Son; the profession of the divine nature of Christ, since if Christ were not God, Mary could not be called the Mother of God; the profession of the hypostatic union and personal unity of Christ the God-man, since otherwise Christ could not be the Son of the Eternal Father and of a woman; and the profession of the two distinct natures of Christ in the unity of the Person, because if Christ, together with His divine nature, had not assumed human nature, He could not have claimed origin from Mary by a true generation.

THE S I S : *Mary became the Mother of God at the moment that she pronounced the words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to thy word."*

This is the common opinion of the Fathers, concerning which Gregory the Great says that as soon as the angel announced it and the Holy Spirit came down, the Word was made flesh in the virginal womb.⁹² St. Augustine says that with the words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word," the angel left, and immediately the Blessed Virgin became the Mother of God.⁹³ And St. John Damascene says that as soon as the Blessed Virgin had given her consent, the Holy Ghost came upon her, cleansing her and giving her abundant strength to conceive the Word of God.⁹⁴

The angel was certainly sent to the Virgin to obtain her consent, for God did not wish to take human flesh from Mary against her will nor to keep her ignorant of the mystery. Mary did not consent until after her conversation with the angel. Then she said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to thy word." Then followed the incarnation of the Word.

THE S I S : *Mary is more perfectly a mother in relation to Christ than is any other mother in relation to her child.*

The reason is that Christ was formed of the substance of the Virgin only, for she alone supplied the material from which His body was to be formed. It was not the same as in natural generation, in which the children are formed by both the father and the mother. Also, because the natural powers of the Blessed Virgin operated more perfectly in the formation and organization of the body of Christ, as subordinated to the active power of the Holy Ghost.

CHRIST'S CONCEPTION

Two things are to be considered here: the principle in the conception of Christ, and the manner and order of His conception. The principle in human generation is said to be twofold: passive and active. The passive principle provides the material, and pertains to the mother; the active principle transforms, fertilizes, and determines the material provided by the mother, and this pertains to the father.

THE ACTIVE PRINCIPLE IN CHRIST'S CONCEPTION

THE S I S I S : *The conception of the body of Christ is rightly attributed to the Holy Ghost.*

Previous Observations. It is certain that the entire Trinity effected the conception of Christ's body. The Eleventh Council of Toledo states that it must be believed that the entire Trinity acted in the conception of the Son of God because the works of the Blessed Trinity are inseparable. The Son alone took the form of a servant in the unity of His Person, that is, in respect to that which is proper to the Son and not common to the Trinity.⁹⁵ Since essence and power of the Blessed Trinity are indivisible, so also the works *ad extra* are indivisible. But Christ's conception is a work *ad extra*. Therefore, it is a work of the entire Trinity.

It is true, however, that the conception of Christ, which was indeed common to the whole Trinity, can in some way be attributed to each of the Persons: to the Father is attributed authority in regard to the Son who assumed human nature; to the Son, the actual assumption of human nature; and to the Holy Ghost, the formation of the body assumed by the Son.⁹⁶ Our question is whether the conception of Christ's body is to be especially attributed or appropriated to the Holy Ghost.

Symbols of Faith. "I believe . . . in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary."⁹⁷ "Was made flesh by the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, and became man."⁹⁸

Sacred Scripture. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the

power of the Most High shall overshadow thee."⁹⁹ "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."¹⁰⁰

The Fathers. St. Ignatius Martyr says: "Our Lord Jesus Christ was conceived by Mary as the fruit of her womb, according to the decree of God, from the seed of David, but of the Holy Ghost."¹⁰¹

Theological Argument. St. Thomas gives three reasons for Christ's conception by the Holy Ghost:

First, because it is befitting to the cause of the Incarnation, considered on the part of God. The Holy Ghost is the love of the Father and Son. . . . Now, that the Son of God assumed flesh from the Virgin's womb was due to the exceeding love of God; whence it is said (John 3:16): "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son." Secondly, it is befitting to the cause of the Incarnation, on the part of the nature assumed. We are thus given to understand that human nature was assumed by the Son of God into the unity of the Person, not by reason of its merits, but through grace alone, which is attributed to the Holy Ghost, according to I Cor. 12:4: "There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit." . . . Thirdly, because it is befitting the term of the Incarnation, for the term of the Incarnation was that the man conceived should be the Holy One and the Son of God. But both of these are attributed to the Holy Ghost, for by Him men are made sons of God, according to Gal. 4:6: "Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father." And He is the Spirit of sanctification, according to Rom. 1:4. Therefore, as other men are sanctified spiritually by the Holy Ghost, to become adopted sons of God, Christ was conceived in sanctity by the Holy Ghost to be the natural Son of God.¹⁰²

THE S I S I S : *The Holy Ghost supplied supernaturally for the cooperation of man in the conception of Christ.*

St. Thomas says: "Since God's power is infinite and all causes derive from it their power of producing an effect, it is evident that any effect that is produced by any cause can, in the same species and nature, be produced by God without the aid of that cause. Wherefore, just as the natural power in human seed produces a real man, having the human species and nature, so too the divine power which endowed the seed with that power can produce the effects of that power, without its assistance, by forming a real man, possessing the human species and nature."¹⁰³

It is important to observe that although Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, He cannot be called the Son of the Holy Ghost, because what is said of anything according to its perfect reason of being cannot be said of it according to its imperfect reason of being. But Christ is the Son of God in the perfect sense of sonship, by eternal generation, but He was not born of the Holy Ghost in that likeness of species and nature which is required for perfect filiation. Therefore, although in His human nature He was created and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, He cannot be called the Son of the Holy Ghost or of the entire Trinity.¹⁰⁴ The Eleventh Council of Toledo expressly defined that we must not believe that the Holy Ghost is the natural Father of the Son nor that the Son had two fathers.¹⁰⁵

THE PASSIVE PRINCIPLE IN CHRIST'S CONCEPTION

As Mary is truly the Mother of Christ and at the same time a virgin, it is clear that in the conception of Christ everything needed for true maternity had to be present and anything that would even slightly lessen the perfect integrity of Mary had to be excluded. Using St. Thomas as our guide, we shall investigate this matter as discreetly and reverently as possible.

THESIS: The body of Christ was formed from the most pure blood of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Previous Observations. The ancient philosophers were accustomed to refer to blood as the element which mothers contribute in the conception of the offspring. According to modern physiology, several things can be understood with regard to the blood, but out of reverence we will omit them here and refer to the remote matter as blood, as St. Thomas does.¹⁰⁶

Errors. Peter Galatinus and other ancients say that Christ's body was formed from a particle of the body of Adam, which was expressly destined for that purpose, free from all concupiscence and transmitted from generation to generation down to the Blessed Virgin. Others, mentioned by Cajetan, say that for Mary to be the Mother of God it was sufficient that she conceive Christ in her mind, in her heart, or in her breast. Valentinus and the Anabaptists maintained that the

body of Christ had been transported from heaven, passing through the Virgin as through a channel.

Sacred Scripture. "God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."¹⁰⁷ We conclude from this passage that Christ received flesh not only in Mary, but of Mary, as from a mother who provides the material that other women provide at conception.

The Fathers. St. Bede says that He was conceived of her virginal flesh by taking flesh, not from nothing but from the flesh of His Mother.¹⁰⁸ St. John Damascene: "The Son of God, from the Virgin's purest blood, united to Himself flesh animated with a rational soul."¹⁰⁹

Theological Argument. Christ's conception, although miraculous with regard to the active principle, was natural with regard to His Mother, since He took from her a substance similar to that provided by other mothers in the conception of their offspring. The material which other mothers give in generation is blood, which is prepared for the purpose of generation. Therefore, we must reject the opinion of those who say that Christ's body was formed in some way from Adam's body, since, besides the reason given, this opinion has no basis in Scripture or Tradition. Moreover, Christ would not in that case have been the Son of David or of Abraham, nor would they be true ancestors of His, but only transmitters of that bodily substance of Adam. Nor would Christ have been the Son of the Virgin, because His body would not have been formed of Mary's substance, but of that bodily substance of Adam which was found in the Virgin's body at the time of Christ's formation. Finally, Christ's body was not related to Adam's nor His ancestors except through the medium of His Mother. The Blessed Virgin Mary's body was not in that of her ancestors by reason of any determined matter, but in the same way that all children are, because she was conceived by natural generation, otherwise she would not have been subject to the debt of original sin.

THE MANNER AND ORDER OF CHRIST'S CONCEPTION

THESIS: Christ's body was formed at the first instant of His conception, animated by a rational soul, and assumed by the Word of God.

The first part is certain; the second part is theologically certain; and the third part is *de fide*.

First part. The formal reason of conception consists in the formation of the body from apt matter. In other men, the formative power of the body proceeds from a finite principle, but in the formation of Christ's body, this formative power was supplied by the power of the Holy Ghost, which being infinite, could and did complete the formation of the sacred body instantly.

Theologians do not agree in their opinions of whether the formation was that of an embryo or a more perfectly organized body at the moment of conception. The ancient Scholastics, with St. Thomas, following Aristotelian physiology, and some moderns like Terrien and Lepicier, hold that the soul is not infused into the body until it has attained its organic human form, but they maintain that Christ's body was miraculously and perfectly formed in the first moment of His conception so that it could receive His soul immediately. Others maintain that the embryo is animated by a rational soul at conception so that from the beginning it is truly human; therefore, they are not obliged to admit that Christ's body was formed in the first moment in such a state of perfection and organization. They affirm that Christ's body grew and developed in the Virgin's womb by the same natural development with which He grew and advanced after His birth. Janssens takes a middle course and states that the initial formation of Christ's body was greater than that of other men, but less than that imagined by the Scholastics.

The second opinion, which seems more probable, is based on the following arguments: No development of the body is necessary for the hypostatic union which was verified in the first moment of Christ's conception. The use of beatific and infused knowledge, with which the soul of Christ was adorned, could have been there without the perfect organization of the body, since both are independent of the senses. The perfect formation of Christ's body from the first instant of His conception makes it difficult to explain the period of gestation for nine months in the womb of his mother without resorting to a miracle. Lastly, it is more in conformity with the maternal office that the Virgin supply what all women supply during the successive formation of the body of the child during the nine months.

Second part. The Fathers. The Synodical Epistle of St. Sophronius,

accepted by the Third Council of Constantinople, says that He was flesh and at the same time flesh of the Word of God, flesh animated by rationality and at the same time animated rational flesh in the Word of God. St. John Damascene repeats this: "At the same time that it was flesh, it was flesh of the Word of God, and simultaneously animated flesh gifted with a rational and intellectual soul."¹¹⁰

Theological Argument. Christ's body, in the very instant of conception, was assumed by the Word. As St. Thomas says, the Word assumed flesh through the medium of the soul and the soul through the medium of the spirit.¹¹¹ The Word assumed His human nature from the very beginning of His conception, and this nature could not exist without a rational soul. From the very beginning of the Incarnation, Christ possessed beatific and infused knowledge, the use of free will, and all the virtues, but none of these could have existed without a rational soul.

Third part. Magisterium of the Popes. "If anyone says or holds that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was first formed in the womb of the holy Virgin and afterward God the Word and the soul were united to it as if it already existed, let him be anathema." In his epistle *Quia charitati*, St. Gregory the Great, addressing the bishops of Ireland (601), states that flesh was not conceived first in Mary's womb, with divinity coming into this flesh later, but that being conceived of the Holy Spirit from the flesh of the Virgin and being anointed by the Holy Spirit were one and the same thing.¹¹²

Sacred Scripture. "Concerning His Son, who was made to Him of the seed of David, according to the flesh."¹¹⁴ "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."¹¹⁵ This would be false had Christ's body not been assumed in the first instant of conception by the Word, for if the humanity of Christ had been a human person for even a moment before union with the Word, He would have existed before the hypostatic union and, therefore, would not be the Son of God, but only a human person, conceived of a woman, of the line of David.

The Fathers. St. Gregory Nazianzen says that if anyone says that Christ was conceived man, and that afterward God entered into Him, he should be anathema, for this would not be the generation of God.¹¹⁶ St. Augustine states that we say: "The Word was made flesh," because He was God at the time He became man.¹¹⁷ St. John Dama-

scene: "At the very instant that it was flesh, it was flesh of the Word of God."¹¹⁸ St. Fulgence: "Hold steadfastly and doubt not for a moment that Christ's flesh was not conceived in the Virgin's womb before being assumed by the Word, but that the Word of God was conceived in taking flesh and that the very flesh of the Word was conceived in the Incarnation."¹¹⁹

Theological Argument. "God took to Himself that which belongs to man; and that which belongs to man did not pre-exist, as subsisting in itself, before being assumed by the Word. If Christ's flesh had been conceived before being assumed by the Word, it would have had at some time a hypostasis other than that of the Word of God. This is against the very nature of the Incarnation, which we hold to consist in this, that the Word of God was united to human nature and all its parts in the unity of hypostasis and it was not fitting that the Word of God should, by assuming human nature, destroy a pre-existing hypostasis of human nature or of any part thereof. Therefore, it is contrary to faith to assert that Christ's flesh was first conceived and afterward assumed by the Word of God."¹²⁰

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

THESES: In addition to His eternal generation from the Father, a temporal birth must be attributed to Christ.

Creeds and Councils. The Apostles' Creed states: "Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," and the Athanasian Creed says: "God, begotten of the substance of the Father before time, and He is man, born of the substance of His Mother in time."

Both the Second Council of Constantinople and the Lateran Council passed decrees of anathema condemning those who did not confess the two nativities of the Word-God: one of the Father, incorruptible and eternal, and the other of the Blessed Virgin Mary in time.

Sacred Scripture. "When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod,"¹²¹ "And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."¹²² "This day is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David."¹²³

The Fathers. St. Leo the Great says that the Son of man came from

heaven when the Son of God took flesh of the Virgin.¹²⁴ St. John Damascene says: "We confess two nativities in Christ: one of the Father, which is eternal; and one which occurred in these latter times for our sake."¹²⁵ Vigilius de Tapso says that according to the Catholic faith and testimony of Scripture, Christ had two nativities: one, of the Father, without time, the other of His Mother, without man.¹²⁶

Theological Argument. Although birth is properly attributed to the person as to its subject, nevertheless, the terminus of birth is the nature or form which is transmitted by generation and by which the subject is what he is. Therefore, the subject in which there are two natures through generation, must have two births. In Christ there are two natures received through generation: divine and human; the eternal, of the Father; the temporal, of the Mother.

THESES: A real relation of motherhood with respect to Christ should be admitted of the Blessed Virgin, and in Christ there is a filial relation with respect to the Virgin-Mother of God.

It is certain that there is a real relationship in the Blessed Virgin with regard to her Son, since in the generation and birth of Christ she had the same influence that any mother has in the generation of a child. It is also certain that the relation of maternity in the Blessed Virgin is of the same species as the relationship of other mothers and, therefore, Mary can be called Mother as the others are, for although Christ's conception on the part of the active principle was supernatural, it was natural on the part of His Mother.

The controversy among theologians is concerned with the filial relation of Christ to His Mother. There are three opinions among the theologians. Henry of Ghent and Alexander of Hales teach that the relation of Christ to His Mother is a real, uncreated relation. Scotus, Biel, Suárez, and Lorca maintain that this relation is a real, temporal one, so that there are two filiations in Christ: one uncreated with regard to the Father, and the other created with regard to the Mother. St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Capreolus, and others assert that the relation of Christ with respect to His Mother is a relation of reason only.

The first opinion lacks probability. A real and uncreated relation is substantial and subsistent in itself, and is found in Christ, not as man, but as God. Also, Christ is the Son of the Virgin by human

generation, but the uncreated relation of filiation was in Christ by reason of His eternal generation of the Father, and as subsistent in His human nature, it was there by reason of the hypostatic union, which is distinct from His human generation. Finally, where there are two births, there should be diverse filiations. The generations of Christ with respect to the Eternal Father and with respect to His temporal Mother are diverse.

The second opinion admits of probability. So St. Thomas says that if we consider the adequate causes of filiation, we must say that there are two filiations with regard to the twofold nativity. But if we consider the subject of filiation, which can only be the eternal supposit, then only the eternal filiation in Christ is a real relation.¹²⁷ Moreover, any relation whose subject, fundament, and terminus are real, must necessarily be real, and all these conditions are fulfilled in the temporal filiation of Christ. As to the principal objection, that the relation of filiation affects the person and that there can be no temporal relation in a divine and eternal Person, it can be said that the relation of filiation is in the humanity as in the subject of inhesion and in the divine supposit as in the subject of denomination. Hence, the relation of temporal filiation does not conflict with the immutability and divine independence any more than do the other temporal denominations, for example, that God was born, suffered, and died.

The third opinion is the most probable. St. Thomas says: "Since, however, the subject of filiation is neither the nature nor part of the nature, but the person or hypostasis alone, and since in Christ there is no other hypostasis or person than the eternal, there can be no other filiation in Christ but that which is in the eternal hypostasis. A relation which is predicated of God in time does not place anything in the eternal God, according to the thing signified, but only according to reason. Therefore, the filiation by which Christ is referred to His Mother cannot be a real relation but only a relation of reason."¹²⁸ Again, we must exclude all mutability from the Person of the Word, to whom nothing real can be added, and this would be the case if there were a real, temporal relation of filiation in the Word. Just as God is called Lord by reason of the relation implied in the real relation of the subject to God, so Christ is really the Son of the Virgin-Mother through the real relation of her maternity to Christ.¹²⁹

Dignity of the Divine Maternity

So great is the dignity of the divine maternity that, after God, nothing greater can be imagined. The Fathers and Doctors of the West as well as those of the East celebrate this dignity with the greatest praise and declare that its complete comprehension is reserved to God alone, who gave the world such a creature and who knew the sublime gifts with which she was adorned. St. Ambrose asks: "What is more noble than the Mother of God?"¹³⁰ St. Anselm says that nothing is equal to Mary; nothing is greater than Mary but God alone;¹³¹ and his disciple and friend, Eadmer,¹³² states that all that exists is either below or above her—what is above is God; what is below is all that is not God. St. Sophronius of Jerusalem praises the sublimity of the graces that she alone received, and St. Bernardine of Siena says that such was the perfection of the Virgin that its comprehension is reserved to God alone, as is stated in Ecclesiasticus: "He created her in the Holy Ghost, and saw her, and numbered her, and measured her."¹³³

According to Canisius, Luther said that the dignity contained in the title of Mother of God is so great that no one can praise her for anything higher, though there were as many languages as there are flowers on the earth or stars in the heavens or sand in the sea. Calvin also praised Mary's excellence as the one who was adorned and chosen the Mother of His only-begotten Son.¹³⁴ It is, nevertheless lamentable that modern Protestants refuse to subscribe to what their predecessors said in praise of Mary.

EXCELLENCE OF THE DIVINE MATERNITY IN ITSELF

The excellence of the maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in itself is contained in the following assertions:

1) *The Blessed Virgin Mary, as Mother of Christ, has a real relation of maternity with regard to the only-begotten Son of God.* The Fathers and Doctors highly extol this privilege. St. Bernard says that the singular glory of the Virgin and her excellent prerogative is that she merited to possess one and the same Son with God the Father.¹³⁵ St. Anselm asks us to consider that God begot His only Son, consub-

stantial and equal to Him, but that this Son wished also to be the only Son of Mary, so that the one and the same Son would be the Son of God and the Son of Mary.¹³⁶

The relation between Mary and her Son surpasses greatly the ordinary relation between mother and son. Other mothers give their sons a part of the substance of their flesh and blood, while the other part is supplied by the father; but the Blessed Virgin alone gave all the substance to her Son. Under this aspect, no other is so much a mother as Mary. Moreover, a child cannot choose his mother, nor can a mother choose her son; but both of these choices existed in the divine maternity. The Son, from all eternity, chose His Mother and decided to adorn her with the richest abundance of gifts so that she might be a worthy Mother; and Mary chose her Son when she gave her free consent to the virginal conception. Finally, mothers do not know the disposition and future life of their child nor is there any communication between mother and son until much later. In Christ's conception, on the contrary, the Blessed Virgin understood perfectly the Son she had conceived, since she had given her consent to the conception of her Son and Redeemer. Moreover, from the moment of His human conception, the Son of God had full use of reason and was full of grace and truth, so that there was a communication between the Mother and her Son which will last for all eternity.

2) *The divine maternity pertains to the same order as the hypostatic union.* The Mother is not outside the order of her Son, since relative terms are simultaneous in their nature and comprehension. Cajetan expressed it by saying that the Virgin alone attained, by her natural operation, to the borders of the deity, because she conceived, gave birth and nourished God with her own milk.¹³⁷

However, no efficient causality must be attributed to the Blessed Virgin in regard to the hypostatic union, either as principal cause or instrumental cause. Not by way of a principal efficient cause, for such an action is proper to God, since no created and finite substance can cause the nature of one genus to be transferred to the being of another genus,¹³⁸ and if a creature could communicate divine being to another creature, that creature would be God, which is an evident contradiction.¹³⁹ Nor could a creature communicate divine being to another by way of an instrumental cause, because in the hypostatic union of

the Word of God with humanity, the only thing attributed to the Virgin is the cooperation necessary for her to become the Mother of God, and for this her efficient influence on the hypostatic union is not necessary, but only her concursus in the generative operation of the humanity of Christ, as any mother does in natural generation.

Consequently, if we sometimes find in the Fathers expressions which seem to indicate the active concursus of the Blessed Virgin in the hypostatic union, we must not interpret them in the strict sense, but in a broad sense, because the Blessed Virgin provided the material for the formation of the body of Christ, who was hypostatically united to the Word of God. Thus we must understand St. Bernard when he says that Mary united the soul and body to the divine Word.¹⁴⁰

Nor does the maternity of the Blessed Virgin demand the hypostatic union, for maternal generation is completed by the communication of the nature to a person, whether connatural or supernatural. Aside from this, Müller says¹⁴¹ that if in generation there be on the part of the mother any requirement that a determined person should be the subject of generation, it can be said that on the part of the Virgin there were many exigencies that the subject of her generation be the Son of God. First, she gave consent only to the virginal conception, whose subject was to be the Son of God. Thus, when the angel told her how the mystery of the Incarnation was to be accomplished, she answered: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word," and at that moment the Savior was conceived. Secondly, the Blessed Virgin seems to have merited *de congruo* to become the Mother of God. Thirdly, the conception was supernatural, proceeding from the Holy Ghost as the active principle, and hence it was most fitting that the subject of the conception be God. Scripture states this clearly: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore, the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Fourthly, it can be said that by her concursus in the conception, the Blessed Virgin (like all mothers, who are determined to the infusion of a particular soul) required that the fruit of her conception be the Son of God, since the soul of Christ was first united, by a priority of nature, with the Divine Word rather than with

His body. And so it can truly be affirmed that there were many exigencies which required that the fruit of Mary's conception be the Son of God.

3) *The dignity of the divine maternity is truly infinite.* St. Albert the Great admits that her Son preceded her in all her privileges, but that this does not diminish the honor of His Mother, but exalts her for having engendered a Son who is not only equal, but infinitely better. This makes the goodness of the Mother infinite, for since a tree is known by its fruit, if the fruit is an infinite good, the tree, too, must in a sense possess infinite goodness.¹⁴²

Moreover, St. Thomas says that the humanity of Christ, from the fact that it is united to the Godhead; created happiness, from the fact that it is the fruition of God; and the Blessed Virgin, from the fact that she is the Mother of God; all have a certain infinite dignity which comes from the infinite good which is God. Therefore, there cannot be anything better than these; just as there cannot be anything better than God.¹⁴³

Similarly, St. Peter Canisius says that the authority and dignity of the infinite Son redounds to His Mother, so that she is the only one who, with the Father, can say to the Son: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

Finally, any relation is specified by its term and its perfection is determined by the term. But the terminus of the maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the God-man, and He is infinite.

4) *The Blessed Virgin Mary, by reason of her divine maternity, possesses a real affinity with God as subsistent in the divinity.* Consanguinity signifies a blood relationship and is defined as the bond which exists among those who are descendants of the same root or stock by carnal generation. In affinity, on the other hand, there is no sharing of the same blood by the persons who are related; it is acquired without relation to generation. Thus, a husband is related by affinity to the relatives of his wife.

The affinity of Mary to God is not founded on a pious affection of the mind, but exists in the real but spiritual order. The reason for Mary's consanguinity with Christ as God subsistent in humanity is that the relationship of a mother and son is consanguinity in the first degree, and the Blessed Virgin is truly the Mother of Christ. Moreover, the Blessed Virgin is united to her Son by a closer bond than

are other mothers to their sons, because the Blessed Virgin alone, without the assistance of man, furnished the material for Christ's conception. The reason for Mary's affinity with God, as subsistent in the divinity, is that the hypostatic union is rightly called a spiritual marriage in which the Eternal Word is considered as the spouse and His assumed humanity as wife or bride. But Mary is related by consanguinity to the humanity which the Word assumed. Therefore, there exists an affinity between Mary and the divinity of the Word, which is common to the Father and the Holy Ghost.

This affinity is described beautifully by Canisius when he states that although, properly speaking, God does not possess relations of consanguinity or affinity, for He is a simple spirit, nevertheless, Scripture attributes to Him not only consanguinity and affinity but, metaphorically, sons and heirs. Among these we must first enumerate the human nature of Christ which, being assumed by a divine Person and united to it intimately, can be said to possess an affinity to God. We must then consider a certain kind of affinity in Mary, since what became the flesh of God in Christ, was taken from Mary's substance, for St. John Damascene states that from her purest blood was formed the body of Christ.¹⁴⁴

5) *The Blessed Virgin is united by special relations to the whole Trinity and to each of the three Persons.* It is frequent among theologians to call Mary the complement of the Trinity. The statement is frequently attributed to Eyschius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, but this is unfounded. Comparing Noah's ark with the Blessed Virgin, he says that Mary is more excellent than Noah's ark. The former was an ark of animals, and she is the ark of life; that, of corruptible animals, but she of incorruptible life; that carried Noah, but she carried Noah's Maker; that had two or three sections or mansions, but she has the entire complement of the Trinity, for the Holy Spirit came to her as a guest, the Father overshadowed her, and the Son took up His abode in her womb.¹⁴⁵

Eyschius did not call Mary the complement of the Trinity; he only asserted that, unlike the ark which carried only created beings, Mary contained the entire Trinity. But it is one thing to *contain* the complement of the Trinity, and another thing to *be* the complement of the Trinity. From the fact that the Blessed Virgin holds in her womb the divine Word, no one can rightly infer that she is the divine Word.

The expression, although common among theologians, is rejected by many, like Janssens, who says that he doubts that Mary is prudently called a complement of the Trinity, and Müller, who believes that it would be better to refrain from using this expression.

Undoubtedly, Mary can be called the complement of the Trinity, not essentially and intrinsically, since God cannot acquire in time an increase of intrinsic perfection, but accidentally and extrinsically, and this for a double reason: Mary is the cause from which originate new temporal relations of the divine Persons *ad extra* and she confers on them a certain extrinsic glory.

Through the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin, new relations *ad extra* originate in the divine Persons which are related with the personal appropriations of each one, so far as through Mary's maternity the Father has authority over the Son, who is co-eternal and equal to Him in all things; the Son acquires a generation; and the Holy Ghost acquires a fecundity in the conception of Christ the Lord, which is attributed to the Holy Ghost by appropriation. Proceeding from the Father in an identity of nature, the Son is equal to the Father in divinity and therefore is not subject to His power and authority. But in regard to His human nature, He is less than the Father, obeys Him, and is subject to His authority. Thus, authority is fittingly attributed to the Father. The divine Word, who proceeds from the Father, cannot be manifested externally in His divine nature as such, but He achieved this external manifestation through a new generation, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, taking flesh from her and then manifesting Himself visibly. Of the three divine Persons, only the Holy Ghost is not productive within the Trinity. The Father engenders the Word, and the Father and the Word together spirate the Holy Ghost, but there is no further production in the Trinity. But by Christ's conception in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, the Holy Spirit attained a certain fertility to produce *ad extra* a divine Person, since Christ's conception is attributed and rightly appropriated to Him as the active principle.

By her divine maternity, the Blessed Virgin seems to bestow a certain extrinsic glory on the Persons of the Trinity. A Virgin undefiled, she conceived and brought forth God, which is a vivid image of the divine processions in which one Person proceeds from another without any loss of integrity.¹⁴⁶ Secondly, she exemplifies the distinction

of Persons in the Trinity; otherwise she could not rightly be called the Mother of the Son, if the Son were not a Person distinct from the Father. Finally, she manifests the attributes and perfections of God, not only because the divine attributes of goodness, knowledge, and power are shown in her, but because certain perfections, such as holiness and purity, seem to be divine rather than human in her. Therefore, after the three divine Persons, Mary is the most excellent. St. John Damascene says that as she surpasses the cherubim and seraphim, and is next to God.

The Blessed Virgin is also related in a special way to each of the divine Persons of the Trinity. She is related to the Father as an adopted daughter. Adoptive filiation is bestowed on rational creatures through sanctifying grace, which makes them participants in the divine nature and gives them the right to eternal glory. The Blessed Virgin occupies first place among the adopted children of God because her adoption imitates perfectly the natural filiation of God. Christ is the natural Son of God and is, therefore, holy by nature and not by adoption. So that the Mother might be like her Son, she received a sanctity which, although above her nature, seemed almost natural to her. For this reason she was given original grace at the very moment of her creation. Moreover, in adopting other men, the Father does not generate them as much as He re-generates them; and thus their production but slightly imitates the eternal generation of the Son, who is begotten from all eternity and *per se*. But the Father created the Virgin *per se* with original grace, and did not re-generate her. Consequently, her filiation is a perfect imitation of the divine filiation, because as the Eternal Father begot the Son from all eternity and His filiation is eternal, so He adopted the Virgin from the first moment of her existence, by the infusion of grace, an adoption and holiness which the Virgin never lost. Again, the Virgin concurred in the generation of the Son of God in human flesh, whom the whole family of adopted children were to follow, "for whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn amongst many brethren."¹⁴⁷ Consequently, it was fitting that this most excellent filial adoption should shine forth in Mary so that she would better resemble Christ, her Son, with whom she was to be the principle of adoptive filiation for others. Finally, as the hypostatic union in Christ is

a title which demands the plenitude of sanctifying grace, so the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin is a title which demands more sanctifying grace than God gives to angels and men.

Whence it follows that the Blessed Virgin, by reason of her adoptive filiation, eminently surpasses all others, not only because she is more perfectly and abundantly adorned with sanctifying grace and therefore shares more perfectly in the divine filiation, but because, while it is not due the rest of the just, it was due Mary by reason of her divine maternity. For that reason the Fathers venerated her as the firstborn and only-begotten daughter of the Father, for in the divine predestination she is intimately united with Christ, His Son, who is the firstborn of all creation. So unique is her title to adoptive filiation that if, by supposition, the work of Christ did not tend to bring all men to filial adoption, Mary, by reason of her maternity, would possess sufficient claim to be, with her Son, a consort in the divine nature through supernatural grace.

It must be noted that although adoptive filiation is related to the entire Trinity, the filiation of the Blessed Virgin is appropriated to the Father, but not excluding the Son. For this reason the Church invokes Christ as "Offspring of the Virgin and Maker of the Mother,"¹⁴⁸ and Dante calls Mary "Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son."¹⁴⁹

Moreover, the Blessed Virgin is related to the Father in a special way in the generation of the Son, not because generation on the part of the Father was the same as generation on the part of the Virgin, nor because the Blessed Virgin had any influence on the eternal generation of the Son, but so far as the eternal and the temporal generation had the same terminus, the same Son, begotten by the Father from all eternity and by the Virgin in time. Moreover, when the Virgin conceived the Son in time, the Father was also generating Him, for since the act of generation is eternal in the Father, and eternity embraces all time, it can be said that the Father was generating the Son with regard to His divine nature at the same moment in which the Virgin conceived Him with regard to His human nature.¹⁵⁰

Because the Virgin is associated with the Father in the generation of the Word, she is sometimes called the spouse of the Father, although Tanqueray advises that in preaching it is not fitting to treat of these titles of spouse of the Father and of the Holy Spirit in great detail.

The Blessed Virgin is related to the Son as Mother in a unique manner, as has already been explained. She is also related to Him as spouse. Although the expression "spouse of the Word," as Campana says, is rarely used in our times, it is equally befitting Mary. If the just soul who loves can be called spouse, much more so can the Blessed Virgin be called the spouse of Christ. Moreover, in the early Church it was the custom to call virgins spouses of Christ, as is seen in the rite of the consecration of virgins, in which Christ is called the Spouse and Son of perpetual virginity. Therefore, says St. Anthony, this title rightly belongs to Mary, the Virgin of virgins. Lastly, the Incarnation is like a spiritual marriage which the Word contracts not only with the human nature He assumed, but with all humanity. And since marriage is preceded by the espousals, which are the mutual promise of a future marriage, it was fitting that humanity accept the mystical nuptials with the Son of God. And Mary, representing the whole human race, accepted these nuptials when she answered the angel who announced the mystery of the Incarnation: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word."

The Blessed Virgin is also related to her Son, Christ, as lady or mistress. St. Thomas says: "Although the nature is not properly said to rule or serve, yet every hypostasis or person may be properly said to be ruling or serving in this or that nature."¹⁵¹ Thus, men are entirely equal in their rights and duties with regard to their specific nature, but not according to their particular conditions; for example, the innate rights and obligations of father and son are the same by reason of their specific natures, but by reason of particular paternal or filial conditions they are different. The father has paternal dominion and authority in regard to the children, and the duty to care for them, nourish them, and educate them. The children owe him love, respect, and other offices of piety, as well as obedience. And even when the children reach maturity, they still owe the debt of piety, respect, and gratitude.

Mary had no maternal authority over Christ with regard to His divine nature, for it is repugnant that Christ, subsisting in the divine nature and supreme Lord of all, should be subject to any creature. Even more, in this respect it cannot be said that Christ is subject to the Eternal Father, for being consubstantial and equal to the

Father, and possessing the very same being and divine essence, numerically one, He could not have even the shadow of subjection. Mary had maternal dominion and power over her Son only in regard to His human nature. Thus, St. Ildephonse, extolling the wonders which God worked in Mary, says that "God became the Son of a Mother whom He Himself had fashioned; and He, the Ruler, in being born, subjected Himself to the servant whom He had created. Thus the servant held the Lord in subjection and the Lord held the servant under His authority."¹⁵² St. Bernardine of Siena says that the proposition, "Everything is subject to the authority of the Virgin, even God Himself," is true. For this reason Gerson says that we could give her no better name than Mother of God because through it she has authority over the Lord and over all things that are subject to Him. Christ's obedience and subjection are inferred from the maternal authority of His Mother. Thus, St. Luke says that He was subject to them.

Pope Leo XIII declares: "In Joseph, fathers of families have the most beautiful model of fatherly attention and providence; in the most holy Virgin Mother of God, the most extraordinary pattern of love, modesty, perfect submission, and fidelity; in Jesus, who as Son of the household was subject to them, a divine Exemplar of obedience to admire, worship, and imitate."¹⁵³

Most theologians admit this subjection and the discussion centers around the basis of Mary's maternal right and the filial subjection of Christ. Cornelius a Lapide and Toledo, among others, derive this right and office not from the generation and birth, but from His will, which freely consented to be subject to His parents. Elevated above all creatures by the hypostatic union, Christ could not acknowledge anyone as superior, to whom He would have to be subject. But it would seem more true to say that Mary's maternal authority and the corresponding subjection and obedience of Christ took its foundation in a natural right; that is, from that of generation and birth. True motherhood bases its natural power over the son on the very fact that he receives human nature from his mother and depends on her for his bodily formation. Under this aspect the mother is superior to the son. The son also, by reason of this debt of nature, has an obligation to obey her who engendered him. This authority over the son, which is a natural accompaniment to the maternal dignity, can-

not reasonably be denied Mary with respect to her Son, because the order of grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it. Christ came, not to revoke the natural law, but to fulfill it.

Nor can it be said that Christ as man, by reason of His hypostatic union, was exempt from maternal authority, as He was exempt for that reason from all dominion and power of kings, emperors, and priests. Christ, the King of kings and the Highpriest of priests, could not be subject to any inferior king or priest, but by reason of His corporal generation He remained truly subject to His Mother because He received from her His human nature. But Mary's maternal authority and Christ's filial subjection were in relation to domestic matters and corporal life alone; they did not pertain to His divine mission. For that reason, when He was found in the Temple by His parents, the Child Jesus said to them (Luke 2:49): "How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"¹⁵⁴ Christ does not deny Mary's maternal authority in regard to other things, for it is inferred by the words which followed: "And He was subject to them," but He places the divine will before obedience to His Mother, as He says through the mouth of St. John (8:29): "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him."¹⁵⁵

Mary's authority over Christ and His filial subjection to her maternal authority lasted until Christ reached the perfect age of manhood and began His public life. Then, as all sons do when they become old enough to look out for themselves, Christ, having reached manhood, also withdrew from the maternal authority. Hence, from the beginning of Jesus' public life, Mary seems to have withdrawn herself so that He could work publicly as the Son of God, and thus be believed by men. Mary was not, however, altogether absent from her Son's public life, as Debout explains.¹⁵⁶

Finally, Mary most faithfully fulfilled all her maternal obligations as a pious and prudent Mother, feeding and taking care of her Son. At the same time Christ, as the most pious of all sons, returned the obligation of filial love, piety, respect, reverence, care, gratitude, not only while He lived, but also when dying, entrusting her from the Cross to His beloved disciple: "When Jesus, therefore, saw His Mother and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He said to His Mother, 'Woman behold thy son.' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold, thy Mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his

home."¹⁵⁷ St. Ambrose and St. Augustine comment beautifully on this example of Christ's filial piety.

Mary was also related to the Holy Spirit in a special way, as temple, sanctuary, abode, and tabernacle. By reason of the plenitude of grace with which she was imbued in so eminent a manner, she is the temple of the Blessed Trinity, and the indwelling of the three divine Persons in the sanctified soul, as a work of sanctification and charity, is appropriated to the Holy Ghost. So, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus calls Mary the immaculate temple into which the Holy Spirit entered; St. Jerome calls her a sanctuary of the Holy Ghost; and St. Albert the Great calls her the abode of the power of the Most High. Pope Leo XIII reminds us of the reason for calling Mary the Immaculate Spouse:¹⁵⁸ it was chiefly because Christ's body was conceived in Mary's womb by the power of the Holy Spirit, in which conception Mary gave the substance of her flesh and the Holy Spirit supplied for the power of man in a supernatural and sublime way. But the formation of Christ's body, although it is the work of the whole Trinity (as are the other operations *ad extra*), is appropriated to the Holy Spirit and for that reason Mary can be called His spouse. This title of Spouse of the Holy Spirit is very frequent among the moderns but was seldom used by the ancients, perhaps so that it might not be interpreted that the Holy Spirit is the Father of Christ. The Church carefully avoided calling the Holy Spirit Father, and the Council of Toledo expressly forbade this denomination.

From what has been said, it can be concluded that there is in Mary, by reason of her divine maternity, the highest union with God and an intimate familiarity with the divine Persons, for which reason she was praised by the angel with the words: "The Lord is with thee." St. Bonaventure praises this singularity of Mary as the daughter, mother and spouse of the Lord.¹⁵⁹

THE DIVINE MATERNITY COMPARED WITH OTHER GIFTS

THESIS: *The divine maternity, considered precisely and isolately, is more excellent than sanctifying grace or the grace of adoption.*

Suárez asserts that the divine maternity, considered precisely and isolately, is inferior to the dignity of the adoptive sonship which is

obtained through sanctifying grace, but if it is considered as including all the gifts and privileges which by their proper nature are due to it according to the order of divine wisdom, it is greater than the dignity of adoptive sonship.¹⁶⁰

Vega is of the same opinion, for he says that the divine maternity, taken proximately and absolutely, is not better than grace; but if it is taken fundamentally and remotely, so far as it requires an immensity of graces, it is more noble and excellent than grace.¹⁶¹

Ancient as well as modern theologians commonly teach that the divine maternity, even considered precisely and isolately, is more excellent in dignity than habitual grace. The Fathers say that the Blessed Virgin, by reason of her divine maternity, surpasses all pure creatures. St. Epiphanius says that except for God, she is superior to all creatures. St. John Damascene says that there is an infinite distance between the Mother of God and the servants of God. St. Anselm states that merely to say that the Virgin is the Mother of God, surpasses in sublimity all that can be said and thought, apart from God.

St. Albert the Great says more clearly that there is a substantial union between the mother and the son, but between the father and an adoptive son, the participation is accidental. Therefore, it is greater to be the Mother of God by nature than a son of God by adoption. Moreover, between being the son of God by nature and being God, and being the son of God by adoption and not being God, is being the Mother of God by nature and not being God; therefore, immediately after God, is the Mother of God.¹⁶²

Theological Argument. 1) A perfection is greater the more it approaches God. The divine maternity is closer to God than is sanctifying grace, because while sanctifying grace belongs to the supernatural accidental order, the divine maternity enters in a certain way into the hypostatic order, which is the very God-man or God substantially communicated to the human nature of Christ, which was taken from the substance of the Mother and with which Mary has a relationship.

2) Again, the measure of greater perfection lies in the greater and more intimate union with God. The divine maternity is more intimately united to God than is sanctifying grace, for the maternal union with God resulting from the communication of her very substance to the Son of God and her union with the divine hypostasis, is productive of consanguinity with God as subsistent in human nature

and of affinity with the same divinity. On the contrary, habitual grace is a union with God by an accidental form only, which does not touch God in His divine and personal being, but only in His intelligible being, as the object of supernatural love and affection. Although sanctifying grace is a physical and formal participation in the divine nature, it does not bespeak a subjective and entitative relation in God (since that which is subjectively and entitatively created is accidental), but an objective relation, because as a fundamental principle it ordains the creature to the attainment of the divine object, God Himself, through the intellect and will.

3) According to the axiom, *propter quod unumquodque tale est illud magis*, if sanctifying grace and the other privileges were bestowed on the Blessed Virgin Mary in such abundance precisely because she was to be the Mother of God, it must follow that the divine maternity is much more excellent than sanctifying grace.

4) Nor does the divine motherhood suffer diminution by Christ's answer to the woman who, according to St. Luke, praised Him by saying: "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts that nursed Thee." To which Jesus answered: "Rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it."¹⁶³ It is evident from the context and from the humble disposition of that woman who was ignorant of the divine filiation of Christ, that the divine Master did not intend to compare the divine maternity with sanctifying grace. The extremes of the comparison are, on the one hand, the divine maternity taken in the generic sense, purely corporal and common to all mothers, and on the other hand, faith and good works. Hence it is sufficiently clear that Christ was placing the spiritual maternity, produced by the word of God received in faith, above the purely carnal maternity, produced by blood and birth.

5) Nor does Christ deny that the Blessed Virgin should be acclaimed blessed because of her divine maternity; indeed, she must be considered much more blessed than the others who hear the word of God and keep it, for she not only conceived the divine Word in her womb and nourished Him at her breast, but she received the word of God in her mind, nourished it in her heart, and produced abundant fruit. Hence Venerable Bede says that the Savior beautifully confirmed the woman's assertion, by saying that not only is she blessed who merited to conceive the Word of God corporally, but

also all those whose ears are opened to faith, who conceive this same Word spiritually, and give Him birth and nourish Him with the performance of good works both in their own hearts and in those of their neighbors. The Mother of God is certainly blessed for having been made a collaborator of the Word who was to become flesh in time, but she is much more blessed for being the eternal keeper of Him who was always to be loved.¹⁶⁴

Moreover, making use of the occasion given by the woman in speaking of the special blessedness of His Mother, He discussed the blessedness common to all, showing the road to take in order to follow it, which is to hear the word of God and keep it. St. Peter Canisius says that the Lord added a general axiom which could serve as profitable to all His hearers and gave the rule necessary to know and observe, in order to live well and happily, so that no one would think that Mary was the only one who would be blessed on heaven and earth.

Although a comparison is established between the maternity of God and grace, nothing can be concluded as opposed to that dignity, for even though the divine maternity is more exalted and more noble than grace, it is not because of this that Mary was immediately and formally blessed. Nevertheless, as Barradas says, Mary is blessed precisely because she is the Mother of God, because to that title are joined obedience to the divine commands, fullest grace, an admirable aggregate of all the virtues, and the greatest glory. This is confirmed by the words of the Blessed Virgin herself (Luke 1:48): "Behold, all generations shall call me blessed." Gerson (*Super Magnificat*), sums up these reasons as follows: because she believed, because she was full of grace, because the fruit of her womb was blessed, because the Almighty had accomplished great things in her, because she is the Mother of the Lord, and because she preserved her virginity. Cornelius a Lapide adds that the chief source of all the rest is the fact that she was chosen to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate.¹⁶⁵

THESIS: *The divine maternity is more excellent than the beatification.*

Gabriel Biel believes that being blessed in heaven is better than being the corporal Mother of God, because it seems that the Lord gave preference to spiritual maternity, which is fulfilled by submission to the will of God, as St. Matthew says (12:50): "For whoever does

the will of My Father in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

The Fathers believe as in the preceding thesis and St. Thomas says: "The union of the Incarnation, since it is effected in the personal being, transcends the union of the beatified mind with God, which is consummated by the act of the soul in fruition."¹⁶⁶ But the union effected by the divine maternity pertains proximately to the order of the hypostatic union.

Theological Argument. 1) Sanctifying grace, which is eternal life begun, and the beatific vision, which is eternal life consummated, both pertain to the same order, since the beatific vision is the final evolution of sanctifying grace. For that reason grace is called the seed of eternal life (John 3:9) and a fountain of water springing up unto life everlasting (John 4:14). But the maternity of God is superior to sanctifying grace.

2) In the hypostatic union, the divine Person of the Word is united to the human nature substantially or according to His personal being; in the beatific vision the divine essence is united to the created intellect as an intelligible species or form which makes the intellect see God as He is in Himself. Although the intimate union of God with the intellect of the blessed results in the intellect being intelligibly deified and made similar to God with regard to being one in act of intellection, nevertheless, the blessed does not become God but is only deiform. From which it is inferred that just as the substantial union in the Person of the Word of God exceeds the purely intelligible union with the divine essence, so the maternity of God proportionately exceeds the beatific vision because it bespeaks an intimate union with her Son according to a certain identity of substance. Therefore, between the intelligible union of the beatific vision and the substantial hypostatic union is the union of the Virgin with God as His Mother.

THESIS: *The divine maternity surpasses the dignity of the priesthood of the New Law.*

There are those who hold that the divine maternity is inferior in dignity to the priesthood, because while Mary gave birth to the human nature of Christ only once, priests give Christ sacramental being

every time they consecrate; but the opposite opinion is the one more preferred.

The Blessed Virgin Mary gave Christ His human nature, and priests offer the same Christ sacramentally. The sacramental state does not add anything intrinsic to the humanity of Christ, because the change by which Christ is present in the Sacrament of the altar, involves no change in the body of Christ but only in the substance of the bread, which is changed into His body. Hence, the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* advises pastors to teach that this transformation is effected in such a way that the whole substance of the bread is changed by the power of God into the whole substance of the body of Christ and the whole substance of the wine into the whole substance of His blood, without any change in our Lord. He is neither begotten nor changed nor increased.¹⁶⁷

The Blessed Virgin Mary, by her own natural power, acted in the conception of Christ as a principal cause, as do other mothers in the generation of their children, but with the Holy Spirit furnishing supernaturally the act of man. In consecrating, priests act as secondary, ministerial and instrumental causes, by the power received from Christ, the principal Priest.

Christ is the chief Priest, who was immolated on the Cross as the immaculate Victim for the salvation of men. But the Blessed Virgin cooperated in a special way with the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, not only by preparing the Victim, nurturing Him and being present near the altar of the Cross, but by serving at the priestly consecration of Christ, which was effected at the moment of His incarnation in her purest womb. De la Taille states that Christ's ordination took place at the Incarnation, inasmuch as Christ's humanity was consecrated with the divinity of the Word by the triune God. Thus the God-man was constituted as our Mediator, who properly sanctifies the offering of our reparation and sanctifies those cleansed by the sacrifice. Such a priestly ordination or pontifical consecration came about when the Virgin consented by the words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word." She herself furnished the subject for anointing when she conceived, and offered herself as the temple of the consecration in her womb. Besides, in holy orders, as in baptism, there is a certain participation in

priestly power innate in Christ; the priesthood of the Church overflows as from a fountain in the Virgin from whom it took its origin.¹⁶⁸

THESES: *The dignity of the divine maternity is superior to the apostolate.*

Pope Innocent III says that although the Virgin is superior to all the apostles, the keys of the kingdom of heaven were entrusted to the apostles and not to her. The principal charge of the apostles was to continue the mission of Christ on earth, preaching His doctrine and applying to men the fruits of redemption. In both of these respects, the Virgin is superior to the apostles. Thus St. Albert the Great argues that the characteristic of the apostles is that they are the light of the world, but the Blessed Virgin illumined the world to the highest degree and therefore she also exercises the ministry of preaching to a higher degree.¹⁶⁹ Besides, all preachers preach with created word; but she with the uncreated Word. Therefore, she preached more excellently than all men.¹⁷⁰

St. Thomas of Villanova explains it by saying that the heavenly Teacher, who was to return to the Father from whom He came, left the schools and chair to Mary, not to lead His sheep like Peter, but to teach His disciples with a heavenly wisdom which she had learned from the beginning. Because of the brilliancy of her mind and her assiduity in the school of Christ, she was wiser and more learned than all the apostles. She directed this school for twelve years, as the teacher of the apostles and disciples of Christ and of all the churches. For this reason we say that she is the only one who has destroyed all the heresies in the Church of God.¹⁷¹

THE DIVINE MATERNITY IN RELATION TO MARY'S GIFTS OF GRACE AND GLORY

THESES: *The divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin is the basis and greatest reason for all the graces and privileges bestowed upon her.*

In this thesis we are not speaking of the physical basis from which the other privileges and graces of the Blessed Virgin flow as a natural consequence and with which she has a natural connection, but of the moral basis, which bespeaks only a relation of proportion, fittingness

and convenience. Although the physical basis is antecedent to its effect by a priority of time or of nature, this priority does not apply to the moral basis and final cause, which in reality do not precede the effect, excepting in intention.

Magisterium of the Popes. Pope Pius IX establishes the reasons for all Mary's prerogatives on her election as the Mother of God:

From the beginning, and before time began, the Eternal Father chose and prepared for His only-begotten Son a Mother in whom the Son of God would become incarnate and from whom, in the blessed fullness of time, He would be born into this world. God so loved her above all creatures that truly in her was the Father well pleased with singular delight. Wherefore, far above all the angels and all the saints, so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of His divinity that this Mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot even imagine anything greater and, outside of God, no mind can succeed in fully comprehending.¹⁷²

In accordance with this, Pope Leo XIII said: "God chose her from all eternity to be the Mother of the Incarnate Word, and for that reason so eminently distinguished her among all His most beautiful works in the triple order of nature, grace, and glory, that the Church justly applies to her these words: 'I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the firstborn before all creatures.'" ¹⁷³

Pope Pius XI speaks in a similar way when he says: "From this dogma of the divine maternity, as from a hidden spring of refreshing water, flow the singular grace of Mary and, after God, her great dignity."¹⁷⁴

The Fathers and Doctors of the Church. St. Ambrose says that neither could Mary be less than what was befitting the Mother of God. St. Augustine states: "Of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the honor of Christ, when we treat of sin, I do not wish that she should be involved. For we know that a greater grace was accorded her wholly to conquer sin, by the very fact that she merited to conceive and bear Him of whom we certainly know that He had no sin."¹⁷⁵

St. Bernard says that the Creator of men, in order to become man, had to be born of man and had to choose and fashion such a mother as was fitting and pleasing to Him. St. Anselm writes: "It is fitting

that the Virgin should be resplendent with a purity such that none could be conceived more perfect save only God's." 176 St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Albert the Great, and Nicholas of Cusa all speak of Mary's predestination as the Mother of God and of the gifts bestowed upon her so that she might become worthy to clothe the Son of God with human nature.

Theological Argument. 1) St. Thomas says that the more one approaches a principle of any kind, the more one participates in the effect flowing from that principle. The Blessed Virgin, by reason of her divine maternity, was nearest to Christ, the fountain of all graces, as has been proved before. Therefore, she must have received from Him a greater fullness of grace than anyone else. 177

2) St. Thomas also says that God so prepares and endows those whom He chooses for some particular office, that they are rendered capable of fulfilling it. On developing this point, St. Bernardine of Siena says: "Whenever the divine favor chooses someone for a special grace or an exalted position, it endows the person thus chosen with all the gifts necessary for him and for his task." 178 We see this in St. John, the Precursor of our Lord, in the apostles and in noted saints such as St. Stephen, who was called full of grace, that is, an amount sufficient for him to be a fitting minister of God and a witness conformable to his election. Therefore, as there is no office more excellent nor greater among creatures than the divine maternity, it surpasses those gifts and privileges which, next to her Son, adorn her more than any other creature.

3) The reason and measure of the gifts conferred by God on creatures are in proportion to God's love for the creature and the creature's love of God. God's love of things differs from ours, since in loving things, God makes them good. Our wills, instead, suppose their goodness, and thus we are moved to love them. The more one loves God, the greater are the benefits He imparts from the abundance of His divine goodness.

On the other hand, the more the fire of love is enkindled, by which one loves God in all things, above all things, and with all the strength of his soul, the better disposed he becomes for the benefits of God, who does not look to how much one does but with how much love one does what he does. St. Vincent Ferrer expresses this very well when he says that the merit of grace in this world and the reward

of glory in the next arise more from love in the heart and fervor of soul than in a multiplicity of goods. The divine maternity is, in respect to Mary's other prerogatives, proportionate to what the hypostatic union in Christ is with respect to the graces and gifts with which His humanity was adorned. Therefore, as the hypostatic union is the principle from which the humanity of Christ reaped so many gifts of grace and glory, the divine maternity is the principle from which are derived all of the gifts of grace and glory and the other privileges with which Mary was exalted above all other creatures. St. John says that as the Eternal Father is, so also is the Son. 179 It should be the same with the Mother with regard to grace and virtues of the Son, so that although she would not equal His infinite dignity, she would show a great sublimity through the abundance of gifts. Hence St. John Damascene says that it was fitting for the Mother of God to have those things from her Son and to be loved much by all creatures. 180 And so we may conclude with Petau (*De Incarn.*, XIV), that all that is worthy of praise in Mary and all the graces and glory with which she is endowed are referred to her divine maternity as to their fountain and origin.

THESIS: Whether the divine maternity, to the exclusion of habitual grace, formally sanctified the Blessed Virgin.

Most theologians assert that the divine maternity fundamentally and remotely sanctified Mary so far as it connaturally exacted the abundance of grace which such a mother required. The problem is whether the divine maternity, prescinding from habitual grace, formally sanctified Mary, by the analogous reason that the humanity of Christ was sanctified formally through the hypostatic union.

Ripalda, Vega and Sedlmayr assert that the divine maternity, even when considered separate from habitual grace, sanctified Mary inasmuch as her maternity alone eminently communicated all the formal effects proper to sanctifying grace.

Müller and Lercher, distinguishing between moral and ontological sanctification, are of the opinion that the divine maternity is a form of ontological sanctification and at the same time the root and principle of moral sanctity, and that Mary was sanctified by this dignity as Mother of God, even excluding habitual grace, as the humanity of Christ was sanctified by the Word, but with this difference, that

Christ is substantially holy through the hypostatic union and Mary is accidentally sanctified through her divine maternity.

Many other theologians, such as Contenson, Rhodes, Raynaud, Morgott, Pesch, Van-Noort and Hugon, deny that Mary was actually and formally sanctified by her divine maternity, prescinding from habitual grace, since formal sanctity is a supernatural, physical, inherent form received into the soul intrinsically, but the divine maternity is not a form intrinsically inherent to the soul of Mary. Moreover, in what pertains to the power of sanctification, her maternity is distinguished from the hypostatic union in which the humanity of Christ, substantially united to the divine Word, cannot be alien to the holiness of the Word; and the Virgin's maternity, which is based on the generation of the Word with regard to His human nature, bespeaks a real relation to God the Son. Now, the Blessed Virgin could not be sanctified formally in the terminus of her relationship, that is, in the Person of her Son, because Mary, even as Mother of God, remains a person distinct from the Son of God and from the other divine Persons.

THESES: *Privileges which should be attributed to Mary because of her divine maternity.*

To Mary must be attributed all those privileges which are befitting the Mother of God and the cooperator in redemption. St. Anselm says that it was fitting that the Virgin should be resplendent with a purity than which one could not imagine any greater outside of God. St. Laurence Justinian says that all honor, dignity, merit, grace, and glory are found in Mary.

All the gifts and privileges of grace and holiness which were bestowed on the saints can likewise be attributed to Mary. St. Bernard and St. Thomas of Villanova emphasize this point, and the latter compares Mary's gifts to those of others famous for the same, such as the patience of Job, the gentleness of Moses, the faith of Abraham, the chastity of Joseph, the humility of David, the wisdom of Solomon, the zeal of Elias, the purity of virgins, the fortitude of martyrs, the devotion of confessors, the wisdom of the doctors, the hermit's detachment from the world, as well as the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, piety, and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit, and all the graces *gratis datae* of which the Apostle speaks in I Corinthians.¹⁸¹

From this generality and accumulation of prerogatives, we exclude those graces which we sometimes find in the saints but cannot permit to Mary, because they are not compatible with her status as a wayfarer or with the perfection of her innocence and sanctity, with her sex or with her cooperation in the work of redemption. Thus, Mary was not in possession of the beatific vision; the virtue of penance in its proper and formal sense does not apply to her; the priesthood in its proper sense cannot be attributed to her, although she had what was equivalent to the priesthood. Nor was Mary exempt from pain and death, because, associated as she was with the redemptive mission of Christ, "she suffered with her suffering and dying Son, and almost died with Him."¹⁸²

With regard to the special favors with which, it is said, some of the saints were favored in certain circumstances—those who were fed by angels with material bread or comforted with the Eucharistic Bread—there is no reason for these things being attributed to Mary, although, as Terrien says, had she needed the help of angels, she could have had them as servants immediately.

Lastly, we must avoid all superfluity in attributing perfections to Mary, for example, preaching exaggerated praises in her honor. It would be superfluous if such praise lacked serious and solid foundation either in Sacred Scripture, Tradition, or theological reasoning. The explanation of John of Segovia is pertinent to this proposition when he says that a man building a wall perspires much until he succeeds in laying the stone exactly where it should be placed. After setting it in the exact place, he doesn't dare touch it, lest it would move from its proper place. Also, an artist painting a picture works hard until he perfects the face; but after giving it the finishing touches, whereby the perfection of the face reveals the artist's true genius, were an amateur artist to add a line, it would be completely spoiled. And so it is with the cumulus of Mary's graces and perfections. All her being and authority, all her riches, consist precisely in the fact that she is the Mother of God. This is the foundation and origin of all of her heroic virtues. Hence, after having said that she is the Mother of God, nothing else can be added, for it would be like moving the stone from its proper place. And it is precisely for this reason that the Evangelists showed themselves so moderate in her praises; for after calling her the Mother of God, they believed that nothing

more could be said in honoring her. So, if some preacher would wish to add something to Mary's excellence, he would certainly distort the picture of Mary, just as would the amateur painter.

John of Segovia goes on to explain that some preachers feel that they are paying Mary great honor when they say much about her and they are satisfied as long as they say a great deal. He advises them to preach on one or the other excellence, in order to reveal the honor and greatness of the Mother of God, and also to cite what the saints have to say concerning her. It would be better to do that than to confuse the excellent picture of the Virgin, for the minds of those listening are moved and influenced more if fewer things are said than if many things are said which haven't even a tinge of truth. He cautions zealous preachers, in using particular titles while referring to Mary, to use them in conformity with the sense and intent of Sacred Scripture and with regard to the mind and interpretation of the saints. This advice is considered sufficient for employing Mary's praises prudently.¹⁸³

Mary's Freedom from Sin

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IT IS EVIDENT from what was said previously that the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin is the principle and highest source of all the gifts and privileges bestowed upon her. From this unique privilege begin, as from their center, the perfections and prerogatives by which the Virgin is superior to all the saints and creatures. These perfections with which the Virgin was so enriched are of three kinds: some pertaining to her soul, others pertaining to her body and still others pertaining to her body and soul.

We must presuppose that Mary was endowed by God with the most noble soul. St. Epiphanius says that excepting only God, she was superior to all in nature; St. John Damascene states that both in the excellence of her nature as in the perfection of grace, God made His Mother as great as was befitting His most glorious majesty. St. Bernardine of Busti says that the spouse of God was the most noble creature in regard to soul and body; more noble than anyone in the world, except her own Son.

While admitting that all rational souls are substantially the same in perfection, the Virgin excels all men in accidental perfection, because accidental perfection of soul depends to a great extent on the diversity of the organism and on individual temperament. Mary had the most perfectly organized body and the greatest harmony in temperament and passions. Hence St. Thomas says: "It is evident that the better the disposition of a body, the better the soul allotted to it."¹

In conformity with her perfection of soul, Mary's mind and will were most perfect in their respective operations, concerning which Contenson says that the perfection of Mary's soul was unique, in such a way, that she could perform the most perfect operations easily—proper to the Mother of God. Hence she had a keen and sagacious mind, a deep and firm judgment, a tenacious and quick memory, a

continuous, unwearied contemplation, an indefectibility, and an exquisite prudence. She was always strong of will, just, inclined toward all virtue, and free from all sin. Her imagination, always calm and gentle, was neither obscured by passion, hindered by sleep, distracted by wanderings, nor darkened by error or deceit. Lastly, her passions were under the control of reason and never hindered her attention of mind which was fixed on God; nor did they impede the burning love in her heart, nor the sweetest experience of heavenly things.²

All of this, as we shall see in the following pages, depends to a great extent on her immaculate conception, by which her soul remained free of all darkness of intellect, of all evil inclination of will, and of all disorder of imagination.

Mary's Immaculate Conception

Previous Observations. Before all else, it is necessary to establish that our first parents, Adam and Eve, were raised by God to a supernatural order and confirmed in holiness and justice by the infusion of sanctifying grace. Together with sanctifying grace they were adorned, as befitted their state, with the infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which flow from sanctifying grace. They were endowed with the gift of integrity or freedom from concupiscence, by which their senses and passions remained totally subject to reason; with the gift of immortality, which removed the necessity of dying; and with the exemption from all suffering and misery, to which we are now subject. Finally, they possessed a great facility for learning and a singular knowledge, free from error, together with perfect rectitude of will and they were exempt even from venial sin.

These are the main prerogatives, some truly supernatural, such as sanctifying grace, the infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and others preternatural, such as integrity, immortality, and so forth, with which our first parents were established in that unique and happy state called the state of original justice.

But the gifts of original justice observed an order and union among themselves. Theologians generally give primacy among the gifts of original justice to sanctifying grace as the root and foundation of all

the other gifts; the infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit are united intrinsically with it; while the gifts of integrity, immortality, and so forth, are united accidentally, by the extrinsic ordination of God, because sanctifying grace, as Mazzella says, which exists in the substance of the soul as in its subject, as compared to infused habits *per se*, which reside in the faculties of the soul as in their immediate subject, is like the essence in respect to properties, for which reason it is called the root and foundation of the other gifts. But if it is compared to the preternatural gifts, such as freedom from concupiscence, immortality, and so forth, it is also their root, for according to St. Augustine, as Suárez says, and even more so according to the facts narrated in Scripture, the integrity and rectitude of nature were given on the condition that as long as the first rectitude toward God lasted, the natural inferior justice would also be maintained; but if the former were destroyed, so would the latter be lost.³

It must be presumed that God instituted the supernatural order, not only for our first parents, but for the whole human race which was to descend from them. For that reason He confirmed them in original grace, not merely as a personal gift, but as an hereditary treasure; and He decreed that that grace would be an obligatory state for all men descending from Adam, as members of his family. This transmission and conservation of original grace was on condition that Adam would obey the divine precept not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17; 3:3). Had this been complied with, original grace would have been transmitted to all of Adam's descendants along with human nature.

It must likewise be remembered that by the instigation of Satan, Adam and Eve broke the divine command and thus were deprived of sanctifying grace, the infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, integrity, and immortality. As a consequence, their intellects were darkened and their wills weakened, for the harmony which existed between body and soul disappeared, as did the ability to avoid evil and to do good.

Note also that Adam's sin was not only personal, but original, so that it could really be called a sin of nature, because original justice was not given to him as to a singular person, but as to the principle and head of humanity. Therefore, as original grace was to be transmitted according to its divine institution to human nature, by genera-

tion through Adam, so the privation of this grace is now transmitted through Adam's sin, by human generation, constituting all as sinners, children of wrath, enemies of God, subjects of death, and other sorrows of life.

It is fitting, finally, to remember that although the Church always defends the existence of original sin and its transmission to all of Adam's descendants, she has not defined in what the formal reason of the sin consists. Nevertheless, she places the privation of sanctifying grace among the essential effects of this sin, as Le Bachelet asserts, while referring to the acts of the Council of Trent.⁴ In the Vatican Council a plan was proposed to anathematize the heretical doctrine of those who would dare to say that original sin is not really and properly a sin in the descendants of Adam, because the descendants themselves had not sinned by their actual consent; and also those who deny that the privation of sanctifying grace belongs to the essence of original sin, grace which Adam lost for himself and for his descendants by sinning freely. It is the opinion of St. Thomas and of most theologians that original sin consists formally in the privation of sanctifying grace, caused by Adam's sin, by which he voluntarily deprived himself and his children of holiness and justice.

From what has been said, we conclude that it is a universal law that all of Adam's descendants, by way of natural generation, are subject to original sin, and as the Blessed Virgin is among those who descended from Adam in this way, the question arises whether Mary contracted original sin or whether an exception to this universal law was made for the Mother of God, so that from the first moment of her conception she was exempt from the stain of original sin.

For a better understanding of this question we may consider the words with which Pope Pius IX, solemnly defined the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary: "That the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."⁵

Conception is twofold: active on the part of the parents, and passive on the part of the offspring. The first is the parental act of gen-

eration. Immunity by the Blessed Virgin Mary cannot be admitted with reference to this active conception, because although her conception was holy, she was capable materially of propagating original sin.

Passive conception is the effect of active conception and is divided into inchoate and perfect conception. Inchoate conception, as understood by the ancients, comprises the whole process of formation, the development and organization of the material, until it is sufficiently disposed to receive a rational soul.

Perfect passive conception occurs when the rational soul is created and infused into the body. As we are not now treating of inchoate passive conception but of perfect passive conception, when it is said of Mary that she was preserved immune of all stain of original sin from the first moment of her conception, we mean the very moment in which she began to exist as a human being, that is, as a substance composed of body and soul. So, we must believe that God, at one and the same moment, created Mary, infused her soul into her body, and sanctified her soul; although by a priority of nature, the creation of her soul was first, then its infusion into her body, and both the creation and infusion preceded her sanctification, because by nature, existence comes before adornment with grace. Therefore, the question as to when the rational soul begins to animate the body can still be freely argued, since the question is concerned with first instant of animation, whenever it occurs.

Mary obtained this privilege of her purest conception in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race; therefore, she cannot be excluded from those who needed the merits of Christ and were redeemed by Him. In order to understand this, we distinguish two kinds of redemption; reparative, by which one is freed from the sin into which he fell, and preservative, which prevents the redeemed beforehand from the sin into which he would otherwise have fallen.

When the Bull states that Mary was preserved from all stain of original sin, it is easily understood that her redemption, made in view of the merits of Christ, was not reparative for sin already existing, as in the other children of Adam, but preservative of imminent sin which should have been contracted by the natural generation of Adam and which in reality she would have contracted had she not been preserved in view of Christ's merits.

The Bull *Ineffabilis* states that Mary was preserved from all stain of original sin. This formula, considered in itself, can indicate something more than simply being exempt from original sin, because concupiscence is also a stain of that sin, or the result of it. But although it is certain that Mary was also free from concupiscence, it cannot be asserted that the Pope wished to define it, since the formula "all stain of original sin" means "all stain which is original sin." This is what was defined by the Pope, and nothing else.

As preservation from original sin is attained through sanctifying grace, to maintain that Mary was free from original sin from the first moment of her conception is the same as saying that in that very moment she was adorned with sanctifying grace. And as grace removes the stain of sin, Mary's preservation from the stain of original sin in the first instant of her conception, is called her immaculate conception.

Finally, we must consider the fact that the object of the papal definition is not only the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, but that this doctrine has been divinely revealed. Thus is excluded the opinion of those who would like to admit the truth of the Immaculate Conception, but only as a theological conclusion. For although this dogma is *formally* contained in revelation, it does not follow that it must have been proposed in Scripture or in apostolic preaching *explicitly*. In fact, if one did not admit that the doctrine of which we treat was only implicitly revealed and in the same way preached by the Church for many centuries, the history of this dogma would be completely inexplicable.

Errors. We will disregard for the time being those who contradicted or doubted the Immaculate Conception prior to the Bull *Ineffabilis* and mention those who were hostile to the dogmatic definition. Certain bishops in Holland, imbued with a Jansenist spirit (Van Sautem, Van Buul, and Heikamp), were among these. In Germany, at the Council of Bonn, convoked in September, 1874, to re-establish the union of churches, Döllinger proposed that the new Roman doctrine of the Immaculate Conception be rejected as being contrary to tradition from the first thirteen centuries, according to which tradition Christ alone was conceived without sin. The English Protestants, Wilberforce and Liddons, rejected Mary's immaculate conception as a new dogma and Pusey maintained that the papal definition was a

new cause for disagreement between the Roman and Greek Church, and even between the ancient and modern Roman Church.

Many Greco-Russians, such as Lebedev, deviating from ancient Byzantine tradition, maintained that Mary was conceived in original sin and was subject to concupiscence, but that she was sanctified at the moment of the Incarnation and also in her conception through the faith of her parents and by a certain extrinsic benevolence of God, which neither removed original sin nor put any grace into her soul. They said, finally, that Mary was totally cleansed from original sin only at the foot of the Cross. This opinion had a great influence in the Russian Church and was the reason why the Holy Synod directed that the question of the Immaculate Conception be inscribed among the theses of polemic theology.⁶ As a result, in the answer of the schismatic church to Pope Leo XIII, Antimus VII accused the Catholic Church of bringing forth a new dogma which was contradicted forcibly by great theologians of the papacy and ignored by the ancients. More recently, S. Bulgakov, professor at the Russian Academy of Paris, denied Mary's immaculate conception as opposed to the principles of Russian theology on grace, original sin, the creation of the soul, and its redemption by Christ.⁷ Finally, Rosmini falsely explains Mary's immaculate conception by tracing her origin from an incorrupt particle of the seed of Adam, forgotten perhaps by the devil and transmitted from generation to generation, to attain its complete development in the Blessed Virgin.

THESES: From the first moment of her conception, Mary was preserved from all stain of original sin.

Magisterium of the Popes. In the famous Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, Pope Pius IX solemnly defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin with these words:

For the honor of the holy and undivided Trinity, for the glory and adornment of the Virgin Mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith, and for the furtherance of the Catholic religion, by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by Our own: We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of

the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful. Hence, if anyone shall dare—which God forbid!—to think otherwise than as has been defined by Us, let him know and understand that he is condemned by his own judgment; that he has suffered shipwreck in the faith; that he has defected from the unity of the Church; and that, furthermore, by his own action he incurs the penalties established by law if he should dare to express in words or writing or by any other outward means the errors he thinks in his heart.

Among the other popes who previously energetically and devoutly defended Mary's immaculate conception, was Pope Sixtus IV, who condemned as heretics those who believed and even dared to preach that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin.⁸

The Council of Trent confirmed the constitutions of Pope Sixtus IV, and at the end of Session V added: "This holy Council declares, however, that it is not its intention to include in this decree, which deals with original sin, the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, but that the constitutions of Pope Sixtus IV, of happy memory, are to be observed under the penalties contained in those constitutions, which it renews."⁹

Pope Alexander VII says: "Concerning the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, ancient indeed is that devotion of the faithful based on the belief that her soul, in the first instant of its creation and in the first instant of her soul's infusion into the body, was, by a special grace and privilege of God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, her Son and Redeemer of the human race, preserved free from all stain of original sin. And in this sense have the faithful ever solemnized and celebrated the feast of the Conception."¹⁰

Sacred Scripture: The Old Testament. After Adam ate of the forbidden fruit in the garden of paradise, breaking God's law, the Lord spoke to the serpent (Gen. 3:15): "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; and thou shalt wait for her heel." This text has been called the Proto-evangelium, as it contains the promise of a future Redeemer. Rejecting all mythical and allegorical interpretation, we must retain from this text a literal historical sense because Scripture attests the historical temper of the narration: "From the woman came the beginning of sin, and by her

we all die" (Eccles. 25:33); and, "The serpent seduced Eve by his guile" (II Cor. 11:3). We add here the argument of the Biblical Commission of June 30, 1909, which declares that one cannot doubt the literal historical sense of the first three chapters of Genesis when they treat of narrations which touch on the fundamentals of the Christian religion, which are, among other things, the original happiness of our first parents in the state of justice, integrity and immortality; the precept imposed by God on man to test his obedience; the transgression of the divine command by the instigation of the devil in the form of a serpent; the fall of our first parents from the primitive state of innocence, and the promise of the future Redeemer.¹¹

Catholic exegetes give two interpretations to the texts of Genesis (3:15). Cornelius a Lapide, and among the moderns, Corluy, Hummelauer and Mangenot, hold that in the Proto-evangelium, in the literal and direct sense, the woman refers to Eve; of thy seed and her seed signifies the children of Eve, or the human race, either in its totality or only in the just who have to fight courageously against the serpent and his seed and, through the grace of Christ, to triumph over the devil and his followers. Since all the just are carnal descendants of Eve, by the victory of her good descendants she is opposed as an enemy of the devil and his followers. By the serpent is meant a material serpent, but as an instrument of the devil concealed in it; by the seed or lineage of the serpent is meant, not only all the devils, but also evil men who, following Satan, become his voluntary disciples. Now, as Eve was a type of Mary, just as Adam, in some sense, was a type of Christ, it follows that the verse of Genesis (3:15) must be understood typically and spiritually of Christ and of Mary. Campana is of the opinion that there is sufficient evidence for this interpretation.

The second interpretation, very prevalent among exegetes and theologians, points out that in Genesis (3:15) the serpent means the devil, who was used as an instrument to speak to Eve. By the seed of the serpent is understood not only the army of angels that Satan dragged down with him in his fall, but also sinners and even sin itself, which was caused by the devil through the medium of a serpent. Finally, by the seed of the woman is meant Christ, the Redeemer of the human race, and His Blessed Mother, who are at enmity with the devil and who triumphed over him.

Now by the serpent is understood the devil who, hidden in Eve, seduced her, and this is shown in three ways: God speaks to the serpent who tempted Eve; but as it is absurd to suppose that a mere natural serpent could deceive her, he had to be a spiritual substance, and evil: so it is the devil. In the Book of Wisdom (2:24) we read: "But by the envy of the devil, death came into the world"; in the Apocalypse (12:9): "And that great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the devil and Satan, who leads astray the whole world"; and in another chapter of the same book (20:2): "And he laid hold on the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan."

Punishment supposes sin, and sin is proper to rational beings. The serpent, being an animal, could neither sin nor be punished for sin; so the punishment is fulminated against the devil, who used the serpent as a visible instrument.¹²

As the devil is the serpent to whom God speaks, it is clear that the seed of the serpent is the seed of the devil. Now seed, among the Hebrews, means descendants or children; but as the devil begot no children, his seed would have to be someone else, that is, sinners, who are begotten by the devil and made his children through sin. "The father from whom you are is the devil, and the desires of your father it is your will to do" (John 8:44). It can also be said that the seed of the devil is sin itself, which entered the world through his seduction. Many sins originate in concupiscence and concupiscence proceeds from the devil, since his deceit caused original sin. Billot¹³ says that only by reason of sin is man the seed of the devil; and when the sin is erased, man is immediately set aside from wicked seed.

By the seed of the woman is meant Christ, the Redeemer of the human race, who, having no part in the devil and possessing complete victory over him, was to destroy his work of sin. The seed of the woman is not the aggregation of all future men, since although the word seed is taken collectively in Scripture most of the time, it un-
 contrary, if it is understood of Christ, it follows that He is rightly called the seed of woman and not of man, for He was to be born of a Virgin-Mother, without the agency of man, but only by the operation of the Holy Spirit. We find it in Isaiah (7:14): "Behold a virgin shall con-

ceive, and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel"; Galatians (4:4): "God sent His Son, born of a woman"; Genesis (3:15) promises a victory in which the head of the serpent would be crushed and the human race, which had fallen through this sin, would be restored. This victory was to be won by Christ.

It is logical to infer that the woman designated in the verse of Genesis (3:15) is not Eve, but the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is called the woman by antonomasia. It is not Eve because, far from holding a particular enmity with the devil, she was converted as his servant in sin. Nor is it the whole female sex, because it treats of a woman who, together with her seed, Christ, holds a unique enmity against the devil. The woman, therefore, is the Mother of Christ, since it speaks of a woman whose seed would conquer the devil, having the most triumphant victories over him. And so St. Ephrem praises Mary as the one who crushed the head of the dragon and flung it into hell.

What is meant by the enmity placed by God between the serpent and the woman and between her seed and his seed? These enmities pertain to the moral order and suppose a state of combat, discord, opposition and aversion, in which there is no partnership between the woman and the devil or between the offspring of either, since partnership with the devil came about by sin, as found in the First Epistle of St. John (3:8): "He who commits sin is of the devil." From this it is easy to deduce the meaning of the words, "she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel," for enmities placed by God are to crush the head of the serpent, that is, the devil, for he is the cause of original sin, the head and principle of all sins.

Nor is there any difficulty in reading *ipsum* or *ipse*, as in the Hebrew text and in some ancient versions, or *ipsa*, as in the Latin Vulgate, which is preserved in the critical edition, edited by the command of Pope Pius XI in the year 1926. The woman cannot crush the head of the serpent by her own power, but only by that of Christ her Son. Hence, if one reads *ipsa*, the meaning will be: the woman, through her offspring, that is, her Son, will crush the head of the infernal serpent. And if one reads *ipse* vel *ipsum*, it is Christ who, with His Mother, will crush the head of the serpent. Cornelius a Lapide proposes the two as antagonists: the woman and her descendants and the serpent with its. Consequently, the woman and her de-

scendants are to crush the head of the serpent. And so Mary is intimately and indissolubly united with her Son in the work of human redemption.

After these explanations, it can be argued in this way: The enmity that was to exist between Mary and her offspring and the devil and his is announced in Genesis 3:15. Therefore, Mary had to be free from original sin because enmity supposes war, aversion and opposition, rather than friendship with the devil in sin. But if Mary had been stained by original sin for even a moment, she would have been an associate of the devil's at least temporarily or, as St. Augustine says, of his family or offspring. The enmity of Mary against the devil and his offspring is the same as that of Christ, as Pope Pius IX says in his Bull. Therefore, if the enmity between Christ and the devil is absolute and perpetual, that of the Virgin also had to be complete and perpetual, which certainly would not be if her soul had been contaminated by original sin. The enmity supposes something unique and proper to the woman prefigured. And on this assumption, nothing could be thought singular and proper to such a woman, had she not been free from all sin, including original sin. Freedom from actual sin alone is not unique, but common to all those who die before they reach the age of reason; liberation from original sin was granted to some in their mother's womb, as in the cases of St. John the Baptist, Jeremiah, and perhaps many others; and finally, all the just have become free from this sin after birth by *remedium naturae* (circumcision) or by baptism, depending on the times. Hence, Mary's privilege, to be unique, would have to exist from the first moment of her conception.

God placed an enmity between the woman and the devil and the descendants of both, so that the woman, through her Son (*ipsa per ipsum*), would crush the head of the devil and have complete victory over him. But this could not have been, had Mary been subject to sin for even an instant.

Finally, the divine will of restoring the human race is manifested in Genesis 3:15 in a way similar to the way in which its destruction occurred. Therefore Janssens says that as Eve cooperated in the destruction of her race, although it was through Adam's sin that it was lost, by the same token, although it was the Son of the woman who was to crush the head of the serpent, nevertheless, the woman is not

separate from Him, but is with Him in this undertaking. So Christ and Mary were to repair what Adam and Eve lost by their deception by the devil. This could not be done if she had not been free from all stain of sin; so it was necessary that this co-redemptrix be truly redeemed.

It is said of the Proto-evangelium in the Bull *Ineffabilis*: "These ecclesiastical writers in quoting the words by which at the beginning of the world God announced His merciful remedies prepared for the regeneration of mankind—words by which He crushed the audacity of the deceitful serpent and wondrously raised up the hope of our race, saying, 'I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed'—taught that by this divine prophecy the merciful Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, was clearly foretold; that His most blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was prophetically indicated; and, at the same time, the very enmity of both against the evil one was significantly expressed."

Moreover, many passages in the Old Testament are applied to Mary's immaculate conception, principally, the words of the Canticum (4:7): "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee," which Richard of St. Victor explains by saying that she who possesses all grace is all beautiful, for there was no sin in her, and which Gerson also emphasizes by saying that Mary was all beautiful and free from the noxious tyrant, original sin.

The New Testament. In the Gospel of St. Luke (1:28) the angel greets Mary in this way: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women"; to which Elizabeth added: "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." The words used by the angel cannot be understood as the grace of the divine maternity, since they were spoken before Mary conceived the Word in her womb, but they showed the grace which was Mary's before Christ's conception; grace given to her so that she might be a worthy habitation for the Son of God. This grace cannot be a mere favor or extrinsic benevolence on the part of God, as the Protestants think, whose doctrine is that justification is worked by an extrinsic favor of God, without the inherent form of grace, and therefore they translate "full of grace" as beautiful, gracious, loved, or highly favored, but it concerns a fullness of grace *gratum facientis*, which not only signifies extrinsic love but also an intrinsic and supernatural love which

is bestowed on man through the goodness of God, making him pleasing and acceptable in His sight. Thus, we read in Psalm 83:12: "The Lord grants grace and glory"; in the Epistle to the Ephesians (4:7): "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's bestowal"; in the Epistle to Timothy (4:14): "Do not neglect the grace that is in thee"; and in St. Luke (1:30): "For thou hast found grace with God."

The angelic salutation contains these three eulogies chiefly: Mary is greeted as full of grace, she is intimately united to the Lord, and she is blessed among women. None of these three things are connected with original sin, and therefore it must be excluded from Mary.

To Mary is attributed a plenitude of grace without limitation or imperfection. If then, Mary were to be in need of grace for even a moment, she could not be called full of grace. Mary is called full of grace, not with an absolute fullness, which St. John attributes to Christ in his Gospel (1:14): "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we saw His glory—glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father—full of grace and of truth," but with a singular relative plenitude, as befits the dignity of the Mother of God. By being free from original sin from the first moment of her conception, Mary could best be worthy of her dignity as the Mother of God. The Virgin whom the angel salutes is the same woman promised by God in the Proto-evangelium who, being at enmity with the devil, was to crush the head of the serpent. Therefore, the fullness of grace predicated of Mary, had to be such that she could retain her perpetual enmity against the devil. "The Lord is with thee," shows that Mary was closely united to God from the first instant of her creation, because the angel did not say "will be" or "was with thee," but simply, "the Lord is with thee." These words would not have been true had Mary been conceived in sin. The words "blessed art thou" place Mary above all women. This comparison to others is made in order to show the singular blessing of Mary's divine maternity. Mary is acclaimed blessed, not only with the blessing of fecundity of such a sublime Son, but also with the blessing opposed to the common curse of original sin, since original sin is the fountain and origin of all evil which befalls the human race.

This sense of the salutation is explained in the Bull *Ineffabilis*: "This singular and solemn salutation, never heard before, shows that the Mother of God is the seat of all divine graces and is adorned with

all gifts of the Holy Ghost. To them Mary is an almost infinite treasury, an inexhaustible abyss of these gifts, to such an extent that she was never subject to the curse and is, with her Son, the only partaker of perpetual benediction. Hence she was worthy to hear Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Spirit, exclaim: 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb' " (Luke 1:42).

The Fathers, Doctors and Theologians. There are three epochs in the tradition concerning the Immaculate Conception.

A) During the first four centuries this doctrine is implicitly contained in the notion of Mary as the new Eve, in the general doctrine of her absolute purity, holiness and divine maternity. As there was no controversy concerning the doctrine of original sin at that time, the Fathers did not have to assert the Immaculate Conception either directly or explicitly.

The comparison of Mary with Eve. The Apostle (1 Cor. 15:45) presents Christ as the new Adam. "For just as by the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted just" (Rom. 5:19); "for since by a man came death, by a man also comes resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:21). The Fathers completed the Pauline parallelism between Adam and Christ by making Eve the antithesis of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And so, the place occupied by Eve in the downfall of the human race is occupied by Mary at the side of Christ in the work of redemption.

The first to call Mary explicitly the new Eve is St. Justin, who says:

He became man, being born of the Virgin, so that the disobedience caused by the serpent might be brought to an end in the same way that it was started. For Eve, till then an incorrupt virgin, conceived the word spoken by the serpent, and gave birth to disobedience and death; but the Virgin Mary, being filled with faith and joy (when the angel brought the good news to her, telling her that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her, and the power of the Highest would overshadow her, and that therefore the Holy One that was to be born of her was the Son of God), answered, "Be it done to me according to thy word." 14

St. Irenaeus writes:

Eve was disobedient while she was still a virgin. She, having Adam as her husband, but herself still a virgin . . . was disobedient, and

so brought death upon herself and upon the whole human race. Similarly, Mary, bearing the predestined man, yet being still a virgin, was obedient, and so became the cause of salvation both for herself and for the whole human race. . . . Eve was seduced by the angel's speech and fled from God, disobeying His word. To Mary the good news was announced by the angel, and she bore God within her, obeying His word. Though the one disobeyed God, the other was drawn to obey Him, and thus the Virgin Mary became the virgin Eve's advocate. And just as the human race was bound down to death by a virgin, so it was released by a virgin, and a virgin's disobedience was counterbalanced by a virgin's obedience.¹⁶

And Tertullian maintains:

God won back His image and likeness, which the devil had seized, by an action that rivalled the devil's. The word which established death found its way into Eve, while she was still a virgin. Similarly, the Word of God which established and built up life entered also into a virgin. And this was done so that what the female sex had sent to destruction, should be brought back to salvation by the same sex. Eve believed the serpent; Mary believed Gabriel. The fault which the one committed by her belief, the other by her belief blotted out.¹⁶

St. Ephrem made use of this comparison, saying: "Those two innocent ones, those two simple women, Mary and Eve, had been indeed created quite equal, but afterwards one became the cause of our death, the other of our life."¹⁷

St. Epiphanius: "So far as the body is concerned, Eve was certainly the mother of every man on earth, but from Mary the life itself was born in the world, so that she could bear living things and become their mother. And so, curiously she is called 'Mother of the living,' . . . But there is another marvel about these two, which must be considered: Eve became the cause of man's death . . . but Mary the cause of his life" (*Haer.*, 78).

It must be noted that the parallelism described by the Fathers between Eve and Mary has a double relationship of similarity and opposition; of similarity, because Eve left the hands of God innocent and immaculate, and so Mary, compared to Eve in innocence and purity, did not suffer contagion of any sin; of opposition, because the disobedient Eve who introduced original sin into the world is opposed to Mary who, associated with Christ in the redemption, brought sal-

vation to the world. Now, this opposition of Mary's with Eve with regard to the fall and her partnership with her Son in the work of reparation show that although Mary was born of the sinful race, she was placed outside of the order of the first fall, and was therefore conceived immaculate. It is not strange that Cardinal Newman, a remarkable defender of the Marian prerogatives, believed that solely through Patristic antiquity he could refute all the accusations against the development of the doctrine on the Blessed Virgin. And he did not hesitate to assert that the Immaculate Conception is taught implicitly in the doctrine on Mary as the new Eve.¹⁸

The perfect purity and holiness of Mary. The Holy Fathers celebrate this with the highest praises. St. Hippolytus compares Mary to an indestructible ark: "The ark which was made of indestructible timber, was the Redeemer Himself. The ark symbolized His tent (body), which was impervious to decay and engendered no sinful corruption. . . . The Lord was sinless because, according to His humanity, He was fashioned from indestructible wood, that is, out of the Virgin and the Holy Ghost, lined within and without with the purest gold of the *Logos*."¹⁹ St. Gregory Thaumaturge says that the Word, finding a virgin holy in soul and body, took flesh from her, as befitted his purpose (*In Nativ. Christi*).

The priests and deacons of Achaia, who wrote an epistle concerning the martyrdom of St. Andrew, are quoted as a most ancient testimony in support of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The epistle states: "Because the first man (Adam) was created of undefiled earth (that is, earth which had not yet been cursed), . . . it was necessary that out of an immaculate Virgin there should be born the perfect man, the Son of God." Some hold this epistle as genuine and others hold it as false, but whatever the supposition, it is a monument of venerable antiquity since the original Greek text goes back to the third century.

St. Ephrem, who in maintaining the innocence and purity of Mary is not inferior to any of the Greek or Latin Fathers, addresses her divine Son: "Really and truly, Thou and Thy Mother are alone entirely beautiful. Neither in Thee nor in Thy Mother is there any stain" (*Carmina nisibena*). And in another passage he calls her an immaculate, unstained, incorrupt, all-pure and stainless Virgin, Spouse of God and our Lady, who conceived and gave birth to the God-man, thus recon-

ciling man with the Word of God (*Ad Ss. Dei Genitr.*). As a sinner, St. Ambrose beseeches Christ to receive him, the fallen flesh of Adam, not through Sara, but through Mary, who is an incorrupt virgin, a virgin through grace, cleansed from all stain of sin (*Ennar. in Ps. 118*).

As seen in these expressions of the Fathers, Mary is called incorrupt, holy in body and soul, immaculate, fair, sinless, inviolate, chaste, and free from all taint of sin. These are praises which, taken in a more obvious sense, exclude all sin in Mary; and not only actual sin, but also original sin. Therefore, they implicitly contain the doctrine of her immaculate conception.

The divine maternity. The Fathers teach that Mary attained to such a degree of sanctity and purity that she merited to become the Mother of God. Thus, St. Ambrose says that with reason she alone is called full of grace, for she alone gained the grace no one else had merited—that of being filled with the Author of grace (*Exp. in Luc., 3*). St. Jerome presents Mary as a model, whose purity was such that she merited being the Mother of the Lord (*Ep. 22 ad Eustochium*); a purity which is worthy of such great honor that it carries with it freedom from all stain.

b) The second epoch of tradition concerning the Immaculate Conception extends from the fifth to the fifteenth century. The Eastern and Western Churches did not agree in explaining and defending Mary's privilege.

The Greek Fathers speak of the immaculate conception of the Virgin more clearly and explicitly, even celebrating her remarkable sanctity and freedom from all sin with greater praises. The Nestorian heresy, which openly denied the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin and diminished her singular prerogatives, spread throughout the Orient in the fifth century. Courageously opposing this heresy was St. Cyril of Alexandria, who refuted Nestorius and victoriously defended Mary's divine maternity. Following in his footsteps were many other Fathers and writers who were eager to defend and clarify the excellence of the divine maternity. And so it happened that in conformity with the order of divine providence, the accused efforts of Nestorius afforded the Fathers an occasion of explaining Mary's eminent prerogatives more fully.

In the fifth century St. Cyril of Alexandria (*In Conc. Ephes.*)

speaks thus: "Whoever heard of an architect who built himself a temple and yielded up the first possession of it to his greatest enemy?" Theodotus of Ancyra, a friend of St. Cyril's says: "Instead of the virgin Eve, who was unto us the instrument of death, God, for the purpose of giving life, chose a virgin most pleasing to Himself and full of grace, who, included in woman's sex, was free from woman's sin, a virgin innocent, without taint, holy in soul and body, as a lily budding in the midst of thorns."²⁰ In his oration (*In Mariam Deiparam*), Chrysippus of Jerusalem addresses himself to the Blessed Virgin, telling her that in all truth she is full of grace, for the King is with His servant, the most beautiful among women. She is hailed as the fountain of light which illumines all men, aurora of the sun which knows no setting, abode of life, garden of the Father and pasture of all fragrance of the Holy Spirit. Proclus, patriarch of Constantinople, stated that Mary was formed from clean clay; and later, that Mary, the sphere of the new and heavenly creation, in which the sun of justice never sets, drove from all souls the darkness of sin (*Or. 6, In S. Dei Genitrix*).

In the sixth century Theophanes and Anastasius Sinaita both refer to Mary's purity; the latter saying that the Mother of God carried with her the complete and intact image of her Son.

In the seventh century, Sophronius of Jerusalem speaks of Mary's excellence as surpassing all creatures in purity. He acclaims her full of grace, for upon no one else was such a fullness of grace bestowed. No one else was adorned with sanctity as was she. In the Synodical Epistle to Sergius, approved by the Sixth Ecumenical Council, Sophronius calls Mary holy, pure in soul and body, and completely free from all contagion. St. Andrew of Crete and St. John, Archbishop of Thessalonica, are high in their praises of the immaculate Mother who found grace with God and is worthy of praise.

In the eighth century St. Germanus of Constantinople, addressing himself to Mary, calls her full of grace, holier than the saints, more excellent than the heavens, more glorious than the cherubim, more honorable than the seraphim and more worthy than all creatures. He calls her palace of God, piously fashioned, most pure, most worthy of all praise, treasure dedicated to God, who excels all creatures; undivided earth, unploughed field, blossomed vine, inexhaustible fountain, virgin and mother who knows not man, hidden treasure

of innocence, and splendor of all sanctity. He continues his praises, referring to her as the new propitiatory (*In Praesent. Deiparae*).

Several orations by St. John Damascene refer to Mary as the garden of paradise in which the ancient serpent gains no entrance. It is here from the virginal earth that the only-begotten Son, consubstantial with the Father, was made man; here that God sent the cherubim to keep her safe from the snares of the seductive serpent.²¹ In a homily on the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, he explains that nature yielded to grace when St. Anne received her fruit after having been sterile.

St. Euthymius, patriarch of Constantinople, doubting nothing concerning the most pure conception of the Virgin, affirms the miraculous purification of her parents. John the Geometer's hymn to Mary follows this same theme.

Nicetas David says that Mary made flow through the whole earth a river of fragrance, and that we honor her, not only because she was born according to the flesh of a sterile mother, but mostly because she was born through supernatural grace with regard to her soul (*In diem natalem S. Mariae*).

The Byzantine schism, which Photius began, was completed by Michael Cerularius in the year 1054, but the Oriental Church did not abandon the ancient faith in the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin, and the schismatic writers transmitted it with all clarity. There are many examples of this faith. We will mention some who, regardless of the schism, show the continuity of this tradition.

Besides Michael Psello, a contemporary and friend of Cerularius, Mauropas, James the Monk, Michael Glykas, and others who openly declared their belief in Mary's immaculate conception, remarkable testimonies of the Marian privilege are given by Theophylactus, Archbishop of Bulgaria (*In Praesent. B. Mariae*), maintaining that Mary was sanctified in the maternal womb. Commenting on Luke 1:28, he says that because God told Eve that she would bear her children in sorrow, Mary's sorrow was turned into joy when the angel said: "Hail, full of grace." And because Eve was accused, Mary was called blessed (*Enarr. in Lucam*). Nicholas Cabasilas, who excelled among the theologians of his time, says of Mary that because nature could not contribute anything to her generation, it was fitting that God Himself, whom Joachim and Anne invoked, should accomplish the work, should create her, so to speak, blessed as the first man. He also

says that the Virgin is truly immaculate and was born just as are all others on earth, of the same race that had ignored her state. And she alone of all men who ever existed, rose above all evil to give back to God the beauty He first gave us (*Serm. In Nativ. Deipar.*).

Manuel II Paleologus, a most learned emperor, writes that at the very moment that Mary was conceived, He who had chosen her to be His future Mother filled her with His grace. Finally, George Escolarius, the last and the most notable of the schismatic theologians of the Byzantine epoch, calls Mary the Mother of God by will and by nature. He praises her as most pure in soul and body, most pleasing of flowers, the root and principle of those predestined to salvation (*Or. in fest. ingressus B.V. Mariae in templum*).

During the fifth century and following, the exposition of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in the Western Church followed a slower course, but in the East, as we have said, the Nestorian heresy gave the Fathers and writers an opportunity to work with more fervent zeal in defense of the Blessed Virgin. In the West, on the contrary, the Pelagian heresy greatly delayed and even hindered progress in the belief in the Immaculate Conception.

The fundamental assertion of the Pelagian heresy is that the first man, Adam, was created by God just as man is born today, without any gift or grace of sanctity and justice, without elevation to the supernatural order. It follows that there is no original sin which is transmitted to all of Adam's descendants. It was natural that in opposition to this doctrine the Fathers would strive to demonstrate the existence of original sin and its transmission to all men. However, they did not deny the privilege of Mary's exemption, so they probably didn't bother to study its basis, and at times they clearly affirmed it.

In this same century, St. Augustine, who gallantly opposed Pelagianism and defended the dogma of the propagation of original sin, though he does not assert the immaculate conception of the Virgin in express words, nevertheless asserts that some singular privilege with regard to sin must be conceded to Mary. "Of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the honor of Christ, when we treat of sin, I do not wish that she should be involved. For we know that a greater grace was accorded her wholly to conquer sin, by the very fact that she merited to conceive and bear Him of whom we certainly know that He had no sin."²²

Although these words of St. Augustine could be limited to the immunity of Mary with regards to actual sin alone, for even that would be a special privilege, nevertheless, in the opinion of this holy Doctor, it must be understood as exemption from original sin. St. Augustine points out clearly that the immunity from actual sin presupposes exemption from original sin.²³ Hence, as St. Augustine denies actual sin in Mary, he consequently denies original sin, as its cause.

Julian threw rude invectives against St. Augustine, for he accused him of being more of an enemy of Mary's through this doctrine on the universality of original sin. As far as Julian was concerned, Augustine was a greater heretic than Jovinian. He says to Augustine: "He (Jovinian) makes Mary's virginity come to an end owing to the condition of parturition; you deliver Mary herself to the devil, owing to the condition of birth." To which St. Augustine replied: "We do not deliver Mary to the devil owing to the condition of birth, because this condition is broken by the grace of being born again."²⁴ These words of St. Augustine must be understood as preservative grace, by which Mary, who should by right have been conceived in original sin, was preserved pure and holy by the grace of God. If Augustine's opinion did not have this meaning, the Blessed Virgin would really have been assigned to the devil through the condition of birth, but this is exactly what Augustine is speaking against.

Nor is this opposed to what St. Augustine points out in another passage, that Christ alone, by reason of His conception, was exempt from original sin: "He alone was born without sin, whom His virgin mother conceived without the embrace of a husband, not by the concupiscence of the flesh, but by the submission of her mind";²⁵ or the passage that says that Mary's flesh was that of sin, for although Christ's body was conceived of the flesh of a woman who was herself conceived carnally, He was not conceived in that way.²⁶ Christ's flesh, not originating from carnal commingling, since it was formed by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin, was exempt from sin, through the exigence of His conception; but the Blessed Virgin, born of Joachim and Ann by carnal commingling, would contract the debt of sin by virtue of sexual generation, and thus her carnal flesh, and the soul united to it, would have had to contract sin.

Some of the Fathers after St. Augustine, anxious to defend the uni-

versal propagation of original sin and its connection with human generation, make no mention of the privilege of Mary's conception, but there are some who were opposed to so high a privilege. Among others, St. Leo says that Jesus Christ alone, among the sons of men, was born innocent, because He alone was conceived without the stain of carnal concupiscence.²⁷ Le Bachelet comments on St. Augustine's texts and shows how all sexual generation is subject to the law of concupiscence; and that although Mary was conceived by Joachim and Anne by carnal generation and was remotely subject to the debt of original sin, she was preserved from original sin by a unique privilege. He also refers to the controversy which arose at that time in regard to Mary's privilege.²⁸ However, testimony in favor of Mary's privilege is not lacking among the Fathers and writers at this time. St. Peter Chrysologus says that the dignity of this Virgin was announced by name, because Mary, in the Hebrew tongue, is Lady in Latin. She was blessed, for she was the only one among men worthy of hearing the words: "Thou hast found grace," a plenitude of grace (Serm. 140 and 142).

Among others giving testimony of Mary's privilege at this time are the poets St. Maximus of Turin, Prudentius, and Sedulius. Sedulius sings:

And, as the tender rose blooms amid sharp thorns,
Having nothing harmful, conceals its mother with its honor,
So likewise Mary, coming from the stem of Eve,
As the new virgin, might expiate the misdeed of the ancient virgin.²⁹

In the sixth century St. Fulgentius said that the seduced woman deceived the first man and an inviolate Virgin conceived the second. Venantius Fortunatus is representative of the poets of this century in singing Mary's praises.

The author of the twelve sermons on Mary, included among the doubtful works of St. Ildephonse, says that Mary is that blessed soul through whom the Author of life entered the world, through whom the malediction of the first parents was destroyed, and the blessing of heaven extended throughout the world (*De Assumpt. S. Mariae*). In another passage (*In Nativ. S. Dei Genitrix*), he conveys the truth of Mary's distinct birth of sterile parents, which is not the usual thing,

and of her freedom from all stain of carnal sin in soul and body. The deacon Paul, most acceptable to the Emperor Charlemagne, praises the work of divine mercy which repaired the fall of man:

As soon as the first earth-born parent perished
 from swallowing the poison of the malicious serpent,
 An infectious poison, flowing therefrom and infiltrating the race,
 inflicted upon the whole of it a deep wound.
 But the Savior having compassion on creatures, and
 discerning the untouched womb of the propitiatory Virgin,
 Committed to her the bringing of the joy of salvation to the world,
 languishing in its deadly crime.³⁰

Paschasius Radbertus deduced from Mary's freedom from original sin that her parturition was accomplished without corruption and without pain (*Liber de partu Virgin.*). St. Fulbert, Bishop of Chartres, says that in the first place, we must say that the soul and body which God the Father chose as the habitation for His Wisdom, should be free from all malice and all stain (*De Nativ. B.M. Virg.*). St. Peter Damian says that although the Virgin's flesh was taken from Adam's, she contracted no stain, and this we also read in the hymn for the feast of the Annunciation (*ad Nocturnum*).

In explaining Psalm 150, St. Bruno states that the Lord gazed upon the earth from heaven on coming into the womb of the Virgin from His regal abode. Therefore, she is that incorrupt earth which the Lord freely blessed from all contagion of sin, through whom we comprehend the way and the life and receive the promised truth.

Yves of Chartres tells of Mary's sanctification and her immunity from all stain of sin both original and actual (*De Nativ. Domini*). Rupert of Deutz draws a parallel between Eve who was seduced, and Mary who crushed the head of the seducer (*In Gen. 3:19*). And really, it is not enough that sin committed or contracted is erased in the presence of so great a love, which he mentions as the reason why she had no sin, but the force of this love had to prefer that sin be neither committed nor contracted. In another passage he says of the Virgin that she is as beautiful as the moon, for the moon shines and illumines things, not by its own light, but by the reflected light of the sun. Thus, she does not possess light of herself, but shines through divine grace, through a fullness of grace (*In Cant., 6*). Peter

Paschasius and Raymond Jorudain indicate by their explanations that Mary could not have contracted the stain of sin.

Controversy of the Scholastics Concerning the Immaculate Conception. The tradition of the Eastern Church and the Western Church was not in agreement concerning Mary's immaculate conception. Among the Scholastics of the Latin Church in the twelfth century there arose a heated controversy without which the truth would not have been studied to such an extent. After St. Augustine and some of the other Fathers, who though recognizing or at least not denying this privilege of Mary, uttered phrases apparently opposed to the privilege, St. Anselm of Canterbury, regarded as the Father of Scholastic theology, opened the way for controversy on this subject. Although he expressed the principle of Mary's supereminent holiness by saying that it was fitting that the Virgin should be resplendent with a purity that could be surpassed by none but God's,³¹ he did not have a clear understanding of the privilege of the Immaculate Conception. He stated explicitly that Mary was to be included among those who were cleansed of sin antecedent to the birth of Christ.³²

Peter Lombard's false opinion on original sin caused the controversy to become even more confused. He held that original sin was nothing more than concupiscence, which is not an act, but a vice, and that it is transmitted to children by the flesh itself which, conceived in unruly concupiscence, is stained and corrupted. Because of that corruption of the flesh, when the soul is infused it contracts the malice and corruption of sin by contact with the flesh, just as an unclean vessel changes wine into vinegar. This vice or corruption of the flesh cannot be called sin if it is only considered as regards the flesh (though it is the root and cause of original sin) because the flesh separated from the soul is irrational, and no irrational substance can be the subject of sin. The rational soul is not infused into the flesh at the very moment of conception; it is first animated by the vegetative soul, later by the sensitive soul, and finally, from forty to eighty days later, God creates and infuses the rational soul into the body.³³

Since the theologians at that time followed the teaching of Peter Lombard, they inquired whether Mary's flesh was stained by the concupiscence of her parents or sanctified before its union with the ra-

tional soul, for it seemed to them that the question of the Immaculate Conception depended on this previous sanctification of the flesh. Four great theologians of the Franciscan and Dominican schools, who did not seem to favor this Marian privilege, deserve to be considered: Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, St. Albert and St. Thomas Aquinas.

Alexander of Hales, starting from the principle from which the Immaculate Conception logically follows, namely, that all the good that could be given her was given to her, treats only of the sanctification of the flesh. In the first place, he asks whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified in her parents before her conception, and he answers negatively, because although her parents could be saints, nevertheless, generation is according to nature, which is corrupt; therefore, it is necessary that the one conceived should contract (original) sin in generation, and for this reason the Blessed Virgin could not be sanctified in her parents; even more, it was necessary that in her generation she should contract sin from her parents.

In the second place, he asks whether she could have been sanctified in the conception itself, and he answers negatively because conception has nothing to do with the will of those who beget, but has to do with nature, which is actually corrupt. Although the union could have been meritorious, conception could never be meritorious, and for this reason no one could be sanctified in it.

Thirdly, he asks whether she could have been sanctified after conception and before the infusion of the soul, and he also answers negatively, because the body is ordained to glory only through union with the soul, to which grace is ordained, but the body can never be sanctified before the infusion of the soul.

Fourthly, he asks whether anyone could be sanctified in the womb after the infusion of the soul. He answers affirmatively, and says that Mary was sanctified in her mother's womb in a way similar to John the Baptist and Jeremias. He says that what was bestowed on any other could not be denied so excellent a Virgin.³⁴ We see from this that Alexander of Hales did not even propose the question of whether Mary's soul, independently of her flesh, received grace at the very instant she was created and united to her body. However, in his way of speaking he denies the Immaculate Conception, and that is the way in which his own disciples understood the question.

St. Bonaventure's doctrine is similar, although it comes closer to the question because he treats of Mary's body and soul separately. In the first place, he asks whether Mary's flesh was sanctified before animation, and he answers in the negative, not because God could not sanctify her flesh before animating it, but because sanctification is a gratuitous gift which has the soul as its subject and not the body. Therefore, if her flesh had been sanctified it would have been effected by the grace existing in her soul or in the souls of her parents. But it could not have been accomplished by the grace existing in her soul because that would involve a contradiction, since her soul would not yet have been created. Neither could it be admitted that this was accomplished through the grace bestowed on her parents, first, because sanctification cannot be transmitted from parent to offspring; secondly, because even supposing that it were possible that sanctification could be transmitted from parent to offspring, this could never happen by means of a lustful union, because then two opposing things would be in the same subject at the same time; thirdly, because if we judge that there was sanctification and that, by divine power, there was no sensuality, it can be said that this is the exclusive prerogative of the Blessed Virgin, who alone conceived without sin and give birth without pain. Hence, this privilege could not be bestowed on her parents, but was reserved to her alone. Therefore, it must be conceded that her flesh was not sanctified before animation.

In the second place, he asks whether the soul of the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before contracting original sin, and he answers that to understand this question it must be remembered that some have said that in the soul of the Blessed Virgin, sanctifying grace came before the stain of original sin because it was fitting that the soul of the Virgin be sanctified in a most sublime manner over the rest of the saints, not only in an abundance of holiness but also in priority of time. Therefore, grace was infused at the moment of her creation, and in that same moment her soul was infused into her body. Besides, the effect of the sanctity of grace on the body prevailed over the effect of sin in the soul, and for that reason she did not contract the guilt of sin.

This opinion seems to rest on several congruencies: principally for the honor of Christ, who should be born of a most pure Mother; by the singular prerogative of the Virgin, who should surpass the rest

of the saints in dignity of sanctification; and for the sake of a better order, since there should be a person midway between Him who was immune from original sin in body and soul and those who contracted original sin under both aspects. Thus, St. Anselm says that the Blessed Virgin was freed from original sin through grace which depended upon and had its origin in the faith and in Christ as Head, but although that grace prevented the contagion of the soul, it did not prevent contagion of the flesh. With regard to this stain of the flesh, the penalty of sin remained in the Blessed Virgin, since sanctifying grace is not opposed to punishment, but to sin. Mary was subject to punishment but freed by Christ from original sin in a way different from the rest. The others were raised up after their fall; Mary was sustained in the very act of falling.

Others argue that the Virgin's sanctification followed immediately on her contraction of original sin. Thus the Apostle says that all have sinned and need the glory of God. This manner of speaking is more common, reasonable and certain, according to St. Bonaventure. It is more common because it is held by most theologians that she had original sin, because of the penalties which she suffered and which could not have been suffered for the redemption of others nor could they have been voluntarily accepted, since they were contracted. It is more reasonable, because being precedes grace in priority of time or of nature, for St. Augustine says that first one must be born and then reborn. Hence, as being comes before being good, the soul must first be united to the body and then infused with God's grace. Now if Mary's flesh was affected, the contagion would have to spread to her soul. It is therefore necessary to maintain that the contagion of sin was previous to the sanctification of her soul. It is, moreover, the most certain, as it is more in keeping with faith, piety and the authority of the saints, for when the saints generally treat of this subject, they exclude only Christ from that universality by which it is said that all have sinned in Adam. It agrees with piety and faith because if we are to honor the Mother with such great reverence and devotion, so much more should we reverence the Son through whom she receives her honor and glory. And therefore, "it concerns the eminent dignity of Christ that He should be the Redeemer and Savior of all, and that He opened to all the gate (of life) and that He alone died for all. We must certainly not withdraw the Blessed Virgin Mary from the gen-

eral application (of this law) lest by augmenting the glory of the Mother we diminish the glory of the Son and thereby provoke the Mother, whose wish it is that her Son should be exalted above herself, the Creator above the creature."⁸⁵ Adhering, therefore, to this opinion that the honor of Jesus Christ is not opposed to the honoring of His Mother, we may assert, in accordance with common opinion, that the Virgin's sanctification was effected after contracting original sin.

In the third place, St. Bonaventure asks whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before her birth, and he answers that it must be asserted that the Church holds as unquestionable that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified in the womb, from the fact that it celebrates her nativity, which it would not have done if she had not been sanctified. And if one desires to know on what day and in what hour this happened, it must be answered that it is not known, although it is believed possible that the infusion of grace followed the infusion of the soul (*Ibid.*).

From all this, it follows that one can hardly doubt the mind of St. Bonaventure with regard to Mary's conception, since he openly declares himself in favor of the common opinion of the time: that her sanctification followed her contraction of original sin. However, the merit of the Seraphic Doctor on this question is great, for he clearly and piously expresses the reasons in favor of the Immaculate Conception, and in justice it can be said that he set Scotus on the way of truth in the matter.

Following in the footsteps of Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure were the Franciscan theologians who at that time were interpreting the Master of the Sentences in Paris. John of la Rochelle, proposing the question of whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before or after her conception, in it or after it and before the infusion of her soul,⁸⁶ answers in a way similar to Alexander of Hales. Richard Middlevale, limiting himself to the question of whether Mary's body was sanctified before being animated, answers negatively of the body and soul, for he says that by its union with the body, Mary's soul contracted original sin.⁸⁷

St. Albert the Great openly confesses the eminent purity of the Blessed Virgin above every other creature. He states the fundamental principle which St. Anselm formulated: "It was fitting that the Vir-

gin's purity should be such that none could be conceived more perfect save only God's" and adds that therefore this purity is none other than freedom from original sin, the extinction of concupiscence, and the summit of gratuitous perfections. St. Albert says that Mary reached the height of this purity in four steps: in the first, she was sanctified in her mother's womb; in the second, by the exercise of the virtues; in the third, by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon her; and in the fourth, by the conception of her Son.³⁸

Therefore, although the principle of Mary's great purity includes her preservation from original sin and not only her purification, even accomplished as quickly as possible in the maternal womb, St. Albert did not see her total exemption from original sin. Recalling the opposition between Mary and Eve as accepted by the early Fathers, he points out that Mary, in opposition to Eve, did not suffer the triple punishment which follows sin: that of pain, sin and ignorance. But the absence of the triple punishment of sin, in the mind of St. Albert, does not extend to exemption from original sin, from which it is seen that St. Albert held for the relation between seminal conception and original sin. Lastly, commenting on the Master of the Sentences, St. Albert asserts on faith that after contracting original sin, the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before birth in her mother's womb after contracting sin, but that no one knows the day or the hour, as it was not revealed, though it is more probable that grace was given immediately after animation rather than after a longer period of time.³⁹

St. Thomas, like other theologians of the thirteenth century, admitted the principles which logically inferred Mary's immaculate conception, for in answering the argument by which is concluded that God could not have created anything better than the Blessed Virgin because, according to St. Anselm, it was fitting that the Virgin be resplendent with a purity such that none could be conceived more perfect save only God's, he says that it is possible to find some creature purer than all the rest, namely, one not contaminated by any taint of sin, and such was the purity of the Blessed Virgin, who was immune from original and actual sin. He teaches the same thing in another place when he says that the increase of purity and the increase of charity differ, since the first constituted a recession of its contrary; and as the Virgin was cleansed from all sin, she attained

the summit of purity, although always below God, in whom there is no potency; potency is a characteristic of creatures, while God is Pure Act.⁴⁰

St. Thomas also points out that the lofty purity of Mary was required by her divine maternity:

But she would not have been worthy to be the Mother of God, if she had ever sinned. First, because the honor of the parents reflects on the child, according to Prov. 17:6: "The glory of children are their fathers": and consequently, on the other hand, the Mother's shame would have reflected on her Son. Secondly, because of the singular affinity between her and Christ, who took flesh from her: and it is written (II Cor. 6:15): "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" Thirdly, because of the singular manner in which the Son of God, who is the divine Wisdom, dwelt in her, not only in her soul but in her womb. And it is written (Wisd. 1:4): "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins."

We must therefore confess simply that the Blessed Virgin committed no actual sin, neither mortal nor venial; so that what is written (Cant. 4:7) is fulfilled: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee."⁴¹

Now the supreme purity of Mary, as befitting the dignity of the Mother of God and as predicated by St. Thomas, must carry with it the exemption from all stain of original and actual sin, as St. Robert Bellarmine points out.⁴² But a doubt arises as to whether St. Thomas meant that the exemption from every stain of sin should be extended to the first instant of Mary's conception. Theologians are divided into four different opinions on this question.

The first group assert that St. Thomas explicitly denied Mary's immaculate conception. This opinion is defended by Giles, the master of theology of the University of Salamanca, Peter of Tarantaise, Peter of Palude, John of Naples, John of Pouilly, Gerard of Abbeville, Capreolus, the Ferrariense, Cajetan, and other commentators up to the sixteenth century. Later, Medina, Catharinus, Estius, and in our own times Janssens, Lepicier, Campana, Le Bachelet, Pesch, Sanda and others interpret St. Thomas in this same sense. In favor of this opinion, they cite the following passages in St. Thomas.

In the first place, those in which he refers to the universal law of the transmission of original sin and the necessity of redemption for

all. Thus, St. Thomas says: "According to the Catholic Faith we must firmly believe that with the exception of Christ alone, all men descended from Adam contract original sin; otherwise all would not need redemption which is through Christ, which is erroneous."⁴³

In the *Quaestiones quodlibetales* (6, q. 5, a.7) he asks whether it is lawful to celebrate the conception of our Lady. In an objection he says that it seems lawful to celebrate the conception of our Lady, for if it were not, it would be because she was conceived in original sin. But it seems that she was not conceived in this sin because she was created to be the abode of God in a special way; therefore, she had to be specially prepared for this by immunity from original sin. He answers by saying that everyone descended from Adam contracts original sin as is explained by St. Augustine in his commentary on Genesis. The Blessed Virgin was born through the commingling of sexes, just like other human beings, and therefore she was conceived in original sin and was included in the generality of those of whom the Apostle says (Rom. 5:12): "Because all have sinned." From this universality, Christ alone is excepted, who was not in Adam with regard to seminal power. But if this exemption were attributed to anyone else, he would not need redemption. Hence, we cannot attribute to the Mother anything that pertains to the honor of her Son, the Savior of all men, as the Apostle says in the First Epistle to Timothy (2:6).

Nevertheless, although the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin, it is believed that she was sanctified in the maternal womb before birth. For this reason there exist in the Church many different customs in the celebration of her conception. The Roman Church and many others, considering that the Virgin was conceived in sin, do not celebrate her feast. Others, taking into consideration her sanctification in the womb, but ignoring the time, celebrate her conception, since it is believed that she was sanctified immediately after her conception and the infusion of her soul. For that reason, the feast does not have to be referred to her conception as such, but rather to her sanctification. And for the same reason, this conception does not have to be celebrated as if it had taken place without original sin. He then states that original sin would not be an obstacle to Mary's having been prepared more specially than the rest, since in sanctification she received most abundant gifts of grace, not only to be cleansed from

original sin, but that she might be free from all mortal and venial sins all her life, as St. Anselm says.⁴⁴

The time of Mary's sanctification, which St. Thomas discusses in his *Commentaries on the Sentences*, is likewise treated in the *Summa theologiae*, where he asks whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before animation.⁴⁵

The sanctification of the Blessed Virgin cannot be understood as having taken place before animation for two reasons: first, because the sanctification of which we are speaking is nothing but the cleansing from original sin. . . . Now sin cannot be taken away except by grace, the subject of which is the rational creature alone. Therefore before the infusion of the rational soul, the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified.

Secondly, because since the rational creature alone can be the subject of sin; before the infusion of the rational soul, the offspring conceived is not liable to sin. And thus, in whatever manner the Blessed Virgin would have been sanctified before animation, she could never have incurred the stain of original sin: and thus she would not have needed redemption and salvation which is by Christ, of whom it is written (Matt. 1:2): "He shall save His people from their sins." And this is unfitting, through implying that Christ is not the Savior of all men, as He is called (I Tim. 4:10).

To the second objection he answers:

If the soul of the Blessed Virgin had never incurred the stain of original sin, this would be derogatory to the dignity of Christ, by reason of His being the universal Savior of all. Consequently, after Christ, who, as the universal Savior of all, needed not to be saved, the purity of the Blessed Virgin holds the highest place. For Christ did not contract original sin in any way whatever, but was holy in His very conception, according to Luke 1:35: "The Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." But the Blessed Virgin did indeed contract original sin, but was cleansed therefrom before her birth from the womb.

And in answer to the fourth objection, he says:

Consequently, though the parents of the Blessed Virgin were cleansed from original sin, nevertheless she contracted original sin, since she was conceived by way of fleshly concupiscence and the intercourse of man and woman; for Augustine says: (*De Nup. et Concup.* 1): "All flesh born of carnal intercourse is sinful."⁴⁶

Lastly, in the *Exposition of the Angelic Salutation*, St. Thomas says that Christ surpassed the Blessed Virgin in excellence by having been conceived and born without original sin, but that the Virgin was conceived, though not born, in that sin.

Notwithstanding, shortly afterwards, establishing the excellency of the Blessed Virgin over the angels in the plenitude of grace and in divine intimacy, he adds that in the third place she surpasses the angels in purity, because not only was she pure in herself, but she also obtained purity for others. She was most pure with regard to sin, because she incurred neither original nor mortal nor venial sin. And the same is true with regard to punishment. As it seems strange that St. Thomas would contradict himself in the *Exposition*, theologians doubt the authenticity of one of the texts. However, after examining many manuscripts, J. Rossi defends the authenticity of the texts.

The second group is made up of those who maintain that St. Thomas taught Mary's immaculate conception. That is the way Vega, Niereberg, Tirso González, Velázquez, Frassen, Hurter, Mazella, Palmieri, Morgott, Paquet, Hugon, and in our times, Friethoff, interpret him. They cite the following texts in favor of the Immaculate Conception:

In the *Commentaries on the Sentences*, the Angelic Doctor says that the Blessed Virgin was immune from original and actual sin.⁴⁷ In his commentaries on the psalms he says that Mary was not darkened by any sin (*In Ps. XIV*) and in her there was no sin (*In Ps. XVIII*). Finally, in the *Exposition of the Angelic Salutation*, he writes that she was most pure with regard to sin because she did not incur either original, mortal, or venial sin; and this was true as regards punishment (*loc. cit.*). Nor do these texts in which it is said that the Blessed Virgin was cleansed, purged, sanctified, etc., present a difficulty, since these expressions state a relationship to holiness and not necessarily to sin, as St. Thomas himself explains while speaking of the justification of the soul of Christ.

Nor are the other texts which stated that the Marian exemption from original sin diminishes the dignity of Christ the Redeemer opposed to the Immaculate Conception. Hurter says that it is sufficient to have thought that the Blessed Virgin was not preserved in her material conception before her animation in order to explain these things. Nor is there difficulty in the texts in which Mary's sanctifica-

tion before animation is denied and it is concluded that sanctification was accomplished after animation, because the meaning of the adverb *after* is not decided by St. Thomas. Therefore, according to his mind, this *after* might imply posteriority of nature only, and need not exclude simultaneity in time, since this is the answer to the question. Thus this doctrine, as Friethoff says, neither contradicts nor necessarily favors the dogma. It can favor it and contradict it, according to the determination of the indeterminate *after*; but leaving it undetermined, it neither favors nor opposes, but maintains perfect silence concerning the dogma, on which he proposes no question.

To the third and fourth group belong those who think, like Salazar and Malou, that St. Thomas hesitated; and those, like Dom Guéranger, Abbot of Solesmes, who are undecided about the question of the Immaculate Conception, and maintain the impossibility of proving that he did oppose the doctrine.

Perhaps it would be better to reserve judgment on this subject. Castagnoli wisely says that much light is being shed on the story of the controversy by present studies, but that the discussion is not yet closed; particularly the discussion on the interpretation of St. Thomas.⁴⁸

Among the defenders of the privilege of the Immaculate Conception was John Duns Scotus, who distinguished himself extraordinarily. Preceding him were Henry of Ghent, noted professor of the University of Paris, Raymond Lull in Spain, and William of Ware in Oxford, whose influence was felt more or less by the Subtle Doctor. Henry of Ghent modified much of the doctrine of the Seraphic Doctor and the Angelic Doctor. Discussing the question as to whether the Blessed Virgin's conception is to be celebrated by reason of her conception, he says that the conception of the Virgin is to be celebrated, but only by reason of the sanctification which she received either in her very conception or by reason of the sanctification she would receive immediately. Afterwards, observing that original sin and sanctifying grace are opposites, so that it is impossible for them to exist together in the same subject, he admits that the Blessed Virgin was in original sin only in passing and for an instant, and in sanctifying grace forever after. That instant, in the mind of Henry, was that of sin with respect to her conception, and also that of grace with respect to sanctification. This same instant is the end of the past and the beginning of the

future. Since it was the terminus of natural conception and of the formation of the body, it is referred to the sin contracted then. As the beginning of the future, in which grace was given by the Sanctifier, it is referred to grace.

Henry of Ghent proves his point that the Blessed Virgin was in original sin for only an instant by using the same argumentation (*Potuit, deuit, ergo fecit*: It could have happened, it was fitting, therefore it did happen) by which the Scotist School, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, demonstrated that Mary was conceived without original sin.

Balic synthesizes the text of the Solemn Doctor this way: Sacred Scripture says nothing on this subject and the holy doctors have spoken very little about it. We must therefore proceed with caution, much more so in treating of such an important matter. For the same reason, the subject must be submitted to authority for examination, since it has no value without it. It is not necessary to prove that God had the greatest love for the Virgin, so that He gave His Mother such holiness and purity that none better can be found in creatures. But a better indication of this great love would be to sanctify and free her from sin as soon as possible, rather than delay it for any time. Since, according to the doctrine of St. Anselm, it was fitting that He adorn her with a purity such that none greater could be conceived under God, so also it was fitting to provide her with such purity as quickly as possible. And thus Henry concludes that if she could be sanctified and cleansed in such a way that she would be in original sin only for an instant, that can be piously believed.

It was fitting, therefore, that the Virgin remain in sin only for an instant, but in reality was it possible? Henry of Ghent answers affirmatively, and he proves this possibility in many ways, saying that what is possible by virtue of nature is much more possible by divine power. Nature can make a thing remain in a certain actual disposition for only an instant. In the order of nature contrary things can actually be in a subject at one time, as in the accession to an accidental form and the recession of the same. Also, by divine power, the soul of the Blessed Virgin could for an instant be in a determined disposition, that is, in the stain of original sin, so that for an instant she had original sin for the first and last time. In order to confirm this proof, Henry of Ghent cites the testimony of St. Augustine and afterwards

explains and solves three difficulties. It could have happened and it was fitting, but did it actually happen? The Solemn Doctor, holding the opinion that we cannot be totally certain of things which depend exclusively on the divine will and are not revealed, answers the question almost with the same words that Duns Scotus used: "I do not know; God knows."

Raymond Lull frequently praises the Blessed Virgin as conceived without sin, free from all evil, and full of all good.⁴⁹ William Ware, teacher of the Subtle Doctor, in his *Commentaries on the Sentences*, after explaining the contrary opinion, answers that he accepts the opinion which asserts that she did not contract original sin.

John Duns Scotus is the herald and glorious proponent of Mary's immaculate conception. Nevertheless, he holds a prominent place, not as the inventor of new arguments to prove the truth, but as one who stated the question accurately and harmonized the two truths of the immaculate conception of the Virgin and her redemption through the merits of Christ. In writing on the *Sentences*, he proposes the question simply: Whether the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin. His first citations are against Mary's immaculate conception from the testimony of Holy Scripture and Tradition. "In Adam all have sinned" (Rom. 5), because all were in him by way of seminal origin; thus it was with the Blessed Virgin. Also, St. John Damascene (c. 10 and 48) says that the Holy Spirit cleansed her; the cleansing refers to none other than sin; therefore she had sin though not actual sin. And St. Augustine, *De fide ad Petrum*, holds that all men conceived by carnal union of man and woman are born with original sin. St. John says: "Behold the Lamb of God." He alone is innocent, because He was not born of carnal union. And Pope Leo, in his sermon on the nativity of our Lord, says that as He found no one free from sin, He came to free all.

On the contrary, St. Augustine (*De natura et gratia*) says: "In the matter of sin, in no way do I wish to speak of Mary"; and St. Anselm (*De conceptu virginali*) writes: "It is fitting that the Virgin should be resplendent with a purity such that none could be conceived more perfect save only God's."

Later Scotus presents reasons against the Immaculate Conception taken from the two arguments already mentioned, one of which is the excellence of her Son, since He, as universal Redeemer, opens the

door to all. However, if the Blessed Virgin had not contracted original sin, no Redeemer would have been necessary for her, nor would He have opened the door, because it was not closed to her, for it is closed only to original sin. The other consists in those things which appear in the Blessed Virgin. She was conceived according to general law; therefore her body was propagated and formed of corrupt seed; and thus she possessed the same contagion as all do in being conceived; and once her body was tainted, her soul would be tainted. She had the same punishments common to human nature, such as thirst, hunger, and similar things, which are inflicted upon us by original sin, and which in reality she did not take on voluntarily, because she was not our redeemer, otherwise her Son would not have been the universal Redeemer. These punishments were inflicted by God and not unjustly; therefore they were inflicted for sin, and she was likewise not innocent.

But Scotus refutes all these reasons victoriously and he maintains that it was precisely for the honor of her Son as Redeemer, Reconciler, and Mediator that she did not contract original sin. He who is the most perfect Mediator must have a most perfect act of mediation in regard to the person through whom He exercises His mediatorial office. Now Christ is a most perfect mediator and He had no more exalted relation to any person than to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This could not be, had He not merited her preservation from original sin.⁶⁰ He goes on to demonstrate this point in three ways: first, by comparison to God, with whom He reconciles her; second, by comparison to sin, from which He frees her; and third, by comparison to the person who is reconciled. The following statements summarize his doctrine:

First, Scotus demonstrates that the Immaculate Conception is not opposed to the universality of original sin nor to the universality of redemption by Christ. Rather, the glory of Christ the Redeemer is increased beyond measure if it is conceded that He redeemed His Mother in so perfect a way that, in view of this redemption, she never contracted original sin.

Secondly, Scotus distinguishes perfectly between the contraction of original sin and the debt of contracting it. Using the distinction between the priority of nature and the priority of time, he states that the infusion of the soul into the flesh which transmits original sin

took place in Mary by a priority of nature but not of time and that she was immaculate from the first moment of her existence.

Thirdly, he establishes the distinction between liberative redemption (redemption from original sin already contracted) and preservative redemption, whereby, through the merits of Christ, the Blessed Virgin was preserved from the contraction of original sin.

Fourthly, Scotus succeeded in nullifying the main arguments of the contrary opinion and in establishing clearly that nothing could be deduced from the dogmas of faith which would be contrary to Mary's immaculate conception.

The entire Franciscan School accepted the doctrine of Scotus. Among the most valiant defenders of the Immaculate Conception were the immediate followers of Scotus, such as Peter Aureolus and Francis Mayron, who wrote copiously in defense of the famous syllogism: *Potuit, deicit, ergo fecit*, that is, it was becoming that the Mother of the Redeemer should be free from the power of sin and Satan from the first moment of her existence; it was in God's power to give her this privilege; therefore, He gave it.

All of the theologians of the Company of Jesus followed this doctrine, and among the Thomists were Catharinus, John of St. Thomas, and Natalis Alexander and many other learned men from different schools. According to Medina, all the universities supported this opinion, principally the University of Paris, mother and teacher of all the rest.

c) The third epoch of tradition extends from the fifteenth century to our own time. In this era the Eastern theologians are generally opposed to Mary's immaculate conception. It is strange that the Byzantine writers, so zealous for their traditions, should close their ears to the opinions of their ancient Fathers and theologians. Thus, among others, were John Nathanael, Metrophanes Kritopulus and Sevastes Kymenites, who assembled the principal arguments which were to be developed later by the Orthodox writers, Sophronius Likhudes and Leveded, to combat the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Nicephorus Callistus who preceded them in the fourteenth century, was the first who, with some hesitation, expressly denied the Virgin's immaculate conception. But in reality the causes which were most influential in stirring up the Eastern writers against the Marian privilege were, aside from Protestant theology, whose influence was con-

siderable and overwhelming in Russia in the eighteenth century, the ignorance of the Byzantine writers of this era concerning their ancient patristic literature and the access of the Orientals to the Western universities, where they often heard doctrines opposed to the Immaculate Conception. Jugie gives an account of this in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*.

In this same era the theologians and writers of the Western Church openly proclaimed Mary's great privilege. St. Vincent Ferrer proposed a splendid testimony when he noted six degrees of sanctification. The sixth degree, superior to all the others, is the sanctification of the Virgin Mary, for in the very hour and on the very day in which her body and soul were created, she was already rational and capable of sanctification and was immediately sanctified.⁵¹

Gerson, or the author of a sermon which is attributed to him, says that it is not strange that the Lord should begin His work of redemption through Mary so that she through whom He prepared the salvation of all should have the first fruit for herself. He states that she was a virgin not only in body, but also in soul, and he quotes St. Ambrose, who says that she was not raised, but preserved from the fall; she would not be a virgin in soul once she was stained by sin.⁵² St. Laurence Justinian attests Mary's freedom from the corruption of the flesh from the moment of her conception. In his *De casto conubio Verbi et animae* he says that all, even the holiest, are not free from the punishment of original sin; therefore all who are born of that race, except the Mediator, Jesus Christ, and His Mother, are under the law.

In his sermon on the Immaculate Conception St. Bernardine of Siena states that Mary was created in the perfection of grace, and Nicholas of Cusa, the most eminent theologian and philosopher of his time, presents a very clear testimony that the immaculate Virgin was created in original justice, even surpassing that of Eve.

Finally, from the middle of the sixteenth century the doctrine of Mary's immaculate conception was growing in universality and strength, so that St. Peter Canisius could write of his own time: "Very few now hold the contrary opinion, and these are ashamed to speak their mind openly and consider it dangerous to profess their belief in public. If they dare to speak out, they would meet with public contradiction and give offense to the people; to such a degree has the

opinion adverse to the Immaculate Conception been weakened, exploded, and as it were, cast out."⁵³

The Liturgy. The celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception in the Eastern and Western Churches was begun very early, so that, as Sanda says, it may justly be considered that this feast was the popular vehicle of tradition concerning Mary's immaculate conception.

With reference to the Eastern Church, Anthony Gravois says that the antiquity of the feast proves the unanimous agreement of all Eastern churches and all Greek churches, Catholic as well as heretical and schismatic. Though differing much in their liturgies, they agree unanimously on this. "If you were to ask the Syrians, the Armenians, the Maronites, the Chaldeans, the Copts, the Melkites, and the Albanians, who observe the Greek Rite, as well as those who inhabit Moscow, Lithuania, Poland, Venice and Sicily, whether the feast of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated in their countries and their churches, they would all answer: Yes; with the greatest devotion."⁵⁴

In the East all the churches celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 9, as a feast of the active conception of St. Anne and the passive conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the *Typikon* is a ritual which has been corrected and edited many times and it seems doubtful whether the feast of the Immaculate Conception was even introduced into its first edition.

That the feast was celebrated in the Greek Church in the seventh century is evident from the canons and inscriptions of St. Andrew of Crete, which bear the inscription, the ninth of December, conception of St. Anne, the grandmother of God.

In the eighth century, John of Euboea enumerates the feast of the Conception as the first among the ten great solemnities. In the ninth century, George of Nicodemia says that the feast of Mary's conception is celebrated not as the most recent, but as the principal one in order and in truth. In the tenth century, the emperor Basil II decreed the feast by civil law; and in the twelfth century, Manuel Comnenus placed it above the other solemnities in dignity.

The object of this feast was to celebrate the active miraculous conception of the Blessed Virgin by her sterile parents Joachim and Anne, bestowed on them by God through their supplication. For this reason the feast was called the feast of the conception of St. Anne. But this

active conception had from its beginning, as its principal object, the cult of the passive conception of Mary; that in which Mary became the worthy habitation of God. Thus, St. John Damascene speaks of Mary as the most holy daughter of Joachim and Anne, who was snatched from the snares of the infernal powers and in the bride-chamber was guarded without stain in order to be the spouse and natural Mother of God.⁵⁵

St. Euthymius, patriarch of Constantinople, mentions the reasons for the great solemnity of the feast of our Blessed Mother and emphasizes the fact that as Adam, the author of the human race fell and was banished, so now his pure daughter, born according to the promise, of sterile flesh, announces the signs of reparation.⁵⁶

With respect to the Western Church, it is said that St. Ildephonse, Archbishop of Toledo, was the first to establish this feast, in Spain in the seventh century. Some doubt the authenticity of the documents on which this is based; others believe that they celebrated not the conception of the Blessed Virgin, but the conception of the Word of God, or the maternity of the Virgin, which was commemorated on December 18 during the reign of the Visigoths. Concerning this feast, Vincent of Beauvais says that if the Blessed Virgin had not been sanctified in her mother's womb, her nativity would not have been celebrated, but since it is now being venerated by the authority of the Church, it is evident that she was free from original sin.⁵⁷

In the ninth century the feast of the Immaculate Conception was already observed in Sicily and in Naples, where it had no doubt been transplanted from the East, since a part of southern Italy was under its empire. And thus, in the ancient marble calendar of the Neapolitan Church is read this inscription for December 9: The conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In Ireland the feast was celebrated as early as the ninth century or at least at the beginning of the tenth, as recorded from the Tamlacense martyrology, where for May 7 we read: Finding of the Cross of Christ; Conception of the Virgin Mary; Ambrose; etc. Again, in a calendar composed in verse, after the death of King Alfred, this festivity was assigned for the sixth of the nones of May. The calendar of the monk Oengui announces May 3 as the feast of the Immaculate Conception: *Feil mar Maire uage* (Great Feast of the Virgin Mary). Toward the middle of the eleventh century the feast was celebrated

in England, as is evident from the calendar of the Abbeys of Oldminster and Newminster, in the earldom of Winton, in which December 8 is inscribed as the Conception of Holy Mary, Mother of God; also from the martyrology of St. Augustine of Canterbury, in which we read: "Moreover, on this very day of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary"; from the *Pontifical* of the primate Church of Canterbury where, under the title, "Blessings on the day of the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God," are found prayers suitable to the occasion; and finally, we prove its celebration by the *Pontifical* of the cathedral of Essex. Later, with the rule of the Normans and the abolition of the Anglo-Saxon calendar, the feast of Mary's conception fell into disuse in England, but it was re-established and spread in the twelfth century through Abbot Anselm of Edmundsbury, a cousin of St. Anselm of Canterbury.

The feast also spread through other countries of the West, to Germany, France, Flanders, and Spain, where it was already celebrated in the Monastery of the Benedictines of Navarre, in the middle of the eleventh century.

But suddenly there arose the most severe opposition against this feast on the part of two noted theologians: John Beletli of Paris, who wished it abolished, for he believed that it would be better to forbid it, since she was conceived in sin; but especially by St. Bernard, who, although very devoted to Mary, reprimanded the canons of Lyons for having introduced this feast into the cathedral church without the authorization of the Holy See. In his letter he warned the canons against the absurdity of celebrating a false honor of Mary. While he raised no objection to the feast of our Lady's nativity, he did protest against celebrating her immaculate conception.

No doubt, the Mother of God was holy even before she was born, and the Church is by no means mistaken in keeping holy the day of her birth. . . . But she could not be holy before she existed, as she did not exist before she was conceived. Or did sanctity perhaps commingle with her conception so that she was sanctified and conceived at one and the same time? . . . Or will someone perhaps say that Mary was not conceived of a man but of the Holy Ghost? But this is something hitherto unheard of.

Hence, if Mary could not be sanctified before her conception, since she was not yet in existence, nor in the act of conception itself, on

account of the sin involved therein, it follows that she was sanctified in the womb after conception, which, since she was cleansed from sin, made her nativity holy, not her conception.

The glorious (Virgin) would choose to be without that honor by which one seems either to honor sin or to introduce a false sanctity. Assuredly she would find no pleasure against the custom of the Church—in a presumptuous novelty, mother of temerity, sister of superstition, daughter of lightmindedness.

I had already been warned that this error was held by some, but I kept silence to spare the fervor that comes from a simple heart full of love for the Virgin. But now, discovering the superstition among the learned, in a noble and famous Church of which I am in a special sense the son, I know not if I can continue silent without doing you yourselves grave injury.

Though it has been given to some men—though very few—to be born in holiness, yet it has not been given to them to be conceived in holiness, in order that the prerogative of a holy conception should be reserved to one alone—to Him who was to sanctify all others and who, alone coming without sin, was to accomplish our purification from sin.

Thus, only the Lord Jesus has been conceived of the Holy Ghost, because only He was holy before His conception. Apart from Him, that is true of all sons of Adam which one of them humbly and truthfully confessed of himself: "In iniquity I was conceived, in sin my mother conceived me."⁸⁸

Some deny the authenticity of this letter of St. Bernard's and attribute it to Nicholas of Clairvaux, secretary of the Mellifluous Doctor, but without reason, for Theophilus Raynaud states that although not all of St. Bernard's letters can be attributed to him, this one especially savors of Bernard and cannot be attributed to anyone else. Mabilón asserts that all of the manuscripts verify the authenticity of this letter. But even presuming its authenticity, theologians do not agree on St. Bernard's intention. Some, like Perrone, Mazzella, Paquet, and Lepicier, say that St. Bernard does not here deny the sanctity of passive adequate conception, but only of active and passive inchoate conception, as is evident from the reasons given by St. Bernard.

Others, like Vázquez, Mabilón, Benedict XIV, Malou and Janssens, think that St. Bernard speaks not only of her active and passive inchoate conception, but also of her passive adequate conception, for

the following reasons: 1) St. Bernard does not recognize any difference between the Virgin and Jeremias and John the Baptist, excepting that the Virgin received more grace than they did; 2) according to St. Bernard, the sanctification of the Virgin followed her conception, because she could not have been sanctified before her conception since she did not yet exist, in her very conception, on account of the sin involved; 3) nor St. Bernard believes that it was reserved to Christ alone to be sanctified at conception.

What is truly noble in St. Bernard is his submission and fidelity to the Holy See. Pope Benedict XIV writes that the principal intention of St. Bernard was that the canons consult the authority of the Church, seeing that they had introduced this feast into the cathedral church of Lyons without its consent. It was to the Apostolic See that Bernard submitted his letter and waited for its answer.

St. Bernard's letter caused numerous protests, among them Peter Comestor, who, after distinguishing between conception by the ones conceiving and conception of the one conceived, says that perhaps Mary was conceived in sin on the part of her parents, but that she was most holy. Nicholas of St. Alban's in England also protested greatly when he said that Mary's soul was pierced through with a sword twice: once in the Passion of her Son, and again in the contradiction of her conception.

Meanwhile, the feast continued and spread more from day to day, for although it was suppressed by Bishop Mauritius in Paris, shortly afterwards it spread throughout most of France, and it was also celebrated in England, Germany, Spain, Sicily and other kingdoms. In the fourteenth century it was already celebrated in Rome. Pope Sixtus IV, in the year 1476, in his constitution *Cum prae excelsa*, approved it and enriched it with indulgences. St. Pius V, in the year 1569, included it in the Roman Breviary; Pope Clement VIII, in the year 1598, raised it to the rank of a double major; Pope Clement XI, in the year 1708, extended it to the entire Church; Pope Pius IX raised it to the rank of a double of the second class with an octave; and finally Pope Leo XIII raised it to a feast of the first class.

Hence the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* states:

Our Predecessors, indeed, by virtue of their Apostolic authority, gloried in instituting the feast of the Conception in the Roman Church. They did so to enhance its importance and dignity by a suitable Office

and Mass, whereby the prerogative of the Virgin, her exemption from the hereditary taint, was most distinctly affirmed. As to the cult already instituted, they spared no effort to promote and to extend it. . . . Besides, it afforded the greatest joy to Our Predecessors to ordain that the feast of the Conception should be celebrated in every church with the very same honor as the feast of the Nativity; that it should be celebrated with an octave by the whole Church; that it should be as reverently and generally observed as a holyday of obligation; and that a Pontifical Capella should be held in our Liberian pontifical basilica, on the day dedicated to the Conception of the Virgin.

Finally, in their desire to impress this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God upon the hearts of the faithful, and to intensify the people's piety and enthusiasm for the cult and the veneration of the Virgin conceived without the stain of original sin, they delighted to grant, with the greatest pleasure, permission to proclaim the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin in the Litany of Loreto, and in the Preface of the Mass, so that the rule of prayer might thus serve to illustrate the rule of belief.

Wherefore, We Ourselves, following the procedure of Our Predecessors, have not only approved and accepted what had already been established, but bearing in mind, moreover, the decree of Sixtus IV, have confirmed by Our authority, a proper Office in honor of the Immaculate Conception, and have with exceeding joy extended its use to the universal Church.

Now inasmuch as whatever pertains to sacred worship is intimately connected with its object and cannot have either consistency or durability if this object is vague or uncertain, Our Predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, therefore, while directing all their efforts toward an increase of the devotion to the Conception, made it their aim not only to emphasize the object with the utmost zeal, but also to enunciate the exact doctrine.

Definitely and clearly they taught that the feast was held in honor of the Conception of the Virgin. They denounced, as false and absolutely foreign to the mind of the Church, the opinion of those who held and affirmed that it was not the Conception of the Virgin but her Sanctification that was honored by the Church. They never thought that greater leniency should be extended toward those who, attempting to disprove the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, devised a distinction between the first and second instant of Conception and inferred that the Conception which the Church celebrates was not that of the first instant of Conception but the second.

As a matter of fact, Our Predecessors held it was their duty to uphold and defend with all their power not only the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin but also to assert that the true object of this cult was her Conception considered in its first instant.

Hence the words of one of Our Predecessors, Alexander VII, who authoritatively and decisively declared the mind of the Church: "Concerning the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, ancient indeed is that devotion of the faithful based on the belief that her soul, in the first instant of its creation and in the first instant of her soul's infusion into the body, was, by a special grace and privilege of God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, her Son and Redeemer of the human race, preserved free from all stain of original sin. And in this sense have the faithful ever solemnized and celebrated the Feast of the Conception."

The Common Belief of the Faithful. All the Christian people quickly professed and defended the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mother of God. The clergy, religious institutes, universities, military orders, kingdoms, cities, and even the most ignorant of the faithful took great pride in defending and venerating the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.

St. Edmund Rich, Archbishop of Canterbury in the twelfth century, invoked Mary as a temple of the Creator, sacred vessel of the Holy Spirit and a spotless mirror of the majesty of God. St. Peter Paschasius in the thirteenth century, expressed his faith in the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary by saying that if the Virgin Mary had the stain of original sin, it would have to be said that at some time she was under the wrath of God, which cannot be said or believed.

St. Thomas of Villanova, Archbishop of Valencia in the sixteenth century, discusses the Immaculate Conception at great length, using Mary's assumption as a proof of her immaculate conception (*In-Concept. B.M. Virginis*). In this same century, St. Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, placing the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin above that of St. John the Baptist, says that John was sanctified in the womb of his mother in the sixth month of his conception, but Mary received the fullness of grace in the first instant of her conception (*Hom. 72*).

St. Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva in the seventeenth century, says that as God had to prepare for Himself a Mother according to

His heart, He willed that her redemption would be applied as a preservative remedy, so that the sin which is transmitted from generation to generation would not reach her (*Treatise on the Love of God*).

St. Alphonsus of Liguori, Bishop and Doctor of the Church in the eighteenth century, affirms in his work, *The Glories of Mary*, many reasons of congruence in favor of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mother of God, after having discussed this privilege in his treatise on moral theology.⁵⁰ And that was also the feeling of bishops throughout the world at the time Pope IX wrote his encyclical *Ubi Primum*, in which he asked the bishops to inform the Apostolic See as soon as possible concerning the devotion of the clergy and people with regard to the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin and what was their mind concerning a solemn definition.

The various religious orders likewise held that Mary was conceived immaculate. With respect to the Augustinians, Giles of the Presentation asserts that all the theologians of his Order who were at first great defenders of Giles the Roman and Gregory of Rimini, who denied the immunity of the Virgin Mother of God, were now adhering to the pious opinion and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the doctrine was defended in all the universities of Italy, France, Spain and Portugal.

Such also was the opinion of the Carthusian Order. Denis the Carthusian stated that the feast of Mary should not be celebrated under the title of sanctification but of conception, as the whole Church now celebrates it and with it, his whole Order (*In III Sent.*, dist. 3, q. 1). This was decreed in the General Chapter of 1470.

The Carmelite Order, in a General Chapter held in France in 1306, decided to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception. St. Teresa of Avila always showed her devotion to the Immaculate Mother. Telling of the conversion of a certain person in one of the chapters of her autobiography, she says that the Blessed Virgin helped that person because of such a devotion to her conception and feast. Baptist of Mantua, Prior General of the Order in the fifteenth century, wrote Latin poems on the immunity of the Virgin from all sin.

As regards the Order of Preachers, its founder, St. Dominic, clearly showed his belief in Mary's immaculate conception when he stated that as Adam was formed from virgin earth, so it was fitting that the second Adam, Christ, should also be born of that earth, that is, of a

Virgin not accursed.⁶⁰ It is a constant tradition that St. Dominic confirmed this doctrine with miracles; for example, when he was defending the doctrine in Toulouse and the book in which the doctrine was contained was thrown into the fire but remained intact. Never did the Dominican family withdraw completely from the path outlined by its founder, for even when some of his sons were inclined toward the opposite opinion, the Order never wanted for remarkable men who would most vigorously defend Mary's immaculate conception.

In the fourteenth century John Tauler demonstrated that the blindness of men is none other than ignorance of Mary's inestimable beauty, goodness and amiability. William Pepin, Ambrose Catharinus, Thomas Campanella, Robert Holchot, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Louis Bertrand, the Venerable Louis of Granada, Laurence Gutiérrez, John of St. Thomas, and many other famous sons of the Order defended the immunity of Mary.

In the manual of the Order of Preachers, edited in Seville in 1524, we read, as testified by Velázquez, that because the Order of Preachers was accustomed to adhering to the doctrine of the saints, it maintained, until that time, that the Virgin was conceived in original sin, but that this matter is useless and disgraceful, especially when the whole Church, whose authority surpasses the opinion of any particular author, asserts that she was preserved.

As regards the Franciscan Order, the faith of St. Francis in Mary's immaculate conception is sufficiently known. He used to invoke this mystery in blessing his friars when they went outside the monastery. All the sons of this Order, almost from the beginning, fought ardently on behalf of the Immaculate Conception. It was often called the opinion of the Minorites and was preserved by all as a heavenly inheritance. Besides William of Ware and Scotus, many other sons of St. Francis, illustrious in knowledge and holiness, such as Aureolus, Francis of Mayron, John of Bassolis, William of Rubion, Tartareto, Liqueto, Gabriel Biel, St. Peter of Alcántara, St. Paschal Babylon and St. Joseph of Cupertino shone in the defense of this singular privilege of Mary. At the General Chapter held in Pisa in 1263 and presided over by St. Bonaventure, the feast of the Immaculate Conception was established as a feast for the whole Order. At the General Chapter of Segovia, held in 1621, the whole Seraphic Order bound itself by oath to defend and teach Mary's immaculate conception. Later, at the

General Chapter of Toledo, held in the year 1645, the Franciscan Order chose Mary as its Patroness, in the mystery of the Immaculate Conception.

The piety and devotion of the Society of Jesus toward the conception of Mary has also been remarkable. St. Ignatius was the strongest defender of the Immaculate Conception both in word and writing, according to the evidence of a codex of his which is preserved in Rome, in which, after describing the singular enlightenment which he received during those forty days in which he studied a way of establishing poverty in the houses of the Society, he demonstrated his love for Mary's purest conception. Imitating him in his piety toward the most Blessed Virgin were James Láinez, second General of the Society, and Alphonse Salmerón, whose authority was so great in the Council of Trent, St. Peter Canisius, St. Robert Bellarmine, St. John Berchmans, who bound himself by a vow written with his own blood to defend the Immaculate Conception, Alphonsus Rodríguez, the Venerable Louis de la Puente, Toledo, Suárez, Morales, Salazar, Martin del Río, Nieremberg, Ribadeneira and many others too numerous to mention. As the Society had so many defenders of this doctrine, Vázquez could rightly say that the Jesuits always and everywhere professed the doctrine.

Other orders also venerated and defended Mary's immaculate conception: the Cistercians, Premonstratensians, Minims, Trinitarians, Mercedarians, and the Servants of Mary, whose Superior General in 1344, the Blessed Matthew of Castro, when blessing his brothers, always asked the Immaculate Conception to be their salvation and protection; and the Religious of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, founded by Beatrice de Silva in Toledo in the year 1481 and approved by Pope Innocent VIII and Pope Julius II. Their rule states among other things, that the Sisters, on being received for profession should say: "I Sister N., out of love for and in the service of God and of the immaculate conception of His Mother, make profession and promise God, etc."

The famous universities also gloried in defending the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. In the year 1340 the Universities of Paris, Oxford and Cambridge made a vow to defend the immaculate conception of the Virgin, which fact is attested by John Bacon. In 1384 the University of Paris energetically defended Mary's immacu-

late conception against an anonymous Dominican, and in 1387 against John Montesón, O.P. In the year 1496 the faculty of Paris obliged all of its doctors to swear that they would always defend the Immaculate Conception.

The Universities of Cologne and Mentz followed that of Paris in the years 1499 and 1500; that of Vienna in the year 1501; that of Bologna and Toledo in 1507; that of Naples and Palermo in 1618; that of Cracow, Douai, Coimbra and Evora in 1602.

In Spain, which was always devoted to this privilege of the Blessed Virgin, the University of Valencia bound itself by oath in 1530 to defend the sinless conception of Mary. In 1617 the University of Granada vowed to defend the Immaculate Conception, even to the shedding of blood. Similar vows and oaths were made at the Universities of Alcalá, Santiago de Compostela, Toledo, Saragossa, and Barcelona in 1617, and at Salamanca and Valladolid, in 1618. Finally, in the year 1664, by royal decree of Philip IV, it was commanded that in the Universities of Salamanca, Alcalá or Valladolid, no one would be admitted to academic degrees or incorporated as a member of the same if they did not affirm and swear to defend this faith in the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1779 this decree was extended to all Spanish universities.

The Cathedral churches took the same oath. That of Barcelona, with the Archbishop of Tarragona and the rest of the bishops of that Principality, in 1618; that of Santiago de Compostela, in 1619; that of Valladolid, in 1634, and many others.

The same generous oath was taken by the Military Orders. The Order of Calatrava took its vow and oath in the Monastery of St. Martin in Madrid on December 23, 1652. In the same year, on December 30, the Order of Santiago took the oath in the chapel of the royal palace of Madrid, together with Philip IV, grand Master of the Order. The same oath and vow was taken by the men of the Order of Alcántara and Montesa; that of Alcántara, in the monastery of St. Bernard on February 2, 1653.

Emperors and kings showed an equal devotion to Mary's immaculate conception. John I of Aragon, in the year 1391, decreed that the feast of the Immaculate Conception be celebrated in his chapel in Barcelona every year, and in the year 1394 he promulgated a constitution in which, after citing the principal reasons which confirm this

privilege of the Immaculate Conception, he imposed perpetual silence in his kingdom on the contrary opinion; and to those who conveyed any doubt concerning Mary's immunity in their sermons and disputations, he threatened with exile and confiscation of property.

Isabel, the Catholic Queen of Castile and León, professed much love for this mystery, and Pope Innocent VIII praised her in his Bull, *Inter munera*, in the year 1489, in which, yielding to her requests, he approved the Order of the Immaculate Conception. In 1492 Isabel and Ferdinand made a solemn vow that if they could wrest the city of Granada from the Moors, they would build a church there in honor of the most holy conception of the Mother of God. These same Catholic rulers established a confraternity in Toledo under the title of the Immaculate Conception, which Pope Adrian VI approved in his Bull, *Romanus Pontifex*, and the Emperor Charles approved anew.

Philip III sent Antonio of Trejo, Bishop of Carthage, to Rome in 1618 and the Duke of Albuquerque in 1619 to promote the cause of the immunity of Mary. As long as his reign lasted, he kept sending legates to Rome who insistently petitioned the definition of this mystery. It is said of him that if he thought it necessary, he would go to Rome himself, prostrate himself at the feet of the Holy Father, and implore him to make his supreme judgment in favor of the original justice of the Virgin. These words made him worthy of the praiseworthy words of Pope Gregory XV, who proclaimed his zeal as a Catholic King to be most pleasing to the Vicar of Christ.

The Kings of Spain, Philip IV, in the year 1621, Charles II, in 1675, and Philip V, in 1714-1732, sent legations and letters to the Roman Pontiffs urging the dogmatic definition of the immaculate conception of the Mother of God. In 1760 Charles III, acceding to the requests of all of his kingdoms, chose the Virgin, under that title as the universal patroness of all the kingdoms of Spain and of the Indies under Spanish rule. This patronage was judged worthy to be approved and confirmed by the apostolic authority of Pope Clement XIII in his Bull *Quantum ornamenti*.

Other kings and emperors have also distinguished themselves by their devotion to the Immaculate Lady, particularly Ferdinand II and his son Ferdinand III of Austria. Ferdinand II was registered in all the Congregations of the Mother of God in Hungary, Bohemia, and other provinces; he ordered a picture of the Blessed Virgin put

on all the flags of his armies, proclaiming her Commander-in-chief; and in the year 1634, when he founded the Fraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the house of the Company of Jesus in Vienna, his wife and children became members.

Ferdinand III, in the years 1647-1649, chose the Virgin Mother of God in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception as patroness of Austria and he decreed that in the University of Vienna all its doctors had to take an oath to defend the immunity of the Virgin Mother of God.

In the year 1646 King John of Portugal took an oath to defend Mary's preservation from sin, even to the shedding of his blood if necessary; in 1656 he chose the Immaculate Virgin as special patroness of his kingdom.

Sigismund, King of Poland, Leopold, Archduke of the Tyrol, Ernest of Bavaria and other princes similarly petitioned Pope Urban VIII that this pious opinion of the freedom of Mary from original sin be declared a dogma of faith.

The kingdom of Valencia in 1440, 1474 and 1624 gave singular proof of its devotion to the Conception; the Cortés of Catalonia, held in the years 1454-1458, decreed that those who insulted Mary's conception would be exiled. The Cortés of the kingdoms of Spain in the time of Philip IV, in 1621, and in the reign of Charles III, in 1760, bound themselves by oath to defend this mystery. Moved by a similar love of piety toward the Immaculate Conception, whole cities took the oath: Palencia in 1615, Seville and Granada in 1617, Valladolid, Salamanca and Barcelona in 1618, Saragossa in 1619, Madrid and Segovia in 1621, Avila in 1662, Valencia and Palermo in 1624, Geneva in 1625, Majorca and Portugal in 1629, Burgos and Toledo in 1653, and many others.

The faithful believed very fervently in Mary's immaculate conception, even during the times when learned men incited subtle controversies concerning this privilege. Benedict Justinian states that if anyone disagreed and spoke against the truth of Mary's conception, they would cause serious disturbances, rebukes and scandals, such was the belief of the faithful. The faithful would not have been disturbed like this if faith in the Immaculate Conception had not been deeply rooted in their hearts.

Theological Argument. God could preserve the Blessed Virgin

Mary from original sin. It was fitting that Mary be exempt from all stain of original sin from the first moment of her conception. Therefore, Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin.

God could preserve Mary from original sin. There is no contradiction on God's part, because although God, as Morales says, bestowed original justice upon Adam, with the stipulation that all of his posterity would be deprived of it if he disobeyed the command, nevertheless, with a foreknowledge of Adam's sin, God could will that the sin be not transmitted to the Virgin and could prevent it through the grace which would be infused at the very moment of her conception. For God does not deprive Himself of the right and liberty of exercising His mercy upon whomever He pleases and whenever He pleases. It is the same as if a king were to make a law under penalty of death; not that he would absolutely wish that all its offenders suffer the punishment of death, for he who made the law could dispense from it, or abolish it, as St. Augustine says in Book I, *De Regimine Principum*.

Nor would the Immaculate Conception injure the holiness of Christ, for He is holy both by reason of His conception by the Holy Spirit and by reason of His divinity, which could not admit sin in His assumed nature. The Virgin, however, neither through her conception nor her person, was immune from sin, but only through a singular privilege. Nor was Christ's power as Sanctifier lessened, since the Virgin possessed this privilege in view of the merits of Christ, which not only did not diminish the efficacy of His passion, but exalted His glory as Redeemer by granting His Mother the privilege of being redeemed in so excellent a way.

Nor is there any contradiction on the part of the Virgin Mary, since there is nothing against her soul being filled with grace in the first moment of her conception. This is what happened in the creation of the angels and in the animation of our first parents, and it is certain that the soul of Christ was sanctified in the first moment of His incarnation.

It was fitting that the Blessed Virgin be preserved from original sin, and this for two reasons: her divine maternity and her cooperation in the work of redemption.

By her divine maternity. Mary, by reason of her divine maternity, acquired new and excellent relations with the Eternal Father, with

whom she was united through her Son; from which it follows that between Mary and the heavenly Father there is a certain parental unity as a legal partnership. The relationship also extends to the Holy Spirit, by whose power she conceived Christ the Savior, being rightly called the associate of the Father in the generation of the Son, His only-begotten daughter, the spouse, temple and sanctuary of the Holy Spirit. Mary's relationship with the Father and the Holy Ghost demands that she be always holy and never stained by sin.

As regards the Son of God made man, a most noble Son had to have a most noble Mother. Corresponding to the greatest nobility is a nobility of origin, that is, an immaculate conception. The Word of God made man was the superior Son of a superior Mother, and a good son shows his love for his mother through the gifts he gives her. Therefore the Word of God had to confer on His Mother the greatest gifts of grace, among which is freedom from original sin. Mary's preservation from original sin was for the honor of Christ, as we read in Ecclesiasticus (3:13): "For the glory of a man is from the honor of his father, and a father without honor is the disgrace of the son." If Christ had taken flesh from a Mother tainted with sin, it would be to Christ's dishonor, since the Mother and the Son are in a certain way the same flesh. It was fitting for the Son of God to fashion for Himself a Mother free from all sin. The dignity of Christ, the Son of God made man, not only affected the purity and holiness of His Mother at the moment of His conception, but from the first moment of her existence, for when the Virgin was conceived, the divine Person who prepared and adorned her as His Mother had already existed from all eternity. Finally, Christ, the Redeemer of the human race, had to redeem His Mother in a more perfect way, and thus Scotus says: "He who is a most perfect mediator must have a most perfect act of mediation in regard to some person on whose behalf he exercises his mediatorial office. Now Christ is the most perfect Mediator . . . and He had no more exalted relation to any person than to the Blessed Virgin Mary. . . . This could not be, had He not merited her preservation from original sin."⁶¹

Of the two ways of redeeming, one by raising the person up after he has fallen, and the other by preventing him from falling, preservation is the more noble and perfect and shows the greatest power and benevolence of the mediator. For this reason the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*

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

With regard to the Virgin Mother of God, God gives grace to each person commensurate with the dignity and work for which he is destined. The principal dignity of the Virgin was to be the Mother of God, and He chose her for this honor from all eternity. It was fitting that in creating her in time, she should be enriched with holiness befitting the Mother of God; and it was also fitting that she be sanctified from the first moment of her conception, since she had already been chosen as the Mother of God. Salmerón gives a beautiful exposition of this point, after which he concludes that the infinite dignity and grace of the divine maternity is a companion and aid of the conception of the Mother of God (*In Evang.*, t. III, tract. 30).

By the cooperation of the Mother of God in the work of redemption. The Blessed Virgin Mary was constituted as the second Eve, for just as Eve, associated with Adam, caused our ruin, so Mary, associated with Christ, was to cooperate in our redemption. This cooperation with Christ in the work of redemption requires immunity from original sin because her opposition to Eve and her cooperation with her Son, the Redeemer, place her outside the order of the fall; also because as Christ, who in His dignity as future Redeemer of the human race was endowed with all holiness and freedom from the yoke of sin, as the Apostle says to the Hebrews (7:26), it was likewise fitting that the Blessed Virgin, cooperator with Christ in the redemption of the human race, be separated from sinners also and therefore preserved free from original sin from the first instant of her conception.

The Blessed Virgin herself concludes our argument with the words

which she spoke at Lourdes in 1858: "I am the Immaculate Conception."

Mary and the Debt of Original Sin

THESIS: The Blessed Virgin did not have the proximate debt of original sin but only the remote debt.

Previous Observation. From what has been said, it is clear that Mary was exempt from the stain of original sin in view of the merits of Christ. We must, however, distinguish original sin from the debt of this sin, which is nothing other than the cause by virtue of which each human being must naturally contract or inherit the stain of original sin.

The debt of original sin is of two kinds: proximate and remote. The proximate debt is the necessity of contracting original sin because of falling under the law of the transmission of sin, that is, under the law by which Adam was constituted the moral head of his descendants in regard to the transmission or the loss of grace. The remote debt is the necessity of contracting original sin by the fact of natural descent from Adam, so that all those are included who descend from him through carnal generation, unless they have been exempted from this law of the transmission by a special privilege. The remote debt is derived from Adam as the physical head, and through physical generation, to all his descendants. The proximate debt is transmitted to men through Adam, not only as the physical head, but also as the moral head, so far as the wills of all his descendants were represented in his will.

It must be held as certain that Mary incurred some debt of original sin because the Bull *Ineffabilis* expressly says that the Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from original sin in view of the merits of Christ, and it is clear that this anticipated application of Christ's merits supposes that there was in her some debt of original sin. Also, because the Apostle (II Cor. 5:15) says expressly: "Christ died for all" and Mary, inspired by the Holy Ghost, says of herself: "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." Cornelius a Lapide explains that

she can say "my Savior" with all propriety because Jesus is her Son and her Savior, both by having preserved her from all sin and filled her with grace and by having made her mediatrix of the salvation of all, that she might be Mother and cause of the salvation of as many as will be saved (*Comm. in Luc.*, c. 1).

The Fathers confirm this truth, among whom St. Ambrose says that it is not strange that the Lord, who was to redeem the world, should begin the work through His Mother so that she through whom the salvation of all was to come, might be the first to receive, in pledge, the fruit of salvation (*In Lucam*). And St. Bernardine of Siena asserts that Christ came to redeem the Virgin more than any other creature, according to the Canticle of Canticles: "Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart" (*Serm. De Concept. Virginis*).

It is clear, as said previously, that the Virgin was preserved from original sin through a special privilege. She was redeemed by Christ by a more excellent redemption than were the rest of men, and therefore she received the greatest benefits from God because it is a greater favor to be preserved from a wound than to be healed of a wound already received.

Theologians argue whether Mary contracted the proximate or remote debt of original sin. Suárez, Vázquez, Bellarmine, Valencia, Palmieri, Pesch and Muncunill maintain that the virgin contracted the proximate debt of original sin. Lezana, Salazar, Peñalosa, Vega, Sedlmayr, the Wireburgenses, Mazzella, Stamm, and Campana maintain that she contracted only the remote debt of original sin.

Theological Argument. Mary contracted some debt of original sin, or she would not have been redeemed by Christ, but she did not contract the proximate debt. To contract the proximate debt of original sin, it is necessary that one be included in the law of hereditary transmission by which Adam was constituted the moral head of his descendants as regards the transmission of grace or of sin. Although Mary was physically descended from Adam through seminal generation, Adam was not her moral head. He was moral head of his descendants antecedent to the absolute prevision of original sin, but Christ, to whom Mary is indissolubly united, was foreseen and decreed posterior to the prevision of Adam's sin, since the existence of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin was decreed only for the redemption

of sinners, according to St. Andrew of Crete, who said that if the Cross hadn't existed, Christ would not have existed on earth, nor the Virgin, nor the second generation of Christ (*Or. de Cruce*). But although Mary was subject, through seminal descent from Adam, to the law imposed universally on all his descendants, the title of Mother of God was a reason of greatest congruity that God, by a special privilege, should exempt her from the law. Hence, this seminal descendency carried with it the inclusion of Mary in the inheritance of sin only so far as Mary, in the order of predestination, is the daughter of Adam before she is the Mother of Christ. She was predestined so uniquely to the divine maternity that without this predestination she would never have existed; and only by virtue of this predestination was her existence decreed as being born by natural generation of Adam, but already preserved from the law of sin through the merits of the Redeemer, her Son, foreseen by God. Campana treats this subject similarly when he explains that Mary was subject to the remote debt of sin (*op. cit.*, I, P. II, q. 2).

Mary's Freedom from Concupiscence

THE S I S : *The Blessed Virgin was completely immune to the fomes of sin, both in actu primo and in actu secundo.*

Previous Observations. The principal consequence of original sin is the contagion of the *fomes*, and since, absolutely speaking, immunity from the *fomes* is not necessarily included in the immunity from original sin, it is fitting that we treat of the question of Mary's immunity from concupiscence.

Concupiscence in its widest sense means the appetite for good in general. Thus, we have good concupiscences, such as that of wisdom, of which it is said: "Therefore the desire of wisdom bringeth to the everlasting kingdom" (Wisd. 6:21). Concupiscence in the proper sense is the sensitive appetite, which desires sensible objects which are proposed proximately by the imagination and remotely by the external senses. In this sense concupiscence can be considered as a simple force which tends toward the sensible good or as a force capable of acting against or outside of reason. As a simple power of

tending to the sensible good, concupiscence cannot be called evil; as a force which inclines to the sensible good without the required subordination to reason, concupiscence cannot be called a good, but is an evil.

This evil of concupiscence must be called a physical evil, but touching on the moral; not that it is a formal sin, but because it inclines to sin through the free consent which the will gives to sensible pleasure excited in the mind by the inordinate movements of concupiscence.⁹² The Apostle (Rom. 7:20-25) calls this concupiscence sin because it originates in and leads to sin, as the Council of Trent (Sess. 5, can. 5) points out: "This concupiscence, which the Apostle sometimes calls sin, the holy Council declares the Catholic Church has never understood to be called sin in the sense that it is truly and properly sin in those born again, but in the sense that it is of sin and inclines to sin."

Concupiscence in this sense is called the *fomes* of sin, as the incitement and occasion of sin. And although it is the consequence and punishment of original sin, nevertheless, as the Council of Trent declares, it remains after baptism, for us to wrestle with, and it cannot injure those who do not acquiesce but resist manfully through the grace of Jesus Christ; for he who shall have striven lawfully, shall be crowned. Salmerón puts it well when he says that although the *fomes* or the concupiscence of the flesh cannot be completely destroyed in this life, their impulses can be controlled with great merit on our part, and thereby effect an increase in virtue, so that the very movements which could have stained the soul, serve as virtues (*In Evang.*, tr. 18).

The *fomes* of sin can be considered *in actu primo* and *in actu secundo*. In the first sense it is the power of the sensitive appetite as inclined to produce inordinate movements. In the second sense it is the active movement of the appetite toward a sensible object contrary to reason, which precedes reason and attracts it to sin.

The *fomes* of sin *in actu primo* can be repressed or made void. It is repressed when, without the disappearance of the power which inclines to inordinate movements, it is prevented from producing acts contrary to reason. It is made void when the proximate potency does not remain even *in actu primo*, disposed for the production of acts contrary to right reason.

As regards Mary's immunity from the *fomes in actu primo*, the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* says: "Wherefore, far above all the angels and

all the saints, so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of His divinity that this Mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot even imagine anything greater." This would not have been so if the Virgin had been subject to the movements of concupiscence.

The *Fathers*. St. Jerome says that all purity and simplicity, all mercy and justice were realized in her and that she is called immaculate because she suffered no corruption (*Serm. De Assumpt. B.M. Virg.*). St. John Damascene greets her as a "holy book, exempt from all evil thoughts" (Hom. 2, *In Nativ. V. Mariæ*). Richard of St. Lawrence presents Mary to us with all her senses employed for Christ, her Son (*De laud. B. Mariæ*, Lib. 3).

Theological Argument. Mary was free from original sin. But in the present order concupiscence is the result of original sin. Therefore, Mary had to be free of concupiscence. It does not matter that death and the other bodily miseries to which Mary was subjected are also the consequence of original sin, for these sufferings, which do not incline to sin, can be assumed by her without detriment to her dignity. Christ assumed them, but He did not assume the *fomes* of sin.

The *fomes in actu secundo* is an act of the sensitive appetite, contrary to reason. This movement, in itself evil and culpable if not excused by ignorance or weakness, would not be in keeping with the dignity due to the Mother of God; therefore, Mary could not have it.

Mary had a degree of purity and holiness becoming the dignity of the Mother of God, and it is clear that sensuality would not be fitting to her who was to bear in her virginal womb the Son of God.

Mary possessed absolute virginity of body and soul, which consists in a bodily integrity free from every stain, from every unworthy movement or suggestion, and a virginity of soul which consists in immunity from every sensual thought or inclination.

The *fomes in actu primo* is the inclination toward an object contrary to reason. It would be beneath the dignity of the Mother of God to have this inclination to acts contrary to right reason. The *fomes* of sin supposes more, in the sphere of evil, than the simple potency to sin, because the latter signifies a power indifferent to good or evil, but the *fomes* adds to the simple potency, the inclination to

evil. It is therefore a potency to sin already inclined to evil. But Mary had no potency to sin. Therefore, she could not have the *fomes* of sin.

The more perfect the virtues are in a person, the weaker the force of the *fomes* of sin becomes in him, because in acting upon the sense appetite, the moral virtue lessens the inclination toward inordinate acts and subjects it to reason. And this is in proportion to the perfection of the virtue possessed. In the Virgin Mother, grace and virtue blossomed in a most perfect degree; therefore, she could not have had an inclination to inordinate acts.

Mary was predestined by God to cooperate with Christ in the work of redemption, and thus, in a certain way, to satisfy with Christ for the sins of the human race. Now the *fomes* in *actu primo* are not conducive to satisfaction, but incline to sin, which is the opposite of satisfaction. And although the Apostle says (II Cor. 12:9) that "strength is made perfect in weakness," St. Thomas writes: "The infirmity of the flesh, that pertains to the *fomes*, is indeed to holy men an occasional cause of perfect virtue, but not the *sine qua non* of perfection; and it is quite enough to ascribe to the Blessed Virgin perfect virtue and abundant grace, nor is there any need to attribute to her every occasional cause of perfection."⁶³

Finally, by her exemption from the *fomes*, neither does the Virgin lack the aureole of virginity obtained by the saints by their victories over the flesh, against which their struggle is continuous, as the Apostle says (Gal. 5:17): "For the flesh lusts against the spirit"; because a victory may be won in two ways: with battle or without battle. The Blessed Virgin had neither struggle nor conflict with the flesh, not feeling its allurements. If at any time she had battled with temptation of the devil, who did not even respect Christ, this battle would not have been internal, or of the flesh, but external, by suggestion, to which there was no excitation of the flesh, as St. Gregory says of Christ that all temptation of the devil is not from within but from without (Hom. 16, *In Evang.*).

THESES: The *fomes* never existed in Mary.

St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure and others were of the opinion that the *fomes* of sin, in the first sanctification of Mary in her mother's womb, were merely restrained through divine grace

and a special act of providence, and that in the second sanctification, which took place at the time of Christ's conception, it was completely extinguished. Although it appears in keeping with the dignity of the Virgin Mother that the *fomes* should be extinguished in her in her first sanctification, yet it is somewhat derogatory to the dignity of Christ, as St. Thomas says: "Just as before the immortality of the flesh of Christ rising again, none obtained immortality of the flesh, so it seems unfitting to say that before Christ appeared in sinless flesh, His Virgin Mother's or anyone else's flesh should be without the *fomes*, which is called the law of the flesh or of the members (Rom. 7:23, 25). Therefore it seems better to say that by the sanctification in the womb, the Virgin was not freed from the *fomes* in its essence, but that it remained fettered; not indeed by an act of her reason, as in holy men, since she had not the use of reason from the very first moment of her existence in her mother's womb, for this was the singular privilege of Christ, but by reason of the abundant grace bestowed on her in her sanctification, and still more perfectly by divine providence, preserving her sensitive soul, in a singular manner, from any inordinate movement.

"Afterwards, however, at the conception of Christ's flesh, in which for the first time immunity from sin was to be conspicuous, it is to be believed that entire freedom from the *fomes* redounded from the Child to the Mother."⁶⁴

Suárez, Vázquez, Valencia, Salazar, Mazzella and modern theologians in general maintain that the *fomes* of sin was extinguished in the first moment of conception. They refuted the objection that so sublime a prerogative as an entire freedom from the *fomes*, would exalt the Mother at the expense of her divine Son, for they maintained that it tends rather to enhance rather than diminish the glory of Christ.

Vega, Sedlmayr, Hugon, Cholet and Jannota maintain that the *fomes* was never checked in Mary, nor was it extinguished, because she never had the *fomes* of sin.

Vega argues that as it is more in conformity with reason that Mary be not conceived with any sin whatever, because she was to be the Mother of God, so also must she have been totally exempt from the *fomes* of sin from the very beginning; for if it was fitting that she be free from sin, it was likewise fitting that she be free from all in-

clination to sin. And so, if the *fomes* never did exist, neither could it be checked.

Hugon argues that if the Virgin was preserved from original sin in virtue of the merits of Christ, she could not have possessed any of the consequences of original sin. But the *fomes* of sin, in whatever sense it is taken, is a consequence of original sin, and therefore this could not be attributed to Mary, seeing that she was excluded through her singular privilege.

Finally, Cholet believes that as the dogma of the Immaculate Conception has been defined, the distinction of St. Thomas, to save the dignity of Christ, cannot be maintained.

Corollary. As Mary was preserved from original sin and from the *fomes* of sin, she possessed original justice in its principal effects, namely, sanctifying grace, the infused virtues and the gift of integrity or immunity from concupiscence.⁶⁵ It is clear, nevertheless, that this original justice of Mary's was not with regard to all the effects of that primitive state since, unlike Adam and Eve, she was subject to the passibility of soul and body and to death.

From what has been said, we conclude that Mary can be considered, with Christ and through Christ, as a type of that perfect and integral primitive nature in which God first constituted Adam and Eve. Concerning this, Richard of St. Victor says that what was truly excellent and singular in the Virgin over the rest of the saints was that incorruptibility and corruptibility could be joined simultaneously—corruptibility relative to suffering and incorruptibility relative to sin—but that it served as her great future glory and as a lesson for us in constancy in battle.

Mary's Freedom from Actual Sin

THESIS: The blessed Virgin was ever immune from all actual sin, even venial sin.

Errors. The Protestants, such as Luther and Calvin, accuse Mary of many sins: of the sin of negligence because she lost her Son in the Temple; of excessive grief in looking for Him with anxiety and despair; of impatience because she rebuked her Son with the words:

"Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, in sorrow Thy father and I have been seeking Thee" (Luke 2:48). They also accuse her of the sin of vainglory at the wedding of Cana, when she asked her Son to perform a miracle with the words: "They have no wine" (John 2:3), so that the rest could see that her Son was superior to all. They also charge her with ambition and imperiousness in her desire to speak to her Son when He was preaching to the multitudes: "Thy Mother and Thy brethren are standing outside, seeking Thee," to which Christ answered: "Who is My mother and who are My brethren?" And stretching forth His hands toward His disciples, He said: "Behold My mother and My brethren! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt. 12:47-50).⁶⁶

Some of the Fathers, strange to say, also held this opinion. St. John Chrysostom believes that Mary asked for the miracle at Cana through vainglory and ostentation before the people that she was the Mother of Christ (Hom. 21-24). St. Basil (*Hom. ad Optimum Episc.*) and St. Cyril of Alexandria (*In Joan.*, 12) believe that Mary wavered in faith during the Passion and that this was predicted in the words, "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (Luke 2:35). But these expressions of the Fathers have to be rejected completely, for they do not agree with Catholic truth on this point; on the other hand, they lack legitimate foundation. There is no discussion whatever on this point today among Catholics. All, without exception, assert that Mary was pure and immune from all stain of even the slightest sin.

Councils and Pontifical Documents. The Council of Trent declared: "If anyone assert that man, after he is once justified, is able to avoid throughout his lifetime all, even venial sin, except by a special privilege, as the Church holds in regard to the Blessed Virgin, let him be anathema" (Sess. VI, c. 23). The Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* states: "Above all the angels and saints, so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of His divinity, that His Mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot imagine anything greater."

Sacred Scripture. Genesis (3:15): "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed." These perpetual

and absolute enmities would not have existed had Mary not been entirely immune from all sin.

Luke (1:28): "And when the angel had come to her, he said: 'Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women.'" Now, mortal sin is not in the soul in the state of sanctifying grace. And with regard to venial sin, St. Albert the Great says that where there is venial sin, there is a defect of grace; but according to the angel, Mary is full of grace.⁶⁷

The words of the Cantic of Canticles of the Old Testament (4:7) are applied to Mary: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee." Raymond Jourdain addresses her: "Thou art all fair, O most glorious Virgin, not in part, but wholly; and no stain of mortal, venial, or original sin is in thee." Richard of St. Victor expresses these same sentiments in his commentary on the Cantic of Canticles.

The Fathers. St. Cyprian declares: "Being far exalted above others, she partook of their nature but not of their sin." St. Augustine, arguing with the Pelagians on original sin, excludes the Blessed Virgin from all sin (*De natura et gratia*, c. 36). St. Bernard (*Ep.* 274) says that such an abundance of graces descended upon her that she was not only sanctified at birth, but was immune from all sin for the rest of her life, which privilege is not given to any other woman, for it was truly fitting that the Queen of Virgins, by a singular grace should live without any sin.

To these testimonies we may add those of the Fathers already mentioned, who celebrate her singular purity and holiness with the greatest praises, and with which praises it is not possible to reconcile the stain of even the slightest sin.

Theological Argument. From the divine maternity: St. Thomas says that God so prepares and endows those whom He chooses for some particular office, that they are rendered capable of fulfilling it. Therefore, there can be no doubt that God, by His grace, made her worthy of that office, according to the words spoken to her by the angel (Luke 1:30, 31). But she would not have been worthy to be the Mother of God if she had ever sinned. First, because the honor of the parents reflects on the child; secondly, because of the singular affinity between her and Christ, who took flesh from her; thirdly, because of the singular manner in which the Son of God, who is Divine

Wisdom, dwelt in her. We must therefore confess simply that the Blessed Virgin committed no actual sin, neither mortal nor venial; so that what is written (Cant. 4:7) is fulfilled: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no spot in thee."⁶⁸

From the cooperation of the Virgin in the work of our redemption: Mary was chosen by God to cooperate with Christ for the redemption of the human race; but there is nothing more contrary to this than sin, which nullifies or weakens the value of satisfaction, according to Ecclesiasticus (34:23): "The Most High approveth not the gifts of the wicked."

From the texts in Sacred Scripture: The texts which the Protestants use do not mention anything against Mary's exemption from sin. On the contrary, they say much in favor of it.

St. Luke (2:43) shows clearly that there was no negligence on Mary's part when she lost her Son, believing that He was with those of another group. And, as Joseph and Mary knew the wisdom of Jesus and His filiation, they did not have to worry about their Son getting home safely. The Virgin was not overly sorrowful but simply worried, as any mother would be on losing her son.

Nor was Mary impatient when she spoke to her Son in this way on meeting Him: "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, in sorrow Thy father and I have been seeking Thee" (Luke 2:48); words which do not convey impatience, but only reveal the great love and sorrow on the absence of the Son, and in a certain way the proper dignity and authority of the Mother. Christ's answer: "How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"—was not an investigation, nor was it an expression of surprise, because it was very natural that His parents look anxiously for their lost Son; nor was it a reprimand, because there was no fault; rather, it was a lesson and, at the same time, a defense of His conduct. Jesus' remaining in Jerusalem, saying nothing to His parents, helps us understand that, besides the duties pertaining to domestic and corporal life, in which He obeyed His parents, He had other duties referring to His divine mission, in which He was to obey only His heavenly Father.

As Lepicier shows, although Mary and Joseph knew very well, in a general way, that Christ, the Savior of the world, was occupied with His Father's business, nevertheless, they did not understand in particular all the designs of the Father, that is, the time, place, and manner

in which His Son was to exercise His divine mission. For that reason Christ has them understand that those days had been pointed out by the Father to make His first manifestation to the world, but He left them uncertain concerning the inauguration of His public mission. "And they did not understand the word that He spoke to them." But in this conduct of Christ's, the dignity of His Mother is not diminished, nor is the filial subjection of the Son, for "He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them."⁶⁹

The words, "They have no wine" (John 2:3), which Mary spoke at the wedding in Cana, do not indicate any kind of vainglory. By them, Mary demonstrated two things: first, her great compassion and prompt spirit in attending to the needs of the couple, for St. Bernard says that Mary felt sorry for them, seeing their embarrassment; and secondly, her faith in the power of her Son and her trust in His supplication (*Serm. In Dom. 1 post oct. Epiph.*). Christ's answer, "What wouldst thou have Me do, woman? My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4), is neither a reprimand nor a rebuke. It referred only to the fact that it had nothing to do with His messianic work and with the miracles with which He was to confirm the work; but it was the will of God, which would be fulfilled when God willed it.

Far from feeling offended by Jesus' words, Mary told the servants to do whatever He would tell them, and He worked a private miracle to honor His Mother; a miracle which, to all appearances, He did not wish to perform, at least publicly, for His hour had not yet arrived.

Neither was Mary ambitious nor vexatious when she was near her relatives and tried to speak to Jesus, who was preaching (Matt. 12:47). She was not ambitious, for St. Peter Canisius says that her humility was most profound; nor did she intend to interrupt her Son's preaching with her own particular needs.

Christ's words, "Who is My mother and who are My brethren?" (Matt. 12:48), do not show any disrespect toward His Mother. Just as on another occasion He had said: "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49), He shows that He could not stop His preaching to talk to His relatives. And this helps us to understand that in the Messianic kingdom, spiritual parentage is of more value than blood parentage.

St. Augustine says that when Jesus stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and said, "Behold My mother and My brethren! For

whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt. 12:49-50), He included His Mother, as she fulfilled the will of the Father (*Ep. Ad Laetam.*).

Finally, the Blessed Virgin can be blamed for neither infidelity nor vacillation during the Passion of our Lord, since she remained under the Cross, while the apostles fled.

THE S I S : Mary was immune from even the slightest moral imperfection.

Moral imperfection is the free transgression or omission of a divine counsel. According to Gobat it is an act or omission concerning something that is not commanded or forbidden but is in some way contrary to a divine inspiration, command of a superior or right reason, but in a matter that does not bind under sin.⁷⁰ There has been in our times a great controversy over moral imperfections: whether there exist imperfections which, although deliberate, cannot be said to be sins, not even venial sins; or whether, on the contrary, deliberate moral imperfections are always imputed as sin. Garrigou-Lagrange, Schelling, Creussen, etc. exclude moral imperfections from sin; Huguency, Prümmer, Ramwez and others, say that they are always sinful. Nevertheless, we must absolutely reject all thought that Mary had moral imperfections, whether they always imply sin or not.

The reason for this is that it is evident from what has been said that the Mother of God was exempt from original sin and every other sin, even the slightest. Also, Mary's entire life shone in perfection. As St. Jerome says, in the same manner as no one is good as compared to God, so, as compared with the Mother of God, there is no one found with her perfections; for it is evident that she excelled all in virtue (*Serm. Ad Paulam et Eustochium de Assumpt. B.V. Mariae*). St. Bernard (*In signum magnum*) tells us that Mary always corresponded to the divine inspirations and graces bestowed upon her. Moreover, St. Bernardine states that Mary chose only what divine wisdom showed her, because she always corresponded with divine graces and inspirations. St. Thomas gives as a reason that the spiritual man is not only instructed by the Holy Spirit on what he is to do, but his mind is moved by this same Spirit so that he is not inclined to act according to his own will, but by the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit (*In Ep. ad Rom., c. 8, lect. 3*). It is evident that it was more fitting that

Mary live and move more than other creatures under the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. In addition, there was nothing to hinder Mary's corresponding to grace because she did not have the *fomes* of sin, being entirely exempt from concupiscence.

THE S I S : *Mary was impeccable from the first moment of her conception.*

We must carefully distinguish between actual sinlessness and impeccability. Sinlessness refers to freedom from sin; impeccability refers to the inability to sin. Impeccability can be consequent or antecedent. Consequent impeccability is the impossibility of sinning based on the infallible prevision that a man or angel will never sin; antecedent impeccability is based on some title or principle of the moral act which bespeaks an opposition to sin. Impeccability is extrinsic or intrinsic. It is extrinsic when the inability to sin results from some external assistance which preserves from sin. Intrinsic impeccability originates from some internal element which rectifies the faculties so that they cannot sin.

It is not necessary to note that God is essentially and absolutely impeccable, because God is subsistent holiness and the supreme principle of all holiness. It is also certain that Christ as man is antecedently and intrinsically impeccable as a result of the hypostatic union, for He is absolutely and infinitely holy.

Neither is there any doubt that the blessed are intrinsically impeccable by reason of the beatific vision, according to the common opinion of theologians. St. Thomas says: "For the rational creature is confirmed in righteousness through the beatitude given by the clear vision of God; and when once it has seen God, it cannot but cleave to Him who is the essence of goodness, wherefrom no one can turn away, since nothing is desired or loved but under the aspect of good. I say this according to the general law."⁷¹ Suárez (*De ult. fine hominis*) teaches the same thing and mentions St. Augustine's treatise on Psalm 35, pointing out that all is loved under this aspect of the divine good.

Finally, we suppose that many of the just, while they lived on earth, had consequent and extrinsic impeccability through an abundance of graces and the assistance of God, as in the case of St. Joseph, who never committed actual sin, the apostles, who after Pentecost Sunday did not commit any deliberate mortal or venial sins, and the eminent

saints such as St. Thomas Aquinas, after his victory in the matter of chastity, and St. John the Baptist regarding sins of the tongue.

That the Blessed Virgin was impeccable is affirmed by St. Peter Damian (*Hom. In Nativ. B.M. Virginis*) and St. Anselm (*De Concept. Virginis*, c. 18). This poses the question as to the intrinsic or extrinsic title by which Mary was impeccable. Undoubtedly, the Blessed Virgin is not impeccable by any intrinsic principle, for the intrinsic principle of indefectibility in good is threefold: the divine nature, the divine Person united to human nature, or the light of glory, which is the principle of the beatific vision. Mary was not impeccable in any of these three ways. Her impeccability is not a divine attribute, nor is it based on a personal union of divinity with humanity, nor can it be the result of the beatific vision. We may add to this that the divine maternity is not a physical form which affects Mary's soul intrinsically, for her maternity is only a relation, and as such it refers to her Son simply as a terminus, although in the moral estimation this dignity redounds from the Son to the Mother. Yet the title which makes Mary extrinsically impeccable is the divine maternity, for the dignity of the Mother of God is opposed to sin, an opposition which is not physical, but moral, and results from the moral indignity that would ensue from uniting the exalted dignity of the Mother of God with the ugliness of sin.⁷²

All these considerations show that the divine maternity is the fundamental reason for Mary's impeccability. It cannot be said that Mary was impeccable because she was immune from the *fomes* of sin, for our first parents were also immune but they actually sinned. Neither was her impeccability due to the removal of external incentives to sin, because the evil angels had no such incentives and yet they sinned. Moreover, Mary's impeccability was further guaranteed by the special assistance of divine providence, the constant care of the angels, her continuous contemplation of God and divine things, her ardent love of God, her plenitude of grace and virtue, so that she could not depart from God.⁷³

From the testimony given, it follows that Mary's impeccability is not unlike that of the blessed in heaven, for they see God clearly and not therefore they cannot love a mutable good. St. Thomas says: "For the rational creature is confirmed in righteousness through the beatitude given by the clear vision of God. . . . I say this according to the

general law; for it may be otherwise in the case of special privilege, such as we believe was granted to the Virgin Mother of God."⁷⁴

Richard of St. Victor, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Alexander of Hales, etc., as a consequence of their doctrine on the extinction of the fomes in Mary after the conception of her Son, maintain that she received the privilege of impeccability in the incarnation of the Word; though *de facto* she had not sinned before that time. Thus, Richard of St. Victor says that from her birth she never committed either mortal or venial sin. Before the conception of the Son of God, she was protected from all sin by grace; after His conception she was confirmed, supported and strengthened by the power of the Most High so that she could not possibly commit sin (*In Cant.* c. 26).

St. Thomas says: "In her sanctification she was delivered from original sin. Afterward, in the conception of the Son of God, she was entirely cleansed from the fomes; lastly, in her glorification she was delivered from all affliction whatever. . . . In her sanctification she received grace inclining her to good; in the conception of the Son of God she received consummate grace confirming her in good; and in her glorification her grace was further consummated so as to perfect her in the enjoyment of all good."⁷⁵ St. Bonaventure holds a similar opinion (*In III*, dist. 3, q. 3). Later theologians place Mary's impeccability before Christ's conception. A few, like Durandus and Medina, say that she was impeccable from her first sanctification in her mother's womb; others place it at the first moment of her conception, on the basis of her divine maternity.

Mary was no more impeccable after the second sanctification, or conception of Christ, through which she became the Mother of God, than after the first, when in the first instant of her conception she was enriched with a plenitude of grace, because although she was not as yet the Mother of God, she had already been chosen as the Mother of God by eternal and infallible pre-ordination, and therefore she was considered the Mother of God morally. Hence, from the first moment of her conception she possessed a plenitude of grace, supernatural gifts, and other helps and divine privileges which made her impeccable. It can be said, nevertheless, that after the incarnation of the Word there was a new reason to strengthen the truth of the impeccability of Mary.⁷⁶

Corollary. It follows from what has been said that Mary possessed

the greatest purity after God. Since purity, as St. Thomas says, is constituted by the recession of its contrary, it is possible to find some creature purer than all the rest, if it is not contaminated by any taint of sin, and such was the purity of Mary, who was immune from original and actual sin and from all moral imperfections. St. Ephrem praises her as undefiled, wholly pure, and Queen of all (*Or. de laud. Deip.*). Therefore the words of the Canticle (6:3), "Thou art all beautiful, O my love, sweet and comely as Jerusalem," are applied to her.

Mary's Fullness of Grace

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HAVING EXAMINED Mary's negative sanctity, we will now consider her positive sanctity, which consists in the perfection of grace bestowed upon her. Grace is divided into *gratia gratum faciens* and *gratia gratis data*. The first is divided into habitual or sanctifying grace and actual grace. Moreover, habitual grace can be considered in itself or in its consequences, that is, in the virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost. All of these gifts and graces will be studied separately: habitual grace in itself, the consequent infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, actual grace and the graces *gratis datae*.

Habitual Grace

Previous Observations: Mary's habitual grace may be considered both in its beginning at her first sanctification, in its increase at her second sanctification, or in its consummation at the end of her life. It is evident from what has been said of the Immaculate Conception that Mary was sanctified in the first moment of her passive conception, because the remission of original sin cannot be effected without the infusion of sanctifying grace, and for that reason the Immaculate Conception is not actually distinguished from the first sanctification of the Mother of God. It can be called her original grace.

It is certain that in the first instant of her conception Mary, because of the great dignity of the divine maternity for which she was destined, received a remarkable plenitude of grace. It is fitting, nevertheless, to investigate what this plenitude was, both in the beginning of her life and at the end of it.

THESIS: *Mary was enriched with the plenitude of grace in the first instant of her conception.*

Ineffabilis Deus: "From the beginning, and before time began, the Eternal Father chose and prepared for His only-begotten Son a Mother in whom the Son of God would become incarnate and from whom, in the blessed fullness of time, He would be born into this world. Above all creatures did God so love her that truly in her was the Father well pleased with singular delight. Wherefore, far above all the angels and all the saints, so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of His divinity that this Mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot even imagine anything greater."

Sacred Scripture: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed. She shall crush thy head" (Gen. 3:15). Here Mary is clearly shown as associated with Christ in enmity against the devil, whose definite end is the victory she will have over him with Christ. But this association with Christ demands a most singular sanctity on the part of Mary even from the beginning of her life.

"And when the angel had come to her, he said, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee'" (Luke 1:28). As being preserved from sin is nothing other than possessing sanctifying grace from the beginning of existence, and as Mary was preserved from original sin in a unique manner, it follows that from the very beginning she was full of grace. Moreover, the angel's greeting is directed to Mary as the chosen Mother of God, and therefore Mary would have to have a fullness of singular grace. The angel told Mary: "The Lord is with thee," and this certainly is because of her fullness of grace.

The Fathers and Theologians also praise Mary as full of grace. St. Epiphanius says that she is "full of grace in every respect" (*Haer.*, 58), as do St. Anthony of Jerusalem, St. Sophronius of Jerusalem, and St. Peter Damian. Explaining the words, "The streams from the river give joy to the city of God" (Ps. 45), St. Vincent Ferrer says that this refers to Mary because the whole river of divine graces overflowed upon her in her sanctification. In other saints, sanctification is infused by a drop of grace; but in Mary the river overflows (*Serm.* 1, *In Nativ. Deiparae*). St. Laurence Justinian says that since Mary had been sanctified in her mother's womb and freed from all contagion

of original sin, she manifested exteriorly the fullness of grace which was in her soul. The Word certainly loved her while she was still in her mother's womb and chose her for His Mother (*De Nativ. Virginis*).

Theological Argument. 1) The more closely one approaches a principle of any kind, the more one participates in the effect flowing from that principle. But the Blessed Virgin was nearest to Christ in His humanity because He assumed His human nature from her.

2) God gives grace to each according to the purpose for which He has chosen him. Hence it follows that Mary had to possess all the graces corresponding to the work to which she was destined as the chosen Mother of God. And she had these graces from the first moment of her conception because she was already the one chosen to be the Mother of God.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that the plenitude of grace with which Mary was endowed from the first moment of her conception was in keeping with the divine maternity. Hence, although Mary was full of grace, she could increase in it; and not only could she increase it, but she did increase in grace during all her mortal life. St. Bernard and Amadeus of Lausanne affirm it.

St. Thomas says that there was a threefold perfection of grace in the Blessed Virgin. The first was dispositive, by which she was made worthy to be the Mother of Christ, and this was the perfection of her sanctification. The second perfection of grace in the Blessed Virgin was through the presence of the Son of God incarnate in her womb. The third is the perfection of the end which she has in glory.¹

THESIS: Mary's initial grace was greater than the grace of men and angels.

Theologians hold as certain that Mary's initial grace surpassed that of men and angels in their first sanctification. It is also a common opinion that Mary's initial grace was more abundant than the final or consummated grace of angels and men considered separately. However, they disagree on whether the grace given to the Blessed Virgin in her first sanctification transcends the consummate grace of all men and angels combined.

Suárez, Theophilus Raynaud, Lepicier, Terrien and others are either silent or deny such an excess of initial grace in Mary. Vega,

St. Laurence of Brindisi, Contenson, Morales, St. Alphonsus, Sedlmayr, Tanquerey, Hugon, Sinibaldi and others place Mary's initial grace above the consummate sanctity of all men and angels combined.

This opinion is the most satisfactory because, as St. Alphonsus says, "When an opinion tends in any way to the honor of the most Blessed Virgin, when it has some foundation and is not repugnant to faith nor to the decrees of the Church nor to truth, the refusal to hold it on the grounds that the reverse may be true, shows little devotion to the Mother of God. I do not choose to be one of these."²

The Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* states: "Wherefore, far above the angels and all the saints so wondrously did God endow her. . ."

God gives grace to each soul according to the purpose for which He has chosen it; therefore Mary, at the first instant of her conception, received grace commensurate with the dignity of the divine maternity for which she had been chosen by God from all eternity. This dignity, we can say with St. Peter Damian, is that before which all creatures are silent and tremble, and scarcely dare to gaze upon the immensity of such great dignity.³ Mary's first infusion of grace made her immaculate, free from concupiscence, and immune from even the slightest sin. No man or angel possessed such an abundance of effects in their first sanctification.

THESIS: Mary's initial grace was greater than the consummate grace of the angels and saints considered separately.

By consummate grace is meant, not the grace of beatitude, but the grace possessed at the end of life, closing man's life as a wayfarer. The truth of our thesis seems to be insinuated in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*: "Wherefore, far above the angels and saints so wondrously did God endow her. . ."

The more closely one approaches a principle of any kind, the more one participates in the effect flowing from that principle. From the first instant of her conception, Mary was nearest to God, the fountain of all graces, more than any angel or saint confirmed in grace, because as the chosen Mother of God, from her first sanctification she was destined to an intimate association with Him.

Again, the more perfect a form, the more perfect the disposition it requires. Therefore, just as the maternity of God, for which Mary's

first grace of sanctification was a disposition so that she might be worthy, is the greatest dignity bestowed on a creature, so her initial grace, as a disposition for so exalted a dignity, had to transcend the grace that could be accumulated by any angel or any man at the end of his state as a wayfarer.

As grace is the effect of divine love, to the greater love of God in a creature corresponds proportionately a greater degree of grace. Now the Blessed Virgin, in the first instant of her conception, was loved by God more than any angel or saint, because she was loved as the chosen Mother of God. For this reason she was more esteemed by God than the most remarkable of the saints or the most ardent of the angels.

THESIS: *Mary's initial grace was greater than the final grace bestowed on all of the angels and saints considered even collectively.*

"Wherefore, far above all the angels and saints, so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts . . ." (*Ineffabilis Deus*).

Mary's initial grace, which is a disposition to the divine maternity, should be proportionate to it. But the final grace of the angels and saints is far from being proportionate to the divine maternity, which is in the highest order and pertains in a certain way to the hypostatic order.

The effect of grace is communicated more to those who are more united to God. But Mary was the creature most united to God, as Garau states, because God selected Mary to be His Mother, the Father chose her for His daughter, and the Holy Ghost chose her as His spouse, and thus she had an affinity with the entire Trinity. Hence, God made Mary the highest and greatest among the rest of the creatures, and gave her an abundance of all good.

The greater love of God toward the creature produces a greater degree of grace. But Mary, from the first moment of her creation, was loved more than all angels and men combined, because God loved her as His chosen Mother, and this privilege carries with it a greater love than any other privilege by which all men and angels confirmed in grace can be honored.

Contenson describes the excellence of Mary's initial grace by saying that it was such that one could believe that her initial grace had

begun where the graces of all the others end; so that her primitive degree of grace was greater, more perfect and more intense than the grace of all the angels and men from the beginning to the end of the world. He says that if all the graces of all the just were weighed in the balance with those of Mary, the scale would incline in her direction.

Finally, if it is asked whether the Blessed Virgin was disposed by a proper movement of free will to receive grace in the first instant of her conception, the answer can be yes, because it was fitting that because of the great dignity of her divine maternity she should be sanctified in the most noble way possible. The most noble manner of sanctification is through the use of free will, which accepts grace, rather than through that attained without the consent of the will. Therefore, the justification of adults is nobler than that of children.

Besides, no one is sanctified without consent of the will, except *per accidens*, that is, when there is no use of reason, because the perfect manner of establishing divine friendship demands consent on the part of God and on the part of man. Mary, however, had the use of reason from the very beginning, as will be explained later.

THESIS: *Mary increased in grace during the whole of her mortal life.*

Peter the Venerable (*Ep. 7*), dwelling on the words of the angel Gabriel, "Hail, full of grace," believed that the grace of the Blessed Virgin increased until the Incarnation, at which time it reached such a fullness that it could not be increased any further.

Other theologians seem to be of this same opinion, among whom is Scotus.⁴ However, nothing can be inferred from his words against the increase of grace in Mary from the time of Christ's conception.

The Doctors commonly teach that in the conception of Christ, Mary attained an inestimable increase in grace and even those who denied the privilege of the Immaculate Conception confessed that the grace bestowed on Mary in the incarnation of the Word was sufficient to extinguish the *fomes* of sin and to confirm her in good. Thus, St. Thomas says: "In the conception of the Son of God she received consummate grace, confirming her in good."⁵ St. Albert the Great says: "We believe, without prejudice to a better opinion, that in the conception of Christ the Blessed Virgin received as much

charity as was possible for a pure creature to receive in the state of a wayfarer," which must be taken in the sense that Mary received as much grace as was necessary for her to be the worthy Mother of God.

It is a dogma of faith that in wayfarers sanctifying grace is capable of increase, according to the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, c. 32), and it is obvious that during her whole life, Mary was a wayfarer.

On the other hand, Mary's initial grace could increase indefinitely, since it was not infinite or absolute as was Christ's grace, which is commensurate with the hypostatic union, making Him, from the beginning of the Incarnation, a perfect comprehensor.

THESIS: *Mary attained an abundance of grace in Christ's conception, but continued to grow in grace, both before and after the Incarnation.*

First Part. St. Athanasius, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Jerome, Richard of St. Laurence and St. Peter Canisius all testify to Mary's plenitude of grace through her intimate relation with Christ.

The theological reason is that the nearer one approaches a principle of any kind, the more one participates in the effect flowing from that principle, and Mary was nearest to Christ in His humanity because He received His human nature from Her.

Second Part. The grace may be increased as long as one is in the state of a wayfarer. Now Mary was a wayfarer even after Christ's incarnation, for unlike Christ, who was truly a comprehensor from the first instant of His conception, Mary did not enter into the state of a comprehensor until after her death.

Dominic Soto states that Mary was certainly as full of grace in Christ's conception as was fitting for the Mother of God. However, her grace was not such that it could not afterwards be increased by meritorious acts.⁷

THESIS: *Mary grew in grace ex opere operantis or in a meritorious manner throughout her life.*

The opinion of some was that Mary could not merit grace from the time of the incarnation of her Son to her death. Among those cited by Suárez are Richard and Alexander of Hales.

1) The good works of the just can merit *de condigno* an increase of grace, according to the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, c. 32). Now

Mary performed meritorious acts throughout her life, for as soon as she began to exist she began to merit. Actually, from the first instant of her conception until her death, she was a wayfarer, enriched with the greatest amount of sanctifying grace, and her acts were free, most virtuous, and directed only to God by an infinite love. St. Bernardine of Siena says that she never chose to do anything except what was shown her by the wisdom of God and she always loved God as much as she believed she should love Him.⁸ St. Peter Canisius expresses these same sentiments in his work on Mary.

2) Sanctifying grace grows *ex opere operantis* in proportion to the fervor of the meritorious acts. Now Mary's meritorious acts, besides the great value they received through her great privilege as the Mother of God, were enabled by the greatest habitual grace and were most intense in proportion to the actual graces which were bestowed on her so abundantly by God, for there was nothing in her to hinder or delay a perfect correspondence to grace, for she was free from all incitement to sin and all disorder in the faculties.

THESIS: *Mary merited grace through each and every one of the actions of her life.*

Previous Observations. Some acts are human acts; others are acts of man. Human acts are those which proceed from a deliberate will; acts of man are those which are performed by the faculties in themselves and independent of the free determination of the will.

In man there are many actions which do not proceed from reason and will, but from properties of the body (to fall down), the vegetative powers (nutrition and growth), or movements of the sensitive powers, because the bodily and vegetative functions are not directly subject to reason, although they may be subject indirectly, and the sensitive powers are subject to the will only in an imperfect way.

The question here concerns Mary's human actions, and not the purely natural actions of body and soul, for although the latter are acts of man, they are not human actions nor do they proceed from free will; therefore they are not of themselves worthy of either praise or merit.

St. Albert the Great says that where reason cannot err in discerning and the will cannot choose evil, the best and the ultimate is always chosen. Now these two perfections existed in Mary; therefore,

she did everything in the best manner and consequently merited grace through each one of her acts.⁹

There was nothing in any of Mary's human actions to prevent her from meriting an increase of grace, since all her actions were free and virtuous, without any mixture of inordinate affection; and they were all adorned with the greatest sanctifying grace. Besides, although Mary performed many objectively indifferent acts, there were none that were not extremely virtuous by reason of their end. Lastly, Mary ordered all her acts to God through a most ardent love. St. Peter Damian says of this that she emitted the fragrance of her good works everywhere and reached the sublime by a continual intention of her heart.¹⁰

THESES: *Mary merited continuously and grew in grace during her whole life.*

Mary's continuity in meriting can be understood either in her time of wakefulness or in her time of sleep. That she merited continuously during her time of wakefulness must be admitted with certainty, because all her acts of mind and will, considered both essentially and by participation, were deliberate. Besides, there were no movements whatever of the inferior powers against right reason. On the other hand, she could not desist from every exterior or interior act because, as Suárez says, this is almost impossible to human nature and would in fact result in slothfulness.¹¹

Mary received infused knowledge from the very beginning of her conception; but infused knowledge is independent of phantasms, therefore it is not necessary to admit that there was any discontinuance whatever in Mary's acts of this knowledge, nor any digression of mind, interference from indeliberate thoughts or bodily weariness caused by the use of this knowledge. All these things arise in us from the natural communication between the intellect and the imagination and other sensitive powers necessarily bound to our material bodies. Terrien is in favor of this explanation, and he adds that the complaint of the saints was their inability to think of God and to love Him without interruption.¹²

That Mary's meriting was interrupted by sleep is maintained by Gerson and Lepicier, who thought that Mary could not perform free acts during sleep and therefore could not merit. Nevertheless, the

majority of the theologians affirm that she did merit in sleep; for example, St. Bernardine of Siena, Denis the Carthusian, St. Peter Canisius, St. Francis de Sales, Contenson, Suárez, Vega, Terrien, Hugon and others.

The affirmative opinion seems more probable. St. Ambrose (*De Virgin.*, Lib. II) stresses this point when he says that even while she slept, her heart still kept vigil. St. Bernardine of Siena maintains that the sleep which prevents the action of reason and free will, and consequently the act of meriting, did not happen to Mary. Rather, her soul was directed to God by a free and meritorious act. Hence, during sleep she contemplated more perfectly than during her waking hours. Rupert of Deutz brings out this point when alluding to Jacob's triumph over the angel, as does Denis the Carthusian.¹³

This testimony shows that because Mary had been given infused knowledge from the first moment of her conception (knowledge which is independent of the operation of the senses and of phantasms), nothing hindered her in sleep from a continuous contemplation and love of heavenly things. Although we admit, says Suárez, that on some occasions this merit would be interrupted by sleep and by bodily weakness, nevertheless those interruptions were so short that her merit could be called continuous. It is believed that Mary required little sleep and devoted a great part of that time to watching and prayer by which she mortified her body.

THESES: *Mary possessed an increase of grace ex opere operato.*

Grace *ex opere operato* signifies all grace bestowed by the will of God, independent of the merits of the subject receiving it. This can happen in two ways: through the sacraments or independent of the sacraments. We must therefore consider the sacraments of the Old and of the New Law and also some instances and occasions in Mary's life in which the goodness of God toward His Mother was to be shown in a special way.

With regard to the sacraments of the Old Law. In the Old Law, besides the circumcision of males, there was the *remedium naturae*, which was applied to women in order to take away original sin. Grace was conferred, not properly *ex opere operato*, but *quasi ex opere operato*; that is, independent of all merit of the recipient. Therefore, such a remedy was applied to Mary, as to all other girls, shortly after

birth, because her parents did not know of the privilege of her immaculate conception. Hence, they followed the tradition of their ancestors. It must therefore be affirmed that Mary received this sacrament, not to be cleansed from original sin, but to adhere to the visible church of that time and to increase in sanctifying grace. Nor could her sanctification from the first moment of her conception be denied because this remedy was applied to her, for John the Baptist was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth, although he was already free from original sin, having been sanctified in his mother's womb.

With regard to the sacraments of the New Law. Mary received baptism, which produced many effects in her. When baptism is conferred on a person already justified, it gives an increase of grace; and thus Mary increased in grace, although already full of grace from the first moment of her conception. Moreover, it is proper to baptism, through the imprint of the character, to incorporate a person in Christ and His visible Church and to make him capable of receiving the other sacraments. Since Mary received baptism, she was marked with the baptismal character as the firstborn of the faithful and the most noble member of the Church; and through it, she was rendered apt for receiving the other sacraments. Finally, by receiving baptism, Mary followed in the footsteps of Christ, who was baptized by John. Thus she gives the faithful an example of perfect observance of the law, just as, at another time, she submitted to the rite of purification, faithfully fulfilling the law, although it was not necessary that she do so.

But when and by whom was Mary baptized? Although it is certain that baptism was not necessary before Christ's death, nevertheless the apostles were ordained priests and received the Holy Eucharist before Christ's passion. According to the general rule (from which it is not evident that Christ would dispense His apostles) no one is capable of receiving the other sacraments unless he is first baptized, hence it must be thought that the apostles were baptized before Christ's death, and Mary before them all, for she always preceded them in matters of virtue and sanctity.

If they were baptized before the Passion, says Maldonado, they were undoubtedly baptized by Christ, since He baptized before His

passion, and baptized in the Holy Spirit. John's statement that Christ did not baptize can be interpreted in the sense that He did not usually baptize, although at some time He might have baptized a few.¹⁴ Suárez agrees with Euthymius Zagabenus that it is pious and probable that Christ baptized Peter and His Virgin Mother, and that Peter baptized the other apostles. It seems reasonable, as it is fitting, considering Mary's singular honor, to be baptized by her Son Himself.¹⁵

Mary also received confirmation, not the sensible sign or rite used nowadays in the Church, but the effects of the sacrament: the grace and fortitude of the Holy Ghost for professing the faith. Mary received this effect on Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended upon her and upon the apostles in the form of tongues of fire. "All these with one mind continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus" (Acts 1:14). On that day, the apostles received the effects of confirmation, that is, the plenitude of the Holy Spirit, as Pope Eugene IV explains: "The effect of this sacrament is that in it the Holy Ghost is given to strengthen the grace of faith, as it was given to the apostles on Pentecost."¹⁶ Therefore, it was reasonable that Mary receive the effects of confirmation, since it was fitting that she be filled with a greater perfection of grace than the apostles and disciples.

Canisius says that Mary also received the Holy Eucharist frequently and even daily. Frequent and even daily communion was in use among the faithful of the primitive Church, of whom we read (Acts 2:46): "And continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread in their houses"; and although it was not sanctioned by apostolic precept, as Vázquez says; nevertheless, it cannot be denied that frequent and daily communion, always so longed for by the Church, was in use among the first Christians. St. Ignatius Martyr attests to this custom: "Meet more frequently to celebrate God's Eucharist and to offer praise."¹⁷ St. Justin Martyr and St. Cyprian also refer to the practice and St. Jerome states that it was the custom in Rome for the faithful to receive Christ's body frequently. In another passage he answers the question as to whether the Eucharist is to be received daily, by stating that it was observed in Rome and in Spain.¹⁸ If, then, frequent and even daily reception of the

Eucharist was the custom among the faithful of the early Church, it is reasonable to believe that Mary also received the Holy Eucharist daily.

Actually, Mary's love for Christ led her to receive Holy Communion daily, that she might harbor within her breast the body of the Son she had borne in her womb. And thus she offered her Son, hidden in the Eucharistic species, a most chaste daily abode, for Christ did not enter into any heart with more pleasure than into His Mother's, since no one was purer, holier or more inflamed with love. As Christ's absence would be felt when He left this world in human form, He instituted this Sacrament so that He might console the faithful, and especially His Mother who, receiving Him frequently in the Eucharist, would be better able to bear the absence of her Loved One. Mary had occasion to communicate daily because she could easily receive the Eucharist from the hands of St. John, her constant companion, or from the hands of another apostle.

Mary never received the sacrament of penance because she had neither proximate nor remote matter, without which there is no sacrament. She could not confess sins she never committed.

There is a disagreement among theologians whether she received extreme unction. St. Albert the Great, St. Peter Canisius, Suárez, Vega and Sedlmayr are of the opinion that Mary was anointed before dying, for although she did not have even the vestige of sin, she was capable of receiving the fortifying grace conferred in this sacrament. Besides, although she was not subject to sickness, the weakness of bodily energies is sufficient for this sacrament. From which it is inferred that Mary received that sacrament for its fruit, for new increases in grace, and for the edification to the faithful, thus giving them an example of humility and of Christian living. It is probable, says St. Albert the Great, that the Blessed Virgin humbly received that sacrament instituted for sinners, so that she could leave this life with the humility she possessed all during her life; and thus, lowering herself in her last moments to become similar to sinners, the Lord might raise her above the choirs of angels.¹⁹

Of the contrary opinion are Peter of Palude, Gabriel Biel, Vázquez, Lepicier, Paquet, Campana and Hugon, who believe that Mary did not and could not have received extreme unction. This opinion seems to be the one preferred, for the following reasons:

1) The subject of the sacrament is a sick person in danger of death, but Mary never suffered bodily sickness.

2) The form of the sacrament of extreme unction, "May the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed . . ." supposes that the person receiving the sacrament contracted sin, which cannot be said of Mary.

3) The proper effect of extreme unction is the cleansing of the remains of sin and the forgiveness of sin if there be any, but Mary had neither sin nor the remains of sin.

4) Lastly, extreme unction strengthens the sick person at the end of life against the snares of the devil and gives a special help in enduring the agonies of death. But Mary did not need to be strengthened to overcome the cunning of the devil, for the devil was always kept far from her; nor did she have to be consoled in her agony, because her passing, rather than a death, was a peaceful flight in the ecstasy of the beatific vision.

Mary did not receive the sacrament of holy orders, for this sacrament is conferred only upon men. Whence Pope Innocent III says that although the Blessed Virgin was more worthy and more excellent than all of the apostles, nevertheless, God entrusted the keys of the kingdom of heaven to them and not to her.²⁰ But although Mary did not receive the sacrament of holy orders and was not invested with the sacerdotal character, nevertheless, because she brought Christ the Priest into the world and because with her consent Christ's priestly ordination was effected, since she offered Him for us as the Victim for our salvation, not only on the altar of her heart but also united to Him and with Him on the altar of the Cross, we must acknowledge that she possessed in an equivalent and most excellent manner whatever is proper to the priestly power.²¹

Mary did not contract matrimony as a sacrament of the New Law, but she was legitimately married to St. Joseph under the Old Law, *prout in officium naturae*. Nor did Mary and Joseph's marriage become a sacrament after she was baptized, because it is commonly believed that Joseph died before Christ instituted baptism and raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament.

Corollary. From what has been said, it seems clear that although Mary did not receive all the sacraments of the New Law, nevertheless, as St. Albert the Great says, whatever graces are granted by the

sacraments of the Church, the Blessed Virgin lacked absolutely none of them in the plenitude she possessed; she attained all of them through the sacraments, the equivalent of the sacraments or in some more exalted manner.²²

THESES: *Instances in which Mary was given a singular increase in grace besides the dignity of her own merit.*

As has already been said, in the conception of Christ, Mary received an abundance of grace through her new, intimate and admirable union with Christ, the source of grace, by which she then became a mother physically and actually. This grace was not restricted only to the time of the Incarnation nor to the nine months during which she carried her divine Son in her womb, but could be extended to the whole period of Christ's infancy, during which time Mary enjoyed a daily familiarity with Him, though it cannot be determined to what degree, proportion or continuity. St. Augustine, St. Peter Canisius and Denis the Carthusian attest to this.

There were other times during which Mary received an abundance of graces; namely, when the principal mysteries of Christ took place, such as the Resurrection, Ascension, and on Pentecost, when it was manifest that Mary, together with the apostles, though she, more abundantly than they, received the graces of the Holy Ghost, and especially at the foot of the Cross, where, St. Bernard says, she was truly a martyr, suffering a pain more cruel than death.²³

Suárez states that these increases in grace must be understood, not as if there were no free cooperation on Mary's part, but so far as they surpassed the disposition she possessed, because God can give an increase of grace by special privilege without any good works or sacraments.²⁴

THESES: *Mary's final grace was almost unlimited, surpassing that of all the angels and blessed combined.*

First Part. Magisterium of the Popes. Pope Pius IX, in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, clearly says: "Far above all the angels and all the saints, so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of His divinity, that this Mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than

which, under God, one cannot imagine anything greater." These words demonstrate sufficiently the abundance of grace accumulated in Mary.

The Fathers and Theologians. St. Peter Chrysologus, St. John Damascene, St. Peter Damian, Richard of St. Lawrence, Denis the Carthusian, St. Thomas of Villanova and St. Bonaventure teach this same doctrine. For example, Denis the Carthusian says that after the sanctity of Christ it is impossible to conceive of any sanctity greater than that of Mary.²⁵

Theological Argument. Mary's initial grace was greater, as we have said, than the consummate grace of each individual saint or angel, and even of all the saints and angels taken collectively. This grace increased continuously during the whole course of her mortal life by her most perfect and fervent meritorious acts, never interrupted either in her waking hours or in sleep. It was increased through her reception of the sacraments, principally through the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist, which no one desired or received more worthily than she, and by the overflowing generosity of Christ, her Son, at definite times in which He was pleased to manifest His great love for His Mother. This idea of Mary's increase in grace is explained by Scholastic theologians and especially by Suárez.²⁶

Second Part. Proved by the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, already quoted. **The Fathers and Theologians.** St. Ephrem says: "Mother of God, my Lady, higher beyond compare than the cherubim and seraphim."²⁷ St. Germanus and St. Peter Damian make similar protestations.²⁸

Theological Argument. Mary's consummate grace surpasses her initial grace beyond comparison. But her initial grace was greater than the final grace of all the angels and saints together.

God, says Suárez, gives grace to each one according to his state and ministry. Now all this intensity and fullness of grace is befitting the Mother of God because her dignity is of the highest order, so that even if that grace extended to the infinite, it would never surpass that which is proportionate to her dignity, because the dignity of the Mother of God is greater than the gifts and dignities of all the saints. Therefore, a grace which surpasses that of the rest befits this dignity.²⁹

Corollary. From what has been said, we infer that Mary's grace, although full from the first instant of her conception, increased continually during her mortal life, and that it attained, at the end of

her life, an immense accumulation which God alone is capable of measuring. Also, we see that this plenitude is different from the plenitude of grace in Christ, since the fullness of Christ's grace is absolute, attaining the summit with regard to its essence and with regard to its power, which extends to all the effects of grace.

Mary's fullness of grace, then, is not absolute, but proportionate to her unique dignity as the Mother of God, by which she was exalted above all creatures. With this respective fullness of grace, saints are also called full of grace, for they receive a plenitude of grace consistent with their state or with the ministry to which God has predestined them. Thus, it is said of St. Stephen that he was "full of grace and power" (Acts 6:8) because he had enough grace to make him a fit minister and witness of God, according to his election.

Therefore Christ, His Mother, and the saints are called full of grace in a different way. Maldonado makes this comparison: The fountain, river and brook are filled with water. However, the water in the fountain is much purer than that of the river, and that of the river is purer than that of the brook. Christ is full of grace as the fountain from which grace flows, and this fullness proceeds from Christ to all men as from the head to the members. The Mother of Christ is as full as the river nearest the fountain, which, although it holds less water than the fountain, nevertheless, runs through a full river-bed. Stephen is full of grace as is the brook.³⁰

It may be well to recall St. Bernard's exposition with regard to Mary's singular holiness, when he said that in her holy soul the life of grace began with her Immaculate Conception and ended with her Assumption and coronation of glory. It was, as St. Thomas says (IIIa, q. 27), a triumph of grace in the beginning and in the end; and in the interval, a constant sanctification.

Theological and Moral Virtues

Previous Observations. Some virtues are natural, others, supernatural, according to the twofold order and end of human acts. Natural virtues can be acquired by their proper acts; supernatural virtues are infused by God. Natural virtues are divided into intel-

lectual virtues and moral virtues. Some moral virtues are principal or cardinal virtues; others are secondary or accessory.

Cardinal virtues are so called from *cardine*, meaning hinge, and are those on which our whole moral life revolves. They are four: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. Prudence is the most important of all because it is the virtue which regulates and gives rectitude to the others. For this reason it is said that prudence is to the moral virtues what the eye is to the body, salt to meals, and the sun to the world.

The secondary or accessory virtues are those which proceed from the cardinal virtues and are referred to them. This comes about in three ways: some are integral parts, without which the exercise of the virtue would not be perfect and integral; others are as subjective parts, by which the cardinal virtue is divided into genus and species; others, are potential parts, not having all the power of the principal virtue, but ordained to certain secondary acts or matter.³¹

Of the supernatural virtues, some are called so only by reason of the cause (*ex parte causae*) and are infused virtues *per accidens*; others are supernatural *simpliciter*, infused virtues *per se*, which by reason of their intrinsic supernaturalness can never be found in man except by divine infusion. Virtues which are absolutely supernatural are divided into theological and moral; the former have God as their immediate and direct object, the latter treat of the means which lead to this end.

Although the infused and acquired moral virtues refer to the same material and have the same names, the infused moral virtues are ordained to the good as modified by the divine law, while the acquired virtues regard good as regulated by human reason. Thus, temperance, regulated by reason alone, moderates eating, so that bodily health will not be impaired nor the exercise of reason be hindered. But according to divine law, man is also required to chastise his body and bring it under subjection by self-denial in eating and drinking, after the example of Christ and the saints.

We treat here of Mary's virtues: her natural virtues and principally her supernatural and infused virtues, theological as well as moral. Also, we consider her secondary or accessory virtues by which she shone resplendent in a special way.

With regard to the supernatural or infused virtues *per se*, it is cer-

tain that they are infused together with sanctifying grace, from which they are derived as properties, so that the more perfect the grace, the more perfect the virtues proceeding from it. And, as Mary's grace was most perfect, we must say that the infused virtues blossomed in her, not according to the common measure, but in the greatest degree and with a certain special eminence. For this reason St. Bernard calls her a field of holy aromatic flowers planted by the heavenly gardener, blossoming delightfully with the precious flowers of all of the virtues.³²

THESIS: *Mary possessed theological faith.*

Sacred Scripture. Elizabeth said to Mary: "And blessed is she who has believed, because the things promised her by the Lord shall be accomplished,"³³ on which Knabenbauer (*Comm. in Evang. sec. Lucam*) comments: "Mary's faith was this, that she believed all that the angel announced was to be accomplished in her; that she, a virgin, would conceive by divine power . . . that her Son would be great, the Son of the Most High."

The Fathers. St. Irenaeus: "The evil done by Eve's incredulity was remedied by Mary's faith."³⁴ St. Ambrose, commenting on the words of St. Luke, forcefully elucidates Mary's faith. St. Augustine says: "More blessed, then, was Mary in receiving the faith of Christ than in conceiving the flesh of Christ."³⁵

Theological Argument. Faith pertains to divine things that we do not see, and Mary did not see the divine essence in this life, at least not permanently.

Mary was not justified without the consent of her free will to grace, and this consent to grace requires an act of faith.

THESIS: *Mary possessed perfect faith, both objectively and subjectively.*

Errors. Luther asserted that Mary's faith was surpassed by the faith of the centurion, of whom Christ said (Matt. 8:10): "I have not found such great faith in Israel." Erasmus supposed that Mary did not adore her Son following His birth, because it is not certain that she recognized Him as God at that time; and Theophylactus claimed that Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth to verify what the angel had said

about Elizabeth's fertility, thereby acquiring greater certainty concerning the mystery announced by the angel.

First Part. The perfection of faith on the part of the material object results in the greater explication of faith, so far as more things are believed explicitly. Thus, the faith of the theologian who expressly understands more divine truths is greater than that of an ignorant man who hardly understands the Creed. Mary understood explicitly more revealed truths and understood them more profoundly than any other creature, both because she was inspired by God in a singular way and because she was closely associated with the work of redemption; also because, during so many years of domestic service to Christ, she breathed in and meditated on His words solicitously, as St. Luke affirms (2:50): "His mother kept all these things in her heart."

Second Part. Doctors of the Church. St. Bernard praises Mary's faith: "Mary is called the one clothed with the sun, because she penetrated the deepest abyss of the divine wisdom, more than can be believed, so that, so far as the condition of a creature permits, without personal union with God, she seems immersed in that inaccessible light."³⁶

St. Albert the Great: "Mary, then, exercised perfect faith, for even when the disciples doubted, she did not doubt."³⁷

Theological Argument. Since the act of faith proceeds from the intellect and will, a man's faith may be described as being greater on the part of the intellect because of its greater certitude and firmness, and on the part of his will because of his greater promptitude, devotion or confidence.³⁸ But Mary's faith excelled in both ways: at the Annunciation, when she believed a wondrous thing that exceeded anything God had ever done; at the birth of Christ, whom she reverently adored as God, lying in the manger; at the prophecy of Simeon, to which she acquiesced with tranquil firmness when he praised Christ publicly and prophesied the sword of sorrow for her; during the cruel hours of her Son's passion, when the apostles fled but she could not be separated from the Cross; and finally, in the other events of Christ's life. With good reason did St. Alphonsus Liguori attest that her faith was greater than that of all men and angels.

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they would not be as strong and constant as they had thought they would be in the face of such great danger. What happened to the apostles, making them leave Jesus alone, fleeing through fear, happened also to the faithful, who, seeing Jesus handcuffed, became somewhat uncertain in their faith in Him; not making them incredulous, but enough to make them waver in their faith.

On the contrary, Mary did not waver in her faith, nor was she scandalized. She was most faithful, constant and inviolable; and being stronger than the apostles, she remained at the foot of the Cross. In this sense, we can understand the words falsely attributed to St. Bernard (*De lamentatione Virg. Mariæ*), that Mary alone had faith, being sure that He would rise again, and for this reason, each candle is extinguished during the Divine Office on the three days of Holy Week, but one candle alone is left lighted, to signify Mary's firm faith.

Corollary. From what has been said, it follows that Mary may, with all propriety, be called the Mother of believers, for she was the first to believe in the Evangelical law, and because her faith was the most perfect, most intense, and most firm of all. For that reason Rupert of Deutz calls her the teacher of religion and faith; Raymond Jourdain, teacher of the apostles; Richard of St. Laurence, mother of knowledge, that is, of revealed faith, and she is also called, in the Litany of Loreto, "Virgin most faithful."

THE S I S : *Mary possessed the theological virtue of hope.*

Previous Observations. Theological hope is a divinely infused virtue by which we hope to obtain the beatific vision with divine help. Hope rests primarily on the omnipotence and piety of God, which bestows grace; secondarily it rests on our merits, because God has promised us eternal beatitude on the condition of our cooperation. On God's part, hope possesses certainty, according to Ecclus. 2:11: "No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded." But on our part, the fact that we may not cooperate with God's grace, carries with it fear and uncertainty, to which the Apostle refers (Phil. 2:12): "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling."

Finally, since the essential element of hope is that it leans on and is sustained in God, from whom it derives its certainty, and it is only accidental that it resides in an unstable subject, it is clear that hope

does not disappear even if the subject has a certainty of attaining beatitude. Thus, souls detained in purgatory, although they be certain of salvation, retain hope because they do not yet enjoy beatitude, but hope for it as an absent good which they will surely attain after their present suffering.

First Part. In the natural order, hope follows faith, because once the attainment of beatitude, although arduous, is revealed by faith as possible of attainment with divine assistance, the will is put into action by the virtue of hope in order to obtain it. Therefore, as Mary possessed theological faith, she also possessed the virtue of hope.

Theological hope is the desire for God not yet possessed, but will be possessed with the assistance of grace. Therefore, hope is not found in the soul that has attained full divine fruition, and Mary did not possess this fruition permanently during her mortal life.

Second Part. Hope, on our part, carries with it fear and uncertainty, because it is associated with a defective condition. But Mary's hope was absolutely certain, joyful and never touched by the slightest agitation or distrust. As Denis the Carthusian says, since hope proceeds from grace, and Mary's grace was of an incomparably high degree, so also was her hope incomparably perfect.⁴²

Corollary. Since Mary possessed the virtue of hope in a most excellent manner and, moreover, since she is also our hope, as our protectress in the work of salvation, the words of Ecclesiasticus (24:24) can well be applied to her: "I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope." Thus, St. Augustine calls her the only hope of sinners, and St. Germanus of Constantinople calls her the hope of our salvation.⁴³ In the antiphon *Salve Regina*, we invoke Mary: "Hail, . . . our hope."

THE S I S : *Mary possessed a most perfect supernatural charity.*

The greater the grace, the more perfect the charity; and Mary was full of grace from the first moment of her existence.

Charity signifies man's friendship with God, and friendship flows from a mutual love founded on some likeness and a communication of good. But all this abounds to a high degree in Mary's supernatural charity. This is because God's love for Mary could hardly be expressed, for He most freely and graciously provided her with all the blessings of His power, grace, and gentleness, and sanctified her from the first

moment of her conception. He gave Himself as her Son, and thus provided her with the greatest dignity possible to a pure creature; that is, the dignity of the divine maternity. He never ceased bestowing supernatural benefits on her until she was crowned by a glorious assumption into heaven. On her part, Mary was enraptured by an intense love of God who was the bestower of her many favors. St. Albert says that Mary had received more than the rest of men, and she had the obligation of loving more, and she did, to that degree.⁴⁴ Hence, we conclude Mary's greatest conformity to God because of her fullness of sanctifying grace, her acts of virtue, and the perfection of her life. Therefore St. John Damascene rightly calls Mary the friend of God, all beautiful and without stain (*De Assumpt. B. Virg.*). According to St. Thomas, the perfection of charity can be understood in two ways:

First, with regard to the object loved, secondly, with regard to the person who loves. With regard to the object loved, charity is perfect if the object be loved as much as it is lovable. . . . On the part of the person who loves, charity is perfect when he loves as much as he can. This happens in three ways: First, so that a man's whole heart is always actually borne toward God; this is the perfection of the charity of heaven, and is not possible in this life, wherein, by reason of the weakness of human life, it is impossible to think always of God, and to be moved by love toward Him. Secondly, so that man makes an earnest endeavor to give his time to God and divine things, while scorning other things except so far as the needs of the present life demand. This is the perfection of charity that is possible to a wayfarer; but it is not common to all who have charity. Thirdly, so that a man gives his whole heart to God habitually, that is, by neither thinking nor desiring anything contrary to the love of God; and this perfection is common to all who have charity.⁴⁵

God's goodness is infinite and He is infinitely lovable. Therefore, no creature can love Him infinitely, since all created power is finite. Now Mary's charity, although it was not objectively most perfect nor proportionate to the perfection of the God who was loved, was subjectively perfect to the greatest degree in three ways. By a special privilege, as St. Thomas says, Mary was actually borne toward God, as are the blessed in heaven, not by a facial vision, which is not possible in this life, but by a clarity of contemplation, through her continuous progress and heavenly inspirations and through the activity and in-

ternal ardor of her spirit, so that she loved God more than the blessed in heaven. She abandoned herself to God in divine things with more perfection than any other saint, as she was free from all inordinate passion, totally preserved from all distraction, and incomparably full of grace and divine gifts. Finally, her whole heart was given to God, so that she did not think or desire anything contrary to the divine will, since she was perfectly submissive and conformed to His will, as St. Bernardine of Siena affirms (*Serm.* 51).

Not only was Mary attracted by this greatest love with regard to the triune God, but her immense charity extended to her Son in His humanity, and to other men, her neighbors, as is stated in the First Epistle of St. John (4:21): "And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God should love his brother also."

Although Mary loved her Son more because He was God than because He was man, nevertheless, she loved Him fervently in His human nature, both with a supernatural love of charity and with a natural maternal love. Since it is proper to charity to elevate all human love, both loves of Mary were so united that her natural love was perfect, and continually animated by the supernatural love of charity. Hence it follows that there was in Mary an admirable harmony between her maternal love and the theological virtue of charity, so that whereas we must keep our natural love within bounds so that it will not separate us from God, such precaution was not necessary in Mary's maternal love because, loving her Son so ardently, she likewise loved God, and this love did not separate her from God, but united her more and more to Him.⁴⁶

She also knew from experience that her Son was her extraordinary benefactor, from whom had come immense gifts of body and soul, and chiefly her divine maternity, through which she was raised above all creatures. These gifts and prerogatives were certainly a great incentive for her love. Finally, the maternal love of a son, especially an only son, is very fervent and intense, concerning which, David, weeping over Jonathan, says (II Kings 1:26): "As the mother loveth her only son, so did I love thee." On the other hand, this love is fuller and greater if the son does everything in accordance with his parents' will, and it is certain that Jesus was conformable to the will of His mother in all things.

Similarly, maternal love is more fervent as the affective power of the mother is greater, and no one is ignorant of the fact that Mary

was especially disposed to love. Thus, St. Bernardine of Busti says (*Mariale*, Sermon 2) that she loved Him with a natural love as a mother loves her son, with the love of friendship as a creature loves her Creator, and with a supernatural love as preserved and redeemed. So great was her love of her Son that she was entirely transformed by love.

Finally, Denis the Carthusian beautifully extols Mary's love of her neighbor, whereby she desired for them present grace and future glory. In view of the fact that she understood that through the incarnation, passion and death of her Son, the whole world would obtain salvation and that she realized that in a sense she had become the Mother of God for the sake of sinners, and hence she was consumed with zeal for the salvation of souls.⁴⁷

THESES: *Mary's charity in this life was more intense than the charity of the blessed in heaven.*

Although charity as a habit and as an act is the same species in this life and in the next, as St. Paul says in I Cor. 13:8, nevertheless, the charity of the blessed, by reason of the extrinsic perfection proper to that state, surpasses the charity of the wayfarer.

According to Mazzella (*De virtutibus infusis*) theologians dispute whether in one and the same subject the charity of beatitude intrinsically or intensively surpasses the charity of this life. Nevertheless, in different subjects, both the habit and act of charity can be more intense in wayfarers than in the blessed. The reason for the first part is that many of the blessed in heaven do not have a more intense charity than that infused in them through baptism, while there are many wayfarers who, through the sacraments and other meritorious works, increase the charity received in baptism. The reason for the second part is that activity of the blessed must always be in accordance with the habit, but in a wayfarer it may be equal to the habit or even more intense than the habit because of actual grace. Nevertheless, be this question as it may, we must hold as certain that the charity of the Blessed Virgin in this life was more intense than the charity of the blessed, both because of the intensity of her habit of charity through which she performed acts which surpassed the charity of the just, and because her helps of grace were so great that they produced in her will a kind of moral necessity.

THESES: *Mary was adorned with a singular prudence.*

The Fathers and Doctors of the Church. St. Ephrem, St. Ildephonus, Raymond Jourdain and St. Bernard, praise Mary as the first in prudence, disciplined in thought, hearing, smell, taste, laughter, speech, touch and all other actions.⁴⁸

Theological Argument. It is proper to the prudent man to do everything in conformity to right reason and faith, so that he does nothing except what is right and praiseworthy. This befits Mary, whose every action was performed in accordance with right reason and faith. St. Albert the Great says that since Mary possessed perfection in action and contemplation, there was no possibility of her making a mistake, and therefore she possessed the cardinal virtue of prudence in a more excellent degree than any other wayfarer.⁴⁹

Prudence implies a remembrance of the past, an interpretation of things present, and a foresight of things future. Now Mary understood present things, that is, she deliberated before acting, on what was to be done, and how. When greeted by the angel who announced the mystery of the Incarnation, she deliberated on what matter of salutation that could be. St. Peter Chrysologus tells us that she deliberated because reflection is characteristic of a mature mind.⁵⁰ Moreover, instructed by the angel that she had been chosen as the Mother of God, Mary inquires how this is to be accomplished. To inquire in this way does not only imply the imperfection of mistrust, but should be considered praiseworthy and attributed to prudence, since Mary had taken a vow of perpetual virginity.⁵¹

Mary possessed a memory for things past because she continually meditated on the prophecies concerning her, on the graces bestowed upon her, and on the remarkable utterances and actions of her Son, as St. Luke says (2:19): "But Mary kept in mind all these things, pondering them in her heart." She worked with foresight, not only caring for her Son and avoiding foreseen dangers, but also providing for Him materially, nursing Him, dressing Him and feeding Him, so that at the proper time He would offer Himself on the altar of the Cross, thereby fulfilling the work of redemption.

THESES: *Mary possessed justice in a higher degree than all other creatures.*

Previous Observations. We are not considering justice in its proper sense, as moral perfection and sanctity, for it is clear that in

this sense it befits Mary, but in the *proper* sense, that is, as a special virtue which consists in giving to each one his due. Justice in the proper sense may be *general* (legal) or *particular* (referring to the common good ordained by law or to the private good of every man).

With regard to *general or legal justice*. Legal justice resides authoritatively in a ruler, so far as he commands for the common good, and administratively in his subjects, so far as they act in subjection to the law. Now Mary fulfilled the law to the highest degree, as is clearly seen in the fact of her having observed the legal precepts of the circumcision of Jesus and of her own purification, although her Son was not subject to circumcision and she was not subject to purification. St. Luke testifies to this (2:21-22): "And when eight days were fulfilled for His circumcision, His name was called Jesus. . . . And when the days of the purification were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, they took Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord." Neither wished to disregard the ancient ceremonies.⁵²

With regard to *particular justice*. There are two integral parts: to refrain from evil which harms one's neighbor, and to do the good which is due them. Mary fulfilled both of these parts in an extraordinary way, for as she was destined from all eternity to become the dispenser of all good, no evil can be found in her dispensing it, especially supernatural goods. And thus St. Ambrose says that she was used to doing no evil to anyone, loving all, respecting her elders, not envying her equals, not boasting, following reason, and loving virtue.⁵³

THESES: *Mary possessed the virtue of religion.*

Mary gave proof of the virtue of religion when, at the age of three, she offered herself to God in the Temple, and lived there, dedicated to divine worship, until her espousals with St. Joseph; by going from Nazareth to Jerusalem every year, with the difficulties inherent in such a long trip, as St. Luke says (2:41): "And His parents were wont to go every year to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover," although women were not obliged by law to go (Exod. 34:23; Deut. 16:16).

Religion is a virtue which inclines men to give to God due worship and reverence. It is to God alone that the cult of latria (adoration) is due, by which the creature confesses the infinite excellence of God and his absolute dependence on Him. Mary most excellently paid to God the homage of latreutic cult.⁵⁴

THESES: *Mary did not possess the virtue of penance.*

With regard to the virtue of penance, theologians dispute whether it existed, and how the acts and habits of this virtue operated in Mary. The solution of this question depends principally on the determination of the formal object of the virtue of penance, that is, whether penance treats formally of sin committed by the penitent and, therefore, always presupposes sin in the subject or at least the capacity to sin; or whether the formal object of this virtue is more extended and is ordained to expiating sin in general, whether it was committed by the penitent or by another; or whether it tends not only to repair divine justice transgressed by sin, but also to safeguard it even if it is neither violated nor can be violated.

Frasen, following the Subtle Doctor, points out that penance, so far as it signifies sorrow of soul and detestation of sin committed, with the intention of sinning no more, can exist only in a sinner, but so far as it inclines the will to vindicate sin in general, whether committed by the penitent or by another, can be conceded, not only in the angels and in innocent Adam, but also in Mary and in Christ. Although Christ's and Mary's wills are impeccable, and consequently cannot perform the act of detesting sin in themselves, nevertheless, they could perform a conditioned act.⁵⁵

Suárez, Tanner, and others, for whom the formal object of penance is the safeguarding of divine justice through a peculiar debt of justice, point out that the virtue of penance, besides implying a vindication and compensation of divine justice wounded by sin, can exercise many other acts, such as the simple love of divine justice and the desire to preserve it intact, the detestation of another's sin, and so forth. Consequently, they hold that the virtue of penance can be attributed not only to Mary, but to Christ.⁵⁶

Lugo's opinion does not differ much from this. He affirms that the formal object of penance consists in a certain moral equality, which he explains in the sense of being at peace with God, of God's being appeased. He believes that many acts, as well as the infused habit, of penance befitted Adam in his state of innocence, and befitted the blessed, and even Mary and Christ (*De Poenit.*, d. 5).

Theologians commonly affirm that the formal object of penance is divine justice wounded through sin and reparable by the acts of the penitent, so far as he detests his sin and intends to repair the injury

done to God in order to re-establish the equality of justice violated through sin.

As regards the virtue of penance in Mary, some, like Vega and Sedlmayr, maintain that Mary had not only the habit of penance, but many internal and external, elicited, and commanded acts, and she could deplore sin as an offence against God. They say that she could even detest it conditionally, that is, to be so disposed that she would really be sorry for sinning if she were capable of committing sin. Thus, the habit of penance is admitted in Adam in the state of innocence, and also in little children, who although not capable of sin in infancy or of performing penances, nevertheless receive the habit of this virtue at baptism, together with grace and the other infused virtues.

Others, like Lepicier and De San, teach that Mary possessed the virtue of penance, not in act, but only in habit. Finally, others, among whom we mention Vázquez, deny both the act and the habit of penance in Mary, and this opinion seems to be preferred to the others.

With regard to the act of penance, because its principal act is contrition, that is, sorrow and detestation of sin committed, by which the sinner wishes to blot out the injury done to God and to compensate for it. This, the Blessed Virgin was never capable of, for she never committed actual sin nor could she commit it.

With regard to the habit, because habit is a disposition to act, but the habit of penance in Mary could neither absolutely nor conditionally pass over to the act of detestation for sin. Not absolutely, because the formal object of penance is detestation and vindication of one's own sin; not conditionally, because the conditional act does not suffice for the possession of a virtue.

THESES: *Mary possessed the virtue of obedience in a singular way.*

It is proved in the words of St. Luke (1:38): "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." St. Thomas says that obedience, like any other virtue, demands that the will be prompt toward its proper object. The proper object of obedience is a tacit or express command of the superior.⁵⁷ Now Mary chose only what divine wisdom pointed out to her, as St. Bernardine of Siena (Serm. 51) points out. Thus, her obedience to the law and to the divine will was complete. She obeyed her parents and was reverent

and submissive to them; she obeyed St. Joseph in all that pertained to the necessities of life, the government of the home and the journeys they had to undertake. Thus, during Herod's cruel persecution, the messenger came to Joseph to tell him to go to Egypt. However, in the proper sense, it cannot be said that Mary obeyed Joseph, because Joseph could not command her, especially after the incarnation of the Word, though she always conformed her will to that of her spouse, since she was not really obeying Joseph, but God.

THESES: *Mary gave remarkable evidence of gratitude.*

Fortitude is a virtue which inclines one to remember a kindness received and to return thanks for it.

Mary was always mindful of the divine favors with which God had raised her above all creatures and in return for them she gave thanks to God, confessing publicly that she had received them through His liberality. Thus, when Elizabeth greeted her with: "And how have I deserved that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" she burst forth in a canticle of praise (Luke 1:46-49): "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid; for behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; because He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name." Hence, Mary humbly referred all her praises to God.

Venerable Bede, commenting on the words, "My soul magnifies the Lord," says that it was fitting that just as by the pride of our first mother, death entered the world, so might life be restored through Mary's humility.

THESES: *Mary excelled in fortitude.*

Fortitude is a virtue which strengthens the will to face danger and to endure difficult things. To the first act, which is to face danger, are annexed two qualities: *magnanimity* or confidence, which regards the preparation of the mind to undertake hardships, and *magnificence*, which regards the accomplishment of the deed, and consists in carrying out what one has confidently begun. Likewise, for the other act of this virtue of fortitude, which is to endure hardships, the following two qualities are also required: *patience*, so that the mind will not be crushed by sorrow by reason of the stress of impending evil, and *per-*

severance, so that there will be a fixed and continued persistence in a well-considered purpose. Mary's fortitude was singularly resplendent both in enduring the difficulties of life and in painful undertakings, particularly in courageously enduring the passion and death of Christ.

Actually, magnanimity or confidence is the prompt undertaking of arduous and difficult things. Both were manifested in Mary to the highest degree because of her spiritual martyrdom.⁵⁸ Mary's promptness in undertaking difficult things is seen in her conformity to the divine decree of the passion and death of Christ, knowing perfectly that the death of her Son and her compassion would redound to great honor for God, to the exaltation of Christ, and to the salvation and liberation of man from the wicked slavery of the devil. Hence, St. Matilda contemplates Mary during the time of the Passion as overflowing with great joy, although she suffered vehemently. Magnificence is the happy termination of things done well, and Mary acted magnificently during Christ's passion.

Enduring misfortunes and sorrows with composure is proper to patience. Hence, although the Blessed Virgin saw Christ treated cruelly—wounded, blasphemed, and nailed to the cross—she did not give way to impatience, anger or aversion for His persecutors, but she pityed them in their wickedness and prayed for them.

Persistence is the constancy of the soul which does not waver in its resolutions. Mary possessed great constancy, remaining firm at the foot of the Cross, nailed to it with Christ, suffering with Him, and dying with Him through her compassion and deep sorrow, until she received His sacred body from the Cross into her arms, during which time she contemplated, not so much the lividness of His wounds as the salvation of the world.⁵⁹

THESES: *The Blessed Virgin was singularly resplendent with the virtue of temperance.*

Temperance is the virtue which moderates the concupiscible appetite in things which seduce it, such as the pleasures of touch and taste. But the Blessed Virgin excelled with regard to these two acts of temperance, since she was resplendent in a purity which surpasses that of the angels. Moreover, Mary, who was accustomed to spiritual delights and was fed with the bread of life and knowledge and with the water of salutary wisdom, was never inordinately attached to food or

drink. She fasted and abstained, never allowing herself any excess. Both St. Ambrose and St. Albert the Great attest that this virtue in Mary was more noble in her than in any wayfarer.⁶⁰

Temperance consists of two integral parts: shamefacedness and honesty. Now honesty is said to be related to a state of honor, but honor refers to virtue, and since Mary was most virtuous, so she was also most honest. Nevertheless, it is also asserted that honesty pertains especially to temperance, for just as the vices and pleasures of touch and taste contain in themselves the greatest dishonesty, torpor and brutality, so honesty consists principally in the virtue and acts of temperance. Moreover, in the proper sense of the word, shamefacedness is not a virtue, but a disposition to virtue, since it keeps one from sin, as a fear of doing something disgraceful. Now Mary, knowing that she was confirmed in grace, was not in any way subject to movements of shame, although if shamefacedness is understood in the broad sense, as a holy modesty, this may in all truth be attributed to her.

THESES: *Among the virtues annexed to temperance, Mary possessed chastity, purity, modesty, meekness, clemency and humility.*

It is hardly necessary to mention that chastity and purity are subjective parts or species of temperance, and that the other virtues enumerated are potential parts of the same, so far as they follow the mode of temperance in other matters: "Now it belongs to temperance to moderate pleasures of touch. . . . Wherefore any virtue that is effective of moderation in some matter or other, and restrains the appetite in its impulse toward something, may be reckoned a part of temperance, as a virtue annexed thereto."⁶¹

That Mary incomparably surpassed all creatures in the virtue of chastity will be explained more fully later.

Purity takes its name from *pudor* (shame), and shame is the reaction produced in the soul at the sight or thought of base things. Purity may be understood in the strict sense and in the broad sense. In the strict sense it is the virtue which moderates the pleasures which accompany and dispose, as previous acts, to consummated carnal sin. In a broad sense it is a part of chastity or modesty.

We must deny that Mary possessed modesty taken in the strict sense because her most eminent purity made her incapable of being stained by anything dishonest. But if purity or shame is taken in its

broad sense, as a part of chastity and modesty, it must be admitted in Mary.⁶²

Continence in the strict sense is a firm purpose of the soul by which one restrains himself from movements of concupiscence. In this sense Mary did not possess continence, for she never suffered the inordinate movements of concupiscence because she lacked the *fomes* and all incitement to sin. Contineny is generally taken in the broad sense as chastity, and so it is clear that in this sense it befitted Mary in a most excellent manner.

Modesty is twofold: one pertains to customs; the other, to exterior adornment. The first moderates exterior movements of the body such as looks, gestures, manners, speech, voice, etc. The second moderates exterior adornment. As regards modesty of deportment, St. Ambrose states that Mary's gestures, posture, gait and manner of speaking were a reflection of her uprightness and probity of soul.⁶³ All of her movements were inviolably subject to reason and will, and were obedient to them. Mary moderated her deportment, her steps, and all the external movements of her body with quiet composure. And thus Vega says that all these things were in Mary full of majesty, and weighed as in a delicate balance.⁶⁴

As regards modesty of adornment, St. Albert the Great quotes the teaching of St. Paul (I Tim. 2:9-10) and St. Peter (I Pet. 3:3) and then states that Mary avoided the excesses of vanity and luxury in her dress but at the same time did not go to the opposite extreme of carelessness or abject misery.⁶⁵

Meekness is a virtue which has as its object the moderation of anger. Mary's meekness is praised by St. Bernard, St. Albert the Great, and Denis the Carthusian in their various works on Mary. Meekness is a virtue which especially pertains to the nobility of women, as are tenderness and suavity, for women are naturally inclined to piety and sweetness. And since Mary surpassed all women in virtue, she is also the most meek of all. By the same token she is worthy of being called the most sweet Virgin.

Mary's great clemency or mercy is demonstrated, since clemency is a virtue by which one is merciful toward his neighbor. This virtue is exercised in three ways: by a ready and voluntary pardon of injuries, by a pious compassion for another's evil, and by a generous alleviation of another's need. Mary's mercy was exercised in all three ways. Her

forgiveness of injuries can be clearly seen in Christ's passion, for, as Denis the Carthusian says, not only was she not angry at the impious men who crucified her Son, but she pitied them, thus resembling her patient Son in charity and meekness, for she also understood the mystery of human redemption.⁶⁶ Her pious compassion for another's evil is vouched for by St. Bonaventure, who exclaims: "And so, O Mary, thou art so full of mercy, so attentive in relieving the wretched, that it seems that thou hast no other desire, no other anxiety,"⁶⁷ as also by Richard of St. Laurence. Her generous alleviation of another's want or need is shown by the testimony of St. Germanus of Constantinople, Raymond Jourdain and St. Bernard: "Ah, truly, O great Lady, does the immensity of thy mercy fill the whole earth."⁶⁸

With regard to Mary's humility, we must first note that humility is a virtue which inclines one to declare his lowliness by actions or other signs. Therefore, humility restrains the inordinate appetite for one's own excellence through a true and regulated depreciation of self. The foundation of humility is in the intellect, by which one recognizes one's misery and the fact that all that he possesses, both in the natural and supernatural order, has been given him by God, but all that is evil in him, his defects and sins, he possesses of himself. And since our judgment should always be in conformity with truth, humility has its foundation in truth and is the declaration of truth. Nevertheless, humility properly resides in the will, which, by the recognition of one's lowliness, disesteems and belittles self and does not desire to be praised, but to be ignored and regarded as nothing, desiring at the same time to refer all to the honor of God, from whom all is received.

There are two kinds of humility: that of the saints, which arises from the contemplation of the divine sublimity and the recognition of one's own littleness, and that of sinners, which proceeds from a consideration of one's own sins. But since Mary was completely devoid of all sin, it is clear that she did not possess this second type of humility, but that which proceeds from the contemplation of the divine sublimity and the recognition of one's own littleness, in such a way that man sees that of himself he is nothing and can do nothing, and that he depends on God for all his natural and supernatural benefits.

That this humility existed in Mary in a unique way can be shown from Sacred Scripture and the Fathers. When Mary was informed by

the angel that she had been chosen as the Mother of God, she did not become proud because of this honor, but answered most humbly: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). Later, having become the Mother of God, she went to St. Elizabeth (v. 39) in order to help her cousin, who was pregnant, old and weak. In this service, Mary's humility is worthy of the most exalted praise, for knowing that she had become the Mother of the Lord, she was not unwilling to serve the mother of the Precursor. Finally, when Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, recognized Mary's dignity, and praised her among all women (v. 42), marvelling that so great a Mother would condescend to serve her, asked (v. 43): "And how have I deserved that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" Mary attributed no great honor to herself, but all was turned in praise of God, who through His goodness had regarded the lowliness of His handmaid, raising her to such a great dignity, and bestowing on her so many great favors. (Luke 1:46 ff.): "My soul magnifies the Lord . . . because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid" (Luke 1:46 ff.). This was not spoken as a vain testimony of her humility, because it is not humility for one to call oneself humble, but because by those words this virtue was put into practice. As Cajetan observes, it is an act of profound humility to esteem oneself as the least; and this becomes Mary's deep humility.

The Fathers say the same concerning Mary's humility. St. Ambrose remarks that she called herself His handmaid and did not claim any merit for the sublime promise made to her.⁶⁹ St. Bernard says that after having been raised to the august dignity of the Mother of God, Mary proclaims herself "handmaid of the Lord" and does not forget her humility.⁷⁰

It pertains to humility to be mindful of one's lowliness and dependence on God. Although Mary was raised to such an excellent dignity as Mother of God and enriched more and more with divine gifts, she most freely recognized her nothingness, that is, what she was of herself and what she would be if God were to abandon her. She knew full well that her being, power, ability to produce, and all of her privileges came from God, and that she depended constantly on the divine goodness. So St. Bernardine of Siena says that the Blessed Virgin always had the majesty of God and her own nothingness present to her mind.⁷¹

THESES: Mary also possessed the natural moral virtues.

As has already been stated, there is a difference between the infused moral virtues and the acquired moral virtues. Although both have the same matter and the same names, they differ specifically. The former tend to the good according to a divine norm; the latter tend to the good regulated by human reason. The acquired virtues can be attained in two ways: either through one's own acts (and then they are called *per se acquisitae*) or through infusion by God (and then they are called *per accidens infusae*). Hence, the question is whether Mary possessed acquired moral virtues from the beginning by divine infusion.

First Part. Mary had to possess all of the moral perfections which ennoble and adorn human nature and were compatible with her dignity as Mother of God. But the naturally attainable moral virtues are perfections which elevate and adorn human nature as proper and immediate principles by which the faculties are naturally and readily inclined to perform honest acts and do not in themselves imply any imperfection that would be unbefitting the Mother of God. For although these virtues are capable of restraining the evil movements of the soul, it is not of their essence to moderate them and restrain them *de facto*, but only to dispose the faculties of the soul to perform honest acts of virtue according to the dictates of reason, and in a connatural and facile manner.

Although all of Mary's desires were subordinate to right reason, nevertheless, it was fitting that this conformity and subordination proceed from a more proximate and connatural cause. The habits of the moral virtues are the proximate and connatural causes which cannot be adequately supplied by the infused habits, because the infused virtue elevates and disposes the faculty to good acts within the order of grace, while the natural virtue disposes for morally good acts within the order of nature. Now Mary not only performed acts with the greatest perfection within the order of grace, but also performed perfectly, morally good acts within the order of nature. Although she always carried out acts with a supernatural intention, it cannot be denied that she often performed morally good acts which proceeded from her naturally acquired virtues, for which she had a supernatural intention, so that her moral acts were proximately and immediately produced by these virtues, and mediately imperated by

charity, and thereby ordained to a supernatural end, as the end of the agent but not of the act itself.

Second Part. Not only Christ, from the first moment of His incarnation, but also Adam, in the first moment of his life, received the moral virtues by divine infusion. Therefore, there is no reason to deny this privilege to Mary.

On the other hand, Mary could not from the beginning possess these naturally acquired virtues by her own acts because she could not then exercise those virtues, as she lacked the species or knowledge of so many sensible objects and things. Nor did she acquire the virtues successively by her own acts, because thus she would be wanting in much for a long time and would also have been in an imperfect state for some years.

Finally, it is more meritorious and more perfect to possess all of the moral virtues infused *per accidens* from the first moment of conception than to acquire them by one's own acts in the course of the years, since it is more meritorious and more perfect to have them always than to lack them for any period of time. For the temporary lack of these virtues would be less in accord with the dignity of Mary than the gradual acquisition of these virtues by her own acts.

Corollary. From what has been said, we can infer that Mary possessed all of the virtues, not only for the glory and splendor with befitting such a Mother, but also as a model of instruction, that she might teach us these virtues and make them more human. St. Anselm (*De excellentia Virginis*) quotes St. Paul when proposing Mary as a worthy example: "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). In some ways, he says, the examples given by Mary are more sweet and human than those given by Christ. "God placed Mary first in the observance of the law and of evangelical perfection so that she would teach us, not by word but by example, . . . teaching perfectly because she taught by practicing them."⁷²

Gifts of the Holy Ghost

The gifts of the Holy Ghost are certain supernatural perfections by which man is disposed to obey divine inspiration promptly. This divine inspiration is a special impulse and movement of the Holy

Spirit; not a general supernatural invitation to do some good or avoid some evil, but a special directive movement to perform what God moves the soul to do here and now. There are seven gifts enumerated by Isaias (10:2-3): understanding, wisdom, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord. Of these, the first four pertain to the perfection of the intellect, and the other three to the perfection of the will.

John of St. Thomas states that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are habits, and not merely acts or dispositions given transitorily; for those gifts are infused so that man may work supernaturally with a certain connaturality to divine things and with a certain experience of them, as moved by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But man cannot accustom himself to divine things and spiritualize himself if he is neither disposed nor feels so inclined in a permanent habitual manner. Therefore, the gifts of the Holy Spirit require a habitual disposition in order to operate.⁷³

The gifts of the Holy Ghost are formally distinct from the virtues, acquired as well as infused. The acquired virtues perceive their object as capable of being directed by the rules of acquired knowledge and prudence. The infused virtues perceive their object as directed by the rules of infused knowledge and prudence, that is, in the light of faith and grace, but always in a human mode, in conformity with reason, which contemplates, deliberates and takes counsel. But the gifts of the Holy Ghost perceive their object as attainable in a higher manner, that is, by an interior inclination and special inspiration of the Holy Ghost outside the laws of speculation and the rules of prudence.

From this distinct regulation follows a distinct morality and a distinct specification of the virtues and gifts. In a very different manner, actually, we are led to the divine and supernatural end when regulated by standards of direction formed by our own study and work, even treating of acts of infused virtue, and when guided by the Holy Ghost, as the ship is guided in one way by the strength of those rowing or in another way by the wind driving the sails, although it is brought to the same goal across the waves. Hence, presupposing the formal distinction between the virtues and gifts, we see that the gifts are either directed and moved to extraordinary works by reason of the matter, which does not occur frequently in the faithful, or to

the ordinary matter of the virtues, but in an extraordinary way or without previous and prudent study.

THESES: *Mary possessed the gifts of the Holy Ghost.*

It is certain that Mary possessed the gifts of the Holy Ghost in a most excellent way, since the gifts follow grace and charity proportionately. The more perfect a soul is in grace and divine charity, the more abundantly does it possess the gifts of the Holy Ghost. And so it was with Mary, who surpassed all creatures in grace and charity.

The gifts of the Holy Ghost are certain perfections of the faculties of the soul, by which these faculties become more capable of being moved by the Holy Ghost, irrespective of human means. This happened to Mary, who was moved by the Holy Ghost in a most perfect manner.

Although Mary was filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost from the first moment of her conception, she received a great increase of them with the coming of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. After Christ's ascension, the apostles, in conformity with the commands of our Lord ("He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, 'of which you have heard,' said He, 'by My mouth' . . . ; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you" [Acts 1:4-8]), entered the Cenacle and were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren (v. 13-14) in order to prepare themselves to receive the Holy Ghost. Finally, when the Holy Spirit came, He filled each one as abundantly as each was capable, worthy and devoutly prepared. Hence, as Mary was the one most worthy, most capable, and the best disposed among them, she received the greatest amount of divine gifts given that day by the Holy Spirit. But it is fitting to treat particularly of the gifts of the Holy Spirit with which Mary was filled most abundantly as compared to all the others.

The gift of understanding

The gift of understanding is a supernatural habit by which the mind becomes capable of receiving and comprehending the truths of faith by the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It is distinguished from the natural intellectual virtues, which examine the truths of the

natural order by their own power, and from theological faith, which assents to the truths revealed by God without proof, investigation or intrinsic understanding of the object. The gift of understanding, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, perfects and sharpens the intellect to perceive and penetrate the truth, not in any manner, but with a certain connaturality and affective experience of divine things. John of St. Thomas says that this manner of understanding and knowing divine things by an experimental affection of them tends of itself to an experimental proof, and this is its unique and specific formality: to perfect and illumine the understanding, so that by a certain connaturality and experience of spiritual things it will understand, comprehend and discern them. This connaturality is not had except through love. "But he who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit with Him," as we read in I Corinthians (6:17).

There are two ways of understanding and passing judgment on something: one by investigation and study; the other by experience. Hence we can possess an understanding and judgment of spiritual and supernatural things by study and speculation concerning them, by the clear and precise illumination of truth, or by a certain love and experience of divine things, as Dionysius says that Hierotheus not only learned about but experienced divine things (*De nom. div.*, c. 2).

Similarly, the gift of understanding is distinguished from the gifts of wisdom and knowledge, by which the mind acquires the aptitude for judging, under the instigation of the Holy Ghost, of the truths of faith through the highest causes, inferior causes, or through effects. However, the difference does not consist in the fact that the gift of understanding is ordained to penetrate the truths and the gifts of wisdom and knowledge are ordained to judge, because the gift of understanding not only perceives supernatural truths, but also judges concerning them, although in a different manner than do the gifts of wisdom and knowledge. There are two kinds of judgment: one is resolute or analytic, by which we judge things through their causes or effects, analyzing them and reasoning; the other is simple or discrete, by which we judge that one thing is not another, making certain comparisons and considerations with the intellect or by a simple impression as that obtained through the senses to distinguish colors, sounds, etc.

Now the gifts of wisdom and knowledge judge spiritual and supernatural things in a resolute or analytic way; wisdom, by its supreme considerations, through intimate union with God; knowledge, through inferior causes or effects, studying creatures. Although the gift of understanding, as is exercised in this life, cannot attain to a perfect understanding of the mysteries and is therefore compatible with faith, nevertheless it inundates with divine light the preambles of faith, the credibility of supernatural truths, their meaning, fittingness and order. From which it follows that the faithful are more confirmed in faith, see more clearly the connection between truths, and comprehend its perfect harmony by docile experience.

That Mary possessed the gift of understanding in a splendid manner is evident from the fact that she most clearly comprehended, *pro loco et tempore*, the things pertaining to faith to an extent possible for a wayfarer, and she understood by abundant experience, for example, that she a virgin conceived God, that God became man, that God is one in essence and three in person, that the Son of God is God and man in the unity of one person. She also understood the supreme dignity of her divine maternity and the eminence of her graces, the excellent economy of human redemption, and the part she had, by the divine decree, in that laborious work. She perceived all with a loving spirit proper to the Mother of God and co-operator in the redemption.

The gift of wisdom

The gift of wisdom is a habit by which man judges divine things according to supreme causes by a certain connaturality with the love of charity. Hence it seems evident that the gift of wisdom implies right judgment of divine things. In judging them resolutely or analytically, as was said before, man is moved by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost according to a certain connaturality, taste and fondness for the same, so that by this affective knowledge he judges divine things in a higher way than permitted by the obscurity of faith. It is proper to love to transform the beloved into the lover by a singular union, from which judgment easily originates by reason of the connaturality which love establishes, because the one who loves pays more attention to and considers more the things he loves, and therefore they satisfy him more easily, as St. Augustine explains: "The

greater our fervor in loving God, the greater is our certainty and clearness in seeing Him." ⁷⁴ Love does this, not merely by causing the intellect to consider with greater attention that which is loved, as the will commands the eye to look more closely, without sharpening one's vision, but by giving greater light so far as it unites the object loved more intimately to the lover. "Taste and see." Thus, through love the beloved is known in yet another way.

The gift of wisdom is therefore distinct from mere philosophical wisdom, which proceeds from natural reasoning and study; from sacred theology, which deduces its conclusions from the principles of faith; and from the virtue of faith, which assents to the authority of the one speaking, without inquiring or reasoning through the causes of things. The gift of wisdom, instead, judges through lofty causes. On the other hand, faith may be found in the sinner devoid of grace, but the gift of wisdom is found only in the just, as we read (Wis. 1:4): "For wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins."

That Mary possessed the gift of wisdom in a high degree is stated beautifully by Denis the Carthusian, who says that through the gift of wisdom her mind understood and contemplated God with an interior delight. She attained the third degree of wisdom, which is proper to the perfect. As Mary was, after Christ, more holy than all the saints, so also did she possess a greater degree of wisdom. Denis applies the expression from Proverbs (11:2) to this consideration: "Where humility is, there also is wisdom." Since Mary was the humblest and the purest of all creatures, she possessed wisdom to the highest degree.⁷⁵

The gift of knowledge

The gift of knowledge is a supernatural habit by which the just, by a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, rightly judge the truths of faith through inferior causes, according to an internal experience or affective connaturality. Meunier explains that charity unites us to God primarily in an affective way, but secondarily it makes us love God primarily in an affective way, but secondarily it makes us love creatures for God; thus, as it gives us an experimental taste of God, it gives us at the same time a taste and awareness of creatures in relation to God. And through this awareness, through the gift of knowledge, one forms a judgment of creatures in conformity with

their properties, pertaining to inferior and created causes, so that he may either love them with moderation or recognize their imperfection and vanity.⁷⁶

That Mary possessed the gift of knowledge in a most excellent way is inferred from the fact that she continually rose above the consideration of created things to God, with joy and fervor. She admired with a subtle profound attention the order of the universe, the magnitude, beauty and causality of celestial bodies; she considered the nature, activity and eminence of angelic spirits. She was acquainted with the work of the six days, the work of distinction and adornment, and through her knowledge of all these things she appreciated the dignity, perfection and excellence of the only-begotten God, conceived and engendered by her. And thus she likewise understood the ineffable grandeur of the divine dignity and benefits bestowed upon her from above and dispensed by her to the whole human race.⁷⁷

The gift of counsel

The gift of counsel is a supernatural habit by which, through the Holy Ghost as counsellor, the mind judges particular things which must be done in order to attain eternal life, according to a certain interior experience and affective connaturality. Now, as wisdom and affective knowledge are attained through love and union with God, by which the intellect is illumined to judge the divine and created according to an experimental and internal taste of God or according to a certain connaturality with God, by the gift of counsel man judges the means, not in accord with natural or infused supernatural rules of acquired or infused prudence, but according to the gifts of wisdom and knowledge and with trust in God, who has the power to dispose all means and overcome all difficulties.⁷⁸

The gift of counsel singularly shone in Mary. According to Denis the Carthusian, the gift of counsel is not an act of the virtue of prudence, but a habit by which the mind is directed by the Holy Ghost in those instances in which human prudence does not suffice. The Blessed Virgin was so filled with this gift that she was always directed by the Holy Ghost. The gift of counsel was brilliantly demonstrated at the marriage of Cana. Though her Son did not wish to perform the miracle, she carefully instructed the servants, saying: "Do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5); on which Gardeil comments: "She

ordered the servants to do all that her Son should bid, and the miracle was performed. Her counsel had prevailed, because fundamentally it was the counsel of a love inspired by the God of mercy."⁷⁹

The gift of fortitude

The gift of fortitude is a supernatural habit by which man, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is inclined to pursue good in the face of difficulties. It is distinguished from the virtue of fortitude, both acquired and infused, so far as the virtue operates according to the common rule of natural and supernatural prudence. However, the gift of fortitude operates through the divine inspiration of the Holy Ghost, not weighing the forces and actions in conformity with prudence, but working in conformity with the forces and power of God, in a mode that is not human and is beyond the rules of even infused prudence. Hence it follows that while acquired or infused fortitude extends to the arduous and difficult according to the rules of prudence and in conformity with the human capacity of the subject, and often fails because of the incapacity of the subject, the gift of fortitude attends to these serious and difficult things, strengthening the weakness of the subject and driving out all fear through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

That Mary possessed the gift of fortitude to a high degree is deduced from what has been said of the virtue of fortitude, which was beautified, elevated and strengthened by the gift of fortitude, allowing it to reach the summit of martyrdom of heart. It is proper to the gift of fortitude, in virtue of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen the weakness of the subject and to drive out all fear in arduous and difficult things. Now Mary was never weak, but faced difficult things courageously, for all her life, in spite of belonging to the weaker sex and of living in the midst of a perverse people, she always appeared strong, calm and constant, and without depression in the face of persecutions of her Son and herself.⁸⁰

The gift of piety

The gift of piety is a supernatural habit by which the just man, moved in a special way by the Holy Ghost, honors God as his Father and attends with love and filial veneration to all that pertains to Him. It is distinguished from the acquired virtue of religion, which is of

the natural order and honors God as the Creator and Author of nature. It is also distinguished from the infused virtue of religion, which honors God as Lord and Author of grace; not as He is in Himself but for the benefits received from Him. The gift of piety considers God as Father and formally as He is in Himself, by reason of His paternal goodness, majesty and glory. All things pertaining to God are considered secondarily, while God is considered primarily. Thus, it considers the just as children of God and partakers in divine nature; it honors the saints, who are temples of the Holy Ghost, and the relics of the saints; it extends to superiors, in whom resides the authority of God, and to Sacred Scripture, which contains His word. It employs, for God, fraternal mercy toward the miserable, and it performs with the same sense of piety and fraternity all the works of mercy and duties toward others.

Mary was remarkable in the gift of piety. She knew that she was the most beloved daughter of the Eternal Father, whose paternal goodness she experienced unceasingly in all things. Now the clearer the understanding possessed through the paternal goodness of God, and the more prolonged the proof of it, the more ardent is piety. Hence Mary says in her canticle (Luke 1:46-48): "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid." As if the motive and reason of magnifying God and rejoicing in Him, says John of St. Thomas, had been none other than the loftiness of God, who looked down from His majesty upon the profound humility of her who was His servant, rather than upon the sublime favors with which He had exalted her, including the favor of her divine maternity.⁸¹

If the gift of piety is considered so far as it regards the things pertaining to God, three acts may be enumerated: the first is to be moved to works of mercy, looking upon the unfortunate as the images of God; the second is to have reverence toward Sacred Scripture, not contradicting it, whether one understands it or not; the third is to honor the saints. St. Albert the Great (*Mariale*, q. 68) shows that Mary practiced all three acts of piety in a more excellent manner than anyone.

The gift of fear of the Lord

The gift of fear is a supernatural habit by which, through the in-

spiration of the Holy Ghost, the mind is moved to revere the majesty of God and to avoid separation from Him. There are many kinds of fear: mundane fear, when a man departs from God through fear of temporal evil; servile fear, when man abandons sin through fear of punishment; filial or reverential fear, when he flees from the evil of sin, not because of punishment, but because it offends God, and he fears separation from Him as children fear separation from their father; and initial fear, which is imperfect filial fear. Of these fears, neither human fear nor servile fear constitute the gift of fear. Not human fear, because human fear is evil and sinful, since it fears to lose the world and all things therein more than losing God. Not servile fear, because although it is not evil, it could be found in a sinner when he disposes himself for justification through attrition which is dominated by the utilitarian fear of punishment. Therefore the gift of fear is filial fear, which is not substantially different from initial fear except as regards state and mode.⁸²

That Mary possessed the gift of fear is demonstrated through the twofold object of fear: the primary object, which is the divine majesty and greatness, and the secondary, which is the terrible evil of separation from God, caused by sin, and the evil of punishment due to sin. Now the fear of God did not and could not exist in Mary so far as it pertains to the evil of separation from God because of sin or to the evil of punishment due to sin. It could exist only so far as it considers the divine greatness as powerful in inflicting punishment, for in this absolute way there always remains a reverential love, although no evil is feared.⁸³

Actual Grace

Grace makes us pleasing to God. As has been said, grace is habitual or actual, depending on whether it is given as a permanent quality in the manner of a habit or as a transient help. Sanctifying grace, the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit pertain to the order of habitual grace. Having already treated of sanctifying grace and the virtues and gifts with which Mary was enriched, all that remains to be considered is actual grace.

Mary needed actual grace to perform supernatural actions, since she could not perform them without the actual supernatural influence of God, as is true of all of the just. But her actual grace never failed to achieve its effect, which is not always true of us, who at times hinder its operation by our rebellious wills. Although Mary's will always remained perfectly free and she always had the basic power to resist grace, nevertheless grace was never wasted in her because she corresponded completely with all the divine inspirations and graces bestowed upon her by God.⁸⁴

Graces *Gratis Datae*

Grace *gratis data* is that which is ordained primarily, not for the benefit of the one receiving it, but for the good and utility of others. While grace *gratum faciens*, which makes us pleasing to God, regards the sanctification and progress of the one receiving it and makes him pleasing and acceptable to God in an inchoate or absolute manner, grace *gratis data* is primarily ordained to the good of others, so that the one receiving it may lead others to God and thus cooperate in their salvation. Secondly, however, the grace *gratum faciens* also redounds to the benefit of others, as St. Matthew says (5:16): "Even so let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven," and grace *gratis data* likewise redounds sometimes to the benefit of him who receives it, according to Daniel (12:3): "But they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity." Both types of grace are gratuitous, but because grace *gratis data* is not given so that the one receiving it may be pleasing to God, since at times it is given even to sinners (the gift of prophecy was given to Balaam [Num. 23] and to Caiaphas [John 11:51]), but to make others pleasing to God, the name *gratis data* or gratuitous grace is reserved for this type.

There are nine graces *gratis datae* enumerated by the Apostle (I Cor. 12:7-11): "Now the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every one for profit. To one through the Spirit is given the utterance of wisdom; and to another the utterance of knowledge, according to

the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing, in the one Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the distinguishing of spirits; to another various kinds of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But all these things are the work of one and the same Spirit, who allots to everyone according as He will."

How right is this enumeration by the Apostle is concluded from the fact that the graces *gratis datae* are ordained to one man's cooperation in the salvation of another. Now, there are three classes of things by which a man can cooperate in the salvation and utility of another, not by an interior movement, which is proper to God alone, but exteriorly, by instruction and persuasion. The first class comprises those things which are necessary so that the teacher of the faith will have a full knowledge of divine things and can, therefore, instruct others; and to this are ordained faith, the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge. To the second class pertain those things which are necessary to confirm and prove what is taught; otherwise his teaching would be ineffective; and because the doctrine of the faith is not confirmed with arguments, but with signs or actions proper to the power of God, that is, those which God alone can perform or those which God alone can understand, there are the gifts of healing, of miracles, of prophecy and of the discerning of spirits. To the third class belong those things necessary for the teacher of faith to explain the doctrine in the way befitting those who listen, and this is accomplished by the gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues.⁸⁵

That Mary was endowed with all the graces *gratis datae*, is proved as follows: 1) whatever grace was bestowed to others in part, was given to Mary entirely and in a perfect way, so that as the Mother of God she would be adorned with the beauty of all the graces and gifts bestowed upon the rest of the just; 2) those graces contributed greatly to the salvation of those whom Mary endeavored to sanctify and save eternally; 3) after Christ, Mary is the universal dispenser of these graces in the Church and it was therefore fitting that she possess all the gifts which were to be distributed to men.

THIS IS: *Mary possessed the charism of faith.*

The faith treated here is not the theological virtue but a profound

knowledge of the truths of faith. This can be explained in two ways: so far as it pertains to the interior act of the mind, and then it carries with it an excellence of understanding and an extraordinary certainty in things concerning faith, or so far as it pertains to speech, as a special gift of the Holy Spirit to explain the truths of faith in a manner suited even to unlearned men newly converted to the faith.

This grace of faith flourished in Mary both with regard to the interior act of the mind because her faith was most firm and perfect, and with regard to vocal expression because it was fitting that she be enriched with this gift. Hence she was called by Pope Leo XIII: "The Mother of the Church, the Teacher and Queen of the apostles."⁸⁶

But if by the grace of faith is understood the confidence necessary to work miracles, Mary also had that, according to St. Albert the Great, commenting on St. Matthew: "If you have faith like a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Remove from here'; and it will remove. And nothing will be impossible to you" (Matt. 17:19). But when Mary said: "Be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38), the highest of the mountains was moved and was cast into the sea, which is Mary. Therefore, her faith possessed the maximum effect.⁸⁷

THESIS: Mary possessed the charisms of wisdom and knowledge.

Wisdom and knowledge are none other than the broader understanding and greater facility granted by the Holy Ghost to explain, persuade and confirm matters of faith through superior or inferior causes. The Fathers and Doctors of the Church were especially adorned with these graces; for example, St. Athanasius, to combat the Arian heresy; St. Cyril of Alexandria, to defend the mystery of the Incarnation and Mary's divine maternity; St. Augustine, to combat the Pelagians; and St. Thomas Aquinas, in composing his *Summa theologica*.

That Mary possessed the gifts of wisdom and knowledge is declared by Denis the Carthusian, who maintains that she had greater wisdom than all the apostles, prophets and patriarchs.⁸⁸ But did Mary use her wisdom and knowledge ministerially? St. Thomas maintains that although she possessed those graces to a high degree, she did not use them in teaching, because this ministry does not befit the female

sex, according to the Apostle (I Tim. 2:12): "But I suffer not a woman to teach"; but only in contemplating, according to Luke (2:19): "But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart."⁸⁹

Notwithstanding, we must understand these words of St. Thomas in connection with his other statement: "Speech may be employed in two ways: in one way, privately to one or a few, in familiar conversation, and in this respect the grace of the word may be becoming to women; in another way, publicly, addressing oneself to the whole Church, and this is not permitted to women. . . . Hence women, if they have the grace of wisdom or of knowledge, can administer it by teaching privately but not publicly."⁹⁰ Hence, we must conclude that Mary made use of the aforesaid gifts of wisdom and knowledge, not publicly, but in private instructions to the apostles and to the rest of the faithful, which teaching is held by Cajetan, Denis the Carthusian and St. Peter Canisius.⁹¹

THESIS: Mary possessed the charisms of healing and working miracles.

The power of working miracles and the grace of healing can be reduced to a single grace, because the two are ordained to the manifestation of the divine power through miraculous works. If done for the benefit of bodily health conferred sensibly to others, they are the grace of healing; if done to manifest the divine power for the benefit of those who witness them, they are miraculous works. St. Thomas says: "The use of miracles did not become her while she lived, because at that time the teaching of Christ was to be confirmed by miracles, and therefore it was befitting that Christ alone, and His disciples who were the bearers of His doctrine, should work miracles. Hence of St. John the Baptist it is written (John 10:41) that he did no sign, that is, in order that all might fix their attention on Christ."⁹² Nevertheless, the contrary opinion, held by St. Albert the Great, St. Antoninus, Suárez, Vega, Terrien, and Lepicier, seems more acceptable. However, it is fitting to distinguish, with Suárez, the various times and kinds of miracles or the different ways of working them.

It is neither certain nor probable that Mary had worked any miracles before conceiving her Son; nor does that time seem the most opportune to exercise this grace, because miracles were neither

necessary in order to show the merits and holiness of the Virgin not to confirm doctrine. It is also probable that she did not work any miracle, especially in public, from Christ's conception until His ascension. That is perhaps what St. Thomas means when he uses the example of John the Baptist. However, at times she did work miracles by means of her Son, through her faith and impetration, such as the miracle of the wedding at Cana, which was obtained through her faith and petition as the Mother of the Son of God. Moreover, nothing is known of any miracle performed secretly by Mary, especially during Christ's infancy, in Egypt, or on any other occasion.

After Christ's ascension it can hardly be doubted that Mary performed miracles and restored bodily health if necessity demanded it, because there would be great good and benefit for the Church in her being recognized and honored as the Mother of God, and this would be a confirmation of faith in Christ's manifestation as God and the Son of God. Moreover, although it was not fitting that she preach publicly, nor persuade others in this way, nevertheless, as miracles do not necessarily have to be performed only by preachers of the faith, but can be performed by the simple faithful if God desires, it cannot be doubted that Mary's intercession would never be rejected, even if a miracle were required for obtaining the grace asked. It is not likely that the faithful would not resort to her while she lived or that this most glorious Virgin, who in the course of the centuries showed herself so rich in mercy, would, before her assumption, close her heart to the requests of the faithful. Nor is it likely that God would have heeded her supplications less at that time.

THIS IS: *Mary possessed the charism of prophecy.*

It is certain that she possessed it, for in her *Magnificat* (Luke 1:48), moved by the prophetic spirit, she said: "Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed," knowing certainly that she would be magnificently celebrated and venerated with filial devotion by all the faithful in every part of the earth down the centuries. Thus, St. Bruno the Carthusian, Rupert, St. Albert the Great, and Knabenbauer explicitly teach that Mary had the gift of prophecy.⁹³

According to Denis the Carthusian, it was certainly most fitting that Mary have the gift of prophecy, since she was constituted by her Son as Mother and Mediatrix, Queen and Guardian, Protectress

and Helper of the Church militant. Presupposing this, it was fitting that many things concerning the Church's state, progress and future events be revealed to her, so that through her knowledge of them she might obtain good for the Church and pray unceasingly for the salvation of the faithful, for an increase in the faithful, and for the perseverance of those converted.⁹⁴

THIS IS: *Mary possessed the charism of discernment of spirits.*

The discernment of spirits is a special gift of the Holy Spirit, either to understand the thoughts and secrets of hearts, according to the Apostle (I Cor. 14:24-25), or to judge from which spirit, good or bad, interior thoughts and desires proceed, both in the one receiving this gift or in others.

Mary possessed the gift of discernment of spirits in two ways. Primarily, it was with regard to judging whether a good or evil spirit gave rise to interior thoughts in herself as well as in others. As to herself, it is certain that all during her life she had special help in order to know with certainty that all her interior movements and affections proceeded from the Holy Spirit. Also, she knew that she could not have had a single thought inspired from without, which did not proceed from a good spirit, and the same must be said of thoughts from within, for she lacked the *fomes* and any disorder of her interior faculties. Thus, although she could be tempted from without, as was Christ, she could not be tempted from within, that is, by an inordinate movement or affection.

As regards the discernment of spirits in others, we must believe that in this also Mary possessed a unique grace, not only through the great experience which was hers in spiritual things, according to I Cor. 2:15: "But the spiritual man judges all things," but also through a special gift of the Holy Spirit, especially necessary after Christ's ascension so that she, as the teacher of the apostles and the faithful, might console and teach them in the absence of her Son.⁹⁵

That the discernment of spirits in Mary attained the knowledge of the secrets of others' hearts is explained by Terrien when he says that Mary possessed discernment of spirits to the most eminent degree after our Lord. She had it so that she could, more than once, sound the secrets of hearts. It is true that the Gospel does not point out any event from which we can easily infer it, but when we see not only

directors of souls, such as St. Philip Neri, but also virgins charged with leading other virgins to perfection, such as St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, reading the most secret faults and thoughts, we cannot be persuaded that the Mother of men, the co-operator of the Savior, would not have obtained the same grace from her Son.⁹⁶

THESIS: *Mary received the charism of tongues.*

Mary received this gift with the apostles on the day of Pentecost, as St. Albert the Great says: "The Virgin was with them when there appeared to them parted tongues of fire; therefore, she received the gift of tongues with them."⁹⁷ Moreover, although she was not to go forth to preach the Gospel to different nations and peoples, nevertheless, in the beginning of the growing Church, this gift was frequently given to the faithful, even to those who did not receive the ministry of preaching and spreading the Gospel, as is evident in Acts 19:6: "And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy." And so it was fitting, because so many of the faithful of many nations had recourse to Mary through filial piety, that she should know their languages in order to understand them and to make herself understood; to console, strengthen and instruct them completely on matters of faith. Finally, Suárez judges it probable that even before Mary used this grace, if perhaps the necessity or occasion demanded it, for example, when Christ was adored by the Magi, Mary understood their language. It is also probable that when she was in Egypt, she understood and spoke the Egyptian language.⁹⁸

THESIS: *Mary possessed the charism of interpretation of tongues.*

The interpretation of tongues consists in a special gift or help to understand the meaning of Sacred Scripture. This grace is wont to be given for the good of others, but it contributes much to the perfection of the one receiving it, since it enlightens his understanding and incites his will to good. Under either aspect, it is fitting to confer this gift on Mary, so that she might understand and love God more perfectly through a more profound understanding of the Scriptures, and also teach others their true meaning, since from the beginning she was a teacher of the faith and instructed the apostles who were the preachers of the Gospel.

Mary's Knowledge

In this article we consider three things: first, the anticipated use of reason in Mary, second, the eminent knowledge which adorned her; and third, her immunity from all error and ignorance.

ANTICIPATED USE OF REASON

THESIS: *Mary possessed the use of reason from the beginning of her conception and it lasted throughout her life.*

Opinions: Besides Muratori, always ready to dispute Mary's privileges, Gerson denied this prerogative of Mary, although he otherwise gave her fervent veneration and admitted that God could have granted it, but did not do so. It seems that St. Thomas holds the same doctrine: "She had not the use of reason from the very first moment of her existence in her mother's womb, for this was the singular privilege of Christ."⁹⁹ But Cajetan and Contenson interpret these words of the Angelic Doctor as a continuous and permanent use of reason, and maintain that she could have performed a transitory act of reason. Lepicier does not depart much from this opinion, saying that Mary had the use of reason at the moment of her immaculate conception, but not after, until she reached the proper age. He also admitted that the use of reason and free will could have been conceded at definite times in her infancy and that through them she could have obtained an increase of grace.¹⁰⁰

More commonly, theologians admit in Mary the permanent use of reason from the first moment of her conception. Among them are St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Francis de Sales, St. Alphonsus Liguori, Suárez, Salazar, Vázquez, Vega, Sedlmayr, Terrien, and others.

First Part. St. Bernardine of Siena asserts that even in her maternal womb, Mary was wrapped in more perfect contemplation than any other person ever was while awake, as we read in Scripture (Cant. 5:2): "I sleep, and my heart watcheth."¹⁰¹

What was granted to another in grace or privilege, cannot reasonably be denied to Mary. Now St. John the Baptist was granted the use of reason and will in his mother's womb, as is evident in Luke (1:41):

"The babe in her womb leapt"; because this leap of John was not the natural movement which occurs in the last months of pregnancy. It was a supernatural leap of joy (v. 44): "For behold, the moment that the sound of thy greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leapt for joy." But if John was so happy in the womb of his mother, there must have been something which caused this joy, since the will is not moved except through the knowledge of the intellect. Hence it can be said that John rejoiced because through his full use of reason and through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost he knew that Christ and His Mother were present. The Fathers—such as St. Irenaeus, Origen, St. Ambrose—usually interpret the leap of John in this sense.

So it must be believed that this prerogative of the anticipated use of reason was also conceded to the Blessed Virgin; for as Denis the Carthusian explains, if the glorious John the Baptist, while still in his mother's womb, had the miraculous use of reason whereby he recognized Christ and rejoiced in His presence, how can we believe that Mary, who surpassed even the most illustrious saints, did not enjoy this privilege?¹⁰²

Considering the sublime excellence of the divine maternity, it was fitting that Mary be sanctified in a most noble manner. Now the mode of sanctification by the use of reason and free will is nobler than that attained without the cooperation of reason and will, just as the justification of adults is nobler than that of children. St. Thomas says: "Now, sanctification is twofold; that of adults who are sanctified in consideration of their own act, and that of infants who are sanctified in consideration of, not their own act of faith, but that of their parents or of the Church. The former sanctification is more perfect than the latter, just as act is more perfect than habit; and that which is by itself, than that which is by another."¹⁰³

Second Part. The gifts of God are without retraction, so that they are not lost except through sin, especially when they are given for the utility, perfection and sanctification of those receiving them. Now the use of reason given Mary in the moment of her conception is a gift which leads to the highest merit and to a continual increase of grace; and therefore to her greater holiness. If the permanent use of reason were not admitted in Mary, many of the graces and virtues granted her in her first sanctification would remain fruitless, since

these graces could not operate and fructify except presupposing the use of reason and free will. Nor is the reasoning of St. Thomas opposed to it, in which he affirms that Mary did not possess the use of free will while still in her mother's womb because this is a special privilege of Christ's, for he does not affirm the use of reason in the same way in Mary and Christ. Christ had the use of reason by His own right, because of the hypostatic union; Mary did not have it by her own right, but through the gratuitous condescension of God and in view of Christ's merits. Moreover, in Christ the use of reason was united with His beatific knowledge, to which is joined infused knowledge; in Mary, reason was joined only with infused knowledge, and only in a transitory way with beatific knowledge. The use of reason in Christ was absolute as regards all things; in Mary it pertained only to those things which referred to the knowledge of God and of Christ. Nor can we omit, finally, that as Mary's immaculate conception was not entirely understood in St. Thomas' time, it is not surprising that the reasons for admitting the use of reason and free will in Mary were not evident.

Estius, Lepicier and others maintain that Mary possessed the use of reason through infused knowledge *per accidens*, which depended on the use of the imagination. Suárez, Salazar, Sedlmayr, Terrien, Hugon and others teach that Mary, from the beginning of her conception, possessed the use of reason and free will in virtue of infused knowledge *per se*. We will discuss this more fully later.

BEATIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Beatific knowledge is the immediate vision of God or the intuitive knowledge of the divine essence. But because the vision of the divine essence surpasses the natural powers of any created intellect, it is necessary that there be added to this the supernatural assistance of the light of glory (*lumen gloriae*), whether habitual or communicated at least in a transitory way, without which the beatific act is impossible.

THESES: Mary possessed the beatific vision during her mortal life in a transitory manner.

The permanent possession of the beatific vision constitutes the state

of terminus, which did not occur in Mary as a wayfarer, since she possessed faith, which is the basis of justice and holiness in the wayfarer.

St. Bernard says that it must be believed that Christ frequently raised His Mother to the mountain of myrrh and to the height of incense, that He would hide her in the wine-chamber, and that He would reveal to her His divine glory.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, St. Bernardine of Siena, making a comparison between Paul and Mary, says that being full of grace in contemplating God and all created things, she was incomparably more than Paul raised to the third heaven, for if Paul was a vessel of election, the Virgin, certainly, was a vessel of divinity.¹⁰⁵

Just as God works miraculously and supernaturally in corporeal things, so also has He supernaturally, and outside the general order, elevated the minds of some saints who lived in the flesh, though they did not use the senses of the flesh, to the vision of His essence, as is believed was the singular privilege accorded to Moses, the teacher of the Jews, and to Paul, the teacher of the Gentiles.¹⁰⁶ But if the vision of the divine essence was bestowed on Moses and on Paul in a transitory way, there is no reason for denying this gift to Mary, as St. Bernard says: "There is no reason to surmise that what was bestowed on a few mortals was denied to a Virgin of such excellence."¹⁰⁷ Denis the Carthusian, in his work on Mary cited several times, speaks in a similar vein.

Finally, Mary is the co-redemptrix in the work of human salvation. Hence, as Christ possessed beatific knowledge in a most excellent manner from the beginning of His incarnation, because of the fact that men have ultimately to be brought by Him to beatitude, which consists in the intuitive vision of God, and that what is in potency is not placed in act except by something already in act, so also, because Mary is, with Christ and under Christ, the principle leading men to glory, it is also fitting that she should see intuitively the essence of God at some time in this life.

On what occasions was it granted to Mary to see transitorily the divine essence? Theologians do not agree as to the times that Mary was allowed to see the essence of God in a transitory way during her mortal life. They usually point out five principal occasions: at the time of her immaculate conception and at the conception of the Divine

Word, at her nativity and at the birth of Christ, and at His glorious resurrection.

That Mary in her immaculate conception and in the incarnation of the Word enjoyed the clear vision of God, Salazar bases on the fact that there were two most happy and worthy times during which she was enriched by God with the richest and most abundant gifts, namely, in her immaculate conception and at the incarnation of the Divine Word. He omits that of her death, since this of itself united her to the clear vision of God.¹⁰⁸

No one expressly affirms that the vision of God was bestowed on Mary in her nativity, but Salazar says that it is credible that the vision of God was given her then, for it was fitting that she should at birth be illumined with a splendid light and that she contemplate in God the world and all the creatures over whom she had precedence.

That Mary had a transitory vision of the divine essence at the birth of Christ is insinuated by St. Peter Damian in his sermon on the Nativity and stated more clearly by St. Antoninus and Cassalius.

That the Blessed Virgin was granted the beatific vision at the resurrection of Christ is asserted by St. Thomas of Villanova, who says that it was reasonable that she who had suffered so greatly in the passion of her Son, should experience at least for some moments the consolation of beatitude.¹⁰⁹

Lastly, it is hardly necessary to remark that this doctrine of the beatific vision granted to Mary transitorily in this life is not proposed as certain, but as pious and probable, as Father Bernard demonstrates.¹¹⁰

INFUSED KNOWLEDGE

Infused knowledge is knowledge which is not acquired by one's own effort but is produced by intelligible species impressed on the intellect immediately by God. Infused knowledge is also called innate, that is, connatural, but we must understand distinct things under both names. Infused knowledge and innate knowledge agree in that neither is acquired by work or industry, but they differ formally because innate knowledge accompanies nature as its property and is

produced at the same time and with the same action with which the subject is produced in which it exists as its complement. But infused knowledge is not formally a complement of nature, for it comes to the subject by infusion from God.

Angelic knowledge is innate because by the very action with which God created the angelic nature, He imprinted intelligible species in the angelic intellects. On the contrary, Adam's knowledge was infused, because it was neither postulated as his natural complement, nor was it implied in the creation of his rational soul, but was given him through a distinct action by which God, the Author of grace, added other supernatural gifts to his gifts of nature.

Infused knowledge is twofold: *per se* and *per accidens*. The first is knowledge which requires infusion in such a way that it cannot be had except through infused species; and this knowledge is called absolutely and simply infused. The other is knowledge which, although it can be acquired by the human mind, *de facto* is not acquired, but is infused by God, who thus forestalls human effort.

Infused knowledge *per se* is completely independent of the imagination and of phantasms, because it is obtained without abstraction from phantasms and is exercised without conversion to them; but infused knowledge *per accidens*, although obtained *de facto* by infused species, cannot be exercised without conversion to representations of the imagination.

THE S I S : *Mary possessed per se infused knowledge.*

Opinions. Lepicier, Campana and Dourche teach that Mary did not have permanent *per se* infused knowledge because it does not seem to be in accordance with man's state in this life, but that at times she enjoyed a certain transitory illumination. Nevertheless, many theologians, such as Suárez, Salazar, Sedlmayr, Terrien and Garriguet, affirm that Mary possessed *per se* infused knowledge from the beginning of her conception.

St. Anselm says that the virtue and power of God and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were in Mary.¹¹¹

Similarly, Rupert of Deutz states that nothing was hidden from Mary and she was enraptured with all its sweetness.¹¹² This must be understood with a certain moderation, so far as it refers to the pre-eminence of Mary's infused knowledge over the angels and saints in

the knowledge of God, divine mysteries, and all things referring to salvation.

Not only was *per se* infused knowledge becoming to Mary, but it was also necessary; nor was this knowledge in opposition to her state of wayfarer. Actually, it was fitting to the honor due the Mother of the Eternal Word and God of wisdom that from the first moment of her conception she should have a pre-eminent knowledge of divine things.¹¹³

From the very beginning, Mary had the use of reason and was sanctified in her mother's womb. Neither of these things could be verified without *per se* infused knowledge because acquired knowledge as well as *per accidens* infused knowledge require the use of the senses and the imagination, faculties which were not sufficiently developed in Mary's infancy to be able to provide such activity. Moreover, this knowledge was necessary so that Mary, during her infancy, might preserve the use of reason about divine things; that she might continue to merit during sleep; and that she might during her whole life be engaged in the contemplation of the things of God without interruption, fatigue or distraction. All these things are easily explained on the supposition of *per se* infused knowledge which is independent of the use of the senses.

Finally, *per se* infused knowledge is not opposed to the state of a wayfarer, to whom it is proper to be directed by faith, for it may be obscure or even used in the service of faith.¹¹⁴ Now although *per se* infused knowledge was not obscure in Mary's intellect, but evident, nevertheless it could co-exist with faith, because the act of faith and the act of knowledge possess two means or motives, each of which suffices to assent to the truth proposed.¹¹⁵

THE S I S : *Mary possessed per accidens infused knowledge.*

St. Antoninus and St. Albert the Great, followed by Vega, believe that Mary possessed *per accidens* infused knowledge of all or most of the human sciences. But it seems more likely that Mary had infused knowledge *per accidens* only of natural and moral things which aid in a more perfect understanding of Scripture and the obligations and moral actions of man. The reason is that the perfect understanding of Sacred Scripture, in which Mary excelled to a most eminent degree, required the knowledge of many things, such as history, geography,

cosmogony and astronomy, in which her intellect worked, like ours, dependent upon the imagination and the senses. And it is not likely that Mary could have acquired such knowledge little by little by her own work and industry, but that she received it from God by infusion, since she could not have easily acquired all of these sciences by her own efforts nor would it be fitting that she occupy herself in acquiring them and thus be distracted from the contemplation of divine things.

Besides, the Blessed Virgin had received, from the first moment of her conception, the natural moral virtues, which require the direction of a principle proportionate to them or an intrinsically natural knowledge infused *per accidens*. Finally, it would be a greater perfection in Mary if during her infancy she possessed the special perfection of this knowledge than to acquire it later by her own effort.

Among these sciences infused *per accidens* was the science of theology, which is usually acquired by study, for this science leads to a more perfect understanding of revealed things so far as the principles of faith are thereby understood more distinctly and the truths contained therein are understood as genuine conclusions. Since Mary was a teacher of the apostles, it was fitting that she possess the most perfect understanding of the mysteries of our faith.¹¹⁶

THESES : *Besides the infused habits of knowledge, Mary knew other things through special transitory revelations.*

It is certain that Mary had many and various revelations because this favor and testimony of divine love and familiarity was bestowed on almost all who excelled in special sanctity, but mostly on virgins and on those who lived the contemplative life, as is evident in the lives of the saints. Therefore, this favor must be conceded even more to the Blessed Virgin.¹¹⁷

In particular, before conceiving her Son and while still living in the Temple during her childhood, Mary had revelations and saw angels, as is attested by Gregory of Nicodemia and Fulbert of Chartres.

In the conception of her Son, Mary received, through the angel Gabriel, the remarkable revelation of the mystery of the Incarnation, as stated in Luke 1:26-28.

Later, carrying her Son in her womb and holding personal and intimate converse with Him, she received excellent enlightenment, as Bernardine of Busti states in his *Mariale*.

After the birth of her Son, Mary asked and learned many things from Him who dwelt with her, according to pious belief.¹¹⁸

After the resurrection of Christ, among the revelations made to Mary we must enumerate those in which Christ appeared to her before appearing to others in manifesting His glory. It is true that the Evangelists do not mention this apparition, but as Rupert of Deutz shows, it is the belief of the faithful that Mary was the first to see the risen Christ.

It is also presumed as likely that during the forty days between Christ's resurrection and His ascension, the well-beloved Son would visit His Mother and gladden her with His sweet presence.

Finally, that Christ after His ascension appeared to and taught His Mother is believed by many, among whom was St. Laurence Justinian, who says that she rejoiced not only in the sight of angels, but also in the frequent vision and conversation with her Son, to which was joined an incomparable plenitude of grace.¹¹⁹

ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

A twofold acquired knowledge can be distinguished: one which treats principally of the singulars perceived through the senses and is based on the evident testimony of experience; the other which treats mainly of universals acquired through intellectual abstraction and is based on evidence by inference from evident principles. It is certain that Mary possessed true experimental knowledge because it is clear that she experienced hunger, pain and other things as we do, and also her senses perceived the things presented through sight, hearing, and the rest. But this question refers more especially to the other acquired knowledge.

THESES : *Mary acquired connatural knowledge by her own actions.*

Mary possessed an agent intellect as well as a possible intellect. The agent intellect is that whereby species are made actually intelligible, abstracting them from the individual conditions of phantasms, so that they can be received into the possible intellect and move it to the act of intellection, from which acquired knowledge results.

Nor would it be difficult to see that Mary would understand later through acquired knowledge many things which she knew previously

through infused knowledge *per accidens*, because she could understand experimentally the same things which she already knew intellectually. Concerning this, St. Thomas remarks that a thing may be experienced in two ways: from sensible objects, by which experience is acquired the habit of knowledge, as happens with us, or by seeing in things what is already known by infused knowledge, which is detectable to the learned; and thus it was that Adam experienced natural things.¹²⁰

THESIS: *Mary acquired knowledge by investigation and by learning.*

There are two ways of acquiring knowledge: by investigation and by learning. Of these, the principal mode is through investigation, and the secondary mode is through study and instruction, for it is more noble to instruct oneself than to be instructed by another.

Mary acquired her knowledge by her own talents, because she had a superior mind which served her body and senses very well. Thus, she learned perfectly and without difficulty the things which were fitting that she know and could be learned through her senses, as St. Thomas teaches happened to Christ her Son.¹²¹

In addition, she also progressed in knowledge by assiduous reading and meditation on Sacred Scripture and by contemplating the divine mysteries, as Origen teaches.¹²²

Finally, Mary's external and internal experience supplied material for knowledge, and through it she perceived many effects which were unknown to others, for example, that she conceived without man, that she gave birth without pain, and so forth.

Mary also received knowledge from another through learning, not from other persons, but only from her Son. It was not reasonable that she who was to be the teacher of the apostles and the faithful be instructed by men. Hence she was instructed by an angel concerning the mystery of the Incarnation.¹²³ However, Suárez states that Mary learned nothing from men, if we consider matters of faith, but if it was a matter of some event or of some text of Sacred Scripture, she could have been taught by men.¹²⁴ On the other hand, Mary's intimate association with Christ sufficed for her most thorough instruction. From this river of celestial teaching she imbibed copiously for thirty years.¹²⁵

TOTAL EXEMPTION FROM ALL ERROR AND IGNORANCE

Two kinds of ignorance are distinguished: negative ignorance and privative ignorance. Purely negative ignorance is simple nescience or lack of knowledge, for which reason we are said to be ignorant of what we are not obliged to know. But privative ignorance is a lack of knowledge of something one should know in his particular state. Hence there is nescience in children, but privative ignorance in the judge who is ignorant of the law.

Error is a false knowledge, or a knowledge positively out of conformity with the thing to be known. Error proceeds from ignorance as from its cause, for St. Thomas says that men are not deceived except in things which they do not know.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, error is formally distinguished from ignorance because ignorance of itself indicates a lack of knowledge and there can be no error if there is no knowledge of the thing about which one errs.

THESIS: *Mary was immune from all error and ignorance.*

The question does not concern negative ignorance, since Mary could possess and *de facto* did have pure nescience or lack of knowledge about many things which did not pertain to her state. Thus, she did not know immediately all the circumstances of the Incarnation, that her cousin Elizabeth had conceived a son in her old age, and she did not know many future things. Therefore, the question is one of privative ignorance and of error or deception.

Errors. Erasmus, who was too frequently influenced by Luther, asserted that Mary was subject to ignorance and error. Therefore, Mary did not know that Christ her Son was truly God and she did not adore Him as a baby. Some even exaggerate Mary's ignorance to the extreme of saying that she and Joseph, by reason of their sensate conception of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, had awaited Him as the most powerful king of the world, with His armies prepared and armed in order to re-establish the kingdom of Israel.

But the common opinion of theologians is that Mary was immune from all error and privative ignorance, a judgment so certain that, according to the opinion of Suárez, the contrary is offensive to pious ears.¹²⁷

First Part. Mary possessed all the gifts of original justice except those pertaining to bodily passibility and mortality. Now in the state of original justice, there was immunity from all error.¹²⁸ Therefore Mary was free from all error.

When exercising the act of understanding in reference to its proper object, our intellect is always truthful, so that of itself, it cannot be deceived. All deception originates from something inferior, that is, from the imagination, the senses, passion, or from some other extrinsic cause which distracts or hinders the intellect from judging things in conformity to reason. But this disorder did not exist in the state of innocence, for as long as the soul remained subject to God, the lower faculties were subject to the higher, and there was no impediment to their activity. Neither was this disorder in Mary, who in this respect enjoyed the privilege of that happy state.

Error in the present order is the result of sin, according to St. Augustine: "To accept the false as true is not natural to man as he was created, but is a punishment for his fault."¹²⁹ This does not apply to Mary, who was immune from all sin.

Mary possessed such a disposition of soul that she had complete dominion over her faculties and the most sublime prudence, without inordinate movements of any kind. Hence, as regards the things she knew, she did not judge them in any other way than as they were in reality; and as regards the things she did not know, she withheld judgment until the truth was evident; or, if she judged by signs and conjectures, her judgment did not fall back on these, but on their possibility or probability, depending on the strength of her signs and conjectures. However, judging that something is possible or probable is not to err.

Second Part. Mary's freedom from ignorance was greater than that of the angels and of Adam, says St. Bernardine of Busti.¹³⁰ As there was no privative ignorance in the angels and in Adam, much less was it present in Mary.

It was fitting that Mary, by her exalted dignity as Mother of God and her pre-eminent sanctity, not only be not lacking in knowledge given her, but possess an abundance of it, as was becoming her state.

We cannot say that Mary possessed a false estimation of the things which concerned her, as on the occasion of Jesus' remaining in the Temple (Luke 2:44), for Mary, believing that Jesus was going along

with the retinue, simply judged that this could have happened, and under the circumstances it would be very likely. It was a probable but well-founded judgment, sufficient to excuse Mary from all error and ignorance.

Corollary. From what has been said, we can infer a pre-eminent knowledge and an abundance of sacred doctrine in Mary; graces which surpassed all the angels, apostles and theologians. This extensive knowledge should not be understood as comprising a complete accumulation of all human sciences, because the knowledge of many natural things is not related to the dignity of her being the Mother of God or to her office as co-redemptrix in the work of redemption. And so it is not unbecoming to affirm that, as regards definite knowledge of nature and of the arts, her knowledge was below that of Adam and Solomon, and even of that of noted teachers in those sciences. But this is not true as regards supernatural sciences or as regards the natural sciences which pertained to her *pro temporis indole ac progressu*.¹³¹

Mary's Bodily Attributes

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HAVING ALREADY EXPLAINED the perfections and prerogatives which adorned Mary's soul, we shall now consider those which refer to her body. We shall discuss successively: Mary's bodily perfection, her passibility, her mortality, and finally her death.

Mary's Bodily Perfection

As the body is to the soul what matter is to form, we must discuss the bodily perfection of the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, as Lepicier advises, not in an absolute way or *a priori*, but in relation to her soul, following the criterion observed by the Angelic Doctor when he stated that all that was perfect had to appear in the Blessed Virgin, always in relation to her divine maternity.

THESES: *Mary possessed a most perfectly constituted body.*

This is so certain that Suárez¹ says that to affirm the contrary, not only opposes right reason and authority, but is temerarious. St. Antoninus and Denis the Carthusian are also great exponents of Mary's bodily perfection.

1) Mary's body was most worthily prepared to receive the Word of God. Therefore it was fitting that her body be most perfectly formed, so that the means might be adapted to the end and the material fit for so great a work.

2) In forming the first man, God had Christ in mind; Christ who was to trace His origin from Adam, according to the testimony of Tertullian (*De resurrect. carnis*). Therefore, if God formed Adam's body with such care, since after so many generations He was to form from Adam the body of the Word, with how much care, counsel,

foresight and love would He have fashioned Mary's body, from whom, not remotely, but proximately and immediately, was to be born the Word of God.

3) A perfect soul should have a most perfectly constituted body. Since Mary's soul was adorned with the most excellent gifts of nature, she needed a body exquisitely formed—absolute integrity of its members, well proportioned, a most powerful vitality and efficiency of senses and faculties—so that she might duly exercise the operations of soul and body. It should also be borne in mind that a good natural disposition and a good physical constitution greatly aid the faculties of the soul.²

4) Finally, a particular resemblance between Christ and Mary must be established, since children resemble their parents in perfection of body, proportion of parts, and facial features.³ And since Christ lacked an earthly father and totally resembled His Mother, and was most remarkable in bodily perfection, so Mary, next to Christ, was distinguished among all by her bodily perfection. To this end, St. Thomas of Villanova,⁴ in order to demonstrate that this resemblance between child and parents was substantiated more completely in Christ than in others, says that other children, being common to father and mother, take something from each. But Christ had no earthly father, deriving His body from His mother alone. He therefore resembled her in the features of countenance, manner and bearing. His Mother alone imitated Him in all, and resembled Him in grace and virtue, excepting, of course, that perfection which resulted from the union of the divinity and humanity in the person of Jesus.

THESES: *Mary never suffered bodily infirmity of any kind.*

This is the common opinion of theologians. Among the natural goods of the body, says Plato (*De Leg.*, I), health takes the first place. Therefore, as Mary received a better constituted body, she possessed, by the same token, a most complete and perfect state of health. Gerson (*De Concept. Virginis*) remarks that we must concede to Mary complete health, harmony, and a balanced constitution.

Although Mary, possessing a most perfect temperament of body, had the natural defects of body, in no way was she subject to personal defects, such as illness; which in some men is caused by native imperfection or from their own fault, or in others because of an abuse of

the passions or transmitted through inheritance. Neither native imperfection nor hereditary defect can be attributed to Mary; Contenson observes that her body was produced miraculously of sterile parents and that natural gifts granted miraculously are exquisite, because God's works are perfect.⁵ Neither can defects be attributed to her by way of personal fault through abuse of the sense appetites, for there was nothing inordinate in her manner of living which might have diminished the admirable harmony of her body.

Though Mary was subject to the air and to other external agents which cause illnesses in us, her bodily health was never endangered, due to the strength and resistance of her perfect constitution and because of her knowledge, by which she could foresee and avoid the influence of these agents. Moreover, she had the special protection of divine providence.

Although Mary suffered no sickness whatever, we cannot conclude that she lacked the physical possibility of growing old and even of dying, for to her we can apply the words of St. Augustine referring to Christ, when he teaches that Jesus Christ himself, since He assumed the flesh of sinners, from the moment of His birth passed through the different ages of life and would have died of old age had He not shed His precious blood on the tree of the Cross.⁶ The final words can be changed with regard to the Blessed Virgin to read: had she not died of divine love.

THE S I S : *Mary suffered no spasms or swoons during the passion of her Son.*

Some theologians attributed spasms or swoons to Mary during Christ's passion. Thus, St. Bonaventure says that because of her most severe sorrow and anguish, Mary fell half dead into the arms of Mary Magdalen, and this opinion is shared by St. Lawrence Justinian and Denis the Carthusian.⁷ St. Bernardine of Siena seems favorably inclined toward this opinion, echoing the legend that Mary fainted on meeting Jesus as He carried His cross to Calvary. St. Bernardine says that this should be believed piously rather than affirmed rashly. St. Bridgit adheres to this same opinion.⁸

The source of this opinion seems to be the apocryphal book *De Lamentatione Virginis*, at one time attributed to St. Bernard, in which we read: "Near the Cross was the Mother of Christ, almost

dead; she could not speak because she was transfixed with sorrow; because of the vehemence of her sorrow and the intensity of her love, she remained as if dead."

This doctrine of Mary's swoon passed on to the liturgy. St. Helen built a chapel, and on the main altar placed a stone on which the Blessed Virgin was to have fallen in her swoon.⁹ Moreover, Cajetan remarks that in his time the feast of the swooning of the Blessed Virgin was celebrated with an octave, and its devotees petitioned indulgences of the Sovereign Pontiff. Finally, various churches featured pictures and statues of Mary in a lifeless faint in the arms of St. John or Mary Magdalen. However, the most common opinion is that Mary suffered no swoon whatever near the Cross nor in any other place during Christ's passion; and the contrary assertion is qualified by Maldonado (*In Joan*, c. 19) as close to error, and by Medina (*In III*, q. 27, a. 4) as rash, scandalous, and dangerous.

Sacred Scripture. We read in St. John (19:25): "Now there were standing by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen." Mary stood near the Cross which shows that she was on her feet, neither sitting nor prostrate on the ground with grief. It should not be affirmed that the apostle used the word "stood" to mean "remained," because he repeats this same word in verse 26: "When Jesus, therefore, saw His Mother and the disciple standing by, whom He loved." For it is a custom of the Gospel, when something important is narrated, to describe the posture of the persons involved, as happens in St. John (4:6), and St. Luke (18:11). On this point Gerson describes the Blessed Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross as standing, as says the Gospel, in front of the Cross, not beside it, looking into the face of her crucified Son.¹⁰

The Fathers. Although Mary was undoubtedly overwhelmed by the most severe sorrow in her Son's passion, she suffered no prostration, spasm or swoon whatever. St. Anselm and St. Ambrose are of this opinion. St. Ambrose says: "Whereas the apostles fled, Mary stood courageously beneath the Cross and viewed with loving eyes the wounds of her Son, through whom she knew would come the redemption of the world."¹¹

Pope Benedict XIV writes that when many persons requested indulgences for the feast of the swooning of the Blessed Virgin, Cajetan, a renowned theologian, was asked his opinion about it. After declaring

that there was no mention of it in the Gospel, he explained the difference between the type of spasm or weakness in which the sorrow is so intense that there is a loss of the use of reason and of the senses, and another type of spasm in which one loses control of the body, so that although the use of reason is not lost, one cannot remain standing. He then concluded that it is false to affirm that Mary suffered any spasm or swooning because this would be opposed to the thesis that Mary suffered no illness whatever, because it would be very unbecoming to say that sorrow disturbed Mary's perfection of grace by suspending her reason, and because the title "Swooning of Mary," taken in its proper sense, would be opposed to the dignity of her body, and taken in the ordinary sense would be opposed to her dignity of soul.¹²

Theological Argument. 1) Mary had perfect control over all of her actions and affections, and so she commanded the sensitive movements of her body in such a way that there was nothing discordant and unbecoming in her actions. But it would have been very unbecoming to allow herself to be so overwhelmed by sensitive sadness and pain that she would be deprived of her bodily strength and use of reason.

2) Moreover, if her superior reason had not been sufficient to control and preserve her lower nature from swooning, neither would divine power fail her, for by increasing her strength and endurance and moderating the affections of her soul, it would preserve her from a suspension of her senses, a weakening of her reason, and an unbecoming collapse of her body.

3) As Mary was full of grace, those defects which hinder the fullness and perfection of grace cannot be admitted. A suffering which causes fainting also incapacitates the use of reason, but because of Mary's mission in the completion of Christ's sacrifice, that is inadmissible in her, for at this time she was to consider the glory and fruit of her Son's passion and the salvation of the human race. This would have been an impossibility had pain confused her reasoning.

4) On the other hand, it was much more pleasing to God that Mary suffer with her Son and that she suffer more in her reason and intellectual appetite, rather than in the sensitive appetite. The rational part is more noble than the sensitive, more free, capable of merit, and more pleasing of itself. Had Mary been deprived of the use of reason

through sorrow, she could not in any way have felt pain with regard to her rational appetite.

5) Though the pain, as Toledo says, was most severe, nevertheless, she remained superior to it through her faith in Christ's resurrection, through her strength of soul and chiefly through her conformity to the will of God. He therefore rejects such doctrine as would inflict injury on the Blessed Virgin by presenting her as losing the integrity of her senses and reason, although she suffered most intensely.¹³

6) Finally, neither the account of the temple constructed in Jerusalem by St. Helen nor the feast of the swooning of the Virgin nor the pictures and statues representing Mary fainting have any value to the contrary. The construction of the temple does not prove Mary's swoon, but the temple was constructed in memory of her suffering. The institution of the feast of the swooning of the Blessed Virgin originated perhaps from the acts of the provincial council of Theodorich, Bishop of Cologne, in the year 1423, to honor Jesus and His Blessed Mother and to repress the audacity of the Hussites, who sacrilegiously burned all representations of Christ Crucified and His Sorrowful Mother. There is no mention of a swoon or spasm, but only of her anguish and pain, although perhaps in some places where the cult of our Lady's sorrows had spread, the name might have been changed to describe her great sorrow more vividly. With regard to pictures and representations of Mary as lifeless or almost dead, John of Carthage attests that in his time the Master of the Sacred Palace in Rome ordered the disappearance of pictures of this kind because they diminished Mary's magnanimity and fortitude. Likewise, those preachers who spoke of the weeping and pain of Mary, as represented by the painters, were seriously reprimanded by St. Peter Canisius, as were the painters themselves.¹⁴

Mary's Passibility

Previous Observations. The concept of passibility depends upon the concept of passion. In a broad sense, passion indicates a change in the subject or the reception of a new form, including the form which perfects without alteration or corruption. In the strict sense, it signi-

fies the reception of a form which causes an alteration, and is defined as a movement or alteration which withdraws the patient from its natural disposition and changes it into something worse, thus starting the process of decomposition.

Understood in this way, passion applies only to corporeal things, but since the alteration of bodies of the sensitive order can occur in two ways, there is also a twofold passion, properly speaking: corporeal and animal. Corporeal passion is one which arises from injury to the members or irritation of organs. Animal passion is that which the soul experiences with regard to movements or affections of the sensitive appetite, which is always accompanied by some corporeal alteration or organic disturbance. Hence two things are to be distinguished in passion: one as the formal element, which is the movement or affection of the sensitive appetite, and the other as the material element, which is the organic alteration. Corporeal passion takes its origin from the injured body or any other bodily disturbance, and through the body it makes itself felt in the soul. Animal passion originates primarily in the soul, and from the soul redounds to the body.

Besides corporeal and animal passions there are also spiritual passions, with regard to the movements of the will which spontaneously follow the apprehension of good or of evil. These acts by their nature do not of themselves involve corporeal alteration, and therefore they are not called passions except in a wide sense; rather, they are frequently called affections or movements of the will.

The passions of the sense appetite are closely associated with the spiritual passions or affections of the will. In the first place, the passions of the sense appetite are generally caused by movements of the will, as taught by St. Thomas and Suárez.¹⁵ On the other hand, the affections existing in the will are often based on sensitive passions. The object which pleases or displeases the sensitive appetite is judged by the intellect as in some way advantageous or disadvantageous to the subject; this judgment is then followed by movements of pursuit or of aversion on the part of the will. Therefore, Mary's passibility is to be examined with regard to this threefold division of passion.

THESIS: *Mary was passible with a corporeal passion.*
The Valentinians said that Mary had a heavenly body, which could

neither suffer nor die. Similarly, the Collyridians,¹⁶ as St. Epiphanius attests, attributed to Mary a celestial body to which, therefore, no corporeal defects whatever could be attached. However, their opinions must be rejected.

1) Mary possessed the defects common to the body, such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, and other sufferings inherent in human nature, and it is impossible that the human body be afflicted by any defects and that the soul, which is substantially united to the body and in union with it, should not suffer *per accidens*.

2) Moreover, it was fitting that Mary should possess defects natural to the body and should experience the passions resulting from them. Since passibility is an ordinary condition of our nature, if Mary had not been subject to any natural defect whatever, it would seem that neither she nor her Son possessed real flesh. In order to satisfy for the sins of the human race, Christ accepted corporeal defects such as hunger, thirst, fatigue and other things similar to them, which are the punishments for sin introduced into the world by Adam. But Mary had to resemble Christ in these defects, for she conceived Christ passible and mortal, who was one with her with regard to flesh, and it would be absurd if from an impassible and immortal person there should naturally proceed one who is passible and mortal. Also, besides conceiving her passible and mortal Son, "she cooperated with Him in the painful expiation offered by her Son for the sins of the world."¹⁷ Finally, by bearing her corporeal defects and passions with fortitude, Mary was an example of patience and fortitude for us, and in suffering these hardships she increased each day the richest treasure of her merits and her glory.

THESIS: *Mary was subject to the debt of suffering corporeal passion.*

It may be well to note with St. Thomas that the cause of bodily defects in human nature is twofold: one *remote*, which proceeds from the material element of the human body and was suspended in original justice; the other *proximate*, that is, original sin, which robbed man of the justice of his primitive state, with which was connected exemption from bodily defects.

According to Gerson¹⁸ and Lepicier¹⁹ Mary was not subject to the necessity of suffering corporeal passion, since only those who contract original sin are so affected. And because Mary lacked original sin and

received human nature in the state of innocence, she was not subject to the necessity of suffering by bodily passion. Thus it is that, absolutely speaking, Mary in her state of innocence, just as Adam in his, could have prevented all bodily suffering either through the use of reason, whereby she could avoid what was harmful, or by divine providence, which could preserve her so that nothing of a harmful nature could come upon her unawares.²⁰

Since Mary did not incur the corporeal defects due to original sin, it must be said that she herself, in conformity with divine favor, accepted them freely so that they would have the desired natural effect in her. Hence, there resulted in Mary a certain necessity by supposition of subjecting herself to these defects. According to Lepicier, Mary renounced her right to impassibility because of a certain necessity to subject herself to the defects of human nature, as did Christ also. The same opinion is held by Gerson. St. Thomas argues: "Flesh conceived in sin is subject to pain, not merely on account of the necessity of its natural principles, but from the necessity of the guilt of sin. Now this necessity was not in Christ [nor in the Blessed Virgin] but only the necessity of natural principles."²¹

The Angelic Doctor observes that Mary's perfection of soul does not preclude her passibility: "The inferior powers pertaining to the sensitive appetite have a natural capacity to be obedient to reason, but not the bodily powers nor those of the bodily humors nor those of the vegetative soul, as is made plain in *1 Ethic*. And hence perfection of virtue, which is in accordance with right reason, does not exclude the *fomes* of sin."²²

Merkelbach, Cuervo, Aldama, and Balic maintain, and with better foundation, that the Blessed Virgin was not exempt from the physical necessity of suffering and death.²³ The grace of the immaculate conception is not a sufficient title to exempt her from bodily suffering and defects because there is no necessary connection between grace and impassibility. Such was the case, by the will of God, in the state of original justice and such is the case in glory, but such does not exist in the order of redemption in which Christ and His elect obtain impassibility and immortality through His passible and mortal life.

And since the Blessed Virgin was not created in the state of original justice but pertains to the order of redemption, she was in this life subject to the conditions of that order, that is, to the conditions of

a passible and mortal nature through the merits of which she would attain impassibility and immortality.

THESIS: Mary was passible by affections of the sensitive appetite.

This question can be discussed in general and in particular. In general it is certain that Mary was endowed with a sensitive appetite, since the sensitive appetite pertains to the integrity of human nature, just as the senses pertain to the integrity of human nature. Moreover, it is sufficiently clear that Mary not only possessed the powers of the sensitive appetite, but also actual affections or sensible passions, because one is not given an active principle without the operations for which it exists and because *per se* the passions are proper to human nature with regard to the sensitive appetite and are not unbecoming to Mary. Moreover, it was fitting that Mary experience these passions in order to show that she truly possessed a human nature and had affections as we have, in order to console men excited by passions, giving them an example how to restrain themselves, and finally in order that she might be fit to serve the purpose of Redemption by bearing the greatest afflictions which were to torture her soul.

But if we treat of Mary's passions in *particular*, we must observe that the sensitive appetite can be concupiscible or irascible, of which the first regards good or evil simply and the second regards good or evil under the aspect of the arduous and difficult. There are eleven basic passions of the sensitive appetite, of which six pertain to the concupiscible appetite: *love* and *hate*, by which we are inclined to good or fly from evil, abstracting its absence or presence; *desire* and *aversion*, by which we are drawn to an absent good or flee from future evil; and *joy* and *sorrow*, which pertain to present good or evil. The other five belong to the irascible appetite: *hope* and *despair*, by which we are moved toward a difficult good possible of attainment or withdraw from a difficult good impossible of attainment; *courage* and *fear*, which concern an imminent evil which is either conquerable, although with difficulty, or unavoidable or hard to resist; *anger*, by which we feel vehemently moved by any present or difficult evil, not to avoid it, inasmuch as it is already present, but in order to compensate for damage through revenge and punishment.

No one can doubt that Mary possessed sensitive *love*, for if she had not love, neither would she have any passion, because as St.

Thomas says: "There is no other passion of the soul that does not presuppose love of some kind."²⁴ Mary undoubtedly experienced this type of love toward her Son, the apostles, her relatives and friends.

It is also certain that Mary possessed *hate* or simple dislike of evil, because good and evil are opposites and whoever loves good hates the evil opposed to it. Moreover, some things happened in Mary's life which in themselves were worthy of hate, i.e., the killing of the innocents, the beheading of John the Baptist, the crucifixion and death of Christ, and so forth.

There was also in Mary *desire* or attraction to the absent good, as in her most ardent desire of seeing Christ when as a child of twelve He was lost and later found in the Temple. She could also feel desires for sensible goods she needed, such as food, drink and the like.

It is easy to understand that Mary possessed *aversion* and separation from evil, both because contraries have the same cause and thus the desire for an absent good implies the avoiding of an absent evil, and because such evils could be proposed to the imagination and arouse this movement, e.g., the passion and death of her Son, especially after the prophecy of Simeon.

Neither did the Blessed Virgin lack *joy* in the sensible good present. Acts of joy or sensible pleasure frequently originate from virtuous objects; hence, the Blessed Virgin enjoyed the presence of her Son, the fellowship of friends, the beauty of the heavens and the fields, and so forth.

Mary also felt sensible pain and *sorrow*. Although sorrow as a concupiscible appetite is wont to be called indistinctly sorrow or pain, nevertheless it differs sufficiently on the part of the thing signified. "Now even as sensible pain is in the sensitive appetite, so also is sorrow. But there is a difference of motive or object, for the object and motive of pain is hurt perceived by the sense of touch, as when anyone is wounded; but the object and motive of sorrow is anything hurtful or evil interiorly, apprehended by the reason or the imagination, as when anyone grieves over the loss of grace or money."²⁵ Mary suffered pain and sorrow because she was not exempt from corporeal defects and hardships which produce sensible pain. Through her imagination or her instinct she perceived interiorly many things as truly injurious, which connatural perception gives rise to the passion of sorrow.

Mary suffered all of these passions more keenly than can be imagined, not only because she had a most perfectly constituted body and was exquisitely endowed with a delicate sensibility, but also because, through her soul, those faculties could understand effectively the causes of her sorrows.

Mary could possess *hope* about some sensible good, arduous and difficult of attainment; similarly, *despair* about a sensible good or about an evil to be avoided, insuperable through natural forces; for example, to preserve Christ's life a little longer. She did not have that despair which is a defection or a lessening of courage and implies a moral defect, but a simple despair that the death of her Son could not be avoided.

Mary possessed *courage* when she found herself in great danger, and overcame it courageously, as when she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth in the hill country and when she went to Egypt to free her Son from the hands of those who pursued Him. Nor was Mary void of holy *anger*, in imitation of Christ, in whom there was no defective anger, but a zealous anger, directed by justice and regulated by mildness.

Mary also suffered sensible *fear* when she thought interiorly of the imminent evils which were to come, which naturally terrified her, such as her Son's anguish and torture, His ignominious death, and other similar evils.

THESES: *Mary possessed spiritual passions or affections of the will.*

It is certain that Mary possessed spiritual passions. Because of the connection of the spiritual and sensitive faculties in the soul there is a mutual influence between them. What pleases or displeases the sensitive appetite, the intellect esteems as good or evil in some way for the subject, and this judgment causes in the will movements of pursuit or aversion. But it is more a matter of treating of the spiritual passion of pain and sorrow with which Mary was so heavily afflicted.

THESES: *Mary suffered real pain and sorrow of soul.*

Sacred Scripture. In St. Luke (2:30-35) it is related that Simeon, inspired by the Holy Ghost, after taking Jesus into His arms, uttered these words: "Because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples," and turning to His father

and mother, he blessed them and told Mary, His true Mother, all that her Son was to suffer and she with Him: "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted, and thy own soul a sword shall pierce." Now, the sword which was to pierce Mary's soul, which Simeon foretold, was not the material sword about which Christ spoke to St. Peter (Matt. 26:52): "For those who take the sword will perish by the sword," for Mary was not to leave this world wounded by a sword or by violent death. Neither did it mean the spiritual sword of the word of God which the Apostle recommends to the soldiers of Christ (Eph. 6:17): "And take unto you . . . the sword of the spirit, that is, the word of God." Simeon had asserted nothing new or remarkable in telling Mary that she was to be pierced by a sword, if this was to be none other than the word of God, for the word of God was Mary's daily food and her delights were in receiving it into her heart and meditating on it. Neither can this sword refer to infidelity, weakness or doubt of faith, since, as said before, she never weakened in faith, but was most faithful, firm and steadfast as she stood at the foot of the Cross—more steadfast than the apostles. But the sword of trial, pain and sorrow wounds the soul, piercing and penetrating, for just as the contradiction predicted by Simeon was carried out at the crucifixion, so the sword of sorrow pierced Mary's soul when, exhausted by pain, she stood at the foot of the Cross, seeing the torments and death of her Son.

The Fathers. Ephrem, Eadmer, Bede, Bernard and others interpret the words of Simeon in a sense of the keenest pain which penetrated Mary's soul, especially during the passion of Christ. Eadmer says: "The most cruel tortures inflicted on the holy martyrs were trifling or nothing in comparison with the martyrdom of Mary."²⁶

Theological Argument. The reason for pain and spiritual sorrow is the injurious and the evil, perceived by reason as united in some way to the subject. Mary's soul interiorly perceived many things as injurious: 1) with regard to Christ, whom she loved with a pure maternal love, because of the poverty, the contempt, the snares, and the persecutions which attended Him during His whole life and culminated in His most cruel passion and crucifixion; 2) with regard to others, of whom she was constituted spiritual Mother, the cruelty of Herod toward the children of Bethlehem, slain for Christ, the be-

trayal of Judas, the inconstancy of the disciples, the treachery of the Pharisees who conspired to put her Son to death, the fierce cruelty of the Jewish slayers, as well as the many sins of men who, rejecting the price of redemption, abandon Christ and thereby lose their eternal salvation; 3) with regard to herself, because of the grief of her soul and pain of body.²⁷

THESES: Mary had complete dominion over all her faculties and actions, so that not even a single movement *primo primi* was in her involuntarily.

Valencia believes it is not absurd to concede that there were in Mary movements *primo primi* with regard to sensible objects not opposed to reason, but it is a common opinion among theologians that in Mary there were no movements *primo primi* which impede reason, but that they were justly regulated by her.²⁸

The Fathers. St. John Damascene says that Mary's will was always divinely governed and directed only to God; all her concupiscence was inclined only to that which should be desired and loved, and her anger was directed solely against sin.²⁹ St. Bernardine of Siena agrees, saying that although God had given His Mother a perfect constitution and had preserved her from all sin, nevertheless, all of those passions which are material for the exercise of virtue and spring from nature without sin remained in her, as in her Son. Therefore, she possessed the passions of love, fear, hate, admiration and any others which can exist without sin.³⁰

Theological Argument. 1) From the first moment of her conception, Mary was preserved from original sin and the *foemes peccati* and had original justice as regards its principal effects: sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of integrity or immunity from concupiscence. "It was granted to Mary, because of the abundance of grace bestowed on her, that her natural disposition was such that the lower appetites could never operate without the command of reason; in this respect the grace of sanctification in the Virgin had the value of original justice."³¹

2) Mary, associated with Christ in the work of redemption, possessed only the penalties and defects which could be ordained for the purpose of redemption. Movements and affections which anticipate reason and freedom do not belong to the work of reconciliation, both

because they lack freedom, and therefore lack merit, and also because they could hinder reason from attaining the good befitting it.

3) Finally, those movements which precede or exceed reason are due to the unhappiness of fallen nature and often are not produced without some harm to virtue; but when they are subject to reason they merit praise, because they serve as a powerful instrument of the will for good. Therefore those movements could not have been admitted in Mary without redounding to her dishonor, so that it must be said that in her all the movements of the faculties of her soul were absolutely subordinate to the dominion of her reason and certainly contributed to her merit and glory.

If it be asked how those passions and affections in Mary were subject to reason and will, we may answer that this can be effected in two ways: *positively*, so far as the will rules the sensitive appetite to produce this by acts of love, sorrow, fear, etc.; or *permissively*, so far as the will, without any imperation, would permit the faculties to work or to suffer what is proper to them.

Vega believes that such movements and affections in the Blessed Virgin always occurred by positive consent of the will, because she always worked in the most perfect matter possible and tended toward God with all the force of her love.³² But neither is it improper to admit that those affections were sometimes permissively voluntary in Mary, since this is also admitted in Christ, in whom each faculty, regulated by divine power, permitted Him to execute what was proper, without one impeding the other.

Corollaries. 1) From what has been said, it follows that the sensible passions were in Mary in a very different way than in us. They often become unlawful in us, but this was not true of Mary. In us, our passions often precede the judgment of reason; in Mary, all of her sensible affections originated in conformity to the dominion of reason. In us, passions, which at times exceed moderation, disturb our reason and hinder it from pursuing the good; in Mary, the movements conatural with the flesh were contained in the sensitive appetite in such a way, that they did not impede the exercise of reason. Thus in Mary, as in Christ, the passions were not possessed as in a condition of passion, but as pro-passions, since they do not anticipate the dominion of reason nor surpass the boundary marked out by it.

2) There could be no interior struggle in Mary, since this cannot

occur except when the sensitive appetite and the will, not being regulated by reason, adhere effectively to the object and remain thus, although the deliberate will is opposed. Consequently, Mary never had any interior temptation, that is, a struggle of the sensitive or rational appetite against the dictates of right reason. Concerning this, Gerson says that the soul of Mary, while a wayfarer, could suffer external temptations, just as could the soul of Christ, but in no way did they move her passionately in blind rebellion against the judgment of reason.³³

3) There was no opposition of wills in Mary, but only an admirable conformity. There is in man a twofold will, one essential, and the other by participation. The first is the inclination toward the good known to the intellect; the other is the sensitive appetite, naturally destined to obey reason. Although the will, absolutely speaking, is commonly understood as the essential or intellectual will, nevertheless it can also be understood as the sensitive appetite, which in this case is called the will of sensuality or the will by participation. St. Thomas says: "But it must be borne in mind that sensuality or the sensual appetite, inasmuch as it naturally obeys reason, is said to be rational by participation. And because the will is in the reason, it may equally be said that the sensuality is a will by participation."³⁴

The will essentially so-called or the rational will is a faculty, but with regard to the acts which it produces it is commonly distinguished into the will *per modum naturae* and the will *per modum rationis*. The will as nature is the principle of the appetites produced necessarily, or of the movements which follow the consideration of the object *secundum se*, so far as it is fitting or not. The will as reason is the principle of the appetites produced prior to counsel or deliberation or of the movements which follow reason immediately, which considers all the circumstances of the object in their relationship to the greater good of the end.³⁵

In view of these previous remarks, it must be said that these wills in Mary were not opposed to each other, but in accord. For although the will as nature and the will of sensuality, of which it is proper to the will as nature and the will of sensuality, of which it is proper to the will as reason and the will of intellect, naturally avoid pain hate what is hurtful to nature and evil in itself, naturally avoid pain and sensible afflictions, they do not reject the motive by which the will as reason accepted them freely. The will as reason willed the pain for the salvation of the human race; but the will of sensuality and the

will as nature could not extend themselves to will a thing with regard to another which was foreign to them, just as in the case of illness, the will of sensuality and the will of reason of the patient reject cautery, but nevertheless the rational will endures it in order to recover health.

In Mary the will of reason, of nature and of sensuality were subject to and conformed with the divine will. The divine will and what was rational will in Mary willed the passion and death of her Son, as also her pain and anguish. St. Antoninus says that such was Mary's conformity to the divine will that if it were necessary she herself would put her Son on the cross and would have offered Him up, for her obedience was not less than Abraham's.⁸⁶ The will as nature and the will of sensuality in Mary, even when adhering to their proper object and avoiding pain, showed no disagreement with the divine will nor with the rational will of Mary, which surely did not desire that her natural and sensual will reject what should be chosen in regard to human salvation.

4) Finally, neither pain, nor sorrow, nor fear weakened in any way the tranquility and peace which inundated Mary from the first to the last moment of her life, due to the complete dominion with which she possessed her sensitive powers subject to and in conformity with reason, her perfect conformity with the divine will, her continuous contemplation and most ardent love of God and, finally, that gentle sweetness with which her soul was at times filled with the transitory but clear vision of God. Nevertheless, Mary's sorrows were not dissociated from the joy which she experienced in contemplating the fruits of Christ's passion.⁸⁷

Mary's Mortality

Previous Observations. Immortality, as Palmieri says, is either the necessary consequence of the natural principles of a being, and is thus proper to spirits, or it is something gratuitously added to nature, and this can occur in two ways: 1) so that the one receiving such a gift cannot die; 2) so that the one receiving this gift need never die if he fulfills the condition imposed, or may and must die if he does not

fulfill it.⁸⁸ That this gift was bestowed by God on our first parents in the state of innocence is declared by the Council of Milevium (Denz. 101), the Council of Orange (Denz. 174-175), and the Council of Trent (Denz. 788).

The immortality of our first parents did not originate from the constitutive principles of their nature, as happened in the angels and the human soul, which lack corruptible material, but it was a gratuitous gift. However, this bodily immortality was not an inadmissible gift, as will be the case of the bodies of the blessed after the resurrection, but they could and had to lose it if they committed sin. Hence St. Augustine says of Adam that he was mortal by reason of the condition of his animal body and immortal through the favor of the Creator.⁸⁹ With reason was Baius' proposition condemned, which reads: "The immortality of the first man was not a favor of grace, but a natural condition."⁹⁰ Therefore, the immortality conceded our first parents was a state midway between that immortality by which one cannot die and that immortality in virtue of which one who should die, by a special privilege, is able not to die. The first man, says St. Thomas, in some way was mortal, since he could die, and in another way he was also immortal, since he was able not to die.⁹¹ Our first parents were mortal through the natural principles of the human body; they were immortal through a gift of God and a special influx of grace, which prevented the cause of death.

The causes of death may be internal or external, depending on whether death is caused by external forces which can harm man or internal causes such as disease, old age, and others. The external causes could of themselves wound and harm our first parents, but they were not permitted to do so. "Man's body," says St. Thomas, "in the state of innocence could be preserved from suffering injury from a hard body, partly by the use of his reason, whereby he could avoid what was harmful, and partly also by divine providence, so preserving him that nothing of a harmful nature could come upon him unawares."⁹²

The internal causes, which are also precursors of approximate death, were eliminated in Adam and Eve: sickness, by perfect bodily constitution, harmony of the passions and suitable food which was abundant in paradise; old age, that is, the slow wasting away of organs, by the fruit of the tree of life which produced this effect, not

repairing, but preventing it. St. Augustine, describing the happiness of the first man, says: "Man had food to appease his hunger, drink to slake his thirst, and the tree of life to banish the dissolution of old age."⁴³

THESIS: *Mary was not subject to death in punishment for sin.*

Vázquez believed that Mary was subject to death through her descent from Adam, who not only merited for himself and his descendants spiritual death from original sin but also bodily death, a punishment inflicted by God on all his descendants, even after the sin was removed in them, including Mary, even though she was preserved from original sin.⁴⁴

The sin to which death is due must be considered either in Mary or in Adam. On neither account, however, did Mary contract the punishment of death. Mary was completely and absolutely immune from all sin, even the slightest. For this reason, Pope Pius V condemned the proposition of Baius which states: "Apart from Christ, no one is born without original sin; hence the Blessed Virgin died because of the sin which she contracted from Adam, and all her afflictions in this life, like those of other saints, are the punishment of original or actual sin."⁴⁵ Nor was she subject to death by reason of the debt of sin, because the debt of sin is caused by the actual commission of sin and not through contracting sin. Nor was it by reason of Adam's sin, as a punishment contracted by his descendants, because Mary was conceived without sin, and therefore could not be subject to the penalty of sin. Nevertheless, it can be said that Mary was subject to death by reason of the sin of Adam in the sense that if Adam had not sinned, death would not have entered the world. Moreover, by dying she was able to pay the debt of the human race, which debt would not have existed had there been no original sin. In this sense the words of St. Augustine are to be understood: "Mary, daughter of Adam, died because of sin, Adam died because of sin, and the flesh of the Lord, taken from Mary, died in order to destroy sin."⁴⁶

THESIS: *Mary was subject to death with regard to the condition of her nature.*

The Fathers. St. Andrew of Crete, St. John Damascene and St. John of Thessalonica all admit that Mary was subject to the law of nature and suffered death.⁴⁷

The Liturgy. "May the prayer of the Mother of God come to the aid of Thy people, O Lord; and although we know that she passed from this life to fulfill the conditions of our mortality, nevertheless, may we experience her intercession for us in the glory of heaven."⁴⁸

Theological Argument. This is deduced from the fact that human nature is subject to death by its condition and constitution. St. Thomas states: "A thing is said to be natural if it proceeds from the principles of nature. Now the essential principles of nature are form and matter. The form of man is his rational soul, which is of itself immortal; wherefore death is not natural to man on the part of his form. The matter of man is a body such as is composed of contraries, of which corruptibility is a necessary consequence, and in this respect death is natural to man."⁴⁹

THESIS: *Mary did not receive the special grace of immortality.*

Many ancient and modern theologians, while admitting that Mary was subject to death according to the principles of human nature, nevertheless teach that she was granted immortality similar to that of man in the state of innocence. She was not obliged to suffer and die. Some theologians then conclude that Mary did not die (Gallus,⁵⁰ Roschini)⁵¹ and others conclude that she chose not to use this privilege but freely accepted death in order to be more conformable to her Son (Galatinus,⁵² Vega, Baeza,⁵³ Sedlmayr, Jugie,⁵⁴ Bover,⁵⁵ Janssens,⁵⁶ Lepicier).

The principal reason for maintaining that Mary received the grace of immortality (whether she used it or not) was that she was constituted in the state of original justice and that the immortality that accompanies that state was not revoked in her. The deprivation of immortality is a punishment for sin (Rom. 5:12), but if Mary was immune from original sin, she could not incur the punishment. Further, immortality is a privilege which belongs to that order of gifts which were revoked from the whole human race and not restored to fallen man even in the state of grace; e.g., integrity, freedom from error and ignorance and immunity from corruption. And since these gifts were not revoked in Mary, neither was immortality. Nor is it a contradiction to maintain that Mary freely submitted to death in order to resemble her Son and that she died most peacefully instead of dying in pain as He did. The one does not oppose the other because Mary suffered pain more bitter than death at the foot of the Cross,

so that Pope Benedict XV states that she suffered with her suffering and dying Son and almost died with Him.⁵⁷ St. Albert the Great, commenting on the words, "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (Luke 2:35), says that since God does not judge the same case twice and since Mary suffered and tasted the agony of death when the sword of sorrow pierced her heart at the foot of the Cross, she was not to be allowed such pain again.⁵⁸

The theologians who hold the above opinion conclude that Mary in part resembles and in part differs from Christ and the rest of men. She resembles the rest of men in having a body mortal by nature; that is, a corruptible body with regard to the principles of human nature. She differs from the rest of men in that they, in the state of wayfarers, recover grace but not immortality. Further, in heaven the immortality bestowed upon men as a reward is different from the immortality conferred on Mary, since theirs signifies that they will not die again but hers is the immortality of one not subject to death, though she could die if she wishes or if God so decrees.

Mary resembles Christ in that she possessed at one and the same time, a mortal body with regard to her nature and immortality through grace; but she differs from Christ because although she enjoyed a transitory vision of God, she was a wayfarer. For this reason the glory of her soul did not redound to her body, nor did it make her body immortal. But Christ was at once a wayfarer and a blessed and could have enjoyed immortality if He had not allowed His body to suffer and die.

The immortality of grace and the necessity of dying are perfectly associated in Christ and in Mary. This necessity is one of supposition, which follows from the free will of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin, to submit to death and other defects, according to the dispensation of the divine will.⁵⁹

St. Peter Canisius, Billuart, Campana, Merkelbach, Balic, Cuervo, Aldama and others more rightly maintain, however, that the Blessed Virgin did not possess the gift of immortality, either as included in the original grace or as a special grace, and that she did not therefore freely renounce the gift of immortality in order to resemble her Son by dying. 1) In the first place, these theologians insist that there is no necessary connection between immortality and the original grace of Mary so that the one would imply the other. That connection did

exist by divine decree in the state of original justice in which Adam and Eve were created, but it does not exist in the order of redemption or in the state of fallen humanity in which immortality must be attained by the merits of our passible and mortal nature. Therefore, although Mary was prevented by grace from incurring the sin of Adam, she was not constituted in the state of original justice but pertains to the order of redemption and is therefore subject to the conditions of passibility and mortality which that order implies.

2) The grace which Mary received in the first instant of her conception was not the grace of creation (*gratia creationis*) but the grace of redemption (*gratia redemptionis*). But the grace of redemption which is given to those regenerated by baptism does not carry immortality with it. This would have to be a special gift by way of addition and there is no evidence or testimony to the fact that Mary received such a gift or freely renounced it.

3) Moreover, death is a punishment for sin but it is also a natural condition of man. As long as Adam remained in the state of original justice, he was immortal, but when he sinned he lost original justice and the privilege of immortality. Therefore his death and that of his descendants, infected with his sin, is a punishment for sin. But if Adam had been created without this special privilege of immortality and had been left to his natural condition in this respect, he would have died nevertheless, but then independently of any sin. And this is the reason why the Blessed Virgin, immune from original sin by her immaculate conception, but not granted the privilege of immortality, was subject to death, not as a punishment for original sin, which she never contracted, but because of her natural condition.

Mary's Death

Death as the dissolution of the living being or the separation of soul and body is one thing; the corruption of the grave or the return of the body to dust is another. Although after death the human body, by reason of its interior disorganization, is changed to dust, this corruption or return to dust is distinct from death, as Christ's death shows. Christ did not undergo this corruption characteristic of others,

as is stated: "For Thou wilt not leave My soul in the abode of the dead, nor permit Thy holy one to see corruption" (Ps. 15:10).

THESIS: *Mary truly died.*

Opinions. The first who seems to have doubted Mary's death was St. Epiphanius, who speaks thus: "Although I do not positively aver it, I neither define that she remained immortal, nor can I state positively that she died. Sacred Scripture, exceeding the grasp of the human intellect, has left us uncertain so that no one would attribute to this beautiful and singular vessel any ugliness proper to the flesh."⁶⁰

It has been stated that already in the fourth century there existed a certain tradition in Jerusalem that Mary did not die, but that she ascended to heaven without dying. Jugie presents as witness of this alleged tradition Timothy of Jerusalem, Hesychius, and Crispus, priests of that Church, but the proofs are far from conclusive.⁶¹

More recently theologians such as Guastalla, Viridia, Arnaldi and Penachi⁶² deny the death of Mary. Jugie, although he does not explicitly deny the death of Mary, weakens the arguments in its defense by treating the matter as a historical rather than a theological question. Since, as he maintains, there is no direct revelation of the death of Mary and since the first six centuries of the Church did not teach it with certainty, it is a purely historical question and not necessarily related to any revealed doctrine. Yet Jugie does not attempt to decide definitively whether Mary died or had the gift of immortality, since there is no conclusive proof for either side.⁶³

Lastly, the death of Mary is clearly denied by Roschini and Gallus, who defend her immortality by right and in fact. Roschini believes that with the proclamation of the Assumption the number of defenders of Mary's bodily immortality will gradually increase, and he sees in the Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* a further precision of the theological notion of the Assumption and a distinction drawn between the question of Mary's death and Mary's assumption. He concludes that the question of Mary's death is still an open question in theology.⁶⁴

Contrary to the foregoing opinions, we must maintain that the traditional, most common and morally unanimous opinion of theologians is that the Blessed Virgin truly died. It is not, as Jugie maintains, a purely historical question, but one which is immediately

connected with the revealed truths concerning original sin and the general economy of the redemption of the human race.⁶⁵ Therefore the question of the Virgin's death is not a matter of opinion nor a pious belief which can be disputed freely; it is a firm and consistent teaching which should be venerated for its antiquity.

Billuart and Novato state that Mary's death is *certissima*;⁶⁶ Lepicier and Janssens, while defending Mary's immortality *de jure*, consider her death *theologicè certissima*;⁶⁷ Merkelbach and Aldama maintain that this teaching is *totaliter certa*;⁶⁸ and the same is true of the majority of theologians. This affirmation of Mary's death is in no way weakened by the proclamation of her assumption, according to the testimony of Filograssi.⁶⁹

Magisterium of the Popes. Pope Pius XI, in his solemn allocution on the occasion of a beatification ceremony in 1933, made specific reference to the death of Mary and noted that there was in her, "not the grace of creation but the grace of redemption, which did not confer on her a true and proper immortality."⁷⁰

Pope Pius XII, in defining the assumption of the Blessed Virgin, prescind from the question of her death in the formula of the definition itself. But did he prescind from it in the expository part of the Apostolic Constitution? Roschini and Gallus maintain that not only is there no reference to Mary's death in the Mass of the Assumption or in the Constitution when the Pope speaks in his own name, but even when he cites documents which do refer to Mary's death, he does not offer the teaching as his own but as that of another.⁷¹

However, the majority of theologians maintain that *Munificentissimus Deus* affirms the death of the Blessed Virgin. In the first place, many passages of the Apostolic Constitution refer to the preservation of Mary's body from corruption. Now it is certain that corruption is a consequence of death, although absolutely speaking it should be noted that "the exemption, as Gordillo says, can be effected either by death and an immediate resurrection or by exemption from death itself."⁷²

Secondly, numerous passages in the Constitution refer explicitly to the death of the Blessed Virgin. It states that she departed from this life (*ex hac vita decessisse*) in the same way as her Son. *L'Osservatore Romano* translated the phrase, *ex hac vita decessisse*, as *Maria*

sia morta, and although it is true that the Latin phrase does not strictly require that translation, it is surely necessary to translate it thus in accordance with the context, since it is stating that the faithful, in spite of admitting without any difficulty the death of Mary, found no difficulty in defending the incorruption of her body in the tomb. On the other hand there would have been no need whatever of suggesting a possible difficulty in this regard if Mary had never died.

And if it be further objected against the above statement that Mary did not die in the same manner as her Son, that is, of a violent death, the answer is easy. If Christ left this world by a violent death and Mary left it without dying, but was carried by angels to heaven, then in no sense could the Apostolic Constitution have stated that Mary left this life the same way that Christ did.

Theologians dispute whether in the passage in question the Pope was giving his own opinion or merely stating the belief of the faithful. Bonnefoy, Cuervo and Quera maintain that the Pope was affirming in his own name that Mary truly died.⁷³ Filograssi and Aldama, on the other hand, believe that the Pope was merely referring to the belief of the faithful.⁷⁴ But in either case the Pope has by his statements strengthened the defense of the belief in Mary's death. Later in the same Apostolic Constitution, when the Holy Father is speaking in his own name, he states that Mary's body was preserved from the corruption of the grave and that she conquered death in the same way that her Son conquered it, although it must be admitted that even here the Pope does not state explicitly that Mary died. However, her Son conquered death by dying and therefore it would be difficult to interpret the Pope's meaning in any other way than that Mary also died.

Lastly, the Apostolic Constitution cites numerous documents of tradition, among them the *Gregorian Sacramentary* of the Roman liturgy, a *Meneus* of the Byzantine liturgy and many texts from the Fathers and theologians, all of which refer to the Assumption and admit the death of Mary without reservations. While they are cited as proofs of the faith of the Church in the Assumption, in the historical sense in which they are used they are also valuable corroboration of the death, incorruption and resurrection of Mary.⁷⁵ *The Fathers*. St. Ephrem states explicitly that Mary was a virgin

all her life and died a virgin.⁷⁶ St. Augustine says: "Mary, daughter of Adam, died because of sin."⁷⁷ The meaning to be attached to this utterance has been explained previously. St. John Damascene points out that as her Son did not refuse to die, neither did she.⁷⁸

St. Andrew of Crete: "She who made heavenly the dust [of the earth] laid aside the dust [of the earth]; she put aside the covering which she received through generation and returned to the earth what is of the earth."⁷⁹

St. John of Thessalonica says that the all-glorious Virgin Mother of God, after spending some time with the apostles until they, by command of the Holy Spirit, had spread throughout the world to preach the gospel, left the earth by a natural death.⁸⁰ Michael Glycas and Nicholas Cabasilas also testify to Mary's death.⁸¹

St. Epiphanius does not deny the fact of Mary's death, but only affirms that there is nothing in Scripture to prove it. Baronius says of St. Epiphanius that he was writing against the heretics who were calumniating the most holy and immaculate Virgin with sins of the flesh, and in his ardor he stated that Sacred Scripture does not even say whether she died.⁸²

The Liturgy. Mary's death is affirmed in the old Mass of the Assumption: "Venerable to us, O Lord, is the festivity on which the holy Mother of God suffered temporal death, but still could not be kept down by the bonds of death, who has begotten Thy Son our Lord incarnate from herself."⁸³

Theological Argument. 1) It was fitting that Mary, in order to conform herself to her Son, should undergo death, and thus through death pass to glory, so that the Mother would not seem greater than the Son.

2) The truth of the Incarnation is better confirmed by Mary's death, for if it was fitting that Christ die to confirm faith in the Incarnation, it was also fitting that Mary leave this life by dying with regard to the law of the flesh; otherwise the suspicion might be admitted that He was not truly a human being because He was born of an immortal woman.

3) Moreover, Mary was constituted by God as a co-operator with Christ in the work of human redemption. But because the redemption of the human race was realized through Christ's death, it was fitting that the Blessed Virgin be associated in death with the death of Christ, since God willed that in the present economy of salvation the

congruous satisfaction of Mary, united to the condign satisfaction of Christ, should concur in the salvation of men.⁸⁴

THESES: The Blessed Virgin died of an ecstasy of love, ardent longing and intense contemplation of heavenly things.

Some authors, referring to the prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:35): "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce," attributed to Mary a martyr's death. St. Isidore makes mention of them, and is hesitant himself as to whether the words imply the sword of real martyrdom.⁸⁵

But Mary died neither as a martyr nor by any other violent death because, as St. Ambrose says: "Neither does the text of Holy Writ nor history teach that Mary left this life through the sufferings of physical violence; for not the soul, but the body is pierced by a material sword."⁸⁶

God did not wish that Mary's purest body be touched by scourges, nor that the virginal flesh from which He himself had taken His should be mistreated by impious hands. Hence Baronius states that those who teach that the Blessed Virgin died a violent death are not held by the Catholic Church.⁸⁷

Nor did Mary die of disease or old age, because no sickness afflicted Mary and it is a constant tradition that she did not leave this life in old age.⁸⁸

St. Peter Damian,⁸⁹ writing to the hermits who were not observing a fast on the vigil of the Assumption, believes that Mary died of pain, as did the Savior Himself. But this opinion is exclusively singular and does not agree with what is frequently said of Mary, namely, that she was conceived without sin, she conceived and gave birth without corruption, and she died without pain.

Theologians commonly assert that Mary died as a consequence of her ardent love of God, her desire to be united to Him and the ecstasy of the highest contemplation.

St. Jerome describes Mary's love of God and her desire for heavenly beatitude very beautifully in his *Epistola ad Paulam et Eustochium de Assumptione* B.M.V. If, as he says, Mary's soul burned so intensely with divine love and with each moment became inflamed with new celestial love and desires, we cannot wonder that, absorbed in them, she would be more and more alienated from her body, and finally would be loosed from it by death. Suárez says that it can happen that

the mind is engaged in these acts so earnestly and intensely as to abandon the body, so that gradually its powers relax and fail, and at last they are so weakened that the soul can be no longer retained in the body.⁹⁰

The Abbot Gueric shows Mary weakened through love and saying: "I languish more by the impatience of love than by the suffering of pain; wounded more by love than overwhelmed by infirmity."⁹¹

St. Albert the Great explains that higher movements impede the lower and nature inclines toward the flesh and the body, but charity inclines from the body to Christ, as the Apostle says to the Philippians (1:23): "Indeed I am hard pressed from both sides, desiring to depart and to be with Christ." Therefore, this inclination can be such that it can separate the soul from the body and thus one dies of love. Moreover, whatever is capable of producing languor, if it is prolonged and intensified, can produce death. But love can induce languor; therefore, it can also produce death, according to the Canticle of Canticles (2:5): "Because I languish with love." Hence we may conclude that The Blessed Virgin died of love and without pain.⁹²

This death from love and contemplation of divine things is also taught by Denis the Carthusian, Thomas of Villanova and, most beautifully, by Bossuet.⁹³

Although Mary, during her whole life, burned with ardent charity, nevertheless, after the ascension of her Son, her love was so great that it can be said that she reposed with her Son and lived in heaven rather than on earth, as testified by St. Augustine and St. Thomas of Villanova. In virtue of this divine love and the desire for heavenly things with which she was consumed, Mary's mind was in a continual rapture and transported by God to the contemplation of divine truth by imaginative visions, as in the case of St. Peter (Acts 10:10), and by intelligible effects, as in the case of David (Ps. 115:2).⁹⁴

Raptures and ecstasies of this kind are compatible with this mortal life, because not only do they not destroy the union of body and soul, but they do not exclude the conversion to imaginary species nor transport the senses. St. Francis de Sales says: "So the most holy Mother, having nothing in her which hindered the operation of the divine love of her Son, was united to Him in an incomparable union, by gentle ecstasies, without trouble or travail, ecstasies in which the sensible powers ceased not to perform their actions, without in any way dis-

turbing the union of the spirit, as again the perfect application of her spirit did not much divert her senses." 95

With the arrival of that day so greatly longed for by Mary, the day on which God was pleased to crown her vehement love and to take her from this exile, the Virgin Mother of God, was carried off in a most sublime ecstasy to the contemplation of the divine essence face to face; now not transitorily as she had enjoyed it on occasions during her mortal life, but for all eternity.

But the permanent vision of the divine essence demands a total alienation and abstraction of the senses. The latter can occur in two ways: 1) all actual conversion or attention to phantasms and sensible objects disappears from the soul; 2) the connatural disposition to the aforesaid conversion disappears, which cannot happen except through corporeal death. For a transitory vision of the divine essence the first abstraction suffices, which does not involve death and is obtained miraculously through divine power, as if the body, through the violence of a greater force, were raised above the state it ought to occupy according to its nature.⁹⁶ But the permanent vision of the divine essence, through the light of glory (*lumen gloriæ*), cannot be realized unless there be entirely withdrawn from the soul its connatural disposition to understand through conversion to the phantasm. This cannot be entirely withdrawn except by means of the separation of body and soul; whence we conclude that this kind of divine vision carries with it the death of the body.⁹⁷

From what has been said, it seems clear that Mary's death had the character of a peaceful sleep. The great love of which Mary died was in no way accompanied by agony, anxiety, languor, weakening of the senses, or any physiological disturbances or violent movements of the affective life. St. Francis de Sales expresses this perfectly in the following words: "Generally speaking, the saints who died of love felt a great variety of accidents and symptoms of love before it brought them to death; many sudden movements, many assaults, many ecstasies, many languors, many agonies; and it seemed that their love with many renewed efforts brought forth their blessed death. This happened on account of the weakness of their love, not yet absolutely perfect, which could not continue its loving with an even fervor. But it was quite otherwise with the most holy Virgin. . . . Thus the divine love grew at each moment in the virginal heart of our glorious Lady, but by

sweet, peaceable and continuous growths, without any agitation, or shock, or violence." 98

With reason, St. John Damascene, in his homily on the Dormition, calls her passing from this world not death, but a sleep, a pilgrimage. Accordingly, Garriguet concludes that her death was like the close of a beautiful night; it was a sweet and peaceful slumber, it was less the end of life than the dawn of a better existence. The Church has used a very charming word to describe it; she calls it the Dormition of the Virgin.⁹⁹

THESES: *Mary died and was buried at Jerusalem.*

Two places claim the honor of being the scene of the death and burial of Mary: Ephesus and Jerusalem. Tillemont, Serry and Natalis Alexander give preference to Ephesus.¹⁰⁰ They base their opinion on the following arguments:

- 1) The Fathers of the Council of Ephesus, in a letter addressed to the clergy and people of Constantinople, stated that Nestorius was condemned in Ephesus, in which city John the apostle and Mary the Mother of God are. The word "are" (*sunt*) is not actually contained in the original text, but the meaning is clear.
- 2) Already in the fourth century there was in Ephesus a large church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and at that time it was not yet the custom to dedicate a church to any saint unless the relics of the saint were preserved there.
- 3) During the time of the Jewish War, in the year 66, or shortly thereafter, St. John retired to Asia Minor and established his residence in Ephesus, which was then the headquarters of that region. During the time of Domitian's persecution he retired to the isle of Patmos. Afterwards, during the reign of Nerva, he returned to Ephesus, and died there during Trajan's reign (98-117). But St. John, to whom Christ commended His Mother while dying, never abandoned her and brought her with him to Ephesus.¹⁰¹
- 4) Add to this the fact that in the year 1891 there was discovered near Ephesus, by some priests of the mission of Smyrna, a house which they named *Panaghia-Kapouli* (Portico of the Virgin), under the mountain of Ala-Dagh, in which house it is believed the Virgin lived and died. The structure and arrangement of the house correspond perfectly to the description which Catherine Emmerich makes in the

life of the Blessed Virgin, composed by the poet Brentano according to Catherine's revelations.¹⁰²

St. Andrew of Crete, St. John Damascene, St. John of Thessalonica, Nicephorus Callixtus, Baronius and many others believe that Mary died and was buried in Jerusalem.¹⁰³ This opinion is based on the following reasons:

1) The churches of Asia Minor and those of the neighboring provinces celebrated Easter on the day of the full moon, that is, the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan, according to Jewish custom; but the Western churches celebrated it on the Sunday after, as did the rest of the Eastern churches. And because this question of the celebration of Easter was not merely a controversy about the "day" but about the "character" of the feast of the Easter and its connection with the feast of the Jews, St. Victor, fearing that the faithful of Asia would fall into Judaizing errors, was determined not to tolerate this custom of the Asiatics. Therefore the Sovereign Pontiff advised the bishops of Asia to hold a synod with Polycrates presiding. In order to authenticate the custom of the churches of Asia, Polycrates inserted in his letter to St. Victor the names of all those who honored the churches of Asia and Ephesus, among them the name of St. John the Apostle and that of the daughter of St. Philip the Apostle, who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, also lived and died in Ephesus.¹⁰⁴ Now, if the death and burial of the Blessed Virgin Mary had occurred there, it is not likely that Polycrates would have been silent about something that would have given such honor to the Church of Ephesus.

2) It is also concluded from the letter of Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem, to Pulcheria and to Marcian, although this letter is considered as doubtful by many. Answering the solicitude of the emperors for Mary's body, he affirms that Mary died in Jerusalem and that her empty tomb was located near Gethsemane.¹⁰⁵

3) It can hardly be imagined that after the ascension of her Son into heaven, Mary would leave Jerusalem and depart from those places in Palestine which Christ had made sacred by His presence and by so many mysteries and miracles. St. Peter Canisius says that she visited those places very frequently.¹⁰⁶

Answering the reasons for the opinion that Mary died and was buried in Ephesus, we say that as regards the letter of the Council of Ephesus, incomplete as it is, it is not necessary to understand the

word "are" (*sunt*) because a variety of words could be supplied to fit into the context.

As to the second argument, the custom of erecting churches exactly where the tombs of the saints were located was not universal and absolute, because in Rome, Constantinople and various other places there were churches erected in honor of the Blessed Virgin. Moreover, Sozomen¹⁰⁷ attests that a chapel was built in honor of St. Stephen even before his body was found in Palestine.

It is also doubtful that the Blessed Virgin was in Ephesus with St. John, for we would then have to say either that St. John moved to Ephesus with Mary, but did not reside there, or that he took Mary with him to Ephesus, established his see there, and governed the churches of Asia. The first lacks all foundation; neither is it likely that St. John would take her there only to abandon her later; and even if Mary did go to Ephesus, we cannot definitely conclude that she died there. The second is even less likely, since St. John did not go to Ephesus until after St. Paul left the city, because St. Paul was the first to preach to the people of Ephesus and he appointed Timothy the first Bishop of Ephesus. Consequently, it must not be believed that St. John established his see there before the year 66 A.D., by which time Mary had already died; otherwise she would have then been eighty-five years old, which opinion is not admitted by anyone.

In the Greek *Menology* we read that after our Lord's ascension and the death of Mary, John went to Ephesus to preach the gospel, and that "Timothy was appointed the first Bishop of Ephesus during the time of the Emperor Nero and before that of St. John the Theologian. St. John came to Ephesus after the dormition of the Mother of God."¹⁰⁸

Although it was true that St. John died at Ephesus and was buried in the hill of Ajasoluk, where Emperor Constantine erected a large basilica in his honor, which was later enlarged by Justinian, and although there existed at Ephesus the Church of St. Mary, in which the Council of Ephesus was held, there is no reason to conclude that the Council of Ephesus was held, there is no reason to conclude that Mary died and was buried there. *Panaghia Kaupoli* is perhaps nothing more than a reproduction of the house in which Mary lived at Jerusalem.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the portico, the chapel and the bedroom in which Mary is said to have died are pointed out, but nothing is said about her tomb. Finally, the revelations of Catherine Emmerich, which are

contrary to the revelations of the Venerable Mary of Agreda on this point, are hardly worthy of credence, for it is suspected that the poet Brentano, wishing to color her revelations artistically, added to them from his own creative mind and from archaeological and geographical sources.

THESIS: Mary's age at death is not known for certain.

Among the various opinions on this subject, there are two principal ones. Cedrenus, Castro, St. Peter Canisius, Suárez and others maintain that Mary died when she was seventy-two years old.¹¹⁰ The reason alleged by Canisius is that it was fitting that the Blessed Virgin live some years after the ascension of her Son because the growing Church was too weak to endure the cruel persecutions which were approaching and needed the support, light and assistance of Mary, whose sweet presence would give comfort in tribulation, enlightenment in teaching, and strength and courage in battle.

Others, such as Evodius, Callixtus, St. Antoninus and Baronius, who cites the authority of Eusebius, Denis the Carthusian and many others, attribute to Mary a shorter life.¹¹¹ They believe that Mary left this world when she was fifty-nine or sixty years of age, or sixty-three at most.

With such a variety of opinions, it is best to conclude with the words of Pope Benedict XIV: "In these controversies concerning the year and place of the Blessed Virgin's death, we follow no opinion and are content to indicate and enumerate the arguments on which they are based. We repeat only one thing, and it is that the Blessed Virgin left this life, that her soul was separated from her body, and that immediately or with a minimum of delay she enjoyed not only the beatific vision, but was elevated to heaven and was exalted above all the angelic choirs."¹¹²

THESIS: The prodigies reported at the death of Mary are not certain.

Among the prodigies which are said to have occurred at the death of Mary, these principal ones must be mentioned: 1) that the day of her death was announced to her by an angel; 2) that Christ was present as she was dying, accompanied by legions of angelic choirs; 3) that the apostles, who had been scattered throughout the world, gath-

ered together in Jerusalem to be witnesses of Mary's death and to honor her remains by their presence; 4) that Mary's body was placed in the sepulchre by St. Peter and the rest of the apostles, and by other men remarkable for their sanctity, such as Hierotheus, Timothy and Dionysius the Areopagite.

That the day of Mary's death was announced to her by an angel is affirmed, among others, by Simon Metaphrastes, Epiphanius and Callixtus.¹¹³ Denis the Carthusian agrees with this opinion, recalling that the Rule of St. Bernard states that in Mary were all the charisms which were bestowed separately to others. He then adds that if our Lord predicted the day of their death to Peter and John and many of the saints such as Cyprian, Antoninus, Martin and Benedict, why would He not do likewise for Mary, as a sign of His love and by reason of her holiness?¹¹⁴

That Christ attended Mary's death with a multitude of angelic choirs is taught by many ancient writers such as St. Gregory of Tours, St. Epiphanius, St. John Damascene, Callixtus, St. Anselm and Amadeus of Lausanne.¹¹⁵

Also, many writers such as St. Gregory of Tours, John, Bishop of Thessalonica, St. John Damascene, Simon Metaphrastes and Callixtus affirm that the apostles, who were scattered throughout the world, were assembled at Mary's death.¹¹⁶ With regard to the way the apostles came together in Jerusalem to be present at Mary's death, Turriano¹¹⁷ believes that this could be explained by saying that Mary's approaching death was announced to them by revelation and that many of them were not too far away and could arrive in twelve, fifteen or twenty days. Nevertheless, although it is said that the apostles arrived in Jerusalem through the air or on clouds, Castro believes that by no means can it be denied that they were present at Mary's death since it is authorized by so many remarkable men who have handed it down to us.¹¹⁸ However it happened, miraculously or otherwise, Canisius maintains that it was a work of divine grace, in which Christ showed in an excellent way His care and love for His Mother.¹¹⁹

That Mary's body was carried to the tomb by Peter, as Pope, and by the rest of the apostles and other men illustrious for their sanctity, is related by John of Thessalonica.¹²⁰

These and other similar events concerning the death and passage of Mary, referred to by St. Andrew of Crete, St. John of Thessalonica,

St. John Damascene, Metaphrastes, Callixtus and many other Greek writers seem to be taken from apocryphal books such as *De transitu Mariae* by pseudo-Meliton, which was condemned by a decree of Pope Gelasius; from the treatise *De dormitione Deiparae*, attributed to St. John the Evangelist; from the book *De transitu Sanctae Mariae*, and others, in which truths are mixed with statements contrary to the Catholic sense. Hence, many Latin writers have attacked the value of those books, for as Bede points out, they are at times openly contradictory to the writings of Luke and Paul.¹²¹ Baronius also attacks the apocryphal books on the death of Mary and quotes Gelasius, Bede and others.¹²²

Quite fittingly, then, the Church never proposed as certain the ancient tradition on the manner and circumstances of Mary's death. It is not easy to distinguish what is historical and what is legendary, yet no one can doubt that many historical and even theological truths are contained in the apocryphal works.¹²³

THESIS: *Mary was not subject to the corruption of the tomb.*

We must distinguish, as we have already said, between death and the corruption of the tomb, because the first can take place without the second, as happened in Christ's death. On the other hand, some theologians insisted too strongly on this distinction because for them the corruption of the tomb and the return of the human body to dust, and not death, was the punishment of sin. Thus, Vega and other moderns like Müller say that the death which totally corrupts the body and converts it to dust is the punishment of sin; and after citing the words of St. Peter Damian, who describes the corruption of the tomb, he adds that Mary was exempt from death as a penalty of sin because her death was not the result of sin and therefore she did not undergo corruption or decomposition.¹²⁴ We cannot understand how this can be stated when in the present historical order both death and the corruption of the tomb are, according to Genesis (2:17 and 3:19), a punishment of original sin.

The bodily incorruption of the Blessed Virgin can be considered either before the Assumption or from the moment of that event. It is *de fide* that from the moment of the Assumption her body was incorruptible, since that is a quality of the glorified body. That she was incorruptible in body before the Assumption is the hypothesis of

those who maintain that she had the gift of bodily immortality and therefore never died. But if, as we believe, Mary truly died and then rose again, it is *theologically certain* that her body remained incorrupt for the brief space of time that it rested in the tomb. This last is the morally unanimous teaching of the Fathers of the Church since the sixth century and of modern theologians as well as the pious belief of the Christian people. The Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* thus states:

These two privileges are most closely bound to one another. Christ overcame sin and death by His own death, and the man who is born again in a heavenly way through baptism has conquered sin and death through Christ Himself. Yet, according to His general rule, God does not will to grant the full effect of the victory over death to the just until the end of time shall have come. So it is that the bodies of even the just are corrupted, and that only on the last day will they be joined, each to its glorious soul.

Now God has willed that the Blessed Virgin should be exempted from this general rule. She, by an entirely unique privilege, completely overcame sin by her Immaculate Conception, and as a result she was not subject to the law of remaining in the corruption of the grave, and she did not have to wait until the end of time for the redemption of her body. . . .

Hence the revered Mother of God, from all eternity joined in a hidden way with Jesus Christ in one and the same decree of predestination, immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood, the noble associate of the divine Redeemer who has won a complete triumph over sin and its consequences, was finally granted, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved free from the corruption of the tomb and that, like her own Son, having overcome death, she might be taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the ages.¹²⁵

Sacred Scripture. In Genesis (3:15) God promised that He would place enmity between the serpent and Mary and that Mary would not be conquered by the infernal spirit, but that she would conquer him. Now Mary's victory over the serpent is a victory over sin and death; not over death itself, as a separation of soul and body (for Christ died and conquered death by dying), but a victory over the permanent dominion of death through corruption. Indeed, bodily corruption

would have been a dishonor to her eminent dignity and would have served no purpose in her work as co-redemptrix.

In Luke 1:28 it is said that the angel greeted Mary, calling her "full of grace." If she had suffered corruption, she would better be called lacking in grace. Pope Alexander III states: "Mary conceived without losing her virginity, gave birth without pain, and left this world without corruption, because according to the words of the angel, or rather of God through the angel, she was full of grace, not partly full."¹²⁶

The Fathers. St. Andrew of Crete: "As the womb of her who brought forth the Redeemer remained ever uncorrupt, so likewise her dead body never perished. O admirable thing! Her birth escaped all corruption, and her grave did not admit that final corruption after death."¹²⁷

St. Germanus of Constantinople: "How could the corruption of the flesh have reduced to dust and ashes you who had liberated the entire human race from corruption through the flesh which He who was born of you took from you?"¹²⁸

The common belief of the faithful

Christ's faithful, through the teaching and the leadership of their pastors, have learned from the sacred books that the Virgin Mary, throughout the course of her earthly pilgrimage, led a life troubled by cares, hardships, and sorrows, and that, moreover, what the holy old man Simeon had foretold actually came to pass, that is, that a most sharp sword had pierced her heart as she stood under the Cross of her divine Son, our Redeemer. In the same way, it was not difficult for them to affirm that the great Mother of God, like her only-begotten Son, had actually passed from this life. But this in no way prevented them from believing and from professing openly that her sacred body had never been subject to the corruption of the tomb, and that the august tabernacle of the Divine Word had never been reduced to dust and ashes (*Munificentissimus Deus*).

The Liturgy. This prayer is found in the ancient liturgy for the day of Mary's assumption: "Sacred to us, O Lord, is this day's festival, whereon the Holy Mother of God suffered death for a time, and yet could not be imprisoned by death's bonds, because she had brought forth Thy Son, our Lord."¹²⁹

Theological Argument. 1) Although the Blessed Virgin died and

the natural consequence of death is the corruption of the human body, the death of Mary was not followed by corruption and bodily decomposition. The reason for this is that we cannot attribute to Mary's death anything that would detract from her motherhood of God. Rather, her death was glorious and meritorious for her and profitable and exemplary for us, in imitation of the death of Christ. It was for her an increase in the riches of grace and glory, and for us, consolation and instruction, especially in our struggle with death. The decay and corruption of the tomb can never be meritorious and honorable for us, but only an opprobrium of the human state.

2) Mary died so that she would resemble her Son who had also died. This likeness and conformity demand that just as the sacred flesh of Christ did not suffer the corruption of the tomb, so neither would Mary, who in a certain way is the flesh of Christ.

3) Christ, the best of sons, never ceased honoring His Mother. He showed this clearly, not only while on earth, but particularly while dying on the cross. The respect of the Son for His Mother required that He free her from all dishonor, such as corruption of the body after death, just as He miraculously honors many saints.

4) Moreover, the array of privileges with which Mary was honored demands her preservation from the corruption of the tomb. 1) The immaculate conception demands it, for Salmerón says that if her motherhood demanded exemption from original sin, it also demanded exemption from corruption after death.¹³⁰ 2) Mary's spotless virginity both of mind, which was never stained by a bad thought, and of body, which Christ did not injure at birth, but preserved and consecrated, likewise demanded it. If then Mary always preserved the purity of her soul immaculate and the physical integrity of her body inviolate in conceiving and giving birth to Christ, she should not be subject to the corruption of the body and the ignominy of corruption after death. 3) Finally, as Denis the Carthusian argues, if the all-powerful Christ could preserve His Mother intact, freeing her from the corruption of the grave; if, as all-knowing, He knew the manner of doing this; if He wished, as all-good, to give evidence by this last privilege, of His respect and solicitude for His Mother; who can doubt that Mary would receive this grace?¹³¹

CHAPTER SIX

Mary's Gifts of Body and Soul

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THREE GIFTS and prerogatives which at once refer to Mary's body and soul will be studied in this chapter, that is, the beauty of her body and soul, her perpetual virginity both of soul and body, and her assumption and glorification in heaven.

Mary's Beauty

Observations. That is subjectively beautiful whose perception is pleasing; that is objectively beautiful which possesses the qualities which make a thing beautiful and cause the pleasure or delight which the soul feels in its contemplation. St. Thomas points out three elements of beauty: *integrity* or perfection of the object, since those things which are defective are by that very fact ugly; *due proportion* or harmony, since what is disordered does not delight but disgusts; and brightness or *clarity*, so that the integrity and proportion of the object are proposed clearly to the eyes of the body and of the mind, and from this knowledge follows delight.¹ Hence, for St. Thomas beauty is the splendor of the form shining through the proportioned parts of matter or various powers or actions, and for St. Augustine it is the splendor of order.

There is a twofold beauty: that of the body and that of the soul, or material beauty and spiritual beauty, according as its constitutive notes are in material and corporeal things or in incorporeal and spiritual things. These notes are found in beauty, not univocally, but analogically, according to the diverse species of sensible and spiritual beauty. Hence, Dionysius says: "A man is beautiful by reason of the due perfection in the size and proportion of the members of his body and a certain clarity of color. In like manner with all other things,

because each one is called beautiful so far as it has spiritual or corporeal splendor according to its class and so far as it has due proportion."²

As the material and spiritual in man are intimately united and mutually influence each other, it is not to be wondered at that the spiritual beauty derived from the soul redounds to the body. St. Thomas expressly asserts this of the elect after the resurrection, maintaining that in them the splendor spoken of in Scripture (Matt. 13:43) will be caused by the redundance of the glory of the soul in the body. This same also holds with respect to wayfarers, maintaining due proportion, and especially in those in the state of grace, as Savonarola so excellently explains when he treats of the beauty of sanctifying grace.³

THESES: Mary was extremely beautiful both in body and in soul.

Sacred Scripture. Canticle of Canticles (4:1): "How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou!" In verse seven of this Canticle we read: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee." The Book of Wisdom (7:29) says: "For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars. Being compared with the light, she is found before it." These passages are usually applied to Mary.

Many women praised in the Old Testament for their beauty give us an idea of Mary's incomparable beauty: Rebecca, of whom we read in Genesis (24:16): "An exceeding comely maid, and a most beautiful virgin"; Rachel, of whom it was written (Gen. 29:17): "Rachel was well favored, and of a beautiful countenance"; Esther, in whose book we read (2:15): "For she was exceeding fair, and her incredible beauty made her appearance agreeable and amiable in the eyes of all"; and Judith, whose beauty the Assyrians admired when they said (Judith 11:19): "There is not such another woman upon earth in love, in beauty, and in sense of words."

The Fathers. Among those who praise Mary's beauty are St. Epiphanius, St. John Damascene, St. Peter Damian, St. Bernard and St. Anselm. They praise her natural beauty as above that of the cherubim and seraphim, a beauty which the sun and moon admire, adorned with all virtues, thus recognized in heaven and for which the King of heaven desired her, sending His celestial messenger from the heavens.

She is beautiful to gaze upon, lovely to contemplate, delightful to love.⁴

The *Liturgy* also celebrates Mary's beauty: "O Holy Mother of God, thou art become beautiful and gentle in thy gladness."⁵ The antiphon *Ave Regina Coelorum* proclaims her beauty over all.

Theological Argument. With regard to her bodily beauty: 1) Bodily beauty results from integrity of the same, due proportion of its members and clarity of color. Now Mary did not have a deformed body, but one naturally integral, a body which was admirably proportioned and illuminated by both a sensible and spiritual light or clarity.⁶

2) The Blessed Virgin, as was said before, was very like her Son. Now Christ was handsome, according to Psalm 44:3: "Thou art fairer than the sons of men." St. Albert the Great states that the nobility of the body depends on the nobility of the soul and as Mary's soul was the most noble after that of Christ, so also was her body most beautiful among the daughters of men and had the most supremely perfect body that nature could produce, after that of Christ.⁷

3) Finally, Mary's corporal beauty should be very eminent for various reasons: a) Through the efficient cause, since although she was conceived by her parents Joachim and Anne, nevertheless, St. Jerome says that the hand of the omnipotent God works in the maternal womb and He is Himself the Creator of body and soul.⁸ Since God had chosen Mary as His Mother from all eternity, He certainly would have adorned her with all beauty. b) Through the material cause, because, as Morales says: "Mary descended from the noblest race and from such select ancestors that there is no reason for doubting that she would be anything but very beautiful in body and more noble than can be described."⁹ We may add that in order to conceive Mary, St. Anne was miraculously cured of her sterility and also that Joachim's generative power was strengthened; gifts which though natural, nevertheless were given miraculously and are precious because God's works are perfect. c) By reason of the formal cause, Mary received a most perfect soul, and this soul demanded a very perfect and beautiful body. d) By reason of the material cause, since of her would be born the Son of God and she would have to surpass all others in perfection and beauty.¹⁰

With regard to her spiritual beauty: 1) This beauty consists particularly in sanctifying grace and its accompaniment of the virtues,

supernatural gifts, and the perfect harmony between her faculties and the interior powers of soul. Now Mary was full of sanctifying grace and adorned with a rich variety of all of the virtues, gifts, and divine favors, and she likewise enjoyed a wonderful conformity of all of her faculties and interior powers, with no deviation whatsoever.¹¹

2) All of the elements making up beauty (integrity, proportion and clarity), which we admire in corporal beauty, are also analogically becoming to the beauty of grace. Grace possesses *integrity* because it is a supernatural reality which makes nature deiform and capable of working on both a human and a divine plane; it has *proportion* because it resides in us after the fashion of a nature, and the virtues and gifts that flow from grace serve to perfect and elevate our natural faculties and powers; and it possesses *clarity* because, as the Council of Trent states in the *Catechism*, it is a splendor and a light which cleanses the stain from our souls and makes them more beautiful and luminous. Besides, as Mary abounded in sanctifying grace and in a variety of all the virtues, gifts and heavenly favors, so also did she shine with a supreme spiritual beauty.¹²

3) Finally, the closer the creature is to God, the fountain of all beauty, the more he is illumined, as we read in Psalm 33:6: "Look to Him that you may be cheered." And so Chislieri says that we approach God for the sole motive of being conformed to Him through our holiness of life; and who among pure creatures can be said to be nearest to God than Mary, who is holier and more beautiful than all, having no stain whatever?¹³

THESES: The brilliance of spiritual beauty illuminated Mary's countenance.

Denise the Carthusian says that Mary's interior dispositions were reflected outwardly on her countenance as her interior gifts and graces were increased.¹⁴ Gerson also gives evidence of Mary's clarity, simplicity, honor and goodness. He maintains that even those envious of her will say that the Lady is worthy of being the Empress of the whole world and of being crowned its Queen.¹⁵

This splendor of countenance was given to some of the saints, either during prayer or as a permanent quality. Thus, if through his pact and relationship with God, the face of Moses shone with such a lively splendor that the children of Israel could not gaze upon his

face, and he had to cover it with a veil in order to speak to them (Exod. 34:29-35), how can this be denied to Mary whose intimacy with God was so great and was so submerged in the abyss of divine light? Thus Mary resembled Christ, whose face shone as a ray of divinity, drawing all souls through love, as happened to Matthew, who fearlessly abandoned his business, moved only by a word, and attached himself to Christ.¹⁶ Mary too, by the majestic beauty of her countenance, by a certain celestial splendor which illuminated it, and by the interior harmony of her soul revealed exteriorly, won the love of all who gazed upon her.

It is concluded from what has been said, that Mary truly bears the banner of beauty, because God enriched her with so many gifts of nature and of grace that, with the sole exception of her Son, the God-Man, she surpassed to an eminent degree all the beauty of creatures. For this reason St. Antoninus says that she attained to such a degree of beauty that none greater can be imagined in a rational creature.¹⁷

St. Thomas says: "The grace of sanctification not only repressed all irregular movements in the Blessed Virgin herself, but was also worked with such efficacy in others that notwithstanding the greatness of her beauty, she was never coveted by others."¹⁸

St. Thomas of Villanova sums up what has been said in a few words: "A Virgin, singularly pure and immaculate, for whom virginity had the distinctive mark of making virgins of those who gazed upon her, since hers was a virginity which produced virgins."¹⁹

Mary's Perpetual Virginity

Virginity, as Billuart says, is derived from "verdure," for just as that is called green which is not parched by excessive heat, so virginity means that the person possessing it is free from the fires of concupisence, which seem to be the consummation of the greatest bodily delight, namely, that of sensual pleasure.²⁰ Virginity may be considered in two ways: physically, on the part of the body, and this is the integrity of the flesh, never violated by lustful contact (and this is not a virtue, but a natural condition at birth, which can be lost

even against one's will); and morally, on the part of the soul, and this is a spiritual integrity, that is, the will and intention of preserving that integrity, either for a certain length of time (pre-marital virginity) or perpetually (the virtue of virginity). Hence virginity involves these two things: the integrity of the flesh and the intention of preserving it perpetually.

MARY'S CORPORAL VIRGINITY

Mary's corporal virginity can be considered before, during and after the birth of Christ. We do not treat here of Mary's virginity before Christ's conception, for it would be unbecoming, since there is so much evidence of that truth, both in the Gospel and in the prophets.

THESES: Mary was a virgin before the birth of Christ, having conceived the Lord solely through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Errors. The Jews deny Mary's glorious virginity before childbirth, considering Jesus, at least while He lived among them, simply as Joseph's and Mary's Son, conceived in the way common to all men. Therefore, after the Ascension, in order to dishonor Christ and lessen His dignity, they denied the honorableness of His origin, covering Him with the most horrible ignominy, and insulting His Mother by infamous calumny. Canisius quotes Bruno as saying that truly there was no creature the Jews hated more than this Mother and her Son. And truly they who would persecute her Son with such wicked hatred could not love His Mother.²¹

Cerinthus, Carpocrates and the Ebionites, corrupted by the Jewish ferment, maintained that Mary conceived by conjugal union with Joseph, like any other woman.

The ancient Protestants, such as Luther, Zwingli and Bucer, acknowledged the virginity of Mary as revealed by God.²² The Anabaptists are excepted, for they renewed the impiety of the Ebionites, particularly Luke Sternberger, who maintains that Christ is not the Son of God, but of Joseph. And what is more, he adds that Joseph had two or three other children by Mary.²³

There are many among the Protestants today who deny that Christ was conceived of a virgin. Nevertheless, there are some among them

who defend the virginal conception: Zahn and Grützmacher in Germany, A. Wright, H. B. Swete, C. Gore, W. Ramsay and W. Sanday in England. In America, B. Warfield is a defender of Mary's virginal conception, as is also J. Gresham Machen, who in his work, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, printed in 1930, shows himself a defender of Mary's virginal conception, though not of her perpetual virginity.

The Rationalists, rejecting *a priori* supernatural facts, also deny Christ's supernatural conception without the assistance of man. They assert that Christ's virgin birth is a story manufactured later by Christian scrupulosity, which thus exalts Jesus as the Son of God, representing Him crowned by divinity, and they attempt to explain this through Jewish influence, pagan religions and mythological legends accepted by ethnic Christians.²⁴

It is *de fide*, however, that Mary was a virgin before the birth of Christ.

Credo and Councils. The Apostles' Creed professes this truth: "Born of the Virgin Mary."²⁵

The Lateran Council, under Pope Martin I, declares that if anyone does not, in accord with the Holy Fathers, acknowledge that the holy Mother of God and ever virgin and immaculate Mary properly and truly conceived of the Holy Ghost without man's cooperation and that she engendered without corruption and after His birth preserved her virginity inviolate, let him be anathema (can. 3).²⁶

The Constitution of Pope Paul IV, *Cum quorundam*, condemns those who dogmatized "that the same most Blessed Virgin Mary is not truly the Mother of God or that she did not always retain the integrity of her virginity, that is, before birth, during birth, and continuously after birth."²⁷

The Eleventh Council of Toledo expressly defined that the conception of Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost left her virginity intact.²⁸

Sacred Scripture. The Old Testament: Mary's virginity is prophesied in Isaias (7:14): "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel." The occasion of the prophecy was that, Rasin, king of Syria, and Phacee, son of the king of Israel, were advancing on Jerusalem, and Achaz, king of Juda, knew that he could not prevail against them. In order that the discouraged king might recover his courage and decide to trust completely in God, the

Lord sent Isaias to assure Achaz that he would be successful over his enemies. After Isaias fulfilled God's command, he ordered Achaz to ask of God a sign as to his future success (v. 11). Achaz refused to do so under pretext of false piety (v. 12): "I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord." Isaias then promised, "Here ye therefore, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to be grievous to men, that you are grievous to my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (vv. 13-14).

We must now prove that this prophecy refers to Christ, the future Messiah, and to Mary, of whom the Messiah was to be born, though keeping her virginity intact. That it refers to Christ, the future Messiah, and to His Mother, is shown both positively and negatively. It can be proved *positively* because Emmanuel is shown as King of Juda, which land is called land and inheritance of the Lord (Isa. 14:2-25; I Kings 26:19), through whom the salvation and glory of the kingdom of Juda was awaited (8:8; 9:1-7) and through whom the enemies of the city of God, along with the offences and schemes of the same, were to be reduced to nothing by a remarkable victory (8:8-10).²⁹ Moreover, Emmanuel is described thus by Isaias (9:6-7): "For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace. His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace. He shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom: to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and forever." Indeed, the very name Emmanuel (God with us) is fulfilled most abundantly in Christ the Messiah, as are the wonderful attributes by which He is named Emmanuel. And whatever is said of His eternal kingdom cannot apply to any other but Christ, the Messiah.

The same is evident in the authentic interpretation of St. Matthew, which applies to Christ what was said by Isaias concerning the birth of Emmanuel (1:22-23): "Now all this came to pass that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, Behold the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is interpreted, 'God with us.'" It is likewise clear from universal Christian tradition and the unani-

mous consent of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church that the prophecy of Isaias applies to Christ and to Mary. St. Justin Martyr says that the words, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child," mean that the virgin would conceive in a way seemingly impossible to men, but predicted for the future by the prophetic spirit, so that when they did come to pass, men would not lack faith, but would believe them as foretold.⁸⁰

The authority of the Church also confirms this reference of Isaias to Christ and to His Mother. In 1773, Lawrence Isenbiehl, a priest of the diocese of Mentz and professor of exegesis, claimed that the words of Isaias: "A virgin shall be with child," do not refer to Christ and to His Mother, and that the word Emmanuel was not to be understood as the Messiah in either the literal sense or in a mystical sense, but that Matthew cited the text of Isaias as a mere historical note, or merely to refer to him. In the year 1779, Pope Pius VI condemned Isenbiehl's libel as containing doctrine and propositions which were false, temerarious, harmful, erroneous, and heretical.⁸¹ For this reason, Isenbiehl, in the same year, acceded to the judgment of the Sovereign Pontiff and retracted his error.

Finally, the ancient Jews as well as modern non-Catholic commentators understand this prophecy of Isaias concerning the Messiah and His Mother literally, acknowledging that it treats of the Messiah. Therefore they deny that verses 1-6 of chapter 9 were written by Isaias. But we must hold as true that the prophet Isaias is the author of the entire book, as confirmed by a decree of the Biblical Commission, June 28, 1908, and approved by the Sovereign Pontiff.⁸²

That this text refers to Christ and to His Mother can also be explained negatively. 1) The prophecy of Isaias cannot refer to Ezechias, son of Achaz, and his mother because this prophecy was made when Achaz was already reigning and he reigned for sixteen years (IV Kings 16:2; I Par. 28:1) and on his death was immediately succeeded by his son Ezechias. However, Ezechias was twenty-five years old when he began his reign (IV Kings 18:2; I Par. 29:1), and therefore Ezechias must have been nine years old in the first year of the reign of Achaz. Hence, his birth could not have been predicted as a future event. Moreover, the Queen, the wife of Achaz, could not be called *ha-alma* (virgin) for she was not a virgin; nor could Ezechias be called Em-

manuel because the Jews would have seen God manifested in him; nor did all those admirable titles fit him as a future Messiah.⁸³ Finally, neither can it be said, as later Jews affirmed, that the text of Isaias refers to the other wife of Achaz, who was younger, and to a son not known.⁸⁴

2) Nor can the text refer to Isaias' wife and his oldest son, who was already born when his father uttered the prophecy and with whom he approached the king (8:3). Moreover, it does not refer to his youngest son, born shortly afterwards, whose name was not Emmanuel but "Hasten to take away the spoils, make haste to take away the prey" (8:3). Moreover, Isaias could not call his wife *ha-alma* (virgin), for she had conceived by Isaias, nor could what was said of Emmanuel be applied to his sons.

3) Neither can the text be applied to any young woman and her son not particularly designated, as if the prophet had said that the time of liberation was so close that if the virgin (of the prophecy) conceived, salvation would have already arrived at the time of his birth, so that the son could be called "God with us." This is a perfectly arbitrary interpretation, since the prophet does not speak under any condition but makes a certain and categorical affirmation.⁸⁵

4) That the prophecy of Isaias refers, rather, to the Mother of the Messiah who was to conceive Him while preserving her virginity, appears from the use of the word *ha-alma*. The Hebrews used three words to designate a virgin: *naara*, *betthula*, and *alma*. The word *naara* often, but not always, signifies a virgin of any age, for in Deuteronomy (22:20) it means violated virginity, and in Ruth (4:12) it means a widow. The word *betthula* means a pure virgin, though she be old; it also means a widow, as in Genesis (29:16). The word *alma* means a young and gentle virgin, that is, an adolescent or a virgin in the flower of youth, intact and not known by man.

Apart from the passage cited by Isaias (7:14), the word *alma* is found only six times in Sacred Scripture⁸⁶ and it is never used in reference to married women. The first five passages refer very definitely to a young unmarried girl. The passage in Proverbs is used to designate a virgin or one who is such at least in name and in the opinion of the people.⁸⁷ From all this it is clear that, according to the manner of speaking in Sacred Scripture, the word *alma* is used to designate an

intact and single young woman; and what has been said is sufficient evidence without having to go more deeply into the etymology of the word.²⁸

Having explained this, we argue as follows: In the prophecy of Isaiah the mother of Emmanuel is called a virgin, and a virgin in an eminent way, *ha-alma*, as shown by the apposition of the Hebrew article *ha*, which is emphatic. But this virginity must necessarily be taken in *sensu composito*, so far as the virgin remains a virgin in her conception of Emmanuel, and not in *sensu diviso*, as though she were a virgin before conceiving and lost her virginity in conceiving. Therefore, Isaiah most solemnly announces an extraordinary prodigy which was to be fulfilled by God: a virgin who would conceive and bear a child, though remaining a virgin.

Finally, virginal conception and birth were a very appropriate sign by which the prophet could comfort the pious Jews in their affliction for, as Knabenbauer says, the divine power is manifested in virginal conception and birth. While the king and people seemed to think that all was lost, this prodigy was to show the faithful that nothing is impossible with God, and by that sign they could understand that their salvation was assured by God and that if necessary He would perform the greatest miracles. In pledge of such a will, virginity was proposed to them as preserved in a state in which, according to the natural order, it could not but be lost.²⁹

The New Testament. Two evangelists, St. Luke and St. Matthew, carefully refer to Christ's virginal conception, but with this difference: while in St. Matthew the angel gives Joseph to understand this mystery after Christ's conception, in St. Luke the announcement was made to Mary before she conceived Jesus. The narration of Christ's virginal conception according to St. Luke (1:26-38) is as follows:

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And when the angel had come to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." When she had heard him she was troubled at his word, and kept pondering what manner of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt con-

ceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he shall be king over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How shall this happen, since I do not know man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth thy kinswoman also has conceived a son in her old age, and she is now in her sixth month; for nothing shall be impossible with God." But Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word."

These words express most clearly that Mary was to conceive Christ, not according to the natural law, which requires male concourse, but above the natural order, that is, by the power of the Holy Spirit, who would overshadow her and keep her virginity intact in conceiving. The story of Christ's conception appears thus in St. Matthew (1:18-23):

Now the origin of Christ was in this wise. When Mary his mother had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. But Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wishing to expose her to reproach, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to thee Mary thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Now all this came to pass that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled. Behold, the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which is interpreted, "God with us."

The words of St. Matthew prove Christ's virginal conception, because it could hardly come about except through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, since no man had any part in it. Not only does the evangelist point out that Christ's conception is virginal but because it was accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit, but on concluding his narration with the words of Isaiah, he openly proclaims that Mary conceived Christ while remaining a virgin.

The Fathers. Already in the early days of the Church, the Holy Fathers unanimously attested Mary's virginity in the conception of Christ.

St. Ignatius Martyr says: "Mary's virginity was hidden from the prince of this world, as was also her offspring and likewise the death of the Lord; three famous mysteries which were wrought by God in silence."⁴⁰

St. Justin: "The words 'Behold a virgin shall be with child' mean that the virgin shall conceive without fleshly commerce. For had she admitted such commerce, she would no longer be a virgin. But the power of God effected that she conceived as a virgin and yet remained a virgin."⁴¹

St. Gregory Nazianzen: "If anyone should say that Christ passed through the Virgin as through a channel, and was not fashioned in a way that is divine, but was conceived in a human manner, he is Godless."⁴²

St. Leo the Great: "Unquestionably, therefore, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit within the womb of His Virgin Mother. She brought Him forth without the loss of virginity, even as she conceived Him without its loss."⁴³

The Liturgy frequently celebrates Mary's virginal maternity. Thus, on the octave of the Nativity the Church sings: "O wondrous exchange! The Creator of man, having assumed a living body, deigned to be born of a virgin, and having become man without man's aid, enriched us with His divinity."⁴⁴

Again, on the feast of the Annunciation the Church exclaims: "You will truly give birth to a son, but your virginity will not suffer any injury; you will become a mother and you will remain intact always."⁴⁵

Theological Argument. On the part of Christ: 1) As the natural Son of God and the Word of God, it was fitting that Christ should be born having a heavenly Father but no earthly father, lest the dignity belonging to God the Father be transferred to another. It was not fitting, says Lactantius, that the Son have two fathers, one eternal and the other temporal, for as God he has no mother in heaven and as Man he needed no earthly father.⁴⁶

2) Moreover, it was fitting that in the human generation of Christ the characteristic of the Divine Word should shine forth. But it is

proper to the word (*verbum mentale*) not to stain the virginity of the mind but to ennoble it. For this reason St. Thomas says: "The word is conceived without any interior corruption: indeed, interior corruption is incompatible with perfect conception of the word."⁴⁷ Therefore, as the Word, proceeding from the bosom of the Father, does not dishonor the Father but shows His infinite fecundity, so it was fitting that He should not dishonor the Mother of whom He was conceived in time, but that He should consecrate the virginity of His own body and that of His mother.

3) As Redeemer of the human race, Christ should not be born in the usual manner by which original sin is transmitted to men, but He should have a virgin mother, lest anyone should think that He was contaminated by the stain of sin. Hence St. Peter Canisius, applying the words of the Apostle (Heb. 7:26): "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from sinners," says that He was truly set apart by reason of His virginal conception and most pure birth.⁴⁸

4) Further, as Christ's redemption aims at man's becoming free from sin and reborn as a son of God, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, so it was fitting in Christ's temporal generation that the Virgin Mother shine as an example and model in conformity with which men in the future would grow spiritually in the Church.⁴⁹

5) Finally, in the redemption of the human race Christ is considered the new Adam, who was to repair the evil done by the first Adam. So that the first Adam would not surpass the second in splendor and privileges, it was fitting that just as the former was created from virgin earth, so also should Christ be formed of the Virgin Mother by the sole power of God.⁵⁰

On the part of Mary: 1) Since she is the Mother of God, it was fitting that she should at the same time be a virgin, so that in conceiving and in giving birth she would give a proof of the divinity of her Son. Mary as mother proves that Christ is true man, but Mary as mother and virgin proves that He is God.⁵¹

2) As co-redemptrix with Christ, Mary is the new Eve associated with Christ in the work of redemption. But just as Mary, by her immaculate conception, shows a relationship to Eve in likeness and in opposition, she does the same by her virginal maternity. The relation-

ship of likeness is shown by St. John Damascene in these terms: "As the first woman, Eve, was formed from Adam, without coition, so Mary gave birth to the new Adam outside the order of nature, though it would seem that she had conceived according to the way common to all women."⁵² The relationship of opposition is shown by Tertullian: "Eve believed the serpent, Mary believed Gabriel. The fault which the one committed by believing, the other amended by believing. But Eve at that moment conceived nothing from the devil's word. Rather, she did conceive, for the word of the devil was seed for her that she might from that time forth give birth as an outcast and give birth in pain. As a consequence, she gave birth to a devil, his brother's murderer. Mary, on the contrary, bore Him who was one day to save Israel, His brother and His murderer. God, therefore, sent down into the Virgin's womb His Word, our good Brother, to blot out the memory of that evil brother."⁵³

THESIS: *Mary preserved her virginity during childbirth.*

Errors. In the fourth century Jovinian maintained that although Mary was a Virgin in conceiving, she lost her virginity during childbirth, giving birth to her Son as does any ordinary mother. This heretic, after having lived for some time in a monastery in Milan, left and abandoned himself to every kind of sensual pleasure, so that he earned the title "Epicurus of the Christians," given him by St. Jerome.

In the fourteenth century this error was revived by the Lollards in Germany. According to them, if Mary remained a virgin after childbirth, she would have given birth, not to a man, but to an angel. This was also believed by the Anabaptists and Protestants such as Peter Martyr, Bullinger, Bucer and Beza in the sixteenth century; today it is held by the Rationalists, who say that just as Christ was conceived like the rest of men, so also was He born. But it is *de fide* that Mary's virginity was preserved during the birth of Christ.

Creeds and Councils. The Apostles' Creed, the Lateran Council, the Constitution *Cum quorundam* of Pope Paul IV, and Council XI of Toledo, mentioned in the preceding thesis, profess Mary's virginity in childbirth.

Sacred Scripture. Isaiah (7:14) states: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." The prophet not only says that a virgin will conceive, but that a virgin will bring forth, and therefore it must be

understood *in sensu composito*, that is, a virgin remaining a virgin during childbirth. It was thus understood by the Fathers, such as St. Ambrose in his letter to Pope Siricius (Ep. 42). St. Matthew (1:22), cited before, is also a proof and St. Luke (2:7) infers Mary's virginal conception by these words: "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger." Mary could not have done this had she been subject to the hardships common to other mothers.

The Fathers. From apostolic times the Fathers have unanimously affirmed, implicitly or explicitly, Mary's virginal childbirth. St. Ignatius Martyr says: "From the beginning of the world Mary's virginity was hidden, as was also her parturition and the death of the Lord; three famous mysteries which were wrought by God in silence."⁵⁴ These words prove sufficiently that there was a divine mystery involved in Mary's virginity during childbirth which was hidden from the devil.

St. Ambrose, referring to the words of Ezechiel (44:2): "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it, because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it," says: "What is this gate but Mary? And shut because she is a virgin. Mary, then, is the gate through which Christ came into this world, when He was born by a virginal birth, without loosing the bars of her virginity."⁵⁵

St. Augustine: "If her integrity was violated by His birth, then surely He was not born of the Virgin, and it would be wrong for the whole Church to profess, as it now does, that He is born of the Virgin Mary, whereas the Church itself in imitating its Mother daily begets its members, yet remains a virgin."⁵⁶

St. Leo the Great: "He was conceived of the Holy Ghost within the womb of the Virgin Mother who brought Him forth without violation of her virginity, just as she conceived Him without violation of her virginity."⁵⁷

Tertullian and Origen were accused of having denied Mary's virginity in childbirth. Even if this were true, the denial of these two writers cannot lessen the agreement of so many of the Fathers who speak without restriction of Mary's virginal birth. This is confirmed by Vincent of Lerins, who says that if one or a few of the Fathers disagree, one should compare the mind of the rest on the same matter

and judge the proposed question according to the greater majority.⁵⁸ Perhaps the discrepancy in this case can be reduced to Tertullian alone, for Newbert maintains that Origen's idea on Mary's virginity in childbirth can be summarized by using Scholastic terminology: that if he denies it materially at times, he always professes it formally.⁵⁹ In other respects we must forgive these two writers, if on zealously combatting the Docetists, who denied the reality of Christ's flesh, they went beyond the limits of truth and said rashly that Mary lost her virginity, hoping thus to prove that Christ's body was not imaginary.

The Liturgy. The liturgy celebrates Mary's inviolable virginity during childbirth in various places, for example, "For she conceived Thine only-begotten Son by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and losing not the glory of her virginity, gave forth to the world the everlasting light, Jesus Christ our Lord."⁶⁰

Theological Argument. On the part of Christ. St. Thomas says that the word is not only conceived in the mind without corruption, but also proceeds from the mind without corruption. Therefore, in order to show that the body of Christ is the body of the Word of God, it was fitting that it should be born of an incorrupt virgin. Moreover, Christ came that He might take away our corruption and it is unfitting that in His birth the Redeemer should corrupt His Mother's virginity.

On the part of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the Mother of God, but if Christ had been born as the rest of men, there would be nothing in His birth to show that He was truly God.⁶¹ Secondly, she is co-redemptrix and the new Eve; therefore, unlike Eve and her daughters, who are subject to pain and corruption through the debt of sin, Mary was exempt from all those punishments, as she was free from sin.

Corollary. How Mary's virginity was preserved intact during childbirth. It is certain that Mary gave birth to Christ as do all mothers, for Isaias (7:14) says: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son," and Luke (2:6-7) says: "And it came to pass while they were there, that the days for her to be delivered were fulfilled. And she brought forth her firstborn Son." On this point, Durandus has a unique opinion. He rightly agrees as to Mary's virginity during childbirth, but because he believes that it is not possible for two bodies to be

present penetratively in the same place, he draws conclusions that do not correlate with Mary's most perfect virginity in childbirth. Theologians commonly reject the opinion of Durandus. Vázquez considers it as bordering on heresy, and Medina judges it as dangerous, if not heretical; and both assert that Christ was born of a virgin, miraculously, without pain or diminution of her virginal integrity.

The Fathers, particularly St. Fulgentius and St. Peter Chrysologus, not only deny that Mary's integrity was diminished in childbirth, but maintain that it was increased.⁶² The Fathers and Doctors also use the star to exemplify Mary's virginal motherhood; for as a star emits rays of light without any corruption of itself, so the Blessed Virgin gave birth to her Son without any corruption to her integrity.⁶³

As regards the possibility of the compenetration of two bodies or their simultaneous presence in the same place, the only obstacle would be the body's quantity. But the quantity by which a body occupies a place has these effects: internal extension, by which a body is extended within itself; external or local extension, by which it occupies a particular place; and impenetrability, by which one body prevents another from occupying the same place.

But the foregoing effects observe a certain subordination. Thus, internal extension is the primary and interior effect of quantity, while location in place and impenetrability are secondary and extrinsic effects which naturally follow from the first. Now, while every body is by reason of its very quantity naturally impenetrable, nevertheless since impenetrability is not the essence of quantity but only a property and secondary effect thereof, it can be suspended by divine power, just as in many miracles the effects or laws of secondary causes are suspended.

Moreover, since impenetrability is naturally posterior not only to the extension of parts in themselves, as is required by any being which is extended, but also to the extension of the parts of the body which it occupies, it is easy to deduce that impenetrability can be suspended by divine power so that it will not produce its proper effect, not only in the body itself, which is extended in itself but not effect, not only in the body of Christ in the Eucharist, but also locally (as is the case of the body of Christ in the place it occupies also in the body which is *de facto* extended in the place it occupies (as when Christ passed through the closed doors of the Cenacle). Therefore, the birth of Christ was a miracle of the divine power

whereas His passing through the closed door was due to the gift of subtility which is a property of glorified bodies.

THESIS: *Mary's virginity remained intact after childbirth.*

Suárez⁶⁴ explains that in no way was it possible to suppose that Mary lost her virginity after Christ's birth through violence, unlawful marital act or in any extraordinary way, as this would be indecorous. No heretic ever dared to attribute any of those things to Mary. Hence, the question is whether Mary voluntarily lost her virginity through the lawful marriage act.

Errors. Many heretics asserted that Mary did not remain a virgin after the birth of Christ but that, besides Jesus, she and Joseph had other children, mentioned as brothers of the Lord in the Gospel. In the third century Tertullian was accused of this error, although it is not proved for certain that he professed it. In the fourth century Mary's virginity after the birth was denied by the Apollinarianists, and in Arabia, by others whom St. Epiphanius called Antidicomarianites. Besides them, there were Jovinian, Helvidius and Bonosus, Archbishop of Sardis, who was excommunicated by Pope Siricius. In the seventh century this error began to gain entrance into Spain and was valiantly refuted by St. Ildephonse of Toledo in his treatise *De virginitate S. Mariae, contra tres infideles*. Michael Carranza believes that this book was written against three heretics who came from Gothic Gaul to Spain during the time of St. Ildephonse, and that he called them Jovinian, Helvidius and Pelagius because they taught the errors of those three.⁶⁵ Rodrigo, Archbishop of Toledo, Luke of Túy, Ambrose Morales and John Mariana mention two heretics who brought this heresy into Spain from Gaul, although they disagree as regards their names. However, it seems that in St. Ildephonse's treatise, the first heretic is Jovinian; the second, Helvidius; and the third, the Jew, not any Jew in particular, but the Jews in general.⁶⁶ In the sixteenth century this same error was revived by the Protestants and Anabaptists, such as Peter Martyr, Reisner, Bucer, Sternberger and others. Finally, in our days, the Rationalists impiously renewed the calumny of the Jews against the Blessed Virgin. However, that Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Christ is *de fide*.

Pontifical Documents and Councils. In his letter *Accepi litteras vestras*, Pope St. Siricius says to Anisius, Bishop of Thessalonica:

"Surely we cannot deny that Your Reverence was perfectly justified in repressing the teaching that Mary had other children after Jesus and you had good reason to be horrified at the thought that another birth should issue from the same virginal womb from which Christ was born according to the flesh. For the Lord Jesus would never have chosen to be born of a virgin if He had ever judged that she would be so incontinent as to contaminate with the seed of human intercourse the birthplace of the Lord's body, that court of the Eternal King."⁶⁷

Also, the Lateran Council in the time of Pope Martin I and the Constitution of Pope Paul IV, already mentioned, openly declared Mary's virginity after the birth of Christ.

Sacred Scripture. Ezechiel (44:2): "This gate shall be shut, it will not be opened, and no man shall pass through it, because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut." Although these words were literally spoken of the eastern gate of the Temple, in a typical or spiritual sense, they announce Mary's perpetual virginity, according to the common opinion of the Fathers and Catholic commentators, among whom St. Ambrose says: "What is this gate but Mary? And shut because she is a virgin."⁶⁸

St. Thomas⁶⁹ thus explains this passage of Ezechiel, according to an anonymous author: "What means this closed gate in the house of the Lord, except that Mary is to be ever inviolate? What does it mean that no man shall pass through it, save that Joseph shall not know her? And what is this that the Lord alone enters in and goeth out by it, except that the Holy Ghost shall impregnate her, and that the Lord of angels shall be born of her? And what means this that it shall be shut for evermore, but that Mary is a virgin before His birth, a virgin in His birth, and a virgin after His birth?"⁷⁰

In Luke (1:34) Mary answers the angel who announced the Incarnation: "How shall this happen, since I do not know man?" These words, as we shall demonstrate, express Mary's vow of virginity. On the other hand, if after Christ's birth she had known man, she would have sinned gravely, violating her vow of perpetual virginity.

The same is inferred from St. John (19:26): "Woman, behold thy son," by which words, Christ, while hanging on the cross, commended His Mother to John; words which would not have been spoken had Mary had other children.

Nor do the words of St. Matthew place any difficulty: "Before

they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit (1:18). . . . And he did not know her till she brought forth her firstborn son (v. 25)." The words "before," "not till," and "firstborn," seem to deny Mary's virginity after parturition, as though implying that there had been marital union between Mary and Joseph later. But there is nothing in these words which contradicts Mary's virginity after the birth of Christ.

The words "before they came together" can be understood either as dwelling together under the same roof or as conjugal cohabitation. The first means that at the time of the Incarnation, Mary and Joseph were not yet living in the same house, since the betrothed among the Jews were not brought to the husband's house until after the solemnity of the nuptials. The second, the less probable, does not offer any difficulty either, because St. Matthew, intent on proving the virginal conception of Christ, says only that Christ is not Joseph's son, without mentioning anything that followed His birth, so that from this silence nothing may be inferred. As St. Jerome observes: "From the phrase 'before they came together,' it does not follow that they came together afterwards; Holy Scripture merely intimates what did not happen."⁷¹

Nor does the phrase "not till" oppose Mary's perpetual virginity, for it simply signifies what did not occur until then, without deciding anything about a later time, for in this passage St. Matthew proposes to prove that Christ was conceived, not by male cooperation, but by the power of the Holy Ghost, without saying anything about what followed His birth, for it was not his intention to tell the story of Mary's life, but to tell the way Christ came into the world, as St. John Chrysostom maintains.⁷²

Nor is the word "firstborn" opposed to Mary's virginity after childbirth, since Christ is called Mary's firstborn, not because other children were born to her after Him, but because none but Himself was born of her. St. Jerome says that the term "firstborn" does not at all imply that Mary gave birth to more than one child, for the Scriptures frequently employ the word "firstborn" to denote a mother's first child, whether or not it was followed by any others or remained the only one.

Neither is there opposition because Sacred Scripture speaks of per-

sons as "brethren" of Christ; these were relatives of Christ and not true blood brothers.

The Fathers. St. Ambrose, Origen and St. Ildephouse are most forceful in denying that Joseph had marital relations with Mary, even calling the assertion audacious and disrespectful.⁷³

St. Peter Chrysologus, speaking against Helvidius, shows that the so-called brothers and sisters of Jesus are none other than close relations, the children of Cleopha, sister of Mary.⁷⁴

The Liturgy. The liturgy abounds in expressions such as these: "After childbirth, O Virgin, thou didst still remain a virgin undefiled."⁷⁵ "Him whom a virgin brought forth, remaining a virgin still."⁷⁶ "O Blessed Mary, Mother of God, perpetual virgin."⁷⁷

Theological Argument. St. Thomas enumerates four arguments of convenience in defense of Mary's virginity after childbirth:

- 1) on the part of Christ, the Only-begotten, the firstborn of God, perfect in every respect, who should be the only-begotten of Mary;
- 2) on the part of the Holy Ghost, who overshadows her womb, and it would be unbecoming that it should be desecrated by intercourse with man;
- 3) on the part of Mary, the Mother of God, who would seem ungrateful were she not content with such a Son and were she, of her own accord, by carnal intercourse to forfeit that virginity which had been miraculously preserved in her;
- 4) on the part of St. Joseph, in whom it would have been extreme presumption to attempt to violate her whom by the angel's revelation he knew to have conceived of the Holy Ghost.⁷⁸

Corollary. *The brothers and sisters of Christ, mentioned in the New Testament.*

Sacred Scripture frequently makes mention of Christ's "brethren." St. John (2:12): "After this (the marriage at Cana) He went down to Capharnaum, He and His Mother, and His brethren, and His disciples"; Matthew (13:55-56): "Is not this the carpenter's Son? Is not His Mother called Mary, and His brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? And His sisters, are they not all with us?"; Luke (8:19): "Now His Mother and brethren came to Him; and they could not get to Him because of the crowd"; Acts (1:14): "All these with one mind continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary,

the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren"; and I Corinthians (9:5): "Have we not a right to take about with us a woman, a sister, as do the other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"

The names "brother" and "sister" are often used in Sacred Scripture in a broader sense. Thus Lot, who was the son of Abraham's brother (Gen. 12:5), is called a brother of this patriarch (Gen. 13:8). Jacob is called the brother of Laban, his uncle (Gen. 29:15); the woman is called sister of the spouse (Cant. 4:9); men of the same tribe (II Kings 19:12) or of the same country (Exod. 2:11), are called brethren. The same occurs in the New Testament, where all Christians are called brethren (Matt. 25:40; Acts 11:26).

So Christ's brethren are only His kinsmen. St. James begins his Epistle with: "James, the servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ," and Jude begins his: "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James." In this same way patristic tradition interprets all the passages in which the brethren of the Lord are spoken of. St. Thomas teaches the same when he says: "For Scripture speaks of brethren in four senses; namely, those who are united by being of the same parents, of the same nation, of the same family or by common affection. Wherefore the brethren of the Lord are so called, not by birth, as being born of the same mother, but by relationship, as being blood-relations of His." 79

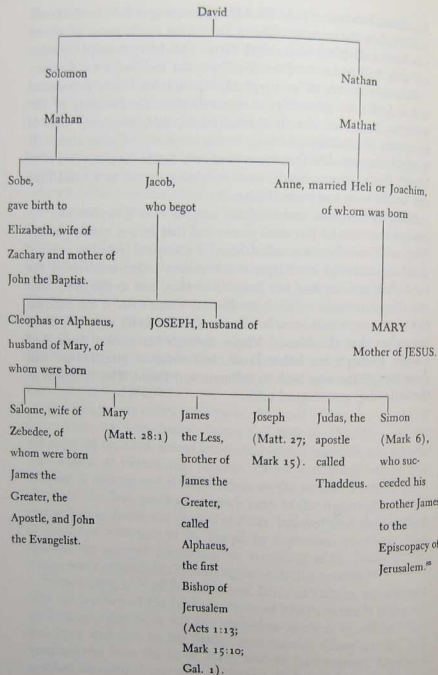
Four persons are called brothers of the Lord (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3): James the Less, Joseph, Simon and Jude or Thaddeus. As for the sisters of the Lord, Sacred Scripture does not mention any names. The degree of relationship between Christ and those called His brothers is obscure and difficult. Some of the ancient Fathers, principally in the East, placing too much faith in the Apocryphal *Prot-evangelium of James* and *Gospel of Peter*, believed that the brothers of the Lord were sons of St. Joseph by a previous marriage. This opinion was rejected completely, for according to St. Jerome,⁸⁰ St. Joseph was a virgin.⁸¹ St. Thomas agrees with this opinion.⁸²

Some writers, such as St. Antoninus, Eck and Gerson, maintained that the brothers of the Lord were sons of Mary's sisters.⁸³ They actually taught that Anne was first married to Joachim, of whom Mary was born, and that on his death, Anne married Cleophas. Of this marriage was born the other Mary, who in turn married Alphaeus and had four sons: James the Less, Joseph the Just (who is also called

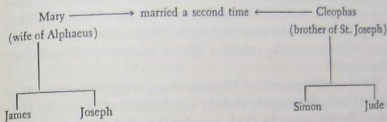
Barsabas), Simon and Jude Thaddeus. According to Eck, on the death of Cleophas, Anne married for a third time, to Salomas, of whom was born a daughter also called Mary. This Mary married Zebedee and they had two sons: John the Evangelist and James the Greater.

This opinion has to be completely rejected, for it lacks foundation and is based on general opinion rather than the authority of the ancients. Anne was already old and sterile, being over sixty years of age, when she conceived Mary, as Christopher de Castro attests. It is highly improbable that after Joachim's death (twelve years after Mary's birth), Anne would have married a second or a third time and would have had more children.⁸⁴

Many theologians and exegetes suppose that Cleophas and Alphaeus are one and the same person and that he was married to the Mary who was therefore called Mary of Cleophas (John 19:25) and of whose marriage were born the four men called brothers of the Lord. But as Cleophas was Joseph's brother, and as the Mary who was Cleophas' wife is called the Blessed Virgin's sister, the children of the former would be called brothers of the Lord, especially if we remember that the Blessed Virgin, through her mother Anne, and Joseph, through his father Jacob, had common grandfathers and ancestors all the way back to Solomon and David. This is shown in the following genealogical table:



Others hold that Jude and Simon were not born of the same parents as James and Joseph, but that Jude and Simon were sons of Cleophas by his first wife, on whose death he married the other Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, who had formerly been married to Alphaeus and by whom she had these sons. F. Prat, following Hegesippus, explains this opinion by the following diagram:



Thus we understand why the Synoptics always relate Joseph with James and Simon, why they call Mary the mother of James and of Joseph, or simply the mother of James, but not the mother of Simon or of Jude, and why St. John says that Mary (wife) of Cleophas is the sister (through affinity) of the Blessed virgin.⁸⁶

However, Suárez' observation must be borne in mind, namely, for the same reason that Joseph is considered the father of Christ, Cleophas could be considered the uncle of Christ, and his sons, Christ's first cousins.⁸⁷ St. Augustine had already said that it is not to be wondered at that some of Mary's relatives were called brothers of the Lord, just as relatives on St. Joseph's side were called His brothers by those who believed that St. Joseph was the father of the Lord.⁸⁸

MARY'S VIRGINITY OF SOUL

THESIS: *From the age of reason Mary resolved to preserve her virginity perpetually.*

Errors. Calvin and his disciples Beza and Peter Martyr, who were followed by the Centuriators of Magdeburg, taught that when Mary was chosen as the Mother of God, she remained a virgin in body rather than in soul, because in her betrothal she followed the general custom of the Jews and submitted to the power of her husband with the intention of procreating children; otherwise she would have in-

tended to deceive her husband in consenting to the marriage contract.

The Fathers. St. Ambrose exclaims: "Who is more noble than the Mother of God? Who more resplendent than she, whom Splendor Himself chose? Who is more chaste than she, who conceived a body without bodily concourse? She was a virgin not only in body, but also in soul."⁸⁹

Venerable Bede, illustrating Mary's words, "How shall this be?" says that by this she indicated her resolve to live a life of virginity. Thus, being the first woman to consecrate herself to such a degree of excellence, she merited by a singular right to be elevated above the rest of women.⁹⁰

Theological Argument. 1) Virginity of soul is more important than that of body, for virginity of body without that of soul is of little value. For this reason La Cerda says that if virginity of soul does not exist, virginity of body alone is accidental and not a virtue; the integrity is merely bodily, not a grace. The form of virginity proceeds from the soul, and virginity is not worthy of praise if it is not joined to continence of soul.⁹¹ Hence in a body violated by force, virginity remains intact, as is witnessed in St. Lucy's answer to the prefect Paschasius when he threatened to take her to a brothel: "If by your order, my virginity is violated against my will, my reward will be doubled."⁹² Hence, as Mary was to excel principally in the virtue of virginity, it is logical that just as she remained ever virgin in body, she should also be ever virgin in soul and in will.

2) Salazar says that the conception of Christ required greater incorruptibility of soul than of body, for if the purity of Christ's humanity demanded that the body which was to house Him retain its integrity before, during and after birth, with much more reason the glory of divinity required that her soul should not be stained with the slightest impurity.⁹³

3) Mary, as we have said so many times, was moved by the Holy Spirit from her infancy so that she would love and do what was better and more pleasing to God. But virginity is of itself better and more pleasing to God than its contrary, both absolutely and relatively or historically, that is, during the time of the Mosaic law. By virginity man separates himself from the cares of time to devote himself more freely to God; what is more, he is in a certain way, raised above himself, becoming a participator in the angelic nature. Thus St. John Chrysos-

tom asserts that virginity surpasses the state of matrimony as heaven surpasses earth and as angels surpass men.⁹⁴ St. Basil also extols chastity as making men like to the angels.⁹⁵

Moreover, although virginity was rarely observed among the Jews, there was no law prohibiting its observance. The words of Deuteronomy (7:14), "No one shall be barren among you of either sex, neither of men nor cattle," do not contain a precept, but the promise of a blessing. And even if those words did include a precept, the propagation of the human race during the time of the Mosaic law did not bind all in particular, but the community in general. The same is true of the words of Genesis (1:28): "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth." Nevertheless, during that time the avoidance of sterility was held as a law among the people for these three reasons: so that the lineage of the future Messiah might be conserved with more certainty; so that the worshippers of the true God would increase more and more; so that the worst vices would not stain the people.

Although virginity and consequent sterility were considered a disgrace by the Hebrews, not all sterility was disgraceful, but only conjugal sterility. Virginal sterility was praised sufficiently during the time of the Mosaic law. For this reason, Judith and Anne, after a short period of conjugal life, are praised for their chaste widowhood, just as are some notable men of that time, such as Jeremias, Elias, Eliseus and Daniel, who are said to have preserved their virginity. In the Book of Wisdom we read: "For happy is the barren; and the undefiled, that hath not known bed in sin. She shall have fruit in the visitation of holy souls" (3:13).

4) Finally, although we admit that virginity, in the spiritual sense, was weak in the Hebrew people and was held in disgrace, it redounded to the praise of the Virgin Mary who, inspired by God, was the first to embrace this virtue which in her time was rejected by Israelite custom.

THE S I S : Mary made a vow to preserve her virginity.

Errors. The Protestants, who deny Mary's resolution to preserve her virginity, reject her consecration by vow. However, in the common opinion of Catholic theologians, it is certain that Mary made a vow of virginity.

Sacred Scripture. Luke (1:31-34): "Behold, thou shalt conceive in

thy womb and shalt bring forth a son. . . . But Mary said to the angel: How shall this happen, since I do not know man?" She had by her vow made herself morally impotent.

Maldonado says that this impotency is twofold: either natural (before puberty or in advanced age) or moral (what is not lawful cannot be performed, as when a Christian says that he cannot eat meat on Friday, that is, it is not lawful to do so). Moral impotence is also twofold: by reason of a law or precept or by reason of a vow. Mary's impotence was not natural impotence but a moral impotence which was the result of a vow.⁹⁶

Speaking of this, St. Ambrose remarks: "Mary answered the announcing angel: 'How shall this be done, because I know not man?' She would not have said this unless she had already vowed her virginity to God."⁹⁷ St. Bernard understood Mary's words as her complete surrender to God; so that if it were God's will, she would break her vow in order to give birth to such a Son, if that were fitting.⁹⁸ Pope Benedict XIV does not doubt that Mary made a vow of virginity, for he believes that her answer, "How shall this happen, since I do not know man," is sufficient proof of her vow of perpetual virginity.⁹⁹

Theological Argument: 1) "Works of perfection," says St. Thomas, "are more praiseworthy when performed in fulfillment of a vow. Now it is clear that . . . virginity had a special place in the Mother of God. It was therefore fitting that her virginity should be consecrated to God by vow."¹⁰⁰

2) St. Bonaventure says that Mary's virginity had to be resplendent to an excellent degree so that she would be a worthy dwelling-place of God, because as wisdom is the splendor of eternal light and a spotless mirror incapable of receiving impurity, it was fitting that she be conceived incorruptible, and incorruption of the will consists in the vow of virginity. Also, Mary was to be an example of virginity for all women, just as God proposed Christ as an example for men; and as the vow most worthy of imitation is the vow of virginity, for this reason should Mary have made it. Further, the grace of holiness was to shine in Mary; therefore, no other virgin can surpass the Blessed Virgin Mary in this; and as the Most High loved her above the rest because of her great dignity, she had to be holier and more lovable than the rest. Hence, even excluding her maternity of God, she is

to be loved and praised above all the saints, and for this reason, the Holy Spirit, who inspires others to make the vow of virginity, would not withhold it from her.¹⁰¹

Corollary: It is certain that Mary took the vow of virginity before the Annunciation, as is evident from St. Luke (1:34): "How shall this happen, since I do not know man?" As we have already shown, these words signify the vow of virginity. It is also the common opinion that Mary took the vow of virginity before her marriage to St. Joseph.¹⁰² But the exact time that Mary made the vow before marriage cannot be determined. James Christopolitanus, Barradas, Magalanes and Garriguet maintain that Mary made her vow of virginity in the first moment of her conception, because she then had the use of reason and was enlightened by heavenly light. St. Thomas and many of his followers teach that Mary took the vow of virginity from the beginning. Suárez, Vázquez, Salmerón, Serry, Lepicier and others maintain that Mary made the vow of virginity in her youth, e.g., at the age of three when she was presented in the Temple by her parents (Salmerón), at her first deliberate act (Suárez), at a more mature age, when the first thought of virginity came to her and she pondered it (Vázquez), when she reached the age of reason (Lepicier), from the moment she began to consider virginity and the use of marriage, she made her vow through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, because she knew that this type of sacrifice was most pleasing to God (Serry). Campana and De la Broisse maintain that Mary was implicitly dedicated and consecrated to God from the first moment of her use of reason, but she consecrated herself explicitly by the vow of virginity when, pondering marriage, chastity and virginity, she understood through divine inspiration that it would be pleasing and acceptable to God if she strengthened her virginity by vow.

Amidst such a variety of opinions, it seems that one should maintain that Mary took the vow of virginity from the time she attained the use of reason, which was from the first moment of her conception.

Corollary: St. Thomas¹⁰³ and many of his followers teach that Mary made two vows of virginity: a conditional vow before her marriage to St. Joseph, and an absolute vow after her marriage. Under the Old Law, men and women were seriously concerned with the duty of begetting, because the worship of God was to be spread according to carnal generation and because the Messiah was to come

through generation. Mary made a conditional vow of virginity at first, in case God should will something else; later, when she was espoused to Joseph and knew by divine revelation that it was acceptable to God, she made an absolute vow, as did Joseph also.

Regarding this opinion of St. Thomas, Serry observes that the Angelic Doctor was misled by the supposed testimony of St. Augustine, quoted by the Master of the Sentences and by Gratian, the falsity of which St. Thomas could not have known, due to the lack of authoritative codices in his time.¹⁰⁴

St. Bonaventure, Scotus, Vázquez, Suárez, Estius, Sylvius, Serry, Billuart and others teach that Mary made an absolute vow of virginity before contracting marriage.¹⁰⁵ This opinion seems to be the one preferred because of the following reasons: 1) Mary's objection to the angel (Luke 1:34) that she knew not man would not have been made if she had only taken a conditional vow, because the message of the angel would have released her from a conditional vow. 2) The absolute vow, as firmer and stronger, is more perfect than a conditional vow; but Mary's vow was most perfect, for she was afterwards an example and model of the vow of chastity for all women. 3) A conditional vow on Mary's part would seem superfluous, since she was always submissive to God's will; also it is not in keeping with her humility to wait for a revelation by God as to the state of life she was to embrace. An absolute vow of virginity would be no obstacle to the marriage between Mary and Joseph because, as has already been said, the immediate object of the marriage contract is the fundamental right over their bodies which the man and wife give mutually. Now, joined to the consent may be the renunciation of this right, even previous to marriage, by means of the vow of virginity, either on the part of both or by one with the consent of the other; however a violation of such a vow would incur the sin of sacrilege.¹⁰⁶ 4) Lastly, it must not be forgotten that Mary's virginal marriage with St. Joseph was contracted under God's inspiration and direction and that it was therefore through divine ordination that Joseph and Mary took a vow of virginity.

THESES: *The Blessed Virgin is the first of all in the vow of virginity, both in time and dignity.*

Observations. It is one thing to practice virginity and another to

take a perpetual vow to do so. Many theologians admit that certain remarkable men like Elias, Eliseus, Jeremias, and John the Baptist preserved their virginity, but it is not evident that they vowed it. The present question concerns virginity confirmed by vow.

That Mary was the first to take the vow of virginity can be shown in two ways: either by dignity, so far as she surpasses all other virgins in the perfection of this virtue, or by reason of time, so far as no one had ever before taken this vow. This is the common teaching of the Fathers and theologians.

First Part of the Thesis

The Fathers and Theologians. St. Jerome: "Christ the virgin and Mary the virgin inaugurated the beginnings of virginity of both sexes."¹⁰⁷ St. Ambrose says that Mary raised the standard of virginity and erected for Christ the pious banner of the inviolate.¹⁰⁸ Venerable Bede says: "Truly was she called full of grace to whom was given by divine favor the privilege of being the first among women to offer to God her most glorious gift of virginity."¹⁰⁹

St. Bernard says that in Mary the holy liberty of soul surpassed the decrees of the Mosaic law and she made to God a vow of perpetual virginity of body and soul.¹¹⁰ Richard of St. Laurence states that Mary is called Virgin of virgins because she was the first among all to make the vow of virginity.¹¹¹ St. Thomas of Villanova exclaims: "O virgins, what a wonderful teacher is yours! It is not St. Augustine, nor Benedict, nor Francis, nor Dominic, nor any other holy Father who is your teacher as to how to guard your virginity. It is the holy Virgin, Mother of God, who was the first to come upon this way of life, and she has pointed it out to the children of Adam. She was the first to teach men celibacy, to live the angelic life in the flesh, imitating the purity of celestial spirits. She was the first to make a vow of virginity to God, and by her example she moved others to do the same, as it is written: 'The Queen stands at thy right hand . . . behind her the virgins, her companions, are brought in to thee.'¹¹²

Second Part of the Thesis

The Fathers. St. Ephrem refers to Mary as the crown of all virgins; St. Epiphanius, "the princess of virginity"; St. Ambrose, "standard-bearer of virgins and teacher of virginity."¹¹³ St. Peter Chrysologus praises Mary by saying: "Virgin truly happy who received the glory of the divine seed and are Queen of all chastity."¹¹⁴ Hugh of St. Vic-

tor says: "Virgin of virgins, singular for integrity, unparalleled in chastity, eminent in dignity."¹¹⁵ Richard of St. Laurence states: "Virgin of virgins, who germinates among the flowers and delights us by the delicacy of her fruit."¹¹⁶ St. Antoninus writes: "Virgin of virgins, because she surpassed all in being exempt from concupiscence, surpassed all in purity and fecundity, being the only fertile virgin."¹¹⁷

Theological Argument. Mary possesses among all virgins the palm of virginity, with regard to all the circumstances which are wont to accompany the vow of this virtue: in the intensity of the act, because Mary's vow arose from the greatest grace and love of God, in which she surpassed all the other virgins together; in duration of time, because she made the vow in the first moment in which she attained the use of reason and preserved it most perfectly until the end of her life; in firmness, because Mary's vow of virginity not only had its foundation in a most intense love of God, but was grounded on her plenitude of grace in such a way that she was free from all inordinate movements, even the slightest, and was surrounded by the resplendent gifts of the virtues which are so helpful to virginity.

Corollary. Whether Mary would have preferred virginity to divine maternity had she been given the choice of one or the other.

Some theologians such as Contenson and Lepicier maintain that if Mary had been given her choice of virginity or the divine maternity, she would undoubtedly have preferred virginity to maternity. This opinion is sometimes used by preachers to praise Mary's virginity, because, as Contenson argues, although the divine maternity is greater than virginity, nevertheless the intense love of God sometimes defers goods which are more excellent in themselves, because love for the beloved is inclined more to giving than to receiving. But Mary, through her maternity, received an immense gift from God, and from His hands, the greatest honor, but through her virginity she gave to God something more precious, that is, she offered her body and soul as a living victim, holy and pleasing to God.¹¹⁸

But it would seem that the opposite opinion should be preferred. St. Bernard maintains that while Mary would have regretted going against her vow, she would have chosen to do God's will.¹¹⁹

Moreover, the choice between virginity and maternity was given either in such a way that if she chose virginity, the Redeemer of the human race would not have been born of another woman, or in such

a way that if she refused maternity, God would have to choose another mother for the work of human redemption. In the first hypothesis, Mary (and Lepicier makes the same assertion) would prefer to surrender her virginity by contracting marriage, so that the Savior could be given to the world, rather than deprive the human race of the Savior. In the other hypothesis, Mary would still have chosen to be the Mother of God, because the salvation of the world and the elevation of the human race following immediately from maternity is a more excellent, more universal, and more fitting good, according to the dictates of reason, than is the particular good of virginity.

The argument for the first opinion does not hold much force. It is based on the fact that perfect charity tends more to give than to receive and that Mary therefore would have chosen to consecrate her virginity rather than accept the honor of maternity, for in accord with God's ordination, the office of Mother of God consists not only in giving the Redeemer His body, so that He might suffer and die for the salvation of men, but also in being united to her Son in His sorrowful expiation, suffering most intensely, almost dying with Him, and giving her whole life for this divine mission.

Finally, there is no reason for carrying this question any further, for in the present economy God wished to be born of Mary, and "possessing a mother's joys with a virgin's honor, her like hath not appeared before nor since."¹²⁰

Mary's Assumption and Glorification

We end the treatise on the graces and privileges of the Blessed Virgin Mary by considering those graces and privileges with which she was crowned eternally at the end of her earthly life: her assumption and glorification in heaven.

The title assumption, although used much by the Fathers and theologians to signify the passing of those who die in the Lord, as used by St. Gregory Nazianzen when he says that his sister Gorgonia was lifted up to heaven, and St. Gregory of Tours who mentions the assumption of St. Avitus, was commonly reserved to indicate that

most singular prerogative of Mary by which her body was transferred to heaven.¹²¹

There exists this difference between ascension and assumption: ascension is applied to Christ, who rose to heaven by His own power; assumption refers to the Virgin, who by a singular privilege was raised body and soul into heaven.¹²²

Mary's assumption is sometimes called *pausatio*, terminus, dormition, *transitus*, but the name assumption has pre-eminence, which, as more fitting in signifying this prerogative, was directed to be observed by a decree of the commission in charge of the correction of the Breviary during the pontificate of Pope Benedict XIV.

Assumption, considered strictly, prescind from death and resurrection, and means nothing more than the glorious translation of Mary's body and soul to heaven, for her assumption would have been a reality even if she had been transported to heaven with a glorified body and soul, without dying and arising. As Renaudin remarks, the Assumption is not necessarily connected with the incorruption of the tomb, for her bodily preservation could have occurred by mere incorruption, by a glorious resurrection or by a glorification which was not preceded by death.¹²³

Nevertheless, if the Assumption is considered concretely, and as it is presented in the liturgy and in the documents of the Fathers and theologians, it certainly includes all these elements: previous death, preservation from the corruption of the tomb, and anticipated resurrection. Thus, we must say that Mary's assumption consists in her anticipated resurrection and a glorious bodily life in heaven.

The third of these elements is essential to the assumption; the others are not necessarily related to it, although in fact they may have preceded or accompanied it. Of these elements some are of empirico-historical import, such as death, incorruption in the tomb, resurrection from the dead and bodily ascension to heaven; others pertain to the supernatural order and can be known only by divine revelation, e.g., the permanent incorruption of Mary's body and her heavenly glorification. Pope Pius XII wrote: "Thus, from the universal agreement of the Church's ordinary teaching authority we have a certain and firm proof, demonstrating that the Blessed Virgin Mary's bodily assumption into heaven—which surely no faculty of the human mind

could know by its own natural powers, as far as the heavenly glorification of the virginal body of the revered Mother of God is concerned—is a truth that has been revealed by God and consequently something that must be firmly and faithfully believed by all the children of the Church."¹²⁴ Therefore, although there are no historical proofs for the first group of facts, we need not conclude from that the lack of any divine revelation concerning the other truths.¹²⁵

THESES: *The Blessed Virgin was assumed body and soul into heaven.*

Opinions. Luther doubted that Mary was raised to heaven soul and body, and believed rather that she was not, by which he judged that the feast of the Assumption should be suppressed. John Rivio denied that Mary was elevated bodily into heaven because it is not evident in any part of Sacred Scripture. Nevertheless, other Protestants, such as Bullinger and Brencius, acknowledge Mary's assumption.

Of the Greek Schismatics, none denied Mary's bodily assumption; rather, the Armenian Council of 1342 expressly asserted: "The Church of the Armenians believes and holds that, by the power of Christ, the holy Mother of God was assumed bodily into heaven."¹²⁶ The Synod of Jerusalem, held in 1672 against the Calvinists, likewise affirmed belief in Mary's bodily assumption.¹²⁷

All Catholics have for centuries unanimously believed that Mary was assumed body and soul into heaven, and Fathers of the Church and theologians have likewise taught this. St. Peter Canisius maintained that the belief in Mary's assumption was so universally held in the Church that anyone who held the contrary would have to be considered temerarious and possessed of a heretical spirit.¹²⁸

By his Dogmatic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, issued on November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII solemnly defined Mary's assumption in the following words: "We pronounce, declare and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

In treating of the magisterium of the Church, the *Code of Canon Law* states that no truth is to be taken as declared or defined by the Church unless it is manifestly evident that such is the intention of

the Church.¹²⁰ On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the Roman Pontiff infallibly defines all and only those things which he signifies explicitly that he intends to define.¹³⁰

As regards Mary's assumption, we must distinguish between the *fact* and the *mode*. The fact refers to the essential element of the assumption, that is, Mary's transferral, body and soul, to heaven. The mode refers to the other accessory elements of the assumption, such as whether Mary's bodily assumption occurred after her death and resurrection or was effected without her death and subsequent resurrection.

Pope Pius XII limited himself merely to the definition of the *fact* of Mary's assumption, without determining the mode or manner. He says: "The ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." Consequently, the death of Mary does not come under this dogmatic definition because it is not manifestly evident that it has been defined nor was it the intention of the Holy Father to define it. Rather, he carefully avoided it. Much less does Mary's bodily immortality enter into the definition. Nor is there any authorization for including this opinion in the definition, for the definition itself does not offer a single word in support of Mary's bodily immortality and there is nothing in the liturgy or the writings of the Fathers which weakens the arguments in defense of the death of Mary.

The dogmatic definition states that Mary was assumed to heavenly glory, elevated body and soul to the glory of heaven. It is necessary to distinguish between the *state* of beatitude and the *place* of beatitude. What has been defined is Mary's passage or transit from the state of a wayfarer (*in via*) to the state of the terminus, which is the state of beatitude or the life of glory. But the translation of Mary to heaven as a *corporal place* assigned as the dwelling of the blessed does not fall under the definition, although tradition and the ecclesiastical magisterium consider it more conformable to Scripture.¹³¹ The definition, moreover, does not determine the excellence of Mary's glory in heaven, although in some passages her glory is exalted, as it is also in the prayer which Pope Pius recited before the multitude on the day of the proclamation of the dogma of Mary's assumption.

Sacred Scripture. Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed. She shall crush thy head."

The enmities established by God between the woman and the devil, between her seed and his seed, are established so that the woman, with and through Him who is of her lineage, will crush the head of the serpent and obtain complete victory over him. This triumph which Christ obtained over Satan, the serpent (Apoc. 12:9), in which Mary played an important part, is a triumph not only over sin and concupiscence, but also over death (I Cor. 15:26; Heb. 2:14), which entered the world through the envy of the devil (Wisd. 2:21). Therefore, as Christ by His resurrection completely triumphed over death, so Mary, intimately associated with Christ, was exempt from the corruption of the tomb and was assumed into heaven.

Pope Pius XII states: "Since the second century the Virgin Mary has been designated by the holy Fathers as the new Eve, who, although subject to the new Adam, is most intimately associated with Him in that struggle against the infernal foe which, as foretold in the proto-evangelium (Gen. 3:15), finally resulted in that most complete victory over the sin and death which are always mentioned together in the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Consequently, just as the glorious resurrection of Christ was an essential part and the final sign of this victory, so that struggle which was common to the Blessed Virgin and her divine Son should be brought to a close by the glorification of her virginal body, for the same Apostle says: 'When this mortal thing hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.'"

Luke 1:28: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." Pope Alexander III says that Mary conceived without offending modesty, gave birth without pain, and left the world without corruption, according to the angel's word, or rather, of God through the angel, so that she could show herself full of grace and not partially full of grace.¹³²

Mary is called "blessed among women," not only blessed by so great a Son, but also by the blessing contrary to the common curse of original sin. This curse, common to men and women, is threefold: of sin, of concupiscence and of death. Therefore, as the Virgin Mother of God is called blessed by having escaped the curse of sin and concupiscence, so also was she blessed through having escaped and death, in the sense that she was freed from its bondage by her glorious assumption. St. Thomas, discussing the curses pronounced against

man as a consequence of sin, says that the third, that men and women should return to dust, did not apply to the Blessed Virgin, who was bodily assumed into heaven.¹³³

There are also passages in the Old and New Testaments designating Mary's assumption. "Arise, O Lord, in the place of Thy dwelling, Thou and the ark of Thy majesty" (Ps. 131:8). "The daughters of kings come forth to meet thee, adorned with gold of Ophir, the queen stands at thy right hand" (Ps. 44:10). "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible, as an army set in array?" (Cant. 6:9). "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" (Cant. 8:5). "Where I am there also shall my servant be" (John 12:26). "And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Apoc. 12:1).

The Fathers and Theologians. The ancient Fathers of the Church, up to the fifth century, said nothing explicitly concerning Mary's bodily assumption, except St. Epiphanius, who, although doubting Mary's death, does not seem to doubt her assumption.¹³⁴ Nor should the silence of the Fathers at this time be wondered at, since they were attacking the Docetists and Valentinians, who said that Christ's body was heavenly, and the Collyridians, who presented Mary as a goddess. Perhaps they judged it more opportune to keep silent on Mary's bodily assumption, lest they give those heretics the occasion of propagating their errors.

Since the fifth century the Fathers and theologians have clearly taught Mary's bodily assumption.

St. Gregory of Tours: "The Lord commanded the holy body (of Mary after her death) to be borne on a cloud to paradise, where, reunited to its soul and exulting with the elect, it enjoys the never-ending bliss of eternity."¹³⁵

St. Modestus of Jerusalem: "Wherefore, the most glorious Mother of Christ our Savior and God, who is the giver of life and immortality, was raised to life by Him, shares incorruptibility with Him forever, who raised her from the tomb and assumed her to Himself, as He alone knows."¹³⁶

St. Andrew of Crete: "A spectacle truly new it was, and beyond human thinking; the woman who surpassed the heavens in her purity,

crossed the threshold of heaven's sanctuary. . . . As the womb of her who brought forth the Redeemer remained ever uncorrupt, so likewise her dead body never perished. O admirable thing! Her birth escaped all corruption, and her grave did not admit that final corruption after her death."¹³⁷

St. Germanus of Constantinople: "Thou art she who, as it is written, appearest in beauty, and thy virginal body is all holy, all chaste, entirely the dwelling place of God, so that it is henceforth completely exempt from dissolution into dust. Though still human, it is changed into the heavenly life of incorruptibility, truly living and glorious, undamaged and sharing in perfect life."¹³⁸

St. John Damascene: "Your soul did not descend to hell, nor did your flesh suffer corruption. Your immaculate, spotless body was not abandoned to the earth, but you, Sovereign Queen, Lady and true Mother of God, were transported to the heavenly mansions."¹³⁹

St. Theodore Studita: "Today the terrestrial heaven, clothed in the garb of immutability, is transplanted to a better and eternal habitation."¹⁴⁰

Testimony of Mary's assumption is also found in the sermons of Atto, the Bishop of Vercelli, in the tenth century and in those of St. Fulbert of Chartres and St. Peter Damian.¹⁴¹ St. Anselm of Canterbury prays to the Mother of God through the merits of her glorious assumption and through her most sweet Son who raised her to heaven. In this prayer he also affirms her death.¹⁴²

St. Bernard: "The Church requires us to celebrate with great veneration the day when Mary bore joy to heaven."¹⁴³

St. Amadeus of Lausanne affirms that Mary's flesh remained incorrupt, as it is incredible that her body should have seen corruption; for it was really united to her soul, and together with it, crowned with glory in the heavenly courts.¹⁴⁴

With regard to the apocryphal books, the first explicit mention of Mary's assumption is found in writings of this kind circulated in the East in the first centuries. The principal ones are the *Liber de Transitu*, written in the second century by Leucius, in which appear heresies on the Trinity and the constitution of the world, the book of Pseudo-Melito, *De Transitu Beatae Mariae Virginis*, composed in the fourth or fifth century, *Historia Euthymiana*, from which St. John Damascene transcribed the answer given by Juvenal, Bishop of

Jerusalem, to Marcian and Pulcheria concerning Mary's transit, composed perhaps in the eighth century.

As to the value of these apocryphal books, while some give them no credence because they are of uncertain origin and filled with legendary fables, others state that they can be used as historical testimony of the faith of those times. But it is necessary to distinguish carefully between the fact of Mary's bodily assumption and the more or less probable or uncertain additions made by doubtful or heretical authors. The authors of the apocryphal books have drawn from the tradition and mind of the Church the substance of the fact of the Assumption, which they later embellished with fables and legends. With good reason, then, in order to defend the integrity of the faith, altered by so many false narrations, Pope St. Gelasius, in the year 494, condemned, along with other apocryphal books, the book by the Pseudo-Melito.

Sacred Liturgy. The feast of the Assumption, which is now celebrated solemnly in the universal Church, goes back to the early centuries. With regard to the Oriental Church, Kellner believes that the feast of Mary's assumption was celebrated in the fifth century because it was celebrated by the Nestorians and the Monophysites, who separated themselves from the Church in that century.¹⁴⁵

About the middle of the sixth century this feast was celebrated on January 18 by the Orientals. In order to spread the devotion which already existed, the Emperor Mauritius decreed that the feast of Mary's Dormition be celebrated on August 15 instead of January 18. This diversity of time Capelle explains through some Coptic documents in which the Dormition of the Virgin was set for the 20th-21st of the month of "Tobi," that is, on January 18. But the Assumption was celebrated the 16th of the month of "Mesore," which is 206 days from the first, and this seems to be the source of the change introduced in Constantinople around the year 600. From here the feast spread to Jerusalem during the time of the Patriarch Modestus and to Thessalonica during the time of John, Archbishop of that church, and to almost all the rest of the Orient, except Macedonia.

With regard to the Western Church, it is probable that the feast of the Assumption was celebrated in Rome in the fifth century, since in the *Sacramentarium* for the Mass of the Assumption, we read:

"Receive, O Lord, the gifts which we offer Thee in the repeated solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for it redounds to Thy praise that she has truly been raised to Thy glory." Also, the *Sacramentarium Gregorianum*, which is substantially more ancient than that of St. Gregory the Great, contains this collect: "May we receive eternal help, O Lord, from the festivity we celebrate this day, on which the Holy Mother of God underwent temporal death, but could not be held down by the bonds of death, because she brought forth Thy incarnate Son, our Lord."

But it is certainly evident that the feast of the Assumption was celebrated in Rome by the year 650, on August 15, and from this time it has never ceased being celebrated. Pope St. Sergius prescribed that a station procession be held on four Marian feasts: the Nativity of Mary, the Annunciation, the Purification, and the Dormition of the Virgin Mary.¹⁴⁶ In the year 817 Pope Paschal I, according to the testimony of Anastasius, adorned the Church of St. Mary Major and beautified its chapels with a statue of the Assumption.¹⁴⁷ St. Leo IV, in the year 847, prescribed that the feast of the Assumption be commemorated with an octave, and in the year 849, he permitted Anscarus, Bishop of Hamburg, to use the pallium on Easter, Pentecost, the Nativity of our Lord, and the Assumption, Nativity and Purification of Mary.¹⁴⁸

Pope Nicholas I, in the year 867, commanded the Bulgarians to follow the custom of the Roman Church in observing a fast on the vigil of the Assumption.¹⁴⁹

In Gaul, at the beginning of the fifth century, January 18 was celebrated as the feast of St. Mary, as is evident from St. Cesarius of Arles, the Missal of Bobbio and the Gothic Missal, used in Gaul until the eighth century. This festival seems to be the same as the one celebrated at the end of the fourth century in Antioch, entitled: Memory of the holy and ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God. It seems to have been passed on to Gaul chiefly through the work of Cassian and the monks of Lirinenses.¹⁵⁰ St. Gregory of Tours (*De glor. martyr.*) asserts that in the sixth century the feast of the glorious Assumption of the Virgin was celebrated in Gaul on January 18. The same is confirmed by St. Odilo in the ninth century.

In England, according to the testimony of Janssens and Campana, the first explicit mention of the feast of the Assumption occurred

at the Council of Cloveshoe in the year 747, and during Alfred's reign in the years 871-896 it attained such solemnity that the whole week preceding it was kept by all as one of great festivity.¹⁵¹

The *Ordo* of Lanfrancus, Archbishop of Canterbury in the years 1005-1089, enumerates the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin among those celebrated as feasts of the first class.¹⁵²

It is also evident from the *Antiphonary* of the Cathedral of León and the *Liber Comitum* of the monastery of San Millán, preserved at present in the Spanish Academy of History, that the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin was already celebrated in Spain in the seventh century. With what pomp this feast was celebrated in Spain is attested by the *Codex Missarum* of St. Ildephonsus, Archbishop of Toledo, the *Vita Sancti Ildephonsi*, written between 774-783, the Mozarabic liturgy, which abounds in the praises of the Assumption, and Sermon 4 of St. Martin of León.¹⁵³

The object of this cult was not only the peaceful death of the Virgin and the assumption or glorification of her soul, but also her bodily assumption, as appears in the liturgical prayers and homilies of St. Gregory of Tours, St. Andrew of Crete, St. John Damascene, St. Germanus and St. Odilo.¹⁵⁴ Nor is there any difficulty in the fact that the word "dormition" is used in these sermons, for Pope Benedict XIV (*De Festis*) shows that the word means the same as assumption.

The Common Belief of the Faithful. Both the hierarchy of the Church and the faithful have professed Mary's glorious assumption since ancient times; for example, St. Antoninus, St. Thomas of Villanova, and St. Charles Borromeo. St. Charles Borromeo, whose piety and priestly solicitude for the glorious assumption of Mary is testified by the *Acts of the Fourth Council of Milan*, commanded that on the day of Mary's assumption, a Solemn Pontifical Mass be celebrated by all the bishops and that the day be observed with solemnity in parish churches.¹⁵⁵ Added to these are St. Francis de Sales, Bossuet, St. Alphonsus Liguori and, in our day, all the bishops of the world, particularly the 194 bishops of the Vatican Council, who petitioned for the dogmatic definition of Mary's assumption. Also, the Bishops of Spain, Latin America and Portugal, who during the Marian Congress held in Seville in the year 1929, petitioned Pope Pius XI to define Mary's assumption.¹⁵⁶

All of the faithful, instructed by their bishops, confess Mary's

bodily assumption into heaven, as is evident from popular devotions, congregations instituted under this title, and the innumerable churches dedicated to Mary's assumption. One of the first monuments of the assumption is to be found at Zaragoza, Spain, and dates back to the fourth century.

The Theologians. The common opinion of most of the theologians from the Middle Ages until the present time is that Mary was assumed into heaven body and soul. Peter of Poitiers, successor to the Master of the Sentences at Paris, testifies to this, as do many others, such as St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and Durandus. In 1497 John Morcellus, while preaching in the Church of St. Benedict, stated that the faithful were not obliged under pain of mortal sin to believe that Mary was assumed into heaven body and soul, as it was not yet an article of faith. The Faculty of Theology of Paris commanded that Morcellus himself reject these propositions in the very Church where he had preached them to the people; with which command the preacher complied.¹⁵⁷

Theological Argument. 1) As the Mother of God, the flesh of Mary was the flesh of Christ. Therefore, as Christ's holy body, without stain of any corruption, attained immediately to the glory of the Resurrection and Ascension, so it was fitting that the flesh of Mary should be preserved from the corruption of the tomb and assumed gloriously into heaven.

2) Moreover, in Mary a most excellent virginity was united to the divine maternity. And since, as St. Ambrose says, heaven is the home of virginity, it was not at all fitting that Mary's virginal body should remain outside her homeland in the darkness of death. Besides, the Apostle says: "In Christ all will be made to live. But each in his own tum" (I Cor. 15:22-23).

3) It was indeed fitting, in accordance with Mary's perpetual virginity, and in particular with her virginal parturition, which did not diminish but consecrated her integrity, that she should be freed from the corruption of the tomb and transferred to incorruptible life. For this reason St. Andrew of Crete says: "As the womb [of Mary] was in no wise corrupted by parturition, so her flesh was not corrupted after death."¹⁵⁸

4) By reason of her divine maternity, Mary was enriched with many graces and privileges, as signified by the words of the angelic saluta-

tion: "Full of grace." Therefore St. Thomas says that it is reasonable to believe that she who brought forth the Only-begotten of the Father, received greater privileges of grace than all others.¹⁶⁰ But Mary's bodily incorruption and her assumption pertain to the privileges of grace, since consummate grace, which is principally the glory of the soul, pertains also to the glory of the body, for from the soul it redounds to the flesh.

5) Finally, the divine maternity places Mary in a completely unique order which approaches the hypostatic union and borders on the divinity. The beginning of that order is the unique privilege of her immaculate conception, and in order that the end might correspond to the beginning, it is fitting that the same order should be crowned with the singular privilege of her glorious assumption. On this point Father Bernard says beautifully: "In Mary the life of grace begins by an immaculate conception and is terminated by an assumption and coronation of glory. A triumph of grace from beginning to end."¹⁶⁰

6) As regards her association with Christ in the work of redemption, just as Christ arose and ascended into heaven after His passion and death, so it was fitting that Mary, who had suffered and almost died with Him, should be preserved from death's corruption and be taken bodily into heaven.

7) On the part of Christ, there is no mark of respect and love which Christ, the best of sons, did not bestow upon His Mother, not only while he lived on earth, but as He was dying on the cross. Christ's filial piety toward His Mother could not permit her to be forgotten after His ascension into heaven, and Christ could not have shown His piety and love for His Mother in a better way than to take her purest body to heaven, giving her the greatest beatitude. Hence, the Scotist argument, *Potuit, deuit, ergo fecit* (God could, it was fitting that He should, therefore He did), which was suitably used in defense of Mary's immaculate conception, would also seem to apply to her glorious assumption.

Corollary. On what day after her death Mary was raised and assumed into heaven nothing certain can be established. St. Antoninus enumerates three of the main opinions. He says that some maintain that it was on the fortieth day; others, on the same day as her burial; still others, on the third day, as was the case with her Son.¹⁶¹

The first opinion was proposed to show Mary's likeness to her Son,

who ascended into heaven forty days after His resurrection, but this reason is not sufficient, for while it was fitting that Christ be bodily present in order to prove His resurrection and to teach His apostles, it was not in any way necessary that Mary's body remain that long in the tomb.

The second opinion also rests on a weak reason, namely, that the Church celebrates the Dormition and the Assumption on the same day.

The third opinion is more common and probable and is defended by St. John Damascene, Nicephorus Callixtos, Christopher de Castro, Suárez and others. Actually, there was no reason for her remaining in the tomb very long, but it was fitting that she be raised from the dead and assumed into heaven on the third day after her death, so that she would resemble her Son.

Corollary. There were some who maintained that Mary's body was borne on the wings of angels to heaven and there it was brought back to life and reunited to her soul. This opinion seemed to be favored by St. Amadeus, Bishop of Lausanne, and also by the Fathers and writers who affirmed that Mary's body was translated to heaven with the help and accompaniment of angels.

The true opinion teaches that Mary was resurrected to immortal life, not in heaven, but in the tomb, and after being returned to life she was taken to heaven. No sacred writer explicitly defends the contrary opinion, although some writers, such as St. Amadeus, write in ambiguous terms.

Suárez states that although Christian art usually pictures Mary carried to heaven by angels, since she had a glorified body after being raised from the dead, she could have risen by her own power. It is said that she was borne by angels because they accompanied her to give her honor; she is said to have been assumed or elevated to heaven rather than that she ascended, because that power was not connatural to her as it was to her Son.¹⁶²

THESIS: *Mary's essential glory surpasses the glory of all the angels and all the blessed, both intensively and extensively.*

Heavenly glory is both essential and accidental. Considered essentially, glory consists in the intuitive vision of God, from which follow as natural properties, love and joy in the possession of the supreme

good. Essential glory, as to its comparative degree of specific perfection, is the same in all the blessed, according to the common opinion of theologians; but as to its quantitative degree, there is a twofold difference, that is, intensive and extensive, according to which the blessed contemplate more or less perfectly the essence of God Himself or secondary objects, possible or existing, in the vision of the divine essence.

Accidental glory is understood as consisting of those things which, although not necessary for beatitude, perfect it in some way, as do certain revelations and delights, aureoles, special bodily gifts and certain external goods such as honor and reverence.

The Theologians. St. Peter Damian says: "As the light of the moon and stars is so entirely eclipsed on the appearance of the sun that it is as if it were not, so also does Mary's glory so far exceed the splendor of all men and angels that in comparison with her they do not even appear in heaven."¹⁶³

St. Bonaventure says that Mary surpassed all the blessed and the angels in nature, in grace and in glory.¹⁶⁴

St. Bernardine of Siena: "According to the measure of her grace by which she surpassed others on earth, so great is her singular glory in the kingdom of the blessed."¹⁶⁵

Theological Argument. Heavenly glory is in proportion to the perfection of grace and charity and the quantity of merits acquired in time, as the Apostle says: "God, who will render to every man according to his works" (Rom. 2:6). Now Mary, as explained before, surpassed all the saints in both fullness of grace and incomparable charity, as also in the abundance of her almost infinite aggregate of merits.

As the beatific vision is not enjoyed by the blessed through the natural faculty of knowledge but through the *lumen gloriae* (light of glory), the most perfect vision of God does not depend on the greater natural sharpness of comprehension, but on a greater participation in the light of glory. The light of glory is infused more or less, according to the diversity of grace and charity and according to the quantity of merits. But Mary surpassed all the blessed in the perfection of grace, of charity and in the quantity of her merits; therefore she surpassed all in intensive glory.

The extensive perfection of the beatific vision is as great as the

number of possible and existent beings contemplated in the divine essence. But Mary sees in the Word more possible and existent creatures than all the blessed because the greater the degree of intensity of vision, the greater the number of possible beings that are seen in the divine essence. As St. Bernard says: "Rightly is Mary called the one clothed with the sun, who penetrates more deeply into the abyss of the divine wisdom than can be imagined, so that she seems as immersed in that inaccessible light as the condition of a creature will permit."¹⁶⁶

Moreover, any one of the blessed, by virtue of the vision of the divine essence, sees in God all those things related to his state. Now Mary's vision, with regard to those things in relation to her state, although not equal to the knowledge of the soul of Christ, who saw all possible and actual beings of all times, was extended to a high degree. It exceeded the knowledge of all the blessed, for to Mary's state as the Mother of God, associated with the redemption, and Queen of all creatures, pertain not only the things common to all the blessed, but also all those which in some way refer to the salvation of men in the order of nature and of grace.¹⁶⁷

Corollary. From the supereminent intuitive vision of God, above all the saints, given to Mary, follows the beatific love with which Mary alone loves God more than all creatures together. If in life she surpassed the seraphim in ardor, what must be the flame of her love after being submerged in her Lover when she entered into the joy of her Son?

Nor is it true, as some assert, that Mary does not love God in heaven with more perfection than on earth, where she loved God with all the impetus of her grace and charity, for the love with which Mary loves God in heaven is much more perfect than that with which she was consumed while on earth, because love always follows knowledge. The impetus of love directed by faith is one thing; that which accompanies the clear vision of God is another. Therefore, no matter how much one may love God in this life, that love will always be inferior to the love of heaven, as the morning light never attains the perfection of the light of midday. To vision and love is joined ineffable joy, in such a way that, just as Mary living on earth was a bitter sea, so in heaven, says Gerson, she is an ocean of immense delight.¹⁶⁸

Corollary. Accidental glory, as we have said, consists of those things

which, although they are not of the essence of beatitude, nevertheless perfect it in some way. Many theologians affirm that Mary receives from Christ many new revelations about free and contingent future things, according as that may be of convenience to her ministry. However, Vega is of the contrary opinion, because although the angels and blessed may see anew some effects and works of grace which they did not know before these revelations were made to them, Mary does not receive new revelations because all things future are as present to her through her knowledge of vision.¹⁶⁹

Moreover, in addition to the supreme joy which accompanies the vision of the triune God, Mary delights greatly in the contemplation of the humanity of her only-begotten Son and in the sight of all of the elect. All the elect in heaven love the humanity of Christ above all creatures, and therefore they delight in the contemplation of Him, not only because He is so good, so beautiful and so lovable in Himself, but also because of the many benefits of grace and of glory obtained thereby. More especially does Mary delight in the humanity of Christ, and since she contemplates Him more perfectly and loves Him more ardently than the rest, so she delights more in His sight over all the others.

On the other hand, Mary obtained through the incarnation of the Word more and better graces than the rest, since through the Incarnation she became the Mother of God, Mistress of the world, Queen of angels and Mother of the Church militant and triumphant. For this reason she contemplates the humanity of her Son with greatest joy and in her contemplation becomes filled with ineffable sweetness.

Lastly, while on earth, Mary treated Christ her Son with the utmost familiarity, and was no less intimately associated with His persecutions, labors, anguish, passion and death. For that reason, she now delights meritoriously, more than all the saints, in the honor, exaltation and beauty of His glorious humanity.

All the blessed, redeemed by the Blood of Christ and reborn through His grace, are spiritual children of Mary. And it is a natural thing in a mother to delight and be happy in the triumphs of her children. Moreover, it is a joy to possess the good desired. Now as Mary ardently desires salvation for her children, she prays for them, obtains graces for them, and delights greatly in obtaining their salvation. Moreover, the more ardently she loves Christ her Son, the more

ferently does she desire the fruit of His passion and death. On this account, seeing the passion of her Son bearing fruit in so many saintly souls, she is deeply joyous in the salvation of those numberless chosen souls.

To accidental glory of soul pertain also the aureoles, as explained before. The aureole is used as a diminutive with respect to the crown of the blessed. The essential reward of the blessed, which consists in the intuitive vision of God, is usually referred to in Sacred Scripture by the name "crown" (I Cor. 9:25; II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4; Apoc. 2:10), since the crown is the symbol of victory and regal power. The saints, fighting and following in the footsteps of Christ the King, conquered with Christ and reign with Him.

The aureole is something added to the crown, a certain accidental reward, peculiar to the dignity and the honor bestowed for a special victory, or, as St. Thomas says: "A crown is due to the fight which is followed by victory."¹⁷⁰

Three aureoles are distinguished with respect to the victories in the three conflicts which beset every man: the world, the flesh and the devil. St. Thomas says: "In the conflict with the flesh, he above all wins the victory who abstains altogether from sexual pleasures which are the chief of this kind; and such is a virgin. Wherefore an aureole is due to virginity. In the conflict with the world, the chief victory is to suffer the world's persecution even until death; wherefore the second aureole is due to martyrs who win the victory in this battle. In the conflict with the devil, the chief victory is to expel the enemy not only from oneself but also from the hearts of others; this is done by teaching and preaching, and consequently the third aureole is due to doctors and preachers."¹⁷¹

At first glance it would seem that these aureoles do not concern Mary, since she does not have the office of teaching; moreover, not having the *fomes* of sin, she had no trouble whatever in resisting the concupiscence of the flesh; finally, the aureole of martyrdom is not that of interior compassion, but of real martyrdom, and as the end of Mary's life was to be a peaceful one, it would not seem that she could be adorned with the aureole of martyrdom. Nevertheless, Mary was adorned most eminently with the three aureoles mentioned, since, as is evident from what has already been said, Mary preserved perpetually her virginity of body and soul, and was more than a martyr when,

during the passion of her Son, she suffered pain which was the same as death. Moreover, through her office of the maternity of God, she is adorned with a certain singular splendor, which is more perfect and of a more elevated order than any other aureole.

Besides the gifts common to glorified bodies, Mary's body shines with singular beauty. There are four gifts of glorified bodies: impassibility, subtlety, agility and clarity, according to the Apostle (I Cor. 15:42-44): "What is sown in corruption rises in incorruption; what is sown in dishonor rises in glory; what is sown in weakness rises in power; what is sown a natural body rises a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."

These gifts will certainly be in the bodies of the blessed through a certain redundancy of their souls, not through a physical influx but through a moral causality, for since the soul is glorified and the body had been its collaborator in merit and in work, it should also be its companion in the reward and happiness of glory. For this reason, the greater the beatitude of soul and its essential reward, the more eminent will these gifts be in the body. And thus they were in Mary, whose beatitude is incomparably superior to that of all the saints.

Moreover, the body of the Virgin Mother of God also shines with a singular and beautiful splendor, since the more closely united a soul is to uncreated light and the more submerged in it, the more beautiful, clear and resplendent is the flesh it animates. But Mary's soul is submerged in uncreated light as radiantly and as profoundly as can be communicated to a pure creature outside the hypostatic union.

Moreover, if we consider, as Denis the Carthusian says, that Mary's body was deified, dignified, and exalted supernaturally and gratuitously in this life by the incarnation of the Word, fulfilled in her and by her, by her maternal and most intimate communication with Him, by her sanctification in the first moment of her conception, by her most perfect acts of virtue, by her immunity from sin and her complete subjection to reason, we can understand in some way how it would be very just and fitting that her most innocent body would be glorified and adorned by her Son in heaven.¹⁷²

To all of this we must add the external goods of honor and reverence tendered her in heaven. She is honored by her Son, as His most worthy and most beloved Mother, to whom He refuses nothing, never

takes His gaze from her and through whose merits and supplications He shows mercy, pardons and assists all.

She is honored by all the blessed, who praise her fervently because they see her as the Mother of God, all beautiful and adorned with the splendor of the most perfect holiness, the companion and co-operator of the Redeemer, through whom, with Christ and under Christ, the human race has been repaired and the heavenly mansion restored; and since so many great benefits come through her, her happiness and glory is ineffably increased.

THE SIS: In heaven Mary constitutes a special order or hierarchy.

The bull *Ineffabilis Deus* praises Mary thus: "So wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of His divinity, that this Mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot even imagine anything greater."

The Fathers and Theologians. St. Ephrem salutes Mary as pure Mother of God and Queen of all; holier than the seraphim, incomparably more glorious than all the other heavenly hosts.¹⁷³

Gerson asserts that the Virgin alone constituted a second hierarchy under God, the supreme hierarchy, at whose right hand is seated the humanity of Christ.¹⁷⁴

The Sacred Liturgy. "Mary has been taken up to heaven, the angels rejoice." "The Virgin Mary has been taken into the bridal-chamber of heaven, where the King of kings sitteth on a throne amid the stars."¹⁷⁵

Theological Argument. St. Albert the Great explains that just as Christ stands midway between God and the pure creature, so there should be a creature between Christ and the pure creature, and this is the Blessed Virgin.¹⁷⁶

St. Antoninus explains that Mary surpasses the seraphim more than the seraphim surpass the cherubim; but the seraphim occupy an order distinct from the cherubim and therefore Mary surpasses all the angelic hierarchies.¹⁷⁷

And surely, as the dignity of the divine maternity is of a superior order, placing Mary in a unique position, approaching the hypostatic

union, it was necessary that Mary form in heaven a special hierarchy above all the orders of saints and of angels.

THESES: *The immense joy of the saints in heaven is increased by the presence and vision of the glorious Virgin Mary.*

Doctors and Theologians. St. Peter Damian, St. Bernard, Denis the Carthusian and St. Bernardine of Siena assert that there is an increase in happiness in heaven from the sight of Mary, and that when the glorious Mother of God ascended to heaven she augmented the joy of its inhabitants, so that after God, the presence of this most beautiful Queen is the greatest glory of the blessed in heaven. St. Bernardine of Siena says that the blessed love Mary with a greater love than they love themselves or all other creatures.¹⁷⁸

Theological Argument. As joy is born of love, the more intensely an object is loved, the greater the joy in its presence and contemplation. The blessed love Mary most ardently because their love for Mary exceeds their love for all the saints, and since we know that love is inclined to return love for love, each of the saints knows clearly that he has received more through the Blessed Virgin than through all the blessed together.

Actually, the blessed cannot but be happy in contemplating the glorious Virgin Mother of God, since she is the most brilliant and spotless mirror in whom the perfections of God—omnipotence, wisdom, goodness, charity, piety and mercy—are reflected to so great a degree. As Denis the Carthusian stated, after the sacred humanity of Christ, there is nothing in the world as glorious and admirable for contemplating God in His effects than the Blessed Virgin Mary.¹⁷⁹

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CHAPTER ONE

- ¹ Lepicier, *Tr. de Beatiss. Virg.*, I, c. 1, a. 2, n. 15.
- ² Janssens, *De Verb. Incarn.*, II; *Marilogia: De Mariae nomine.*
- ³ *De Somn.*, IV, II, 20.
- ⁴ Campana, *Maria nel Dogma catolico*, I, p. III, c. 1.
- ⁵ *In Matth.*, p. 44.
- ⁶ *In Speculo*, c. 1.
- ⁷ *Eccles.* 24:24.
- ⁸ *Apoc.* 12:1.
- ⁹ *Luke* 1:3.
- ¹⁰ *Matt.* 22:42; 21:9.
- ¹¹ *Luke* 1:31-32.
- ¹² *Apoc.* 5:5; 22:16.
- ¹³ *Luke* 2:4.
- ¹⁴ *Rom.* 1:3.
- ¹⁵ *Tim.* 2:8.
- ¹⁶ *De cons. Evang.*, c. 2.
- ¹⁷ *Num.* 36:6-9.
- ¹⁸ *Hom.* 2, *Super Missus est.*
- ¹⁹ Knabenbauer: *In Evang. sec. Matt.*, p. 43.
- ²⁰ *Luke* 1:36.
- ²¹ *Luke* 1:5.
- ²² *In lib. Judic.*, VII, q. 47.
- ²³ *Corn. a Lapide: In Luc.*, c. I; *St. Thomas, In IV Sent.*, dist. 20, q. 2, aa. 1-4.
- ²⁴ *Heb.* 7:13-14.
- ²⁵ *De Fide orth.*, IV, 15.
- ²⁶ *De festis B.M. Virg.*, II, c. 9.
- ²⁷ *II Cor.* 8:9.
- ²⁸ *Hom.* 1, *In Nativ. B.M.V.*
- ²⁹ *Benedict XIV: De festis D.N.C. et B.M.V.*, II.
- ³⁰ *Or.* 2, *De Nativ. B. Mariae.*
- ³¹ *Hom.* 1, *De Nativ. B.M.V.*
- ³² *Haeres.*, 79, 2.
- ³³ *Orat.* 1, *De dormit. Virg.*
- ³⁴ *Benedict XIV, De festis. Theol. Mar.*, VI, 1.
- ³⁵ *Ep.* 174 *ad Can. Lugdn.*
- ³⁶ *Luke* 1:35.
- ³⁷ *De Deo Homine seu de Myst. Incarn. Marial.*, X, dist. 6, c. 1.
- ³⁸ *Tract. de Beatiss. Virg.*, II, 2, 1.
- ³⁹ *De festis B.V.*, c. XIV, n. 6.
- ⁴⁰ *De fide orth.*, IV, c. 5.
- ⁴¹ *Jugie, Hom. Marial. Byzant.*
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ *Lev.* 27:2 ff.
- ⁴⁴ *Exod.* 35:25; 38:8.
- ⁴⁵ *De Virgin.*, I, c. 3.
- ⁴⁶ *I Kings* 3:3.
- ⁴⁷ *IV Kings* 11:2-3.
- ⁴⁸ *Luke* 2:37.
- ⁴⁹ *In Matth.*, tract. XXVI, c. 23.
- ⁵⁰ *I Kings* 2:22; *II Mach.* 3:20.
- ⁵¹ *In Exod.*, c. 38, 2.
- ⁵² *La Sainte Vierge*, c. 3.
- ⁵³ *La Sainte Vierge*, I, c. 2.
- ⁵⁴ *De fide orth.*, IV, c. 13.
- ⁵⁵ *Matt.* 13:55-56.
- ⁵⁶ *Heb.* 9:25.
- ⁵⁷ *Num.* 17:5-8; *Lepicier: Tract. de S. Joseph*, p. I, a. 3.
- ⁵⁸ *Saint Joseph*, c. 3.
- ⁵⁹ *Cf. Knabenbauer, Evang. sec. Matth.*, I; *Lagrange, Evang. selon S. Matth.*; *Fillion, Vie de N.S. Jésus-Christ*, p. III.
- ⁶⁰ *Matt.* 1:18.
- ⁶¹ *Luke* 1:26-27.
- ⁶² *III, q. XXIX, d. VII, sect. I.*
- ⁶³ *Matt.* 1:16; 19-20.
- ⁶⁴ *Luke* 2:4.
- ⁶⁵ *Luke* 2:33.
- ⁶⁶ *Matt.* 13:55.
- ⁶⁷ *John* 6:41-42.

- ⁹⁰ Luke 2:27; 41: 43.
⁹¹ Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:27.
⁹² Palmieri, *Tr. de matrimonio Christiano*, 3.
⁹³ *In Luc.*, hom. 6.
⁹⁴ *Contra Julianum*, II, c. 1.
⁹⁵ Matt. 1:20.
⁹⁶ *De Nupt. et Concup.*, I.
⁹⁷ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 29, a. 2.
⁹⁸ Matt. 12:55; Mark 6:3.
⁹⁹ *De Sancta Ch. gener.*
¹⁰⁰ Hom. 2 *super Missus est.*
¹⁰¹ *De Virginit. Mariae*, c. 1.

CHAPTER TWO

- ¹ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 24, a. 1.
² *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 24, aa. 1-2.
³ Prov. 8:22-23.
⁴ *Eccles.* 24:5.
⁵ Dominican Missal, Votive Mass of the Most Holy Rosary.
⁶ Luke 19:10.
⁷ Gal. 4:4.
⁸ *Tract. VIII, In Joan.*
⁹ *Or. de Cruce.*
¹⁰ *De excell. Virg.*, cap. 1.
¹¹ IIIa, dist. 22, 4.
¹² Cf. IIIa, dist. 10, sect. 8.
¹³ Mass for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.
¹⁴ *De Deo incarn.*, q. 4, dub. 2.
¹⁵ *In III Sent.*, dist. 4, a. 3.
¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, I, sect. II, q. 2, a. 11.
¹⁷ *In III Sent.*, dist. 4, a. 2.
¹⁸ *In III*, dist. 22, n. 15.
¹⁹ *Serm.* 291, *De Sanctis.*
²⁰ *Summa theol.*, IIa, q. 2, a. 11.
²¹ Müller, *Mariologia*, thesis 2, n. 68.
²² *In III*, q. 2, a. 12.
²³ *De Deo uno*, I, c. 6.
²⁴ *Op. cit.*, II, 5, n. 182.
²⁵ *Ep.* 63.
²⁶ Hom. 2 *super Missus est.*
²⁷ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 5.
²⁸ *In III*, dist. 22, n. 28.
²⁹ Cf. Gen. 3:15; Matt. 1:16, 2:11;

- ³⁰ *De sancto Matrim. sacr.*, II, d. 29.
³¹ Vega, *op. cit.*, *palaest.* 22, cert. 2.
³² Luke 1:26-27.
³³ Matt. 1:20.
³⁴ Matt. 1:18.
³⁵ Matt. 1:20-24.
³⁶ Matt. 1:19.
³⁷ Cf. Palmieri, I.
³⁸ *Haer.*, 78.
³⁹ *Op. cit.*, II, sect. I, q. XXIX.
⁴⁰ *Or. In Nativ. Dom.*
⁴¹ Num. 36:6.

- Luke 1:43, 2:34-51; Mark 3:31, 6:3;
 John 2:1, 19:25-26; Acts 1:14.
⁴² *La Mère de Dieu*, II, c. 1.
⁴³ *Serm. de Transfig. Christi.*
⁴⁴ *Or. 1 de Nativ. Virg.*
⁴⁵ *Mariologia*, III, n. 81.
⁴⁶ *In III*, 2, 1, a. 3.
⁴⁷ *Op. cit.*, q. 1, a. 3.
⁴⁸ Luke 1:26-38.
⁴⁹ Cf. Luke 1:26-32.
⁵⁰ *Super cap. 1 Luc.*
⁵¹ Hom. 4 *super Missus est.*
⁵² *Serm. De Annunt.*
⁵³ Cf. Lercher, *De Verbo Incarnato*, cap. 3, n. 339.
⁵⁴ *Octobri mense*, September 22, 1891.
⁵⁵ Cf. *De Virginit. Matris Nativitate.*
⁵⁶ Cf. Suárez, *In III*, q. 30, a. 1.
⁵⁷ Cf. Billot, *De Verbo Incarnato*, th. 41, 2, n. 2.
⁵⁸ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 30, a. 2.
⁵⁹ Cf. Luke 1:26.
⁶⁰ Cf. Dan. 8:16 ff.
⁶¹ *Ep. Ad Eustochium.*
⁶² *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 30, a. 3.
⁶³ *Ibid.*, a. 4.
⁶⁴ *I Kings* 10:11.
⁶⁵ Luke 1:36.
⁶⁶ Matt. 2:13.
⁶⁷ John 2:1.

- ⁶⁸ *De Maria Deipara Virgine*, III, 4.
⁶⁹ Pope Pius XI, *Lux veritatis*, December 25, 1931.
⁷⁰ Denz. 113.
⁷¹ Denz. 256.
⁷² Denz. 290.
⁷³ Denz. 201.
⁷⁴ Denz. 993.
⁷⁵ Denz. 1462.
⁷⁶ A.A.S., XXIII, 14.
⁷⁷ Luke 1:43.
⁷⁸ Luke 1:31 ff.
⁷⁹ Rom. 1:3.
⁸⁰ Gal. 4:4.
⁸¹ Matt. 2:11; Luke 2:37, 38; John 2:1; Act., 1:14.
⁸² *Ephes.*, XVIII, 2.
⁸³ *Apolog.*, XV, 2.
⁸⁴ *Apolog.*, I, 63.
⁸⁵ *Contra Noetum.*
⁸⁶ *Adv. Haer.*, III, 21.
⁸⁷ *De carne Christi*, c. 17.
⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, c. 18.
⁸⁹ Cf. Neubert, *Marie dans l'Eglise antenicéenne*, c. 3, nn. 132-33.
⁹⁰ *Ep. ad Alexandrum Constantinopolitanum*, 12.
⁹¹ *Contra Arian.*, or. 4.
⁹² *Ep.* 101.
⁹³ *De Virgine*, II, 7.
⁹⁴ D'Ales, "Le Symbole d'Union de l'annee 433 et la première école nestorienne," *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, juin, 1931.
⁹⁵ *De Haer.*, IV, c. 12.
⁹⁶ *Contra Julianum*, VIII.
⁹⁷ *Jannota, Theotologia Catholica*, 4, 1, 73.
⁹⁸ Clement, "Le sens chrétien et la maternité divine de Marie," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, oct., 1928.
⁹⁹ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 35, a. 4.
¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 35, a. 1.
¹⁰¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 35, a. 4.
¹⁰² *Compendium theol.*, c. 222.
¹⁰³ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 35, a. 4.
¹⁰⁴ *ad 2um.*
¹⁰⁵ *Mor.*, VIII, c. 27.

- ¹⁰⁶ *De Annunt.*, sermo 1.
¹⁰⁷ *De fide orth.*, III, c. 2.
¹⁰⁸ Denz. 284.
¹⁰⁹ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 32, a. 1.
¹¹⁰ Denz. 6.
¹¹¹ Denz. 86.
¹¹² Luke 1:35.
¹¹³ Matt. 1:20.
¹¹⁴ *Ep. ad Ephes.*, n. 18.
¹¹⁵ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 32, a. 1.
¹¹⁶ *Contra Gentiles*, IV, 45.
¹¹⁷ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 32, a. 3.
¹¹⁸ Denz. 282.
¹¹⁹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 31, a. 5.
¹²⁰ Gal. 4:4.
¹²¹ *In Lucam* 4:11.
¹²² *De fide orth.*, III, 1.
¹²³ *De fide orth.*, III, 2.
¹²⁴ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 6, aa. 1, 2.
¹²⁵ Denz. 205.
¹²⁶ Denz. 250.
¹²⁷ Rom. 1:3.
¹²⁸ Gal. 4:4.
¹²⁹ *Ep. 1 ad Cled.*
¹³⁰ *De Trin.*, XIII, 17.
¹³¹ *De fide orth.*, III, 2.
¹³² *De fide ad Petr.*, c. 18.
¹³³ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 33, a. 3.
¹³⁴ Matt. 2:1.
¹³⁵ Luke 1:35.
¹³⁶ Luke 2:11.
¹³⁷ *Epist. ad Flavianum.*
¹³⁸ *De fide orth.*, III, 7.
¹³⁹ *Contra Eutychem*, II.
¹⁴⁰ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 35, a. 5.
¹⁴¹ *Loc. cit.*
¹⁴² *Loc. cit.*
¹⁴³ *De Virg.*, II.
¹⁴⁴ *Or. 52, Ad S.V.M.*
¹⁴⁵ *De Concept. B.M.V.*
¹⁴⁶ *Serm.* 51.
¹⁴⁷ *Canisius, De Maria Virg. Deipara*, I, cap. 2.
¹⁴⁸ *De Annunt.*
¹⁴⁹ *De excell. Virg.*, c. 3.
¹⁵⁰ *In IIam Haer.*, q. 3, a. 4 ad 2um.
¹⁵¹ *Satolli, De Incarn.*, I, q. III, concl.
¹⁵² Medina, *In IIIam*, q. 31, a. 4.

- ¹⁰⁰ Hom. 4 *super Missus* est.
¹⁰¹ Mariologia, th. 1, n. 34.
¹⁰² *Mariale*, q. 197.
¹⁰³ *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 25, a. 6, ad 4^{um}.
¹⁰⁴ *De Maria Virgine*, V, c. 15.
¹⁰⁵ *Serm.* 5.
¹⁰⁶ Cf. St. Gregory Nazianzen, *In Laudem Virginitatis*.
¹⁰⁷ Rom. 8:29.
¹⁰⁸ *Matins Hymn*, Common of a Virgin.
¹⁰⁹ *Paradiso*, cant. 33, c. 1.
¹¹⁰ Cf. Terrin, *op. cit.*, II, 4.
¹¹¹ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 20, a. 1, ad 2^{um}.
¹¹² *De Virginitate S. Mariae*, c. 8.
¹¹³ *Neminem Fugit*, January, 1882.
¹¹⁴ *Luke* 2:49.
¹¹⁵ John 8:29. Cf. Lebreton, *La Vie et l'Enseignement de Jésus-Christ, Notre Seigneur*, chap. 1, 4.
¹¹⁶ Cf. Debout, *La femme aux douze étoiles*, p. 107.
¹¹⁷ John 19:26-27.
¹¹⁸ Cf. *Divinum illud*.
¹¹⁹ *In Speculo B.M.V.*, c. 7.
- ¹²⁰ *In III*, q. 27, dist. 1, sect. 2.
¹²¹ *Op. cit.*, XXV, cert. 2.
¹²² *Mariale*, q. 141.
¹²³ *Luke* 11:27-28.
¹²⁴ *In Lucam*, IV, c. 49
¹²⁵ *In Luc.*, c. 1.
¹²⁶ *In III*, q. 2, a. 11.
¹²⁷ Cf. *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, McHugh and Callan ed., p. 238.
¹²⁸ *Mysterium fidei*, elucid. 50, epil.
¹²⁹ *Mariale*, q. 119.
¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, q. 79.
¹³¹ *De Assumptione Marial.*
¹³² *Ineffabilis*.
¹³³ *Augustissimae Virginis*.
¹³⁴ *Lux veritatis*.
¹³⁵ *De nat. et grat.*, c. 36.
¹³⁶ *De Concept. Virginis*, c. 18.
¹³⁷ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 5.
¹³⁸ *Sermo* de S. Joseph.
¹³⁹ John 16:15.
¹⁴⁰ Or. 2, *In dormit. B.M.V.*
¹⁴¹ *In Nativ. B.M.V.*, conc. III, n. 8.
¹⁴² Pope Benedict XV, *Inter Socialitatis*, March 22, 1918.
¹⁴³ Cf. *De praedicatione evangelica*, II, c. 49.

CHAPTER THREE

- ¹ *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 85, a. 7.
² *Op. cit.*, dis. VI, c. 1. specul. 1.
³ *De Deo Creante*, dist. IV, a. 1, n. 661.
⁴ *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, t. VII, c. 846.
⁵ *Bull Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8, 1854.
⁶ Jugie, "Immaculée Conception dans l'Eglise Grecque après le Concile d'Éphèse" in D.T.C.
⁷ *Civiltà Cattolica*, a. 78, t. IV, 1927.
⁸ Cf. *Denz.* 755.
⁹ *Denz.* 792.
¹⁰ *Sollicitudo Omn. Eccl.*, December 8, 1661.
¹¹ Cf. *Denz.*, 2, 123; cf. also St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, L. VIII.
¹² Cf. Palmieri, *De Deo Creante*, t. 87.
¹³ *De Verbo Incarnato*, t. XII.
¹⁴ *Dial. cum Tryphone*. For a complete bibliography of all the literature on the Immaculate Conception see *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception* by Edward O'Connor, C.S.C. (Notre Dame: 1958).
¹⁵ *Adv. haer.*, III, 22; V, 19.
¹⁶ *De carne Christi*.
¹⁷ *Serm. exeg. ad Gen.*, 3.
¹⁸ Newman, *Anglican Difficulties*.
¹⁹ Theodoretus, *dial. Eranistes*.
²⁰ *In S. Mariam Dei Genitr.*
²¹ *De Assumpt. B. Virg. and In Dormit. Deiparae*.

- ²² *De nat. et grat.*, c. 36.
²³ *Contr. Julian.*, V, 15.
²⁴ *Op. imperf. contr. Julian.*, IV.
²⁵ *De pecc. mer. et remis.*, I.
²⁶ *De Gen. ad Litt.*, X, 18.
²⁷ *Serm.* 5, *In Nativ. Dom.*
²⁸ *Immaculée Conception dans l'Église latine*, t. 7.
²⁹ *In Paschale, opus*, 2.
³⁰ Quoted by Ballerini, *Sylloge*, I, 34.
³¹ *De Concept. Virginis*, 18.
³² *Cur Deus Homo*, II, 16.
³³ Cf. I *Sent.*, dist. 30-31.
³⁴ *In III Sent.*, q. IX, memb. 2.
³⁵ *In III Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2.
³⁶ *III Sent.*, dist. 3.
³⁷ *In III Sent.*, dist. 3, a. 1.
³⁸ *Mariale*, q. 139.
³⁹ *In III Sent.*, dist. 3, a. 4.
⁴⁰ *I Sent.*, dist. 44, q. 1, a. 3; d. 17, q. 2, a. 4.
⁴¹ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 4.
⁴² *De contro. Chr. fid.*, III, 4, c. 15.
⁴³ *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 81, a. 3.
⁴⁴ *Quodl.*, VI, q. 5, a. 7.
⁴⁵ St. Thomas here states that Mary was not sanctified in her parents, before the completion of her conception, nor before the animation of her flesh by a rational soul, but only after her animation and before birth. Cf. *In III Sent.*, dist. 3, q. 1, a. 1.
⁴⁶ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 1.
⁴⁷ *In I Sent.*, dist. 44, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3^{um}.
⁴⁸ *D. Th. Plac.*, XXIV, p. 553, 1931.
⁴⁹ Cf. *Lib. de laud. B.V. Marial.*; *Disp. super aliquibus dubiis Sent. Mag. Petri Lombardi*, q. 96.
⁵⁰ *In III Sent.*, dist. 3, c. 1.
- ⁵¹ *In fest. B.M.V.*, *serm.* 4.
⁵² *De Conceptione B.V. Mariae*.
⁵³ *De Maria Deipara*, Lib. I, c. 7.
⁵⁴ *De ortu ac progressu cultus et festi immaculati conceptus*, a. 1.
⁵⁵ Or. I, in *Nativ. Deip.*
⁵⁶ *Laud. in Concept. S. Annae*.
⁵⁷ *Speculum Historiale*, Lib. VI, c. 65.
⁵⁸ *Ep.* 174.
⁵⁹ *Theol. mor.*, Lib. VII, *Dissert. super censuris circa Immac. B.V. Mariae Concept.*
⁶⁰ *Coccio, Thesaurus Catholicus*.
⁶¹ *Scrip. Oxon.*, *super Sent.*, Lib. III, dist. 3, q. 1.
⁶² Cf. Mazzella, *De Deo Creante*, dist. 4, a. 4.
⁶³ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 3.
⁶⁴ *Ibid.*
⁶⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 3.
⁶⁶ St. Peter Canisius, *De Maria Virg. Deip.*, Lib. IV, c. 12.
⁶⁷ *Mariale*, q. 133.
⁶⁸ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 4.
⁶⁹ Cf. Lepicier, *op. cit.*, P. II, c. 1, a. 3.
⁷⁰ Cf. Gobat, *Experientiae theologicae*, Lib. 7, c. 15.
⁷¹ *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 100, a. 2.
⁷² Cf. Ripalda, *De Concept. Virginis*, c. 18.
⁷³ Cf. St. Albert, *De laudibus B.M. Virginis*; St. Jerome, *Serm. de Assumpt. B.M. Virg.*; St. Anselm, *De excell. Virginis*, c. 3.
⁷⁴ *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 100, a. 2.
⁷⁵ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 5, ad 2^{um}.
⁷⁶ Cf. St. Bernardine of Siena, *Serm. 4, De Concept. B.M.V.*

CHAPTER FOUR

- ¹ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 5, ad 2^{um}.
² *The Glories of Mary*, chap. 5.
³ *Serm.* 44, *De Nativ. B. Mariae*.
⁴ *In IV*, dist. IV, q. 6 ad 1^{um}.
⁵ *Summa theol.*, loc. cit.
⁶ *Mariale*, q. 46.
⁷ *In IV*, dist. 5, a. 2.

- * Serm. 51.
 * *Mariale*, q. 135.
 * Serm. 3, *De Nativ. Mariae*.
 * In III, dist. 18, sect. 2.
 * *Op. cit.*, I, VII, c. 1.
 * Rupert of Deutz, *loc. cit.*; Denis the Carthusian, *In Cant.*, V.
 * Maldonado, *In Joan.*, c. 3.
 * Suárez, *In III*, dist. 19, sect. 1.
 * *Decretum pro Armenis*.
 * *Ep. to the Ephesians*.
 * *Apol. contra Iovinianum and Ep. ad Lucinum*
 * Cf. *Mariale*, q. 43.
 * *Cap. Nova, extrav. de Poenitentia*.
 * Cf. Gerson, *Super Magnificat*, tr. 9.
 * Cf. *Mariale*, q. 44.
 * *Serm. de Passione*.
 * *De gratia*, Lib. IX, c. 1.
 * *De praeconio et dignitate Mariae*, Lib. I, a. 15; cf. also St. Bonaventure, *In Speculo*, c. 5; St. Peter Chrysologus, *Serm. 140, De Annunt. B. Virginis*; St. John Damascene, *Hom. 2, In Dormit. B.V. Mariae*; St. Peter Damian, *Serm. 40, In Assumpt. B.M. Virg.*; Richard of St. Laurence, *De laud. Deiparae*, Lib. II; St. Thomas of Villanova, *Serm. 2, De Nativ. Virginis*.
 * *In III*, disp. 18, sect. 4.
 * *Carmina Nisibena*.
 * St. Peter Damian, *Serm. 40, In Assumpt. B.M. Virginis*; St. Germanus of Constantinople, *Or. In Praesent. Deiparae*.
 * *Loc. cit.*
 * *Comm. in Luc.*, c. 1.
 * *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 49, a. unie.
 * *Ad glorios. Virg. Mariam deprec. et laus*.
 * Luke 1:45.
 * *Haer.*, III, 23.
 * *On Holy Virginity*, c. 3.
 * *In Signum magnum*.
 * *In Luc.*, I.
 * *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 4.
 * Suárez, *In III*, dist. 19, sect. 1.
 * *In Lucam*, cap. 1.
 * *In I Cor.*, a. 15.
 * *De laud. glor. Virg. Mariae*, Lib. III, a. 2.
 * St. Augustine, *Serm. 2, De Annunt.*; St. Germanus, *De Praesent. Deiparae*.
 * *Mariale*, q. 46.
 * *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 8.
 * Cf. St. Bernardine of Siena, *Serm. 2, De glor. nom. Mariae*.
 * *De laud. glor. Virg.*, III, 7.
 * St. Ephrem, *De Ss. Dei Genitr. V.M. laudibus*; St. Ildephonse, *Serm. 1, De Assumpt. B.M.*; Raymond Jourdain, *Contempl. de B. Virgine*, 8; St. Bernard, *Serm. 2, In Assumpt. B.M. Mariae*, q. 54.
 * *Serm. 140, De Annunt. B.M. Virg.*
 * Cf. Richard of St. Laurence, *De laud. B. Mariae*, Lib. III.
 * Cf. Richard of St. Laurence, *loc. cit.*
 * *De Virginitate*, Lib. II.
 * Cf. St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 51.
 * *De Poenit.*, sect. 1, q. 4.
 * Cf. Suárez, *De Poenit.*, d. 2, sect. 3; Tanner, *De Poenit.*, q. 2, dub. 2.
 * *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 104, a. 2.
 * Cf. St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 55; St. Bernard, *Serm. In Signum Magnum*.
 * Cf. Office of the Seven Dolours, at Matins, resp. 6.
 * Cf. St. Ambrose, *De Virginitate*, Lib. II, c. 2; St. Albert, *Mariale*, q. 59.
 * *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 143; a. 143, a. unie.
 * Cf. Denis the Carthusian, *De praec. et dign. Deiparae*, III, 13.
 * See St. Ambrose, *De Virginit.*, II, 2, and Richard of St. Laurence, *De laud. B. Mariae*, Lib. IV.
 * Cf. Vega, *op. cit.*, pal. 17, cert. 12.
 * Cf. *Mariale*, q. 61.
 * *De praec. et dign. Deiparae*, III, a. 19.
 * *Stimul. amoris*, III, c. 19; Richard of St. Laurence, *De laud. virginis*, c. IV.
 * *Serm. 4, In Assumpt. B.M.V.*; St.

- Germanus, De Praesent. Deiparae*; Jourdain, *Contempl. de B. Virg.*, VI, 16.
 * Cf. *In Lucam*, c. 1.
 * *Hom. 4, Super Missus est*.
 * *Serm. 51*.
 * Cf. *Deiparae Elucid.*, princ. 12, sect. 2.
 * *In Iam IIae*, d. 17, a. 2.
 * *De Trinit.*, VIII, c. 19.
 * Denis the Carthusian, *De laud. glor. Virg. Mariae*, II, a. 3.
 * *Revue Ecclésiastique de Liège*, sept., 1931.
 * Denis the Carthusian, *op. cit.* II, a. 6.
 * John of St. Thomas: *op. cit.*, dist. 18, a. 5.
 * *The Gifts of the Holy Ghost in the Dominican Saints*.
 * Denis the Carthusian, *op. cit.*, III, a. 11.
 * *In Iam-IIae*, q. 17, a. 6.
 * Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 19, a. 8.
 * See also St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 60.
 * Suárez, *In IIIam*, dist. 18, sect. 2.
 * Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 111, a. 4.
 * *Enc. Adjutricem populi*.
 * *Mariale*, q. 12.
 * Cf. *De laud. glor. Virg. Mariae*, II, a. 4.
 * Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 5, ad 3um.
 * *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 177, a. 2.
 * Cajetan, *In IIIam*, q. 27, a. 5; Denis, *op. cit.*, II, a. 19; St. Peter Canisius, *De Maria Virgine*, V, c. 1.
 * *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 5.
 * Cf. St. Bruno, *Hom. De Nativ. Dom.*; Rupert, *In Cant.*, IV; St. Albert, *Mariale*, q. 151; Knabenbauer, *Comm. in Lucam*, 1.
 * Denis the Carthusian, *De laud. glor. Virg. Mariae*, II, a. 18.
 * Suárez, *In IIIam*, dist. 20, sect. 1.
 * *Op. cit.*, VII, c. 6.
 * *Mariale*, q. 117.
 * *In III*, dist. 20.
 * *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 3.
 * *Tr. de Beatiss. Virg.*, II, c. 1, a. 4.
 * *Serm. 51*.
 * *De laud. glor. Virg. Mariae*, I, a. 12.
 * *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 34, a. 3.
 * *Serm. De B. Maria*.
 * *Serm. 36*.
 * Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 175, a. 3.
 * *Ep. 174*.
 * Cf. *Defensio Immac. Concept. B.M.V.*, c. 32. When one of his disciples attacked this doctrine by saying that he did not approve of the method of arguing which states that God could do it, and therefore He did it, Gerson replied: "And what if it befitting His divine honor to grant this grace?"
 * *Serm. de Resurrectione*.
 * *The Mystery of Mary*, II, chap. 36.
 * *Hom. 9, In Luc.*
 * *In Cant. Lib. I*.
 * See Denis the Carthusian, *De dign. et praec. Virg. Deiparae*, II, 1.
 * Cf. Suárez, *In IIIam*, dist. 19, sect. 3.
 * Sodlmayr, *Theol. Mar.*, I, q. 10, a. 7.
 * See St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 100.
 * Suárez, *In IIIam*, dist. 14, sect. 4.
 * See Denis the Carthusian, *op. cit.*, II, a. 14.
 * *Serm. De Assumpt.*
 * *In II Sent.*, dist. 23, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2um.
 * *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 12, a. 3.
 * *Hom. 6, In Lucam*.
 * See Bernard, *Hom. 4, Super Missus est*.
 * *Est*.
 * *In IIIam*, dist. 19, sect. II.
 * See Denis the Carthusian, *De laud. glor. Virg. Mariae*, II, a. 16; St. Thomas of Villanova, *Conc. 1, In Assumpt. B.M.V.*
 * *Metaphys.*, IV, lect. 6.
 * *In IIIam*, dist. 19, sect. VI.
 * Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 94, a. 4.

¹⁰⁹ *De lib. arbitr.*, III, q. 18.¹¹⁰ *De virt. Mariae*, IV, serm. 2.¹¹¹ See St. Peter Canisius, *op. cit.*, IV, c. 17.

CHAPTER FIVE

¹ *In Illam*, disp. 2, sec. 2.² Cf. St. Antoninus, *Summa theol.*, IV, tit. 15, c. 10.³ See Bernardine of Busti, *Mariae*, II, serm. 4.⁴ Conc. 3, *In Nativ. Virg.*⁵ *Op. cit.*, c. I, specul. I.⁶ *De peccat. merit.*, II, c. 29.⁷ St. Bonaventure, *Medit. vite Christi*, c. 77; St. Laurence Justinian, *De triumphali agone Christi*, c. 21; Denis the Carthusian, *In cap. 12 Joannis*.⁸ St. Bernardine of Siena, *Serm. 51, In passione Domini*; St. Bridgit, *Revel.*, I, c. 10, and IV, c. 70.⁹ Benedict XIV, *De festis. B.M. Virginis*, II, c. 4.¹⁰ *In Exposit. Pass. Domini*.¹¹ *De instit. Virg.*, c. 7; cf. St. Anselm, *Enarrat. Evang.*, 1.¹² Cajetan, *De spasmo B.M.V.*¹³ *In Luc.*, c. 2, annot. 57.¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, IV, c. 26.¹⁵ St. Thomas, *De veritate*, q. 26, a. 10; Suárez, *De anima*, I, 5, c. 6.¹⁶ *Haeres.*, 36.¹⁷ Pope Leo XIII, *Jucunda semper*, September 8, 1894.¹⁸ *Cf. op. cit.*, P. II, cap. 2, a. 2.¹⁹ Cf. *Ep. de suscept. human. Christi*.²⁰ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 97, a. 2.²¹ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 15, a. 5, ad 2um.²² *Ibid.*, IIIa, q. 15, a. 2, ad 1um.²³ *Mariologia*, P. II, cap. 2, a. 1; *La Ciencia Tomista*, tomo 77, 1950; *Estudios Eclesiásticos*, Vol. 21, 1947; *De definibilitate Assump. B. Virg. in coelum*.²⁴ *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 27, a. 4.²⁵ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 15, a. 6.²⁶ *De excellent. Virg.*²⁷ See St. Peter Canisius, *De Maria deipara*, IV, cap. 25.²⁸ *Comm. theol.*, IV, d. 2, q. 1, p. 3.²⁹ Or. 1, *De Nativ. Virginis*.³⁰ *Serm.*, 1.³¹ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 3.³² *Op. cit.*, pal. 7, cert. 4.³³ *Super Magnificat*, tr. 5.³⁴ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 18, a. 2.³⁵ *Ibid.*, a. 3.³⁶ *Op. cit.*, IV, 15, c. 14.³⁷ Cf. St. Albert the Great, *Mariae*, q. 150.³⁸ *Tr. de Deo creante et elevante*, th. 52.³⁹ *De Gen. ad litt.*, VI, c. 25.⁴⁰ *Denz.* 1078.⁴¹ *In II Sent.*, dist. 19, q. 1, a. 2.⁴² *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 97, a. 2, ad 4um.⁴³ *De Civ. Dei*, XIV, c. 26.⁴⁴ *In Illam*, d. 115, c. 3.⁴⁵ *Denz.* 1073.⁴⁶ *Enarr.* in Ps. 34, serm. 2.⁴⁷ See St. Andrew of Crete, *Hom. in dormit. Deiparae*; St. John Damascene, Or. 1, *de dormit. Virginis*; St. John of Thessalonica, Or. in *dormit. Dominae nostrae Deiparae*.⁴⁸ Secret in the Mass of the Assumption.⁴⁹ *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 164, a. 1, ad 1um.⁵⁰ *De Virgine Immortale*.⁵¹ *L'Assunzione e l'Immacolata Concezione*.⁵² *De arcanis catholicae veritatis*, VII, c. 10.⁵³ *Comm. mor. in Evang. historiam*, I, c. 13.⁵⁴ *La mort et l'assomption de la sainte Vierge*.⁵⁵ *La asunción de María*, III, c. 4.⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*, II, sect. 3, mem. 2, q. 50.⁵⁷ *Litt. Apost.*, March 22, 1918.⁵⁸ *Mariae*, q. 181.⁵⁹ Cf. Peter Galatinus, *De arcanis catholicae veritatis*, VII, c. 10.⁶⁰ *Haer.*, 78.⁶¹ *Echos d'Orient* (1926); cf. also Janssens, *op. cit.*⁶² Cf. Campana, *op. cit.*, I, P. II, q. 5, a. 1, n. 1.⁶³ Cf. *op. cit.*⁶⁴ "Il problema della morte di Maria SS. dopo la costituzione dogmatica *Munificentissimus Deus*," *Marianum*, II (1951)⁶⁵ Cf. Aperribay, "La muerte de la Sma. Virgen, problema mcremento histórico o también teológico?," *Estudios Marianos* (1950).⁶⁶ Cf. Billuart, *op. cit.*; Novato, *De eminentia Deip. Virg. Mariae*, II, c. 8.⁶⁷ Cf. Lepicier, *op. cit.*, II, c. 2, a. 3; Janssens, *Trat. de Deo-Homine*, II, sect. 3, q. 50.⁶⁸ Cf. Merkelbach, *loc. cit.* *Aldama, Mariologia*, c. 5, a. 1.⁶⁹ Cf. *Gregorianum*, XXXI, 4 (1950).⁷⁰ Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 16-17 (1933).⁷¹ Cf. "Notae quaedam ad interpretationem Bullam *Munificentissimus Deus*," *Marianum*, fasc. 2 (1951).⁷² Cf. Callus, *loc. cit.*⁷³ Cf. Bonney, "La Bulle Dogmatique *Munificentissimus Deus*," *Epiphem. Mariologicae*, fasc. 1 (1951); Cuervo, *La Ciencia Tomista*, January-March (1951); Quera, "La Bula *Munificentissimus Deus*," *Razón y Fe*, July-August (1951).⁷⁴ Cf. Filograssi, *Gregorianum*, XXXI, 4 (1950); *Aldama*, "Boletín asuncionista," *Estudios Eclesiásticos*, July-September (1951).⁷⁵ Cf. *Aldama, loc. cit.*⁷⁶ Cf. Lamy, *S. Ephraemi Syri hymni et sermones*.⁷⁷ *Enarr. in Ps. 34*.⁷⁸ Cf. Or. 2 *de dormit. B.M.V.*⁷⁹ *Encom. de dormit. SS. Deiparae*, c. 6.⁸⁰ Or. in *dormit. Deiparae*, Jugie, *Homel. Marial. Byzant.*⁸¹ See Scheeben, *Mariology*, II, ch. 7.⁸² The homily of St. Athanasius, cited by Glycas, is unauthenticated. There is no historical tradition on the subject of Mary's death before the first five centuries. However, dogmatic considerations connected with Mary's privileges as the Mother of God are proofs of Mary's death (Translator's note).⁸³ *Annal. Eccles.*, an. 48, 11 and 12.⁸⁴ The testimony of Timothy of Jerusalem, Hesychius and Crispius is not conclusive.⁸⁵ Cf. *Sacrament. Gregorianum*. The words "Dormition" and "Passatio" used in the Greek liturgy signify the death of Mary.⁸⁶ Cf. Peter Canisius, *De Maria Virgine*, V, c. 1.⁸⁷ Cf. *De Vita et obitu Patrum*, c. 67.⁸⁸ *In Luc.*, 2.⁸⁹ *Op. cit.*, an. 48.⁹⁰ Clitoveus, a famous opponent of Luther, and Terrien teach that Mary did not die of sickness or old age. Cf. Molani, *Histor. sanct. imaginum*, III; Terrien, *op. cit.*, VIII, c. 1.⁹¹ *De celebrandis vigiliis*.⁹² *In Illam*, dist. 21, sect. 1.⁹³ *Serm. 2, In Assumpt. S. Mariae*.⁹⁴ *Mariae*, q. 131.⁹⁵ Cf. Denis the Carthusian, *op. cit.*, IV, a. 3; Thomas of Villanova, *Conc. 4, De Assumpt. Virg.*; Bossuet, *Serm. 1, Pour l'Assumpt.*⁹⁶ *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 175, a. 3, ad 1um.⁹⁷ *Treatise on the Love of God*, Bk. VII, chap. 14.⁹⁸ *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 175, a. 5, ad 1um.⁹⁹ Lepicier, *Tr. de Beatiss. Virg.*, p. 11, c. 2, a. 3.¹⁰⁰ *Loc. cit.*

- ⁹⁹ *La Vierge Marie*, p. II, c. 16.
¹⁰⁰ Cf. Tillemont, *Annot. in S. Virginiem*; Serry, *Exercit.*, 65; Alexander, *Histor. Eccles.*
¹⁰¹ Cf. Cornelius a Lapide, *In Act.*, 10:10.
¹⁰² Cf. Campana, *op. cit.*, I, p. III, c. 9.
¹⁰³ Cf. St. Andrew of Crete, *Or. in dormit. B. Virg.*; St. John Damascene, *Or. 1 in dormit. B.M.V.*; St. John of Thessalonica, *Or. in Dormit. Dom. nostrae Deiparae*; Callixtus, *Hist. Eccles.*, XV, c. 14; Baronius, *Annal. Eccles.*, an. 48.
¹⁰⁴ Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, c. 24.
¹⁰⁵ Cf. Callixtus, *Hist. Eccles.*, *loc. cit.*
¹⁰⁶ *Op. cit.*, V, c. 1.
¹⁰⁷ *Hist. Eccles.*, VIII, c. 16.
¹⁰⁸ *Ad diem*, September 16 and January 22; cf. Trombelli: *op. cit.*, d. 45, q. 3.
¹⁰⁹ Cf. Bianchi, "Un Sopralluogo a Efeso," *Mater Dei* (1931).
¹¹⁰ Cf. Trombelli, *op. cit.*, d. 44, sect. 3; Castro, *Hist. Deip. Virg. Mariae*, c. 20; Canisius, *op. cit.*, V, c. 1; Suárez, *In Illam*, d. 21, sect. 1.
¹¹¹ Cf. Callixtus, *Hist. Eccles.*, II, c. 21; St. Antoninus, *Chron.*, I, VI, c. 3; Denis the Carthusian, *De laud. glor. Virg. Mariae*, IV, a. 7.
¹¹² *Op. cit.*, c. 8, n. 12.
¹¹³ Cf. Metaphrastes, *Or. de vita et dormit. Deiparae*; Epiphanius, *Narr. de dormit. B.M.V.*; Callixtus, *Hist. Eccles.*, II, c. 21.
¹¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, IV, a. 3.
¹¹⁵ Cf. St. Gregory, *De glor. mar-*

tyrum, II, c. 4; St. Epiphanius, *loc. cit.*; St. John Damascene, *Serm. 1, In Assumpt. B.M. Virg.*; Callixtus, *Hist. Eccles.*, II, c. 21; St. Anselm, *De excell. Virginis*, c. 8; Amaduc, *Hom. 8.*

¹¹⁶ Cf. St. Gregory, *De glor. martyrum*, c. 1; St. John, *loc. cit.*; St. John Damascene, *Or. 2, De dormit. Deiparae*; Metaphrastes, *Or. de vita et dormit. Deiparae*; Callixtus, *loc. cit.*

¹¹⁷ *Adv. Magdeburgenses.*
¹¹⁸ Cf. *Hist. Deip. Virg. Mariae*, c. 20.
¹¹⁹ Cf. *op. cit.*, V, c. 3.

¹²⁰ Cf. *loc. cit.*; Callixtus, *op. cit.*, II, c. 22.

¹²¹ *Retract. in Act. Apost.*, c. 8.
¹²² Cf. *Annal. Eccles.*, c. 48.

¹²³ Cf. *De la Broisse, op. cit.*, c. 12.
¹²⁴ Vega, *Orig. div. apost. doct. evec. B. Virg. ad glor. coel.*, etc.

¹²⁵ Cf. "Munificentissimus Deus," translated by Rev. J. C. Fenton, *The Thomist*, January, 1951.
¹²⁶ *Ep. ad soldanum Iconii.*

¹²⁷ 88 *Or. in dormit. Ss. Deiparae*; cf. also St. Modestus, *Encom. in dormit. Ss. Dom. nostrae semper que Virg. Mariae.*

¹²⁸ *In dormit. B. Mariae*; cf. also St. John Damascene, *Or. 2, De dormit. B. Mariae*; St. Bernardine of Siena, *Serm. 52*; Denis the Carthusian, *Enarr. in Cant*; St. Thomas of Villanova, *Conc. 5, In Assumpt. B.M. Virginis.*

¹²⁹ *Gregorian Sacramentary*; cf. St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, q. 132, who comments at length on this prayer.

¹³⁰ Cf. Salmerón, *op. cit.*, tr. 38.

¹³¹ *De laudib. glor. Virg. Mariae*, IV, a. 3.

CHAPTER SIX

- ¹ *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 39, a. 8.
² *De div. nomin.*, V, c. 4.
³ Cf. Ferretti: "De Christo pulchri-

tudinis prototypo," *Divus Thomas Placentinus*, January, 1926.
⁴ Cf. St. Epiphanius, *Encom. Vir-*

ginis; St. John Damascene, *Or. 1, De Nativitate Mariae*; St. Peter Damian, *Serm. 1, In Nativ. Deiparae*; St. Bernard, *Hom. 2 super Missus est*; St. Anselm, *Or. 51.*

⁵ *Ant. for Vespers, Feast of the B.V.M.*

⁶ Cf. Richard of St. Victor, *In Cant.*

4:7.

⁷ Cf. *Mariale*, q. 15.

⁸ Cf. *Ep. ad Pammachium.*

⁹ Cf. *In cap. 1 Matt.*, II, tr. 10.

¹⁰ Cf. Richard of St. Laurence, *op. cit.*, V.

¹¹ Cf. Richard of St. Laurence, *De laud. B. Mariae*, V.

¹² Cf. Bittremieux, "De pulchr. effectu grat. sanctif.," *E.T.L.*, V, fasc. 3 (1928).

¹³ Ghislieri, *In Cant.*

¹⁴ Cf. *De laud. glor. Virg. Mariae*, I, 30.

¹⁵ Cf. *Serm. de Conceptione.*

¹⁶ Cf. St. Jerome, *Comm. in Matt.*, c. 9.

¹⁷ *Summa*, IV, tit. 15, c. 10; cf. also St. Ambrose, *De instit. Virg.*, c. 6.

¹⁸ *In III Sent.*, dist. 2, q. 1, a. 2, ad 4um. See also St. Bonaventure, *In Illam*, dist. 3, q. 3; and Denis the Carthusian, *In Cant.*, 2.

¹⁹ *Serm. 2, De Annunt.*

²⁰ *Curs. Theol.: De temperantia*, dist. 4, a. 2.

²¹ *Op. cit.*, II, c. 6.

²² Cf. Canisius, *op. cit.*, II, c. 17.

²³ *Ibid.*, c. 8.

²⁴ Fillion, *Vie de N.S. Jésus-Christ*; App. XII; Vosté, *De concept. virg. Jesu Christi*, Ag., an. X, fasc. 3 (1933).

²⁵ *Denz. 6.*

²⁶ Cf. *Denz. 256.*

²⁷ *Denz. 993.*

²⁸ Cf. *Denz. 282.*

²⁹ Knabenbauer, *Comm. in Isaiam prophetam*, h. 1.

³⁰ *Apol. I pro Christianis.*

³¹ Cf. J. H. Janssens: *Hermen. sacra*,

c. 3, sec. 3.

³² Cf. *Denz. 2115.*

³³ Cf. Eusebius, *Demonstrat.*, VII, c. 1.

³⁴ Cf. Knabenbauer, *op. cit.*, h. 1.

³⁵ Cf. Knabenbauer, *op. cit.*, h. 1.

³⁶ *Gen. 24:43; Exod. 2:8; Ps. 67:26;*

Cant. 1:3, 6:7; Prov. 30:10.

³⁷ Perrone, *De Incarn.*, II, c. 2.

³⁸ Cf. Franzelin, *Tr. de Verbo Incarnato*, th. 15.

³⁹ Cf. Knabenbauer, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁰ *Ep. ad Ephras.*

⁴¹ *Apol. I pro Christianis.*

⁴² *Ep. ad Cledonium.*

⁴³ *Ep. 28.* See also St. Irenaeus, *Haer.*, III, 12; Tertullian, *De carn. Chr.*, 16;

Origen, *De principis*, I, and *In Joam.*, 32; St. Ephrem, *De Sa. Dei Genit. Virg. Mariae laudibus*; St. Epiphanius, *Anchoratus*; and Ildephonse of Toledo, *De virginis S. Mariae*, c. 1; St. Augustine, *Serm. 9, In natali Domini.*

⁴⁴ *Ant. 1 at Vespers.*

⁴⁵ *Resp. 3 for Matins.* See other feasts of B.V.M.

⁴⁶ *Instit.*, IV.

⁴⁷ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 28, a. 1.

⁴⁸ Cf. *op. cit.*, II, c. 3.

⁴⁹ Cf. St. Leo the Great, *Serm. 4, De Nativ. Domini.*

⁵⁰ Cf. St. Ambrose, *Serm. 37, De Quadragesima.*

⁵¹ Cf. St. Athanasius, *Or. De Incarn. Verbi.*

⁵² *De fide. orth.*, IV, c. 15.

⁵³ *De Carne Christi*, c. 17.

⁵⁴ *Ep. ad Ephesios*, 18; cf. also St. Gregory, *Serm. in sancta Theophania.*

⁵⁵ *De instit. virg.*, c. 8; cf. also St. Ephrem, *Serm. adv. haereticos.*

⁵⁶ *Enchir.*, 34; cf. also St. Peter Chrysologus, *Serm. 117.*

⁵⁷ *Ep. 38*; cf. also St. Ildephonse, *op. cit.*, c. 1.

⁵⁸ Cf. *adv. haeres. novit.*

⁵⁹ Cf. *Maria dans l'Eglise antiecclesienne*, II, c. 1.

⁶⁰ *Preface of the B.V.M.*; cf. *Feast of the Annunciation, Resp. 3 at Matins.*

- ⁴⁰ Cf. St. Leo, *Serm. 1, De Nativ.*
⁴¹ Cf. St. Fulgentius, *De laud. Mariae ex partu Salvatoris*; St. Peter Chrysologus, *Serm. 142.*
⁴² Cf. St. Athanasius, *Quaest. 19*; St. Bernard, *Hom. 2, super Missus est*. See also Contenson, *op. cit.*, X, d. 6, c. 2.
⁴³ *In Illam*, dist. 5, sect. 2.
⁴⁴ Vázquez, *In Illam*, dist. 121, c. 2.
⁴⁵ Cf. Menéndez Pelayo, *De rebus Hispaniae*, XI, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, III, I, c. 3.
⁴⁶ Denz. 91.
⁴⁷ Cf. *De instit. Virg.*, c. 7.
⁴⁸ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 28, a. 3.
⁴⁹ *Serm. 25* in the works of St. Augustine, appendix.
⁵⁰ *Comm. in Matth.*, 1:18.
⁵¹ Cf. *Hom. 5, In Matth.*
⁵² St. Ambrose, *De instit. Virg.*, c. 6; Origen, *Hom. 7, In Luc*; St. Ildephonse, *De virginit. S. Mariae*, c. 2.
⁵³ *Serm. 48.*
⁵⁴ Vers. ad ant. *Alma Redemptoris Mater.*
⁵⁵ *Magnificat Ant.*, I *Vesp. Feast of the Purification.*
⁵⁶ *Benedictus Ant.*, Off. of B.V.M. for Saturday.
⁵⁷ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 28, a. 3.
⁵⁸ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 28, a. 3, ad 5um.
⁵⁹ *In Matt. c. 12.*
⁶⁰ Adv. *Helvid. de perpetua virginit. Mariae.*
⁶¹ Cf. *Comm. in Gal.*, 1:19.
⁶² Cf. St. Antoninus, *Chron.*, IV, c. 6; Eck, *Serm. S. Annae*, Gerson, *Serm. de nativ. Virg.*
⁶³ Cf. Castro, *op. cit.*, c. 3; Lippomanus, *De vitis sanctorum.*
⁶⁴ Wirceburg, *De Incarn. Verb. divini*, sect. 3, a. 2.
⁶⁵ *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, XVII (April, 1927).
⁶⁶ *In Illam*, disp. V, sect. 4.
⁶⁷ *In Matt. 17*; cf. Calmet, *In Evang. Luc.*, "De genealogia J.C."

- ⁶⁸ *De Instit. Virg.*, II.
⁶⁹ *In Luc.*, c. 1.
⁷⁰ *Mariae effigies revelatioque trinitatis et attributorum Dei*, acad. 20.
⁷¹ Feast of St. Lucy, lesson 6 at Mattins.
⁷² Cf. Salazar, *op. cit.*
⁷³ *De Virginit.*, VI, c. 1.
⁷⁴ Cf. *Lib. de virginite.*
⁷⁵ Cf. Maldonado, *In Luc.*, c. 1.
⁷⁶ *De Sancta Virginitate*, c. 4.
⁷⁷ *Hom. 4, Super Missus est.*
⁷⁸ *De festis B.M. Virg.*, c. 1, n. 7.
⁷⁹ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 38, a. 4.
⁸⁰ Cf. St. Bonaventure, *In IV Sent.*, d. 30.
⁸¹ Cf. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. in Nativ. Domi*; St. Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, c. 4.
⁸² *In IV Sent.*, dist. 30, q. 2, a. 1.
⁸³ For the passage in question, cf. *IV Sent.*, dist. 30.
⁸⁴ Cf. St. Bonaventure, *In IV Sent.*, dist. 30; Scotus, *In IV Sent.*, q. 2; *In Illam*, d. 124, c. 2; Suárez, *In Illam*, d. 6, sect. 2; Estius, *In IV Sent.*, d. 13; Sylvius, *In Illam*, q. 28, a. 4; Serry, *Exercit.*, 21; Billuart, *Cursus Theologici*, *De Beata Virgine Maria*, d. 1, a. 4.
⁸⁵ Cf. Billot, *De Matrimonio*, th. 35.
⁸⁶ Ep. 48, *Ad Pammachium.*
⁸⁷ *De Instit. Virg.*, c. 5.
⁸⁸ *Hom. de fest. Annunt.*
⁸⁹ *Serm. in Signum magnum.*
⁹⁰ *De laud. B.M.V.*
⁹¹ *Conc. 2, De Annunt.*
⁹² St. Ephrem, *Serm. de Ss. Dei Genitrice*; St. Epiphanius, *Haeres.*, 78;
⁹³ St. Ambrose, *De Instit. Virg.*, c. 5.
⁹⁴ St. Peter Chrysologus, *Serm. 143.*
⁹⁵ Hugh of St. Victor, *Serm. in qualibet festo B. Mariae.*
⁹⁶ Richard of St. Laurence, *De laud. B.V. Mariae*, III.
⁹⁷ St. Antoninus, *op. cit.*, IV, tit. 15, c. 22.
⁹⁸ Cf. Contenson, *op. cit.*, X, d. 6, c. 2.
⁹⁹ *Hom. 4 super Missus est.*

- ¹⁰⁰ Second antiphon for Lauds of the Nativity of our Lord.
¹⁰¹ Cf. St. Gregory of Nazianzen, *Or. funebris in laud. sororis suae Gorgoniae*; St. Gregory of Tours, *De glor. Confessorum*, c. 49.
¹⁰² Cf. Pope Benedict XIV, *De festis B.M.V.*, c. 8.
¹⁰³ Cf. Renaudin, *Assumpt. B.M. Virg. Matris Dei*, c. 10.
¹⁰⁴ *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950.
¹⁰⁵ Cf. Janssens, *De glorif. corpor. B. Mariae Virginis*, E.T.L., fasc. 3, 1931.
¹⁰⁶ Mansi, *Conc. collectio*, XXV.
¹⁰⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, XXIV.
¹⁰⁸ Cf. *De Maria Virgine*, V, c. 5.
¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Codex Juris Canonici*, canon 1323, 3.
¹¹⁰ Cf. De Guibert, *De Christi Ecclesia*, th. 39.
¹¹¹ Cf. Billot, *De Novissimis*, p. 53.
¹¹² *Ep. ad soldanum Iconii*; Mansi, *Conc. Collectio*, XXI, c. 898.
¹¹³ *Expos. salut. angelicae.*
¹¹⁴ Cf. *Haeres.*, 42, c. 6.
¹¹⁵ *De glor. martyr. I.*, c. 4.
¹¹⁶ *Encom. in dormit. Deiparae.*
¹¹⁷ Or. 1 and 2, *In dormit. Ss. Deiparae.*
¹¹⁸ *In dormit. B. Mariae.*
¹¹⁹ *Hom. 1, In dormit. B.V. Mariae. Laud. in dormit. Deiparae.*
¹²⁰ Cf. St. Peter Damian, *Serm. 40, De Assumpt.*
¹²¹ Or. 40, *Ad S. Virg. Mar. in Assumpt. eius.*
¹²² Ep. 174; See also *Serm. 1, In Assumpt. Mariae*; Hugh of St. Victor, *De Assumpt. et decem praecon. Mar. semper Virg.*
¹²³ *Hom. 7, De B. Virg. obitu, Assumpt. in coelum.*
¹²⁴ Cf. *Heortologie*, 168.
¹²⁵ Pope Benedict XIV, *De festis B.M. Virg.*, c. 8.
¹²⁶ Trombelli, *op. cit.*, d. 46, q. 1, c. 1.
¹²⁷ *Quoniam Apostolicae.*
¹²⁸ Labbe: *Collect. Concil.*

- ¹²⁹ Campana: *Maria nel culto cattolico*, sec. 2, c. 1, a. 12.
¹³⁰ Cf. Labbe, *Conc. Collect.* (Paris: 1715); Wilkins, *Conc. Magnal Britanniae* (London: 1737).
¹³¹ Cf. *Decreta pro Ord. S. Benedicti*, sect. 7-8.
¹³² Cf. Gordillo, *La Asunción de María.*
¹³³ Cf. Gordillo, *op. cit.*
¹³⁴ Cf. St. Antoninus, *Summa theol.*, p. IV, t. 15, c. 43; St. Thomas of Villanova, *Conc. 4 and 6, In Assumpt. B.M.V.*; St. Charles Borromeo, *Acta Eccles. Mediolanensis.*
¹³⁵ *Crónica oficial del Congreso Mariano Hispanoamericano de Sevilla.*
¹³⁶ Cf. Frassen, *Scotus Academicus, De div. Verb. Incarn.*, d. 3, a. 3, sect. 3, q. 5.
¹³⁷ *Or. de Dormit. B.M.V.*
¹³⁸ *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 1.
¹³⁹ *Le mystère de Marie*, I, c. 14 (English tr. *The Mystery of Mary* [Herder: St. Louis]).
¹⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. IV, tit. 15, c. 45.
¹⁴¹ Cf. Suárez, *In Illam*, d. 21, sect. 2; cf. also St. Thomas of Villanova, *Conc. 5, In Assumpt. B.M. Virg.*
¹⁴² *Serm. 40, De Assumpt. B.M.V.*
¹⁴³ *In Speculo*, c. 5.
¹⁴⁴ *Serm. 1, In Assumpt.*, cf. also St. Thomas of Villanova, *Conc. 2, De Assumpt. B.M.V.*
¹⁴⁵ *In Signum magnum.*
¹⁴⁶ Cf. Suárez, *In Illam*, dist. 21, sec. 3, who maintains that Mary's vision in glory extends to all things except those which pertain peculiarly to Christ and the interior thoughts of His soul.
¹⁴⁷ Cf. Contenson, *op. cit.*, X, d. 6, c. 1.
¹⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, pal. 35, cert. 4.
¹⁴⁹ *Summa theol.*, *Suppl.*, q. 96, a. 1.
¹⁵⁰ *Loc. cit.*, a. 11.
¹⁵¹ *De laud. glor. Virg. Mariae*, IV, a. 17.
¹⁵² Cf. *De laud. Deiparae.*
¹⁵³ Tr. 4, *Super Magnificat*; cf. also

St. Peter Damian, Sermon 40, *In Assumpti. B.M.V.*; St. Bernardine of Siena, Sermon 3, *De glor. nom. Mariae*.
¹⁷² Ant. 3 and 5, Vespers for the Feast of the Assumption.

¹⁷⁶ *Mariale*, q. 151.

¹⁷⁷ *Op. cit.*, IV, tit. 15.

¹⁷⁸ Sermon 61.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. *De laud. glor. Virg. Mariae*, I, a. 38.

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