

DThC	<i>Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique</i> (Paris, 1903)
Dz	E. Denzinger, <i>El Magisterio de la Iglesia</i> (Barcelona, 1963)
EMBP	D. Cassagrande, <i>Enchiridium Marianum Biblicum Patristicum</i> (Rome, 1974)
GER	<i>Gran Enciclopedia Rialp</i> (Madrid, 1971–)
GNO	<i>Gregori Nyssem Opera</i> , ed. W. Jaeger (Leiden, 1970–)
NDM	S. Fiores and S. Meo, <i>Nuevo Diccionario de Mariología</i> (Madrid, 1988–)
PG	J.P. Migne, <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> (Paris, 1857–)
PL	J.P. Migne, <i>Patrologia Latina</i> (Paris, 1844–)
PO	R. Graffin and F. Nau, <i>Patrologia Orientalis</i> (Paris, 1903–)
SC	Sources Chrétiennes, Paris
ScrMar	<i>Scripta Maria</i> , Saragossa, 1982

The many abbreviations used in citing journals and not shown in this list are the ones recommended in S. Schwertner, *Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete* (Berlin and New York, 1974).

## Introduction to Mariology

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Council begins its exposition of Marian doctrine by using St Paul's words to recall that 'when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons' (Gal 4:4–5). The Council takes as its springboard the essential reference that Christ has to his Mother and that she has to him, in the context of the great panorama of salvation history. In this connexion it is very significant that the Council chose to give the entire chapter eight of *Lumen gentium* the very meaningful title of 'The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God in the Mystery of Christ and the Church'.<sup>1</sup> This title shows that the Council wanted to give a broad-ranging view of the mystery of Mary, showing that the Maid of Nazareth, whose name was Mary, by her 'Let it be done ...' (cf. Lk 1:26) not only made it possible for Christ to be born but also co-operated in an exceptional way in the salvation of the world, and holds a special place in the life of the Church.

The importance of the Blessed Virgin's role in the economy of salvation was something the nascent Church realized from the very first moment, when it assembled around her in the Cenacle at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 1:14) and it was vigorously attested to in the New Testament texts that have to do with her. The first Symbols of the faith include mention of Mary as the mother of Jesus by the action of the Holy Spirit. This mention of Mary in the Creeds is not merely anecdotal or circumstantial; it is included designedly and it has great theological significance: Mary is referred to explicitly on account of her special part in the mystery of the Incarnation and the unique role which that gave her in the work of Redemption.

As an indication of the manner in which God chose to save mankind, the Redeemer came into this world in the same way as every man and woman does being born to a woman, from whom he receives not only his flesh and blood, but also his membership of the human race and membership of a particular nation. Thanks to her, Christ is the descendant of David, the heir to the throne, the bearer of the messianic promises, the One on whom the Spirit of Yahweh rests (Lk 1:32–6; Is 11:1–3). The active role of the 'Woman' in this mystery of the Incarna-

<sup>1</sup> *Lumen gentium*, 52

tion is something that God positively wills to happen: so much so that one cannot grasp the mystery of Christ if one does not accept that the manner in which he came to form part of the human race was by being made flesh 'by the power of the Holy Spirit' in the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This link Mary has with the entire mystery of Christ – the mystery of his being and of his mission – is what led the Church to make ever more explicit its conviction that the Blessed Virgin has a unique role and holds a special place both in the redemptive work of her Son and in the life of the Church as it makes its way on earth. This role, of total maternal service to the Redeemer, characterizes Mary and differentiates her from others; it is what constitutes her vocation, that is, the choice God made of her before time began, to be the Mother of Jesus.

## 2. MARY CONTEMPLATED BY FAITH

In the faith of the Church and the thought of Christians, Mary is seen first and foremost in special and direct reference to her physical motherhood of Christ. She is, above all else, the Mother of Jesus (cf. Acts 1:14); her entire mystery derives from that mystery; her entire relationship with the salvation of mankind derives from that motherhood. She is inseparable from the mystery of the Incarnation, for that mystery (like her own vocation) is what explains her very existence. What she is and what she means for salvation history is determined primarily by her relationship to her motherhood. It is only right that we should always remember that every valid statement about Mary must be made in the light of Christ; what we know about Mary is a direct function of what we know about Christ.

Theological reflection on Mary must therefore be done from a viewpoint that can only be called Christocentric. This viewpoint is in keeping with the essential elements of the person, life and contribution of Mary to salvation history. If every mother has a direct connexion to her motherhood in such a way that, on conceiving her child, her life begins to have an irreplaceable connexion with her child's life, then with even more reason must it be said that Christ is the entire life of this Woman chosen by him to be his Mother in the most human and fullest sense of the world. So much so that anyone who fails to appreciate the radical Christocentrism of Christian thinking on the Blessed Virgin can never understand the sobriety that is really a feature of theology's statements and theories about different aspects of Marian doctrine.

Most theologians are agreed that Mariology and Christology have special reference to one another; this is particularly true of Mariology's connexion with Christology. Any Marian statement, if disconnected from the mystery of Christ, would look like a branch torn from a living tree and, sooner rather than later, would become distorted, become a diseased limb of an otherwise healthy theology. The connexion between the two is so indissoluble that the reverse is also usually argued:

a Christology that had no explicit reference to Mariology would be an incomplete Christology, for it would lack points of reference essential to a full-blooded assertion of the truth of the incarnation of the Son of God, that is, to showing that Jesus truly belonged to the human race, into communion with which he entered through the heritage he received from his Mother. It is no accident that the Council of Ephesus teaching about the motherhood of Mary arose precisely because of the need to make it perfectly clear that the Son of God truly became man. In other words, Mary links Christ to specific people and a concrete historical situation; that link makes him a 'son of man' in a special way and it avoids any risk of Docetism undermining the faith.

However, although it is true that Christology and Mariology are connected by indissoluble links, Mariology should never be seen as a 'duplicate' of Christology, or as simply a development of Christology. The truth concerning Mary is also directly associated with the truth concerning the Church. She is a type or figure of the Church, and in her the Church attains her highest expression. Just as Christ is reflected in Mary, so too is the Church reflected in him. That is why 'Mariology has not only Christological meaning but also ecclesiological meaning. One is able to see the Church in Mary, and Mary in the Church. A person looking at the Church is seeing Mary.'<sup>2</sup> Paul VI described this connexion very forcefully: 'Her (the Church's) inner vitality and special nature, her essence, the main source of her sanctifying efficacy is to be found in her mystical union with Christ. We cannot conceive of this union apart from her who is the Mother of the incarnate Word and whom Christ so intimately associated with himself in bringing about our salvation. Love-filled contemplation of the great things that God did in Mary must be set within the framework of our vision of the Church. And knowledge of true Catholic teaching concerning Mary will always be the key to understanding the mystery of Christ and of the Church.'<sup>3</sup>

The point has been very rightly made that *Lumen gentium's* reflection on Mary's connexion with the mystery of Christ leads automatically to reflection on Mary's connexion with the mystery of the Church.<sup>4</sup> The reason for this is the special relationship that exists between Mary and Christ, and the close communion of life that exists between Christ and the Church. In the present economy of grace, being Mother of Jesus involves being Mother of the Church. This is a very important theological lesson taught by the Second Vatican Council, as John Paul II emphasized: 'The Second Vatican Council, by presenting Mary in the mystery of Christ, also finds the path to a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Church. Mary, as the Mother of Christ, is in a particular way united with the Church, "which the Lord established as his own body" (*Lumen gentium*, 52). It is significant that the conciliar text places this truth about the Church as the Body of Christ (according

<sup>2</sup> Schmaus (1961), p. 36.   <sup>3</sup> Paul VI, *Address on the closing of the third session of the Second Vatican Council*, AAS 56 (1964) 1014-15   <sup>4</sup> Philips (1968), vol 2, p 273

to the teaching of the Pauline Letters) in close proximity to the truth that the Son of God through the power of the Holy Spirit was born of the Virgin Mary. The reality of the Incarnation finds a sort of extension *in the mystery of the Church–Body of Christ*. And one cannot think of the reality of the incarnation without referring to Mary, the Mother of the Incarnate Word.<sup>5</sup>

In the light of this fact, one can readily understand the axiom frequently used by theologians: *Nothing without Mary*. It is true that Christianity is nothing other than the good news of Christ; indeed, one could go so far as to say that Christianity is Christ. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, ‘the transmission of the Christian faith consists primarily in proclaiming Jesus Christ in order to lead others to faith in him’.<sup>6</sup> From this viewpoint one is able to see very clearly that ‘it is useful to emphasize the radical newness of the Christian religion in the context of the history of religions. Christianity means first and foremost, following a man (Jesus), whom one confesses to be the Messiah (the Christ) expected by the Jewish people – a man whom one worships, loves and listens to with the same commitment that one has to God the Creator, because one firmly believes that that man, a son of Adam, is also the Only-begotten of the Father, God from God, and Redeemer and Saviour of mankind.’<sup>7</sup> Christianity is grounded on an unrepeatable human life, that of Jesus of Nazareth, so much so that one can say that God ‘has inserted his salvific action into human history as a concrete whole’.<sup>8</sup> A part of this ‘concrete whole’ is Mary’s motherhood of Christ, a motherhood which extends to all mankind. For this reason the axiom ‘Nothing without Mary’ is a highly important theological statement, because Mary’s co-operation in the Christ event and the place she occupies in salvation history help us to discover not only the truth about Christ, but also the true face of the Church and the precise nature of man’s salvation.<sup>9</sup> In Mary as in no other created being is reflected the mystery of God and of man’s salvation. Very beautifully and accurately Mary has been described as the ‘icon-woman of the mystery’:<sup>10</sup> in her person the Almighty worked his wonders in a unique way, and her story is both salvation of mankind and the archetype of man’s response to divine grace. ‘This humble part of truly human history, enveloped in and blessed by the power of the Most High, has become by her presence the profound image not only of God’s work on the world’s behalf but also of the response which man has been enabled to give to his God.’<sup>11</sup>

This means that the truth concerning Mary is also indissolubly linked to theological anthropology. In her is made manifest the change which takes place in man redeemed by Christ. She is the maximum expression and at the same time the most faithful reflection of what it means to be a new creation in Christ and what the dignity of man redeemed by Christ involves. Her holiness is a call to and a model of

5 John Paul II, Enc. *Redemptoris Mater*, 5 (2004), p 20 6 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 425 7 Ocáriz et al (1996), p 405 8 Muller (1996), p 405 9 Cf Domínguez (1992) 232 10 Cf. e.g. Forte (1993) 11 Ibid, p 9

what human holiness means: her co-operation in the work of redemption points up the fact that the salvation wrought by Christ goes so far as to insert man into Himself, as the branch is inserted in the vine (cf. Jn 15:1–8); that is to say, to the point of giving one’s very life to Him and becoming a co-operator in his saving work. The truth about the Blessed Virgin also affects eschatology. Her Assumption body and soul into heaven is exceptionally important for knowing what lies beyond death, for understanding the survival of the soul and the connexion between the resurrection of the body and the final event of salvation history.

We can see, therefore, that many theological truths converge in Mary. That is why the key elements of theological construction intersect in Mariology – from Christological and ecclesiological questions to those connected with theological anthropology and eschatology. That explains why theologians often observe that Mariology is also a key point of reference when it comes to ecumenical dialogue. Here too it can be said (as with Christology and ecclesiology) that ‘Nothing without Mary’ applies. It might be more accurate to put it another way: in and from Mariology a friendly and useful light is cast on ecumenical dialogue; Mariology is a place where ecumenical dialogue must occur.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. MARIOLOGY AS A THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINE

Because of her essential reference to the Word of God, and in and through Him to the Blessed Trinity, Mary is the subject of much theological attention. She forms part of the proper object of theology. Thus, if every being is the object of theology insofar as it has a reference to God, the Mother of Jesus, who has an essential reference to him as his own Mother, must be studied by theology with the greatest care and attention; indeed, she has a key place in theological thinking. She has this place also by virtue of her essential reference to salvation history.

This therefore leads to the question: What is the best way for theology to undertake the study of Mary. Is it a good idea for it to be as a special subject on its own, in some way, with a unity and autonomy of its own? Mary is an extremely rich subject, whether she is studied in her reference to Christ and her co-operation with the Redeemer in salvation history or studied so to speak as a person in her own right, that is, from the viewpoint of what is normally referred to as her ‘privileges’ In order to understand the wealth of this subject, would it not be good – and maybe necessary – to examine in a systematic way, separately, everything that has to do with Mary?; in other words, should Mariology not be a separate theological subject?

It was for this reason that towards the end of the 16th century one begins to find in theology a special treatise – Mariology – devoted to Mary and her role in salvation history. Mariology, as such, that is, as a systematic treatise with its own per-

12 Cf John Paul II, Enc. *Redemptoris Mater*, 30.

sonality in the overall theological scheme of things, arose precisely to make it easier to study the mystery of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Its first author, Francisco Suárez (d. 1617) wrote this treatise with the clear intention to correct the imbalance between the 'very great dignity' of the Blessed Virgin and the brevity of the notice given to her in the medieval Summas; that is to say, he sought in this way to show the importance that Mary has. Placidus Nigidus, who described himself as an innovator – '*primus sine duce*' – was the first to coin the term 'Mariology' by choosing to name his work *Summae sacrae mariologica pars prima*.<sup>13</sup>

Etymologically, Mariology means 'treatise or word concerning Mary', or, less literally, 'knowledge concerning Mary'. Mariology is really that part of theological science which studies Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Word Incarnate, that is, Mother of God and Mother of all mankind. Mariology concerns itself with the mystery of Mary taken as a whole with all its facets, that is, it addresses Mary herself and all her many connexions with the whole body of Christian doctrine revealed to us. To sum up, one can say that, as in the case of Christology, rather than examining certain specific truths, Mariology focuses on the person of that Woman who is the Mother of God.

Mariology is, therefore, an inseparable part of theology, to which it is connected closely and indissolubly in the typical style of theology. If Mariology is worked at in the right way, it needs to have all the characteristics of theological study, which, ever since St Anselm, has been defined as *fides quaerens intellectum*, faith seeking understanding. But in addition to this (and very importantly) Mariology must not be seen as an entirely autonomous treatise, dissociated from other theological treatises and themes: it is a treatise which is harmoniously and fruitfully linked to all of them, and its autonomy is merely functional (designed to meet the needs of theological instruction) and relative – an autonomy only insofar as it is needed to examine in an orderly and complete way the Woman who is the Mother of God and the Mother of all mankind. If one were to lose sight of this vital connexion with the broad study of all Christian truth, Mariology, instead of being a genuine theological treatise, would become a tumorous growth on Christian theology.<sup>14</sup> As Cardinal Ratzinger put it, 'Mariology can never be simply Mariology, but rather is to be found within the fundamental ensemble formed by Christ and the Church, since it is the most concrete expression of that ensemble.'<sup>15</sup>

Accepting this, it might still be asked whether it is useful to devote a special treatise within theology to the study of the Blessed Virgin and her role in salvation his-

<sup>13</sup> Cf Fiore, 'Mariología/Mariología', in NDM, p 1283. <sup>14</sup> 'Mariology is a tumor, i.e. a sickly construction of the theological mind. Tumors have to be cut out'. Barth (1946), vol 1/2, p 153. In this passage (pp 153–60) which appears under the heading 'True God and true man', Barth's position is radically opposed to that of Catholic Mariology. Even though the above assessment is wholly unjust, because it is not something which has ever occurred, it is nonetheless worth being aware of it, in order to ensure it never happens, and especially because this idea carries considerable weight in the debate on the right of Mariology to exist as a theological discipline. <sup>15</sup> Ratzinger & Balthasar (1981), p 32.

tory; in other words, should Mariology be a special treatise in its own right, or should the various truths that have to do with our Lady be studied separately elsewhere: for example, her divine motherhood in the treatise on the Incarnation, her Immaculate Conception in that on original sin, her role in salvation in that on soteriology, her Assumption in eschatology, etc.<sup>16</sup>

As we shall see later when we come to the history of Mariology, the figure of Mary has always been very present in the faith and piety of the People of God – and in the Church's preaching. However, when it came to developing a systematic theology, this presence of Mary was not given a place of its own; instead, Mariological doctrine was dealt with in different places, particularly in Christology. This was the position throughout the Patristic period and in the systematic theology of the Scholastics. That holds true for St Thomas Aquinas, too, who chose to include Marian doctrine within the context of Christology and soteriology (*S. Th.* 3, 27–37), using that doctrine to explore the nature of the life of Christ.

As Schmaus points out, this method has the advantage of radically avoiding the isolation of Mariology, and it does point up the special reference Mary has to Christ and to salvation history.<sup>16</sup> It has the disadvantage, already noted by Suarez, of never focusing on all the aspects of Mary as such at the one time, and therefore it does not seem sufficiently to stress how singular she and her role in salvation history are; in other words, the mystery of Mary is never fully explored in a way that reveals how all her different dimensions inter-relate.

By focusing the study of Mary into a treatise of its own, this disadvantage is avoided; but the risk is run of cutting it off from the rest of theology. However, that risk should not be over-estimated. It exists only to the extent that those who work on a Mariology treatise give in to the temptation to relegate to a second level the unity of theology as a whole and the fact that there exists a hierarchy of truths, as the Second Vatican Council was at such pains to stress. One can say that the advantages of this route outweigh the disadvantages. We can see this from the many fine Mariology treatises published in the 20th century, and from the advances made in Mariology during the same period (due in the main to the Mariological studies produced by scholars and institutions which have treated Mariology as a treatise in its own right).<sup>17</sup> The wealth of Mariological truths contained in Revelation and in later Christian reflection underlines the scope and indeed the need for an organized treatment of these truths, as 'a partial whole within the general context of theology'.<sup>18</sup>

As pointed out already, Karl Barth has been the severest critic of attempts to treat Mariology as a treatise per se. S. de Fióres has noted that the reason for Barth's

<sup>16</sup> Schmaus (1973), pp 449–50. <sup>17</sup> One need only think of the contribution made by the many Marian academies, Mariological and Marian congresses and specialized Marian journals. Without that contribution, the doctrinal advances made in recent decades would have been impossible. Cf Koster (1974), pp 104–5. This latter work is a translation of *Bilanz der Theologie im 20<sup>o</sup> Jahrhundert*, 3 vols (Freiburg, 1969–70). <sup>18</sup> Schmaus (1973), 452.

rejection of Mariology comes not from the danger that Mariology might become an autonomous treatise, but from the fact that, by studying in the round all the truths that have to do with Mary, she is inevitably depicted as the prototype of the human creature as regards co-operation in her own salvation and in the salvation of others.<sup>19</sup> This is also the view of Cándido Pozo, who judges Mariology to be a key location for ecumenical dialogue.<sup>20</sup> Truly, the contribution of Mariology to theological anthropology is a convincing and decisive one, because in Mary is to be found to a supreme degree what sanctification really means for the new creature in Christ.

Generally speaking, Protestant theologians have reacted against approaching the doctrine of Marian prerogatives as a single subject, as a discipline in its own right, on the grounds that that runs the risk of magnifying and idolizing the figure of Mary, counterposing it to that of her Son. Clearly, genuine Catholic theology has never tried to eclipse the Person and work of Christ; it has never lost sight of the fact that he is the only Mediator and Redeemer of mankind. In fact, consideration of the prerogatives of Mary and of her exceptional holiness results from and leads one to consideration of the wonderful effectiveness of the salvation wrought by Christ. This effectiveness is highlighted by what have come to be known as Mary's 'privileges'.

The fact that Catholic theologians so frequently choose to study Marian truths in a treatise of its own is due not so much to a desire to 'magnify' Mary, as to adopt a single-focus approach to salvation history. There happens in Mariology something akin to what happens in Christology. In Christ his nature and mission are so closely linked that his God-Manness is inseparable from his condition as Redeemer; in Mary, the study of her person – what she is, including her 'privileges' – is inseparable from that of her maternal mission in salvation history. The main reason why it is useful to gather the Marian truths together in a single body of doctrine has not to do mainly with the fact that one is trying to make a series of statements about a particular person: it derives from the fact that Mary has a special mission in the economy of salvation. Her entire person and her history (all the grace Mary received) are at the service of this mission.

Because this mission is a fundamental one and has universal relevance, the Blessed Virgin is present not just in one or other aspect but in the entirety of the plan of salvation willed by God. Thus, 'having entered deeply into the history of salvation [...] she, in a way, unites in her person and re-echoes the most important doctrines of the faith: and when she is the subject of preaching and worship she prompts the faithful to come to her Son, to his sacrifice and to the love of the Father'<sup>21</sup> This is the underlying reason for judging it to be very helpful for Mariology to have a treatise of its own. As C. Pozo writes, 'Mary's co-operation in the work of salvation is Mariology's reason of being' Once this co-operation exists and even though the personal privileges of Mary may not justify there being a Mariol-

<sup>19</sup> Fiores (see note 13), p 1274    <sup>20</sup> Cf Pozo (1990), p 9    <sup>21</sup> *Lumen gentium*, 65

ogy, those privileges require to be made the object of theological study, because they were given to our Lady to enable her to co-operate in the work of salvation.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, the proper and specific object of Mariology is the person of Mary as such and the place she occupies in salvation history, since God, in choosing her to be the Mother of Jesus, also chose her to be the Mother of the Redeemer and, in Him, chose her to be the Mother of all mankind, endowing her with special, unique prerogatives in keeping with the mission to which he called her. Mariologists usually say that Mary not only is a unique and unrepeatable creature, but she also has a unique place in the history of salvation; they stress that, even in the 'eternal decree' of man's salvation, God chose Mary to be the Mother of the Son and the Mother of all mankind.

Divine motherhood, motherhood of mankind, and Mary's perfections combine to form a single closely integrated whole. In the present economy of salvation, the purpose of the Incarnation is to set mankind free from the slavery of sin. When she agreed through her 'Let it be ...' to be the Mother of God, Mary took that motherhood in all its fullness, consciously desiring to be associated as Mother with the work of her Son, the Redeemer of mankind. One can say, therefore, that being the Mother of the Redeemer is for Mary the reason and basis of all her connexions with God and with mankind. From this point of view Mariology has essential and primordial reference to Christology. As Michael Schmaus puts it, what Mary is and what she means in history is determined by her relationship to Christ. Her figure 'bears the seal of Christ. Her life's destiny and course are determined by Christ. The Son of God made man has become what determines the entire shape of this Woman's life. The figure of Mary has to be interpreted in terms of the fact of the Incarnation.'<sup>23</sup>

Since Mariology is an integral part of theology, the method used in it has to be the same as that used in theological science. So, there is nothing new or special about the methodology used in Mariology. Like all theology, it has to be seen as the study, in the light of faith, of what that same faith teaches about the mystery of Mary in herself and in her role in salvation history.

This means that we must apply to Mariology the criteria the Second Vatican Council proposed for all dogmatic theology, especially as regards the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation: 'biblical themes should have first place; then students should be shown what the Fathers of the Church, both of the East and West, have contributed towards the faithful transmission and elucidation of each of the revealed truths: then the later history of dogma, including its relation to the general history of the Church; lastly, in order to throw as full a light as possible on the mysteries of salvation, the students should learn to examine more deeply with the help of speculation and with St Thomas as teacher, all aspects of these mys-

<sup>22</sup> Pozo (1990), pp 7 and 15    <sup>23</sup> Schmaus (1961), p 34.

eries, and to perceive their interconnection. They should be instructed at all times in the ceremonies of the liturgy, and in the whole life of the Church. They should learn to seek the solution of human problems in the light of revelation to apply its eternal truths to the changing conditions of human affairs.<sup>24</sup>

Throughout most of the 20th century, especially in the decades prior to the Second Vatican Council, two lines of approach were used to the Marian truths, two distinct methods, in some way opposed to and irreconcilable with one another. The first, called the traditional, devout or mystical approach, was a speculative one which took the line of *in Maria, cum Maria, per Mariam* or *de Maria numquam satis*. The second, which we might call the critical or modern approach, positivist in style, sought to defend Mariology from an excess of sentimentality, its ambition being to produce objective, scientific scholarship, freed from the enthusiasm to which affection and devotion lead.

The Second Vatican Council managed to get beyond these two trends and the guidelines it gave – by including the *De Beata Virgine Maria* schema in the Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*, chapter 8) and including it in the mystery of Christ and of the Church – establish the route that the methodology of this subject should take.

Therefore, a valid methodology for Mariology will be one which, without neglecting the primary evaluation of Mary's personal prerogatives, inserts her in the overall context of the Christian mystery. In this way Mariology will develop in intimate connexion with Christology, ecclesiology, Christian anthropology and eschatology. By the same token, Mariology needs to have an unambiguous openness to ecumenism. Pope John Paul II has suggested that Marian doctrine and devotion provide a route to the union of all Christians: 'Why should we not all together look to her as our common Mother, who prays for the unity of God's family and who "precedes" us all at the head of the long line of witnesses of faith in the one Lord, the Son of God, who was conceived in her virginal womb by the power of the Holy Spirit?'<sup>25</sup>

#### 4. THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF MARIOLOGY

In the decades prior to the Second Vatican Council the adoption of a position in favour of Mariology as a treatise per se also saw another development – a desire to organize all the Mariological truths around a fundamental principle which would show how they all interconnect and from which they all spring. This trend began towards the end of the 19th century and from then on it was a feature of Mariology treatises, particularly those that pre-date the Second Vatican Council. This trend was reinforced by a desire to give unity to Mariology and to give structure to

<sup>24</sup> *Optatam totius*, 16    <sup>25</sup> John Paul II, Enc. *Redemptoris Mater*, 30

the study of the various Marian truths – which as we have seen was one of the most compelling arguments in favour of Mariology as a discipline per se; also influential in this trend was a concept of theology as primarily a science of conclusions.

Initially, the first Marian principle was conceived to be that prerogative from which derive all the attributes and properties Mary was given with a view to her own glorification and the salvation of mankind. This often underlined the difficulty that exists for any attempt to organize all Mariology around a first principle, among other reasons because there are many Marian truths whose interconnecting with one another derives from the will of God and not from the consequences which divine Motherhood metaphysically implies and, consequently, it does not seem possible to identify a first principle which allows one to *deduce* all the Marian graces and privileges with the rigour that a theological conclusion demands. Michael Schmaus' approach to the question is more nuanced and eclectic: he identifies such a 'first principle' as 'a fundamental perspective'; this dodges the issue, because a 'fundamental perspective' is not as serious an affair as a first principle.<sup>26</sup> No one will deny that Mariology needs to be approached from some perspective or other: indeed, any study of any kind needs to have a line of approach. But a perspective is not a principle from which truths can be derived one by one. H. Mikoster calls this 'a thorny question' and is inclined to the view that 'the unity of the figure of Mary can be grasped by setting out from any one of a number of ideas from her divine motherhood, her significance as a type of the Church, her exceptional place in the Redemption'.<sup>27</sup>

Here is a list of the main positions adopted by Mariologists on this matter:

**Views which argue against a first principle** Some theologians decide against a systematic treatise on Mary, in order to avoid Mariology being isolated and too introspective. This is the approach of Bonnichon,<sup>28</sup> who favours the Marian prerogatives being separated from one another and distributed over the various divisions of theology. Zimara<sup>29</sup> queries the usefulness of a first principle for Mariology and hopes thereby to reduce the dangers that may result from excessive systematization. Bonnefoy,<sup>30</sup> more radically, refuses outright to accept that there is any first principle; he sees Mariology not as an autonomous discipline but as part of theology; the only principles it can have are those of theology itself.

**Views in favour of a single first principle** A number of trends are found here, each identified by the particular prerogative selected as first principle.

The position most widely held in the past (and supported also by many contemporary scholars) centres the entire structure of Mariology on Mary's *divine Motherhood* (not simply from its biological aspect but also taken in its moral and

<sup>26</sup> Schmaus (1973), p 453    <sup>27</sup> Koster (1974), p 117    <sup>28</sup> Bonnichon (1936).    <sup>29</sup> Zimara (1937), pp 113–15    <sup>30</sup> Bonnefoy (1939), 88ff

transcendental dimension). This is the position taken by St Laurence of Brindisi, Francisco Suarez, and St Aphonius M. de Ligouri.<sup>31</sup>

Other Mariologists hold that the first principle of Mariology is her prerogative of being the *New Eve*, being an associate of the Redeemer. It was Cardinal Newman<sup>32</sup> who, through his study of the Fathers, drew attention to the importance, in Patristic teaching, of the Eve–Mary parallel. As he sees it, Mary's divine Motherhood derives from her vocation as the *New Eve*.

Some Central European theologians argue that the limitations of contemporary Mariology will be overcome when the subject is inserted into the core of our salvation. But the proper place of Marian theology in the plan of Redemption is Ecclesiology (along with Christology and supernatural Anthropology), because the salvific mission of Mary and that of the Church are intimately connected. Therefore, *Mary as type of the Church is the only valid Mariological principle*.<sup>33</sup>

Rahner,<sup>34</sup> after expounding and evaluating the first principle proposed by other scholars, argues that 'Mary in her divine Motherhood has not only a "private" relationship with the person of the incarnate Word; she occupies in the history of Salvation an essential, unique and decisive position.' Taking as his springboard this pre-eminent and exclusive position of Mary, he expounds his first principle in these terms: *Mary is the one who has been ransomed in the most perfect way*.

Recently, some theologians, basing themselves on current exegetical studies of the New Testament, have put forward this proposition as the paradigm of Mariology: *Mary is the perfect disciple and follower of Christ*.<sup>35</sup>

**Positions which argue for a composite first principle** Other Mariologists consider that a simple first principle is insufficient to give structure to the Marian treatise; they put forward a first principle which gathers together or unites a number of different things which merge all the Marian attitudes.

Various other theories have been put forward which basically say the same thing but in different words. Scheeben<sup>36</sup> and some other authors<sup>37</sup> say that the first principle is the *nuptial maternity of Mary*.

For Merkelbach<sup>38</sup> all Mariology is based on the following principle: *Mary is the Mother of the God-Redeemer*. In fact, the doctrine of the *New Eve* reduces to the doctrine of the Mother of the Redeemer when looked at from a formal point of view.

<sup>31</sup> Recent theologians include Gagnebet (1945); Fernández (1928), Galindo (1966), Cuervo (1967), pp 19–27, Llamera (1944) Schmaus (1961) also defends this first principle, p 266, etc. <sup>32</sup> Cf Davis (1954) In the 20th century this current has been followed by Deneffe (1936) and Alameda (1944), among others. <sup>33</sup> Proponents of this theory includes Semmelroth (1950), pp 118ff, and Koster (1954) Schmaus (1961) makes a critique of this first principle, pp 265–6. <sup>34</sup> Rahner (1954), and (1967), pp 39–50. <sup>35</sup> Cf. García Paredes (1988), pp 164ff, Bearsley (1980), Espinel (1985), pp 185–92. The phrase 'Mary was first and most perfect disciple of Christ' is from Paul VI (cf *Mari- alis cultus*, 35). <sup>36</sup> Cf Scheeben (1882), vol 3, p 455. <sup>37</sup> Cf Feckes (1935), Druwe (1936). <sup>38</sup> Merkelbach (1954), pp 133–4. The same idea, with variations, is expressed by Lebon (1939), Nicolas (1951); Benz (1937), Aldama (Madrid, 1961), vol 3, p. 329, Llamas (1979) etc.

Fr Bover<sup>39</sup> (*divine Motherhood taken in an historical, concrete sense*), Fr Roschini<sup>40</sup> (*the universal Motherhood of Mary*), and Fr García Carcés<sup>41</sup> (*Mary is the Mother of the total Christ*) formulate the first principle along similar lines.

**Views which argue for two fundamental principles** There are some – rather few – Mariologists who propose two principles. J. Bittremieux<sup>42</sup> argues for two principles: *The Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God* and *The Blessed Virgin is associated with her Son the Redeemer*. Although these two prerogatives are intimately connected (her involvement in Redemption presupposes her Motherhood, and her Motherhood is ordained to that involvement) it is one thing to be Mother and another to be an associate of the Redemption. So, these are two different (though essentially related) principles; hence Marian theology needs to highlight this connexion.

G. Alastruey<sup>43</sup> and F. Ceuppens<sup>44</sup> hold the same position, expressed in similar wording.

## 5. SECONDARY PRINCIPLES OF MARIOLOGY

Alongside the basic principle, scholars usually list others which, founded on the first principle, help to develop the structure of Mariology. Obviously these principles are less comprehensive and all-embracing than the first, but they are more concrete; therefore they are more explicit and are very helpful to the development of this branch of knowledge.

Usually four secondary principles are accepted. Two refer to Mary herself – the principle of *singularity* and that of *appropriateness* – and the others have to do with Mary – and others – the principles of *eminence* and *similarity*. We shall briefly examine each.

**The principle of singularity** 'Given that Mary is, by divine design, an entirely singular and unique creature, she has received from the Lord graces and privileges which are out of the ordinary and which cannot suit any other creature.' St Thomas implicitly formulated this principle by saying that '*Beatae Virgini aliquid ultra legem communem conferendum fuit*' (Something beyond the common law had to be bestowed on the Blessed Virgin),<sup>45</sup> or, as he put, it more precisely in the *Summa Theologiae*, '*rationabiliter creditur quod illa, quae genuit Unigenitum a Patre, plenum gratiae et veritatis, prae omnibus aliis majora privilegia, gratiae acceperit*' (it is reasonable to believe that she who brought forth the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, received greater privileges of grace than all others).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Bover (1929), pp 10ff. The same doctrine, but differently formulated, is held by Alfaro (1958), p. 242. <sup>40</sup> Roschini (1962), vol 1, p 115. <sup>41</sup> García Carcés (1940). <sup>42</sup> Bittremieux (1931) 249–51. <sup>43</sup> Alastruey (1956), p 3. <sup>44</sup> Ceuppens (1938), pp 11–19. <sup>45</sup> *III Sent*, d 3, q. 1, a 2. <sup>46</sup> *S Th*

Clearly Mary is entirely exceptional in her person, in her mission and in her privileges, for from the first moment of her conception she was favoured with immunity from sin. The excellence of her entire life culminated in her ascension body and soul into heaven at the end of her earthly life. All this led St Anselm to say that Mary is 'the wonderfully exceptional and singularly admirable woman'.<sup>47</sup>

**The principle of appropriateness** 'God has granted Mary all the privileges and graces that befit her sublime divine motherhood and her mission as Mediatrix.' St Thomas also has other ways of expressing this principle: '*Credendum est ei* [the Blessed Virgin] *collatum esse quidquid conferrí potuit*' (We are to believe that whatever she was capable of receiving was, in fact, bestowed on her).<sup>48</sup> The basis for this principle can be St Thomas when he says: 'When God chooses someone for some role, he prepares him and equips him in such a way that he is suited to it.'<sup>49</sup> It is therefore in keeping with this notion to apply the principle of appropriateness to Mary.

As Roschini<sup>50</sup> has pertinently shown, great prudence needs to be exercised when using this principle. Thus, one needs to distinguish between the appropriateness of a privilege already conferred (*convenientia rei facta*) and that of a privilege which might be conferred (*convenientia rei faciendae*). All the privileges which faith tells us to have been granted to Mary – Immaculate Conception, Assumption, etc. – by the mere fact of having been conferred on her are appropriate to her sublime dignity.

It is an altogether different thing to use the principle of appropriateness to establish a privilege. In such a case, the appropriateness must be a very real one; that is, it must be appropriate for God to grant it, not just for us to posit it. It is very helpful to draw a distinction between mere appropriateness (something whose contrary would not be inappropriate) and qualified appropriateness (something whose contrary would be inappropriate) Anything that is really inappropriate must be rejected and excluded from Mary. Thus, for example, the appropriateness of her immunity from original sin is a qualified appropriateness, because its contrary (her contracting original sin) is unbecoming to the Mother of God. One can conclude with 'moral certainty' that Mary had to be preserved from original sin.

**The principle of eminence** 'Mary possesses every grace and every gift that is granted to other creatures.' This is, clearly, a variation of the principle of appropriateness. Thus, it is highly appropriate that the woman chosen to be the Mother of God should be adorned with all the privileges of nature, grace and glory that are granted to all the saints and angels.

Now, it is obvious that the Blessed Virgin did not have certain charisms which some saints had, such as the gift of tears; that is why it is specified that Mary has

3, 27, 1 47 St Anselm, *Orat*, 52, PL 158, 955C 48 *III Sent* d 3, q 1, a 1 49 *S. Th* 3, 27, 4c.  
50 Cf. Roschini (1964), p 125.

charisms either in the same form (all those compatible with her sex and condition, such as sanctifying grace, the virtues and gifts) or in an eminent way (those incompatible with her sex and condition; for example, the priestly character, which Mary did not have, because she was a woman; however, she did have in an eminent way what this character confers, which is authority over the body of Christ), or in an equivalent way (thus, although the birth of Mary is not known to have been accompanied by signs and portents, it was however foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament).

**The principle of similarity** 'Mary possesses in an analogous way, as befits her state and condition, the various privileges that belong to the Humanity of Jesus Christ.' We have seen that Mary's fullness of grace, her queenship and her mediation etc. are analogous to Christ's fullness of grace, his kingship and his mediation.

Clearly, the analogy in question is one of attribution, in which the principal analogate is Christ and the secondary analogate Mary. Moreover, we have to add the nuance that those privileges of Christ which derive directly from the hypostatic union (for example, adoration) need to be applied to Mary by a loose, improper analogy (taking the same example, by the cult of hyperdulia); however, those privileges which only indirectly derive from the hypostatic union can be predicated of Mary by a proper analogy (her bodily glorification, for example).

## 6. BIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES TO MARY

Holy Scripture tells us nothing about Mary prior to the moment of the Annunciation, and therefore we need to have recourse to tradition to be able to learn anything about her background.

From time immemorial, the liturgy has celebrated Joachim and Anne as parents of our Lady.

St Ephraem was the first Father to give these names to Mary's parents, drawing on earlier apocryphal traditions.<sup>51</sup> Later on, St John Damascene, St Modestus of Jerusalem, etc gave the Blessed Virgin's parents these names, and on this basis Benedict XIV states that, given the widely held opinion in the Eastern and Western Church over the centuries to the effect that the parents of the Blessed Virgin were called Joachim and Anne, there is no reason to go against that view.

We know for sure that Mary was born in Palestine; but we do not have sufficient data to know where exactly she was born. Nor do we know the exact date, though it seems to have been around the years 729–733 after the foundation of Rome.<sup>52</sup>

51 St Epiphanius, *Haer*, 70, PG 42, 354 It is quite possible that he took it from the Protogospel of James, because in that work the names of Mary's parents are given, and in those times its reliability was beyond discussion in the field of Marian piety 52 The dates which appear above are derived



As regards Mary's genealogy two different views are held. The first says that she belonged to the tribe of Judah and the house of David. This view is based Luke 1:31-2, because the words the angel uses when he says that Jesus 'will be great, ... and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David' are pronounced in the context of her virginal conception. Therefore, there are grounds for holding that Jesus' relationship to David is not only a legal one but also one according to the flesh: Mary belongs to the line of David. This view is also based on the genealogy given in Luke (cf. Lk 3:23-8) where it says that 'Jesus was ... the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli ..', and that in this way the Lucan genealogy belongs to Mary and not to Joseph. Equally, Romans 1:3 gives basis to the same view: 'concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ...'

The second opinion held that Mary belonged to the priestly line because she was related to Elizabeth (cf. Lk 1:36), who was 'of the daughters of Aaron' (Luke 1:5). Therefore, the Blessed Virgin was also of the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron. Christ's descent from David came via Joseph, his legal father. It must be remembered that for biblical authors and for the Jewish people (cf. the law of levirate) legal and moral descent was of key importance in determining the line a person belonged to. According to this theory, Jesus, in view of his legal filiation, was a son of David and according to his carnal filiation a son of Aaron. Therefore, in his person the Messiah has both royal and priestly descent.<sup>53</sup>

We do know that Mary was betrothed to a man of the house of David called Joseph, the son of Jacob (cf. Lk 1:27; Mt 1:18), and was an artisan by profession. According to Palestinian customs of the time, the Blessed Virgin would have been somewhere between 14 and 18 years of age. She was living in Nazareth, a village with a few hundred inhabitants, situated in Galilee. The marriage was celebrated in accordance with Jewish tradition: first came the betrothal, which had legal validity and lasted for approximately one year, to be followed by the marriage, that is, the bringing of the bride to her husband's house. From what the Gospels tell us we know that the Annunciation took place after the betrothal and the most likely date would be the year 748 after the foundation of Rome. Taking as our point of reference the edict of Herod ordering the killing of all male children under two years of age (an interval of time chosen to ensure that the Child would be included in the massacre), the flight into Egypt must have taken place in the year of Jesus' birth, that is, towards the end of 749. And assuredly prior to the 9th of November, because that was when Herod, feeling unwell, left Jerusalem and went down to Jericho and from there to Calirrohe, where there were hot springs; not finding any relief there, he made his way back to Jericho, dying there in the year 750. The Holy

from the date of the Annunciation and from the usual age for the betrothal of Jewish girls 53 Cf. Pozo (1990), pp 210-12

Family's stay in Egypt could not have lasted more than two years; therefore, it is very likely that Mary returned to Nazareth with her Son and her husband in the year 751.

If these dates are correct, the loss of the Child in the temple would have happened during the Passover of 761, when Jesus had passed his twelfth birthday. From then on no information is available to us until the start of Christ's public life. From the information provided by St Luke (cf. Lk 3:1-2), we know that John the Baptist began his preaching 'in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being the governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Judaea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene.' This enables us pretty accurately to determine that we are in the year 780 of Rome and Jesus, at this time, would have been about 31 years old and Mary somewhere between 46 and 50. From the Gospel of St John and the date of Jesus' death - a Friday in the Jewish month of Nisan, which bridges March and April in our calendar (cf. Mt 27:62; Mk 15:42; Lk 23:54; Jn 19-31) - is most likely that Jesus died at the start (specifically on the 7th, which would correspond to the 14th day of Nisan, a Friday) of the month of April in AD 30. Mary would have been between 49 and 53 years old at the time.

Following on from this we find Mary in the Acts of the Apostles awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit together with the Apostles in the cenacle at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. From the account of Calvary (cf. Jn 19.25-7) we know that the beloved disciple, John, took her as his Mother and cared for her. No further reliable information about her is available, except that, at the end of her earthly life, God took her body and soul into heaven. Tradition points to Ephesus or Jerusalem as the city where the Assumption occurred.

# A short history of Mariology

## I. INTRODUCTION

As pointed out in the previous chapter, Mary has been the subject of close theological study on account of her essential reference to the Word of God and, in him and through him, to the history of salvation. As can be seen from the texts of the New Testament which mention her, the Blessed Virgin was present from the very start of the life and preaching of the Church, which has lovingly reflected on the mystery of her motherhood. In a certain sense, then, one is justified in saying that Mariology, that is, faith-inspired reflection on the Blessed Virgin, already had its beginning in the New Testament writings. There the presence of Mary and the sober mentions made of her are not devoid of a clear theological intent. Everything that is recounted about her – her virginity, her maternity, her presence at Cana or beside the Cross, etc. – is mentioned because it is considered to have theological relevance and to be part of the complete story which has to be preached to the Church and conserved in the Church's memory.

We shall examine later, in more detail, the Marian doctrine contained in the New Testament. In this introductory chapter we shall simply give a short summary of the history of Mariology, that is, a general over-view of how Christian thinking has explored the teaching contained in the New Testament and has been enriched by carefully considered, organic development of that teaching; this will help show how the various truths have been linked up with one another, that is, how Mariological thinking developed.

## 2. THE PATRISTIC PERIOD

The earliest Mariological texts that have come down to us are found in the writings of St Ignatius of Antioch (d. c.110). These are in fact statements designed to defend the reality of the Incarnation, the fact that Christ was truly man. Mariological doctrine is to be found in this anti-Docetist context. Christ belongs to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf St Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistola ad Smyrnaeos*, 1, 1 EMBP, 4 'Jesus Christ . . . our Lord who is truly "of the race of David according to the flesh" (cf Rom 1 3), Son of God according to the will and power of God, truly born of a virgin'

line of David because he was truly born of Mary the Virgin;<sup>1</sup> he was truly conceived in and born of Mary;<sup>2</sup> her conception of him was virginal,<sup>3</sup> and this virginity is one of those mysteries that lie in the silence of God.<sup>4</sup> These earliest statements about the truth concerning Mary are an incipient theological reflection on what Holy Scripture has to say about her. The virginal conception and birth are here closely linked to Christology, being the mode whereby the Word enters our world, and they radically touch on the truth concerning his flesh and his relationship with mankind; the mystery of the virginity of Christ's mother can be seen to be closely linked to other mysteries preserved in the silence of God and directly connected to his salvific plans for mankind.

The Eve–Mary parallel In St Justin (d. c.167) reflection on Mary echoes Genesis 3:15 and is linked to the antithetical parallel between Eve and Mary. This parallel will prove to be the central thread of the very rich and constant Marian theology of the Fathers. In the *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin puts stress on the fact that Christ truly had a human nature and, therefore, on the fact that Mary was the Mother of Jesus;<sup>5</sup> and like St Ignatius of Antioch he underlines the virginal conception of Jesus<sup>6</sup> and brings the Eve–Mary parallel into his theological argument.<sup>7</sup>

This Eve–Mary parallel, which clearly refers back to Genesis 3:15, is not, however, dependent on the Marian interpretation that is given that passage: it can be identified as dependent on the Pauline statement contained in Romans 5 concerning the Adam–Christ parallel. Thus, the form in which St Justin applies the Eve–Mary parallel implies the assertion of a coherent divine economy of salvation based on the notion of Christ and Adam being heads of the human race and on the central role played by each in the work he carries out.

Scholars usually call this theological reflection the *principle of recirculation*, meaning that there is an antithetical parallel between the fall and its repair – the new Adam retracing the steps wrongly taken by the first Adam. This 'principle of recirculation' finds its first formulation in St Justin and is of crucial importance to the thought of St Irenaeus. It shows that Mariology has, from the outset, had a Christocentric orientation and has been closely linked to consideration of the role of Mary in the history of salvation. Hence also the close link that came to be seen between Mary and the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Cf St Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistola ad Ephesos*, 7, 2, EMBP, 1    <sup>3</sup> Cf *ibid*, 18, 2, EMBP, 2.    <sup>4</sup> Cf *ibid*, 19, 1, EMBP, 3, cf *Aldama* (1970).    <sup>5</sup> Cf St Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone iudeo*, 43, 3, 100 2, EMBP 11 and 17    <sup>6</sup> Cf *ibid*, 78, 3 84, 2, EMBP, 15 and 16    <sup>7</sup> St Justin, *ibid.*, 100, 4–5, EMBP, 17: 'If by means of the Virgin Christ was made man, it is because the divine plan establishes that the path on which the disobedience of the serpent began should be the same as that on which the solution should be found. Eve, being virgin and incorrupt, having conceived the word emitted by the serpent, gave birth to disobedience and death, Mary, the Virgin, having conceived faith and joy at receiving the good news from the Archangel, ... replied, "Let it be done to me according to your word" And from her was born the One of whom, as we have shown, so many scriptures had spoken, and through whom God destroys the serpent, with the angels and men who resemble him.'

In St Irenaeus of Lyons (d. c.202), the Eve–Mary parallel acquires full theological development to the point that it would be quite appropriate to add to his title of ‘father of Catholic theology’ the further title of ‘first Mariologist’. To Irenaeus is also due the discovery of the analogy that exists between Mary and the Church. In the context of a polemic against Gnostics and Docetists, Irenaeus, like Ignatius and Justin, emphasizes the fact that Christ had a real body and that he was formed in the womb of Mary,<sup>8</sup> and he makes Mary’s divine Motherhood one of the bases of his Christology and Soteriology: it is the human nature assumed by the Son of God in Mary’s womb that makes it possible for Jesus’ redemptive death to benefit all mankind.<sup>9</sup> St Irenaeus’ struggle against the Gnostics leads him to stress the maternal role of Mary in her relationship to the new Adam and, consequently, leads him to emphasize her active role in cooperating with the Redeemer.<sup>10</sup>

In the West, the Eve–Mary parallel was used by Tertullian (d. c.222) in an anti-Gnostic context, very similar to Irenaeus’ case. The question he poses is whether Christ ‘took substance from the human womb’. And, after pointing out that it was appropriate that the Word should take flesh from a virgin, given that Adam was made from the virgin earth, he goes on: ‘The word of the devil had entered Eve, building death; the word (*verbum*) of God, the builder of life, had also to find its way into a virgin, so that what had hastened towards perdition through (feminine) sex should turn back towards life through the same sex. Eve believed the serpent; Mary believed Gabriel. The sin which the former committed through believing (the devil), the latter corrected through her faith.’<sup>11</sup>

The Eve–Mary parallel would continue to be used with wonderful theological consistency right through the Patristic period. The basic lines of this parallel were already sketched out by St Justin and St Irenaeus. Later exegesis and preaching would go into this in more detail, exploring ever more deeply its soteriological significance and also the analogy between Mary and the Church. Thus, for example, for St Epiphanius (d. 403) Mary was not only the ‘occasion of life’ but truly the ‘mother of the living’. Eve is simply her figure.<sup>12</sup> St Ephraem (d. 373) uses the antithesis to re-assert Mary’s holiness;<sup>13</sup> St Ambrose (d. 430) uses it to explain that in the womb of the Blessed Virgin the Word assumed that flesh that had been stained in Eve;<sup>14</sup> and St Augustine (d. 430) says

8 Cf St Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 3, 19, 3, EMBP, 37. 9 Cf *ibid*, 1, 10, 1, EMBP 26 and *Demonstratio Apostolicae Praedicationis*, 2, 2, 57, EMBP, 59 10 Cf St Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 3, 21, EMBP 43 *Epidievis*, 33, SC 62, 83–6 ‘It was by means of a disobedient virgin that man was punished, fell and died; in the same way it is by means of the Virgin who obeyed the word of God that man, brought to life again, discovered life . . . In effect, it was necessary for Adam to be restored by Christ, so that what is mortal might be absorbed and subsumed by immortality, for Eve to be restored in Mary, so that a virgin, converted into the advocate of another virgin, might destroy and abolish the disobedience of a virgin by her virginal obedience’ 11 Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, 17, 1, EMBP, 77 12 Cf St Epiphanius, *Panarion, sive adversus haereses*, 78, 18, EMBP, 716 13 Cf St Ephraem, *Sermones de Nativitate Domini*. 1, EMBP, 311–12 14 Cf St Ambrose, *In Ps CXIV*

that where the virgin Eve succumbed and caused death and disaster, there the Church, whose model Mary is, wins victory by giving life and regeneration.<sup>15</sup>

In any event, it is clear that by using the Eve–Mary parallel, theological thinking has increasingly exposed the richness that comes from clearly asserting Mary’s active co-operation in the work of salvation on a sublime and unique level. This parallel hinges on the relationship between the sin of Eve and the Annunciation to Mary; at its centre lies the Adam–Christ relationship; this gives Mariology a Christocentric dimension, for all the authors who use the Eve–Mary parallel do so in a clearly Christocentric sense.

**Divine motherhood** Divine maternity, that is, the fact that Mary can truly be called (with all its radical implications) the Mother of God, is something that impacts decisively on Marian devotion and on Mariology. It is on account of this maternity that Mary is to be found alongside Jesus in Holy Scripture, and her divine motherhood is the deepest reason why she is honoured by Christians with special veneration. The fact that Mary is the Mother of the Redeemer is the ground on which is constructed the earliest Patristic thinking on Mary’s greatness, whether that thinking is expressed, as we have seen, in simple testimony to her virginal motherhood, or whether it focuses on the role of the new Eve in salvation history.

It is from the fourth century onwards, when the truth of Mary’s divine Motherhood is expressed particularly by the title of *Theotokos*, that the full force and doctrinal richness of this truth is brought out into the open. This period, too, evidences popular Marian devotion in all its splendour; so much so that some Mariologists, when it comes to writing about the history of Mariology, begin a new period of Mariology with the Council of Ephesus, for the very reason that the pre-conciliar period saw a huge development of Marian feasts, a development which then reached a climax after the Council.<sup>16</sup> These feasts imply, as R. Laurentin has pointed out, that the Blessed Virgin has acquired her liturgical dimension and that, as each church celebrated the Marian feasts each year, homilies came to be preached and hymns sung which nourished popular devotion and which helped to reveal our Lady’s privileges and her connexion with the central truth of her divine motherhood.<sup>17</sup>

*II*, 2, 8, EMBP, 594 15 Cf St Augustine, *Sermo XXV*, 8, EMBP, 968 ‘but I fear that, as the serpent deceived Eve with astuteness, spirits may be corrupted and degenerate from the chastity which is in Christ . . . Where Eve was corrupted by the astuteness of the serpent, there the Church must be virgin by gift of the Almighty Then she gives birth in the spirit to Christ’s members, as the virgin Mary gave birth to Christ from her womb, and thus you will be members of Christ’ 16 As early as the fourth century we find Marian homilies given on feasts of our Lady, especially on the Feast of the Annunciation, thanks, for example, to St Gregory of Nyssa and St John Chrysostom Cf Mateo-Secco (1978), 409–66 Cf Aldama (1965) 17 Laurentin (1953), p 47 Regarding the history of Marian feasts, cf H Leclercq, ‘Marie’, in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, x, pp 2035–42.

The title of *Theotokos* appears for the first time in the prayer *Sub tuum praesidium* (We fly to your protection ...), which is the most ancient Marian prayer known to us. The same title is used in the creed against Arius composed by Alexander of Alexandria (d. 328).<sup>18</sup>

From there it spread across the Christian world, and many Fathers made a point of expounding its theological meaning – St Ephraem, St Athanasius (d. 373), St Basil (d. 379), St Gregory Nazianzus (d. 394), St Ambrose, St Augustine, Proclus of Constantinople (d. 446), etc. – to the point where the title Mother of God had become the one most widely used in connexion with Mary. It is easy to see that Mary's divine motherhood, in the intention of the Council of Ephesus, is first and foremost a Christological explicitation, but it is at the same time an explicitation of the mystery of Mary and it leads not just to a better understanding of the nature of our Saviour but also to a more exact and pious understanding of the one who is the Mother of the Redeemer. On becoming fully explored in this way divine motherhood concretizes and complements the teaching contained in the Eve–Mary parallel.

**Mary's 'all-holiness'** The description of the beginnings of Mariology would be incomplete if we failed to mention a third basic element in its development: the firm conviction of the exceptional nature of the person of Mary which is something that forms part of her mystery – and which is summed up in the affirmation of the fullness of her holiness, her *panhagia*, which is usually referred to as Mary's 'privileges'. These are 'privileges' whose sources lie in Mary's maternal relationship to Christ and to the mystery of salvation, which are truly to be found in her, endowing her with a superabundance of the graces appropriate to her carrying out her unique, universal mission.

Thus, we need to underline that, in addition to the Eve–Mary parallel and with an eye on her relationship to Christ, from St Ignatius of Antioch onwards, on a discreet level yet quite definitely there, Marian privileges are being seen as something whose proclamation is not accidental or superfluous, but necessary to protect the integrity of the faith. And they are defended by the Fathers, even though that defence had disadvantages given the context in which the Fathers found themselves. For example, this clearly applies to the virginity of Mary, especially her *virginitas in partu* (virginity while giving birth). There was a real risk that the Gnostics would use this virginity to argue that Christ did not have a real body, but only an imaginary one, but despite this. St Ignatius asserts Mary's virginity. And so does St Irenaeus:<sup>19</sup> even when writing against the Ebionites, he teaches that Mary was a virgin while giving birth.<sup>20</sup> And Tertullian, in his controversy with Marcion, says that Mary is the Mother of Christ because she engendered him in

<sup>18</sup> Cf Alexander of Alexandria, *Epistola ad Alexandrum Const*, 12, EMBP, 178 'Our Lord Jesus Christ had truly, and not apparently, a body obtained from Mary the *theotokos*'. <sup>19</sup> Cf St Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 3, 21, 4, EMBP, 40 <sup>20</sup> Cf *ibid*, 4, 33, 11, EMBP, 48.

her virginal womb;<sup>21</sup> however, in order to defend the real humanity of Jesus he denies her virginity *in partu*.<sup>22</sup> In Egypt, also in an anti-Gnostic context, Origen (d. c.254) defends the perpetual virginity of Mary,<sup>23</sup> and regards the Mother of the Messiah as model and help of Christians.<sup>24</sup>

The assertion of Mary's virginity, both *ante partum* and *in partu*, was by this stage to be found throughout the Church. Thus, in opposition to Jovinian her virginity *in partu* was defended by St Ambrose,<sup>25</sup> St Jerome (d. 419)<sup>26</sup> and St Augustine.<sup>27</sup> For Gregory of Nyssa<sup>28</sup> and other Fathers of this period, virginity *in partu* was a specific sign of the Incarnation of the Word. Methodius sings the praises of 'Mary ever Virgin' – *aetparthenos*.<sup>29</sup> St Ephraem outlines the features of Mary's virginity,<sup>30</sup> and St Epiphanius includes this Marian title in his Creed.<sup>31</sup> The Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople put it into its dogmatic statement.<sup>32</sup>

Alongside this assertion of Mary's virginity, to be found ever more frequently and universally, as time passes we find more and more acknowledgment of her fullness of holiness. Although the presence of sin in her was something always rejected, it was at first accepted that she could have had some imperfections: We find this being said by St Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, St Basil, St John Chrysostom, St Ephraem and St Cyril of Alexandria, whereas St Ambrose and St Augustine reject the idea. St Ambrose wrote an apology of the Blessed Virgin, adorning her with all the virtues and excluding from her any defect.<sup>33</sup> St Jerome links her perfect holiness to her divine motherhood.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cf Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 4, 10, EMBP, 89 (Christ) 'is from a virgin mother because he has no man as father' <sup>22</sup> Cf Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, 23, EMBP, 83. <sup>23</sup> Cf Origen, *Commentaria in Evangelium secundum Mattheum*, 10, 17, EMBP, 132. <sup>24</sup> Cf Origen, *Homiliae in Lucam*, 17, 9, EMBP, 147 <sup>25</sup> Cf St Ambrose, *Epistola 42*, EMBP, 601–2 <sup>26</sup> Cf St Jerome, *Adversus Iovianum*, EMBP, 800–2. <sup>27</sup> Cf St Augustine, *Contra Iulianum Pelagianum*, 1, 2, 4, EMBP, 972 <sup>28</sup> Cf St Gregory of Nyssa, In *Canticum Canticorum*, oratio XIII, GNO, p 388, 3–389, 1 'He alone came to this life with a new kind of birth. Nature did not determine this birth, it was his slave For this reason it calls him white and red, because he dwelt with this life by means of flesh and blood, and it says that he is distinguished amidst thousands of men by his virginal purity his conception did not proceed from the union of two, his birth was immaculate, his birth without pain His birth alone had no labour pains, just as, similarly, he came to exist without a man's participation For it is not accurate to use the word "labour" for that incorrupt bringing forth without a man's participation, since the words "virginity" and "labour" seem incompatible in regard to him However, just as we were given a son without father, so we were given a child without labour This is borne out by the prophet Isaiah when he announces that her giving birth would be painless, saying "Before the pangs of labour came, having been freed from them, she brought forth a male child" Thus, he was chosen and renewed the order of nature in both points he neither had his origin in pleasure, nor emerged to the light in pain' <sup>29</sup> Cf St Methodius, *Convivium decem Virginum*, EMBP, 173 <sup>30</sup> Cf St Ephraem, *Oratio exomologetica ad S Dei Gentricem*, EMBP, 347 <sup>31</sup> Cf St Epiphanius, *Panarion* 78, 6, EMBP, 712 <sup>32</sup> Cf D 422. <sup>33</sup> Cf St Ambrose, *De virginitate*, 2, 2, EMBP 520 'She was humble of heart, reflexive, prudent, sparing of words, a lover of reading, she did not put her hope in unstable riches, but in the prayer of the poor Assiduous in work, modest in action, she would seek as judge of her thoughts, not man, but God; never did she offend anyone, she was benevolent towards all, honouring the aged, she envied not her friends, she fled from ostentation, followed the dictates of her reason, loved virtue When did she ever offend, even with a glance, her parents?' <sup>34</sup> Cf St

After the dogmatic definition of that motherhood, her prerogative of fullness of holiness came more into focus, the title 'all holy' (*panhagia*) becoming generalized. In the *Akathistos* we find the line 'The Lord made you all holy and glorious' (song 23). At the beginning of the fifth century the people of Constantinople were invoking our Lady as *panhagia* to protect them from invasion from the north. From the sixth century onwards, as Mary's divine motherhood and complete holiness come more into focus, there is a further development in affirmation of Marian truths and prerogatives generally. Specifically this is true of the Dormition and Assumption, Mary's complete sinlessness and her role as Mediatrix and Queen.

Thus, for example, although Hesichius (d. *post* 450) already implicitly affirmed the Assumption (on the basis of Psalm 132:8),<sup>35</sup> was not until the sixth century that this Marian truth began to attract much attention, as it did via homilies given on 15 August, the feast of 'dormition' or 'translation' of Mary. St Modestus of Jerusalem (d. 634) instructs his faithful in the mystery of the Assumption, giving Mary's divine motherhood as the basis for it.<sup>36</sup> St Germanus of Constantinople (d. 733), in a number of 'Dormition' homilies outlines the theological arguments for the bodily glorification of the Blessed Virgin.<sup>37</sup> So too does St Andrew of Crete (d. c.740)<sup>38</sup> and, a little later, with more depth, St John Damascene (d. 749).<sup>39</sup>

Theodotus of Ancyra (d. 488) writes that the Virgin 'is exempt from all malice, stainless, immune from all sin, undefiled, spotless, holy in soul and body'.<sup>40</sup> Hesichius depicts Mary as exempt from concupiscence.<sup>41</sup> St Sophronius (d. 638) was the first to hold that Mary had the special privilege of a prepurifying grace.<sup>42</sup> For St Germanus, she was exempt from concupiscence, the *fomes peccati*.<sup>43</sup> St Andrew depicted her as the first member of redeemed mankind.<sup>44</sup>

As far back as St Ephraem she is hailed as 'queen of all creation'<sup>45</sup> and St Peter Chrysologus calls her 'Lady'<sup>46</sup> (the feminine of 'Lord'). In this later Patristic peri-

Jerome, *Epistola XXII*, 38, EMBP, 792: 'Look at the Blessed Virgin, who was of such immaculate purity that she merits becoming the Mother of God' 35 Cf Hesichius, *De Santa Maria Deipara*, EMBP, 1278 36 Cf St Modestus, *Encomium in dormitionem S Dominae nostrae Deiparae semperque Virgins Mariae*, 5, EMBP, 1705 37 Cf St Germanus, *Oratio in dormitionem S Deiparae*, PG 98, 345: 'Because just as the One who in thee abased himself was God from the beginning and life from eternity; it must needs happen that the Mother of Life lives with Life, passes through death as through a dream and through her translation as if it were an awakening .. Thou, as it was written, appearest in beauty, and thy virginal body is all holy, all chaste, all God's dwelling For this reason, too, it is necessary for thy body to be immune from decaying into dust and to be transformed from human to incorruptible and to live most gloriously, free from harm, endowed with the fullness of life . For that reason, we believe that thou, Mother of God, walkest close to us.' 38 Cf. St Andrew of Crete, *In Dormitionem B V Mariae*, 2, EMBP, 1856-7 39 Cf. St John Damascene, *Homilia in Dormitionem B V Mariae*, EMBP, 1952-9 40 Theodotus of Ancira, *Homilia VI*, 11, EMBP, 1201 41 Cf Hesichius, *De Sancta Maria Deipara*, EMBP, 1276 42 Cf. St Sophronius, *Oratio in SS Deiparae Annuntiationem*, EMBP, 1729-30 43 Cf St Germanus, *Oratio VII In dormitionem SS Deiparae*, EMBP, 1821-3 44 Cf St Andrew of Crete, *Oratio XII In dormitionem B V Mariae I*, EMBP, 1853-5. 45 St Ephraem, *Oratio ad Deiparam*, EMBP, 341 46 St Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo*

od more and more voices exalt Mary as Queen and Mistress of heaven and earth. This is true of Leoncius of Byzantium (d. 542);<sup>47</sup> St Ildephonsus of Toledo, who invokes her as 'my Lady, my liege, Mistress among the servants, Queen among the sisters';<sup>48</sup> St Andrew of Crete, who calls her 'Queen and reconciler of peace';<sup>49</sup> St Germanus, who acclaims her as 'Queen of the universe';<sup>50</sup> St John Damascene, who regards her as his 'Queen, Mistress and Lady'.<sup>51</sup>

If in the preceding centuries the Fathers showed the Blessed Virgin's cooperation in redemption by using the Eve-Mary parallel, now they explicitly proclaim her social role. For St Sophronius Mary is 'man's only refuge'.<sup>52</sup> St Germanus works on this idea at length and sees the Virgin as the only path of salvation: 'none is saved unless it be by the Mother of God; none mercifully receives the divine gifts unless it is because she has brought him to God'.<sup>53</sup> St John Damascene insists on the fact that she is the dispenser of gifts: 'through you, until the time comes for us to leave this impermanent world, we receive help to do good works'.<sup>54</sup> St Andrew of Crete teaches the same thing.<sup>55</sup>

One can see from a study of the Patristic period that, over these first eight centuries of its life, the Church went ever deeper into the mystery of the Mother of God. In this period all the main lines of Mariology were marked out; Mariology would keep to this course, enriching this treasury of doctrine. These main lines are, in sum: the Mother of Jesus is truly the Mother of God, whom she conceived and gave birth to while remaining a virgin. She is therefore essentially connected to the Redeemer, as the new Eve, the mother of all the living. She is also a prototype of the Church. Her role in salvation history explains why she enjoys special privileges.

If Mary's virginity is already being spoken of in the second century, as also the Eve-Mary parallel and the connexion between Mary and the Church, it is from the Council of Ephesus onwards that, with the affirmation of her divine motherhood, we find the testimony of Marian feasts and devotion, in the many sermons that have survived. As Hilda Graef has pointed out, this development of devotion and, along with it, of Mariology, in the Patristic period was more widespread and splendid in the East than in the West (which history shows to have been much more sober in its language and more reserved when it comes to speaking of her 'prerogatives').<sup>56</sup> In the West, at the close of the Patristic period, mention must be made of St Ildephonsus, not only for his clear defence of Mary's virginity, but also

*CXLII De Annuntiatione D Mariae Virgins*, EMBP, 1257 47 Cf. Leontius of Byzantium, *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychnianos III*, EMBP, 1548. 48 St Ildephonsus, *De Virginitate perpetua B M Virginis*, PL 96, 58 49 St Andrew of Crete, *Canones et Triodia*, EMBP, 1870 50 St Germanus, *In ingressum SS Deiparae I*, EMBP, 1808 51 St John Damascene, *Laudatio S Barabarae*, EMBP, 1963. 52 St Sophronius, *Trodidum*, PG, 87, 3, 3855 53 St Germanus, *Oratio in Dormitionem SS Deiparae II*, EMBP, 1821 54 St John Damascene, *Oratio in Annuntiationem B V Mariae*, PL 96, 647 55 St Andrew of Crete, *Oratio III In nativitate B V Mariae*, EMBP, 1839-40 56 Cf. Graef (1963), vol 1, p 162

for his hymn to her queenship and especially his devotion to our Lady epitomized in the idea of loving service and consecration to Mary.

### 3. MARY IN THE MIDDLE AGES

From the point of view of the progression of theological ideas, it is not easy to trace a dividing line between the end of the Patristic period and the start of the Middle Ages, particularly if one takes the East into account. There Marian devotion and theological thought about Mary continued to follow a fairly straight, unbroken line up to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, whereas in the West, particularly from the Carolingian renaissance onwards, one finds much more rapid development in Mariology. This was due, in the first instance, to the influence of the great Latin writers, especially St Ambrose, St Jerome and St Augustine; but it was also due, in no small measure, to the influence of East on West, an influence which became marked at the start of the Middle Ages.

This influence is to be found in the introduction of Marian feasts from the East from the eighth century onwards, and in the translations made of homilies and even of the *Akathistos* hymn, whose Latin version, made c.800, came to be widely used. This influence is particularly important if one bears in mind that the doctrinal development the West experienced was preceded by what could be called a veritable (and enduring) explosion of popular devotion. So it can be said that this evolution extended from the Patristic period right up to the eleventh century.<sup>57</sup>

What we find here is a doctrinal development which is grounded on the divine motherhood and perpetual virginity of Mary, received by this stage as truths pertaining to the faith. In fact it is through consideration of the dignity of the divine motherhood that theological development will steer towards consideration of the Marian prerogatives, particularly the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, the Mediation and Queenship, expanding and deepening the themes already sketched out in Patristic theology.

It is useful to remember that we do not find in the Middle Ages any Mariological treatises in the strict sense. The exploration of Marian themes took place via sermons, ascetical writings and commentaries on Holy Scripture. These writings (and the personality of some of their authors) played a decisive part in the exploration of Marian themes. They are texts in which the mystery of Mary is also, as Shea points out, 'an object of the Scholastics' "*fides quaerens intellectum*" [faith seeking understanding]. And therewith we had at least the beginnings of scientific Mariology.<sup>58</sup> These principles focus on Mary's divine motherhood, giving Mariological thought a totally Christocentric shape which will impact directly on the way the Marian 'prerogatives' are treated. As we enter the Middle Ages,

<sup>57</sup> Kohler, in NDM, p 844. <sup>58</sup> Shea (1955), p 286

we find that the Eve–Mary parallel takes a less prominent place than it had in the Patristic period.

The first important author in this period is undoubtedly St Bede the Venerable (d. 735), a man immersed in 'the sober Roman tradition'.<sup>59</sup> In Bede we find the traditional themes of the Eve–Mary parallel and comparison of Mary with the Church. The Blessed Virgin's life and her virtues and 'privileges' are given a pious and sober treatment in the preaching and biblical commentary of this English Benedictine.

Bede is followed by Ambrose Autpert (d. 784) who manages to bring out Mary's spiritual motherhood, continuing to stress the Mary–Church relationship.<sup>60</sup> A native of Provence based in Italy, Autpert produced a Mariology very much influenced by the Greek approach, more exuberant than the typical Latin sobriety. This is to be seen specially in his sermons on the Assumption of Mary, on her exaltation as Queen, and in the way he firmly associates her with the saving work of her Son. However, Autpert's writings continue to explore the typical lines of Latin Mariology. This can be seen particularly in the stress he puts on the Mary–Church link in his commentary on chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation. He sees both Mary and the Church in the woman clothed in glory described therein. And in addition to seeing Mary as Queen, he points out that she is the Mother of believers, who nourishes Christ and offers him to mankind. Autpert fully deserves to be honoured as the man who in an exceptional way succeeded in uniting Latin and Byzantine Mariological tradition.

Ambrose Autpert stands at the threshold of the Carolingian era and the theological renaissance which was such a feature of that period. The theology of the period continues to reflect the influence of Eastern Mariology and of popular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>61</sup> Her intercession is something to which all its writers refer, and we find evidence of a tender Marian devotion even among those who were least exposed to Greek influence.

This period sees once again an emphasis on the truth of Mary's divine motherhood in the rejection of the Adoptionism of Elipandus of Toledo (d. 800) and Felix of Urgel (d. 818), culminating in the Council of Frankfurt (794). The Adoptionists refused to accept outright that Mary was the Mother of God, arguing for a dual divine filiation in Jesus – his natural filiation to the Father as Word, and his adoptive filiation to the Father as man – which meant that Mary was really only the mother of him who was the adoptive son of God.<sup>62</sup> As a consequence,

<sup>59</sup> Cf Graef (1963), vol 1, p 162. <sup>60</sup> Cf Kohler in NDM, p 843. <sup>61</sup> Agreeing with G Meersseman, H Graef emphasizes the Greek influence on Marian devotion in the West and points out that this occurred through three writings translated from the Greek and used as sermons in the liturgy: the hymn *Akathistos*, the legend of Theophilus, and the Life of Mary in Egypt. The legend of Theophilus who sells his soul to the devil and is saved through our Lady's intercession is the basis of the myth of Faust (cf. Graef, 1963, vol. 1, pp 170–1). <sup>62</sup> Cf Mateo-Seco (1994).

those Carolingian writers (for example, Alcuin (d. 804) and Paulinus of Aquileia (d. 802) who were to the fore in the controversy with the Adoptionists) extolled Mary's divine motherhood, as something worthy of all honour and devotion. To this period, perhaps the end of the eighth century, belongs the composition of the *Ave, Maris stella*, a hymn praising her virginal motherhood.

This image of the Blessed Virgin as star of the sea very quickly became part of Marian devotion in the West. We find it in Strabo (d. 849) and in Rabanus Maurus (d. 856), Benedictines both, and it will be given what is probably its most beautiful expression by St Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153). Still in the ninth century, mention might be made, as something very indicative of the spirit of the period, of the controversy on the virginity *in partu* between Pascasius Radbert (d. 865) and Ratramnus (d. c.868). The latter seems to be of the view that Mary gave birth in exactly the same way as other women, which leads one to think that he does not accept the virginity *in partu*;<sup>63</sup> Radbert's text already speaks of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>64</sup>

From the ninth century on we find, in one form or another and with greater frequency, statements which touch on the question of the Immaculate Conception of Mary: she is shown as free from the consequences of original sin (concupiscence, physical corruption etc.) or as freed from the original sin that affects us, as 'the one who alone is blessed', 'the blessed one par excellence', 'the immaculate earth, blessed and free from all curse', or as 'the only one who is immaculate and ever pure and immune from fault'. From this period also comes the letter *Cogitis me*,<sup>65</sup> attributed to Radbert, which was to have so much influence on the question of Mary's assumption into heaven.

In the 11th century, although popular devotion continued unabated, there are not many authors known for their work in the field of Mariology. Mention should be made of the sermons of Fulbert of Chartres (d. 1028), the works of St Peter Damian (d. 1072) and those of Godeschalk of Limburg (d. 1098), which highlight Mary's intercession for all mankind and her universal mediation. Towards the end of the century more attention begins to be paid to Mary's co-operation in the work of Redemption.

A new period begins with the 12th century, particularly as regards theology *qua* discipline, and consequently as to how the subject of Mary should be treated. With the rise of Scholasticism and the concept of theology as a systematic *fides quaerens intellectum*, theologians began to regard the Blessed Virgin as an integral part of theology; she was viewed mainly in the context of the mystery of Christ.

This was already happening in the work of St Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109). His teaching on Mary is to be found mainly in his *Cur Deus homo*, which deals

63 Ratramnus, *De eo quod Christus ex virgine natus est*, PL 121, 81-102 64 Paschasius Radbert, *De partu virginis*, PL 120, 1367-86 For an account of the controversy, and statement of the Immaculate Conception, cf Graef (1963), vol 1, pp 176-9 65 Pseudo-Jerome, *Cogitis me*, PL 30, pp 122-42.

with the Incarnation, and in his *De conceptu virginis et originali peccato* and his famous *Orationes*. In the *De conceptu virginis*, St Anselm does not accept the Immaculate Conception, yet he lays the bases for correct theological study of that dogma. His *Orationes* are very rich mariologically, not only on account of the deep piety evidenced in them but also because of their insights into Mary as Mother of God and therefore the deductions that can be drawn from that for Mary's role in the history of salvation. As Hilda Graef writes, 'In Anselm some of the principal trends of medieval Marian doctrine and devotion are already united: a scholastic argumentation working out the consequences of Mary's divine motherhood in a strict parallelism between it and the fatherhood of God, which leads necessarily to her share in Christ's work of redemption ... Besides, Mary appears not only as the Mother of God, but also as the beloved, beautiful Lady of her spiritual knight who places himself under her protection.'<sup>66</sup>

Very much part of this ambience, St Eadmer (d. 1124), a disciple of St Anselm, wrote two works which have great importance for the theme of the Immaculate Conception: the *Liber de excellentia Virginis Mariae* and a *Tractatus* on her conception.<sup>67</sup> Eadmer ardently develops the tradition already articulated in the *Sub tuum praesidium*, which invokes Mary as intercessor and special help of Christians. This period also sees the beginnings of Marian interpretation of the Song of Songs, which may have resulted from the reading of parts of the Song in the Assumption liturgy. The first of these commentaries were written by Rupert of Deutz (d. 1135)<sup>68</sup> and Honoratus of Autun (d. 1136).<sup>69</sup>

St Bernard of Clairvaux was, undoubtedly, the most important Marian figure of the 12th century, not only for the extent of his writing but also for the influence he had on later thinking. His most important writings are the four sermons *Super Missus est* (collectively entitled 'In praise of the Virgin Mother'), the three sermons on the feast of the Annunciation, the four on the Assumption, one on the twelve stars, the sermon on the feast of Mary's nativity, and his letter to the canons of Lyons.<sup>70</sup> What we have here is basically a spoken corpus of doctrine, and his influence is due, in no small measure, to the beauty of his style, which is full of feeling and fervour and which received unqualified praise.

But this style is not the only thing which accounts for the notable influence of Bernard's Mariology. His later influence is due to two features of his Marian doctrine: on the one hand, St Bernard does not strive after originality, but seeks only to gather up earlier tradition; on the other, his thought, even though it is conveyed in a style dictated by the literary genre of sermons, still manages to achieve a remarkable internal cohesion. As G.W. Shea points out, St Bernard bases his

66 Graef (1963), vol 1, p 215 67 PL, 159, 557-80 and 301ff, the *Tractatus* This edition is defective. Cf Burridge (1936) 68 Rupert of Deutz, *Comm in Cantica Canticorum*, PL 168, 837-962 69 Honoratus of Autun, *Sigillum Beatae Mariae*, 5, PL, 182, 335 70 Cf PL 183, 55-8, 383-98; 415-30, 429-38, 437-44 PL 182, 335

thought on two principles, mainly, which interweave perfectly with one another – the greatness of Mary's divine motherhood and her role as mediatrix between God and men by virtue of her special, maternal relationship with the Mediator. Bernard uses this dual viewpoint in his approach to the other Marian truths and privileges.<sup>71</sup>

St Bernard won the title of *Doctor Mellifluus* precisely because of the beauty of his style; his Mariology, on the other hand, has been described as 'concrete in form and character'.<sup>72</sup> This specificity of Bernard is due largely to the most important feature of his Mariology – his teaching on our Lady's mediation. This is described particularly beautifully in his *respice stellam* passage.<sup>73</sup> St Bernard is in fact the one who did most to advance the doctrine of Marian mediation, exercising decisive influence on later scholars, especially St Albert the Great, St Bonaventure, St Bernadine of Siena, etc. But really Bernard impacted on all Mariology. The Mariology of the end of the 12th century is populated by such friends of his as Peter the Venerable (d. 1156) and Arnold of Bonneval (d. c. 1156), or disciples of his such as Amadeus of Lausanne (d. 1159) – all Benedictines or Cistercians.

If Mariology developed in the 12th century largely due to Benedictines and Cistercians, in the 13th the impulse came from the mendicant orders, particularly the Franciscans and the Dominicans. Outstanding among these was St Anthony of Padua (d. 1231), whose work again was to be found mainly in sermons. His Mariology, which follows on the previous tradition, pays a lot of attention to the Marian 'privileges'.

The 13th century brings with it the Golden Age of Scholasticism, and the great theological Summas. As a result of this, the Marian truths came to be treated as a unit, in a systematic way. The hierarchical ordering of these truths which began with St Bernard now becomes more systematic. In his *Book of the Sentences*, Peter Lombard (d. 1160) discusses Mary in the content of Christology, apropos of the mystery of the Incarnation. Naturally his commentaries are in line with this more systematic treatment; his Mariology is to be found placed between Christology and Soteriology.

In his *De incarnatione* St Albert the Great (d. 1280) clearly sets his Mariology in the context of Christology.<sup>74</sup> The trend towards systematization, which reaches its peak at this time, not only helped towards a better over-view of the mystery of Mary but did so in more sober language, a language devoid of the hyperbole to which sermons lend themselves. This is evidenced in Albert's Mariology, and even more so in his disciple St Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274). Typical of the period,

<sup>71</sup> Shea (1955), pp 289–90 <sup>72</sup> An opinion found in, among others, Shea (1955) <sup>73</sup> St Bernard, *Hom Super missus est*, 2, 17, PL 183, 70–1 <sup>74</sup> Cologne edition, 1958, vol 26. Cf. Fries, *Die Gedanken des hl. Albertus Magnus über die Gottesmutter* (Friburg, 1958) Cf. also Graef (1963), vol 1, p 274ff

his *Summa Theologiae* deals with Marian subjects at the end of Christology, after studying Christ's mediation and when he begins to treat of matters to do with the life of Christ as he moves into Soteriology.<sup>75</sup>

St Bonaventure's Marian thought also found its expression in sermons as well as systematic works: in his *Breviloquium* and his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*.<sup>76</sup> St Bonaventure's commentary is structured very like St Thomas',<sup>77</sup> following, in the the context of Christology, the order of the mysteries of Mary's life; all his Mariology is based on two principles – the divine motherhood and Mary's association with the work of Christ.

Prominent among 14th-century authors we find, firstly, John Duns Scotus (d. 1308). His Mariology, too, is found mainly in his commentaries on The *Sentences* written in Oxford (1289) and in Paris (1304). Like all his theological work, his Mariology is marked by the feature which led him later on to be given the title of *Doctor subtilis*. This subtlety and his dialectic prowess bore particularly rich fruit in his Mariology. He is famous for his vigorous defence of the Immaculate Conception, which also earned him the title of *Doctor Marianus*:<sup>78</sup> by saying that Mary did not contract original sin, he not only does not deny the universality of the redemption but shows Christ to be the most perfect Redeemer, since a redemption which preserves from sin is more perfect than one which sets people free from sin once that sin has been contracted.

So great was Marian devotion during this period that it is impossible to count all the authors who wrote about Mary, though that is not to say that the period saw any great changes in Mariology. We will just mention James of Varagine (d. 1298), known for his Golden Legend and his *Mariale aureum*,<sup>79</sup> and, in the 14th century Raymond Lull (d. 1316), who managed to combine poetry and theology in a remarkable way,<sup>80</sup> and whose Mariology is enthusiastically strewn with Marian

<sup>75</sup> The structure of these questions is truly eloquent, not only because of the sober and clear way in which they are framed, but also because, appearing as they do in the place where Christ's life begins to be explained, their internal structure somehow follows the structure of the mysteries of our Lady's life. Thus, they begin with the sanctification of Mary in her mother's womb (q 27), and deal with her virginity in conceiving Christ (q 28), and the nature of her betrothal to St Joseph (q 29), and conclude with the questions on the birth of Christ, the adoration by the Magi, and the purification of our Lady. <sup>76</sup> Cf. Chetani (1942). <sup>77</sup> St Bonaventure in his work *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum*, 3, which deals with the 'Incarnation of the Word and the restoration of the human race', in the same way as St Thomas, in tracing the life of Christ, denies Mary's sanctification in her mother's womb (3, 1, 1 and 2) and clearly states her purification before birth (3, 1, 3); he maintains Mary's preservation from all personal sin (3, 2, 1) and he dwells at length on the existence of the fomes peccati in Mary (3, 2, 2 and 3) In his subsequent distinctions, he poses the question of whether our Lady merited to conceive Christ (4, 1, 2) and holds her virginity at conception (4, 3) and the virginal birth (8, 1, 1 and 2) Finally, in speaking of the adoration due to Christ, he deals with the veneration of Mary (9, 1, 2) <sup>78</sup> A title given him by, among others, Graef (1963), vol 1, p 300, and Shea (1955), p 302. <sup>79</sup> Cf. Lorenzin (1951). <sup>80</sup> Not to mention *Disputatio Eremtae et Raymundi super aliquibus dubis quaestionibus Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, his *Liber Sancta Maria*, and the poems about *Plant de Nostra Dona Sancta Maria*, and *Horus de Nostra Dona Sancta Maria*



titles; while, in the East, Marian theology was enriched by famous writers such as Gregory Palamas (d. 1360) and Nicholas Cabasilas (d. 1371). Although it is true that this century saw no advance in systematization and the introduction of no new line of thought, it is fair to say that a genuine enrichment of Marian doctrine did take place and, what is more important from the point of view of theology, theologians did not spare themselves on praise of Mary. Outstanding among them were the Franciscans Peter Aureolus (d. 1320), Francis of Meyronnes (d. 1325) and William of Nottingham (d. 1336), the Benedictine Engelbert of Admont (d. 1331) and the Carmelite John Baconthorpe, who was also very influential among Carmelites generally.

To sum up, in the medieval period biblical and patristic texts were availed of to produce an even more structured theological reflection on the Mother of God. The theology of this period – which was developed according to the Scholastic method – made doctrinal advances on the themes of the Mediation, Immaculate Conception, Assumption and Queenship of Mary.

This period saw the emergence of three specific Marian *genera*:

- *Mariale*: books written in praise and concur of Mary. Among the many *Manales* of these centuries mention should be made of that attributed to St Albert the Great – *Mariale sive cccxxx quaestiones super evangelium Missus est* – in which the author brings in a number of different Marian themes following the thread of the Gospel text.

- *Marian Florilegia*, which consist of accounts of various prodigies attributed to Mary's intercession – for example, Walter of Cluny's *De miraculis B.V. Mariae*.<sup>81</sup> These books, written first in Latin, were later translated into the various European languages, giving rise to a rapid flourishing of prose and verse literature on the miracles of Mary.

- *Marian monographs*, which either deal with some particular prerogative of Mary, such as Eadmer's *Tractatus de conceptione B.M. Virgins*; or which collect Marian sermons dealing with some aspect of our Lady, such as Bonaventure's *Tractatus de Beata Virgins*; or which offer spiritual considerations about Mary, such as the *Speculum B.M. Virgins* of Conrad of Saxony; or which gloss the life of the Mother of God, such as the *Iterarum Virginis Mariae* (author unknown).

This period, too, gave us the hymns *Ave Maris Stella* (ninth century), the *Salve Regina* (11th), the *Alma redemptoris mater* (12th), the *Memorare* (12th). And special mention should be made of the Rosary, which acquired its present structure

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Walter of Cluny, PL 173, 1379–86

in the 16th century. Also from the period is the Office, composed to be read on Saturdays and which later came to be used by associations of the faithful.

There was an enormous proliferation of Marian feasts. The feasts celebrated in the East in the sixth century and which spread to Rome in the eighth and ninth, found their way all over the West during this period. To them new ones were added.

Alongside the severe Romanesque image of the Virgin and Child, we now find the Gothic images of the Sorrowful Virgin and of our Mother of Mercy, with Mary depicted holding her Son's prone body. Throughout the Christian West, splendid cathedrals and churches were raised in honour of Mary, often with the advocacy of her Assumption (Toledo, Seville, Lyons, Paris, etc.).

Marian theology developed in the 15th century with ever more careful study of the mysteries of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. Outstanding in this connexion was John Gerson (d. 1420), chancellor of the University of Paris and, as such, defender of the *Immaculata*. Gerson too, concerned about the polemic waged on that theme, was the first to treat explicitly of Marian principles. Other outstanding Marian writers included St Bernadine of Siena (d. 1444), the first to collect his Marian discourses under the title of *Tractatus de Beata Virgine*; St Anthony of Florence (d. 1458); and Denys the Carthusian (d. 1471). The period closes with Bernardine of Busti (d. 1515), whose *Mariale* is a collection of legends, hyperbole and reasonable statements.

#### 4. MARY IN THE MODERN AGE

Marian theology at the end of the Middle Ages was also marked, as it could not but be, by the decadence of thought and by the excesses which gave rise to the Reformation. However, attention has rightly been drawn to the fact that the early Reformers did not level their attacks directly against Marian devotion or doctrine. Indeed, Luther has left us very beautiful pages about the Mother of God. But there is no doubt that the advance of Mariology in this period was crucially affected by the theological positions taken up by the Reformers and by the features that are typical of controversial literature. Thus, we must particularly note that the Catholic defence of the person of Mary in the face of Protestant criticism gave rise in the 16th and 19th centuries to a more profound and systematic treatment of the Marian privileges. One good result of this was the treatment accorded this theme in the *Catechism for Parish Priests*, published on the orders of Pius V as a summary of the doctrine emanating from the Council of Trent,<sup>82</sup> and, on another level, the *De B. Virgine incomparabili* of St Peter Canisius (d. 1597).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Council of Trent* (1923 trans), pp 41–9.

It is worth noting here two characteristic features of the Mariology of this period – the birth of Mariology as a treatise with a marked internal cohesion, and the challenges that Jansenism represented for Catholic thought.

Francisco Suárez was the first to try to write a full Mariology treatise not tied to the *De Verbo Incarnato*. In 1584 he composed his *Quaestiones de B.M. Virgine quattuor et viginti in summa contractae*, but for various reasons this was not published as a book in its own right; instead it was included in his *Disputationes de Mysteris Vitae Christi* (d. 1–23). However, given the systematic nature of his work, the clarity of his intuition, and the theological depth of the Marian doctrine contained in the *Quaestiones*, Suárez can be considered the founder of what we now know as the treatise on Mariology. Although Suárez failed in his purpose,<sup>83</sup> he did provide the guidelines for the works of Silvester de Saavedra (d. c. 1620). *Sacra Deipara, seu de eminentissima dignitate Dei Genitricis* – and other authors who did produce systematic works on Mary free from a formal link with any other theology treatise.

Ever since then this discipline has received various different names: *Mariale*, *Marian Theology*, *Theotokology*, *Treatise on the Mother of God*, etc. All these titles suffer from being too general. *Mariale* is too vague a designation and does not convey the scholarly nature of the treatise: in the Middle Ages, as we saw, this title was applied to works in praise of Mary. Or the title involves a degree of verbal contraction: *Marian Theology* is not a good title, because etymologically Theology is the science of God, and Marian refers directly to Mary. Or the title is restrictive from a conceptual point of view: *Theotokology* and *Treatise on the Mother of God* reduce the title of the treatise to just one aspect (essential yes, but partial) of Marian doctrine.

The first to use the title *Mariology* was Placidus Nigidus, whose *Summa Sacrae Mariologiae* was published in Palermo in 1602. This author, using his brother's name, Nicholas, sought to provide 'a distinct and separate treatment regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary', structuring his treatise, not chronologically, as Suárez had done, but by following the line of efficient and final causality.<sup>84</sup> Although this title (Mariology) was not used by any other writer in this or the following century,<sup>85</sup> it entered into common use in the 19th century and has lasted into our own time.

<sup>83</sup> According to Aldama, Suárez systematized his Mariology twice. The first time was in Rome c. 1584–5. Unfortunately, the author did not maintain the whole of his courageous innovation, and years later reformulated the scheme of his Mariology. When in 1592 he published his *De Mysteris vitae Christi*, he admittedly retained the general structure, but nonetheless sacrificed a good deal of the cohesiveness and structure of his first Roman version. His motive for including his Mariology within the life of Christ was due to the necessity of commenting on all the questions of the Summa in order. As a result, Mariology became submerged in Thomistic scheme of the life of Christ. Cf. Aldama (1952) 84. Cf. Fiore, in NDM, p. 1283. <sup>85</sup> In its modified form it appears in the work of Cotenson, *Mariologia, seu De incomparabilibus Deiparae Mariae Virginitatibus* (Lyon, 1668–9). Cf. Fiore (1987), pp. 27–9.

Seventeenth-century Mariology was affected, naturally, by the crisis that developed in the 16th. It was typified by the sort of structurization begun by Suárez and by defence of Marian privileges and popular devotion to Mary. As R. Laurentin has pointed out, the Mariological movement spread rapidly, especially from 1619 to 1630, reaching its peak in 1630–50 and then beginning to burn out.<sup>86</sup>

In this period we find such famous Mariologists as St Lawrence of Brindisi (d. 1619), D. Petau (d. 1652), John Baptist Novati (d. 1648) and Vincent Cotenson (d. 1674). All Catholic theology of the period can be said to be a passionate reaction in defence of the Marian tradition of previous centuries and in defence too of popular Marian piety. The same holds true of influential writers in the field of spirituality, particularly in the sphere of French influence, such as Peter de Berulle (d. 1629), founder of the Oratory in France, and Jean-Jacques Olier (d. 1657), founder of the Seminary of St Sulpice. Both men were noted for their outspoken preaching of the glories of Mary and of her powerful intercession; both always linked Marian truths closely to Christ.

Marian devotion, which did so much to bolster the faith of the people, quite often degenerated into sentimentalism, exaggeration and sometimes even deviations, against which authoritative voices like that of Bossuet spoke out, insisting that true devotion to Mary is only to be found in the context of a coherent Christian life.<sup>87</sup> But in the 17th century theology also had to deal with the rigorism of Jansenism, particularly in connexion with the attitude Jansenism took to popular devotion and the mediation of Mary. Thus we find Pascal (d. 1662) in his *Provincial Letters* rejecting the book by Paul de Barry whose very title leaves us in no doubt about the exaggeration that lies within: *Paradise opened to Phylagia through one hundred devotions to the Mother of God, easy to practise*. Important and symptomatic in this general context is Adam Widenfeld's (d. 1678) *Momta salutana*, which appeared in 1673, in which he attacks the excesses of popular piety in a manner which provoked a reaction (not always well conceived) on the part of the various religious orders. There was always a degree of rigidity in this rejection of abuses in popular piety. This made it necessary for popular piety to be encouraged and it also helped to show up the difference between true piety and superstition. A contribution in this connexion were St John Eudes (d. 1680), who did a great deal to foster devotion to the Sacred Heart of Mary, and other 18th-century authors such as St Louis Marie Grignon de Monfort (d. 1716), who wrote his *Treatise on True Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin*, and St Alphonsus de Liguori (d. 1787) with his *Glories of Mary*, which is world famous. These writers had enormous influence on Marian devotion in the centuries that followed. Summing up, we can say that at the end of the Middle Ages an intense Marian piety was to be found in the Christian people. Sometimes this piety was so fervent that, due to

<sup>86</sup> Laurentin (1963), *Traté*, p. 55. <sup>87</sup> Fiore, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. 10, p. 463.

people's lack of doctrinal formation, it spilled over into superstition or pure sentimentality. These deviations, and the reductionist attitudes of Protestants, led the latter to condemn Catholic devotion to Mary, which they saw as an aberration and as taking from the worship of Christ.

Many of the religious orders and congregations founded or reformed in this period developed a markedly Marian spirituality; there is much evidence to this effect. The Society of Jesus – specifically Fr J. Leunis – founded the Marian congregations; the Capuchins did a widespread catechesis through their Marian fraternities, confraternities and popular missions; Fr Olier, the founder of the Sulpicians, propounded a Marian spirituality for priests; the Eudists, founded by St John Eudes, professed an ardent love for the Blessed Virgin; the Redemptorists of St Alphonsus, in their missions to the people, combatted Jansenism by means of devotion to our Lady; the Monfortians promoted Marian missionary outlook; etc.

In the 16th century the Rosary acquired the structure we are familiar with today [until John Paul II's reform], and this devotion was given a strong impetus by the feast of our Lady of the Rosary, instituted by St Pius V. Towards the end of the 17th century Italy saw the birth of the devotion to the 'month of May', which soon spread through the Catholic world, becoming a standard practice of devotion towards the middle of the 18th century.

## 5. MARY IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

**Marian prerogatives** Support for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which had been swelling during the previous centuries, culminated in the reign of Pius IX with the dogmatic promulgation of this privilege (1854). A century later, in 1950, Pius XII defined as a dogma of faith the Assumption of Mary body and soul into heaven.

In the 20th century, on the initiative of Cardinal Mercier, archbishop of Malines, a movement was established to promote a dogmatic definition of Mary's mediation. It did succeed in getting Benedict XV to institute the feast of 'Mary, Mediatrix of all grace' and to establish three commissions – Belgian, Spanish and Roman – to study the matter of the definition. Although the initiative came to nothing, because the Popes that followed were unfavourable to it, the idea of Marian mediation became so much part of Catholic life that during the preparations for the Second Vatican Council, the Holy See received three hundred petitions from Council fathers, associations, religious institutes and universities putting forward the possibility of the dogmatic definition, during the Council, of the universal mediation of Mary.

After the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, devotion to Mary's queenship grew. In 1900 the Holy See was petitioned to institute the feast of 'Mary Queen of the Universe'. This petition was repeated in the years

that followed. After the proclamation of the feast of Christ the King, by Pius XI in 1925, a broad movement *pro regalitate Mariae* [in support of the queenship of Mary] developed, which culminated in Pius XII's encyclical *Ad caeli Regnam* and the institution of the liturgical feast of the 'Queenship of Mary'.

**Mariology treatises** Virtually no Mariology treatises were published in the 19th century. Of those that were, mention must be made of M. Scheeben's *Handbuch der Katholischen Dogmatik*.<sup>88</sup> Here Scheeben returned to the sources of Patrology while taking on board the intervening dogmatic development. Two concerns are in evidence in his *Dogmatik* – to treat of the various aspects of the Marian mystery in an ordered, unified way, and (something new) to give Mariology in its proper place with theology: between Christ and the Church. No other 19th-century Mariologist followed Scheeben's line on this; the rest used the traditional approach, that is, they saw Mariology as a discipline closed in on itself, having no particular connexion with the other theological tracts, a discipline with a very speculative methodology and not well grounded on Scripture and Patristic tradition.

Mention should also be made of J.H. Newman, who, although he did not write a Mariology treatise, does devote considerable attention to Mary in his various writings, and has many profound things to say. For Newman, the person of Mary is very closely connected to that of her Son. 'Mary is part of the mystery of Christ. Her figure is always "drawn" to that of our Lord, and we could even say that she hides behind him. But at the same time Mary shows Christ forth. She points him out and exhibits as it were obliquely – sometimes *in recto* – the qualities that go to make up the divine-human figure of her Son.'<sup>89</sup>

This closeness of Mary to Christ makes her an exceptional, unique creature; however, that does not cut her off from the rest of mankind: 'What God began in her was a sort of type of His dealings with His church. This was a shadow outline of that Kingdom of the Spirit, which was then coming on the earth.'<sup>90</sup> Newman rescued from a kind of oblivion the Patristic doctrine of the Eve–Mary antithetical parallel which played such an important part in the early stages of Mariology.<sup>91</sup>

In the explanation that Newman gives for Mary's perfections and privileges one can see that the Mariological pattern found in his writings shows that for him 'statements concerning Mary are not independent doctrines but are all part of an harmonic whole and all support one another'.<sup>92</sup> Nor can Marian doctrine be regarded as an isolated, self-sufficient science; it should be given a place in theology proper.

A great deal of Mariology was produced in the 20th century. Among the main ones we might mention: J.B. Terrien, *La Mère de Dieu et la Mère des hommes* (4

<sup>88</sup> Cf Scheeben (1882) <sup>89</sup> Morales (1989), p 264 <sup>90</sup> Newman, *Parochial and plam sermons*, vol 4, p 314. 'The weapons of saints'. <sup>91</sup> Newman, *Certain difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic teaching*, vol 2, pp 31, 35, 45–6, etc, cf Morales (1989), pp 289–83 <sup>92</sup> Morales (1989), p 271

vols.); A.M. Lepecier, *Tractatus de beatissima Virgine Maria Matre Dei*; H. Merkelbach, *Manologia: Tractatus de Beata Virgine Maria*; G.M. Roschim, *Manologia*, 3 vols.; J. Keuppens, *Manologiae compendium*; G. Alastruey, *Mariologia; sive Tractatus de Beata Virgine Maria Matre Dei*, 2 vol. D. Bertetto, *Maria Madre universal* J.B. Carol, *Mariology*, 3 vols.; M. Schmaus, *Mariologia*; J.A. Aldama, *Mariologia in Sacrae Theologiae Summa*.

Almost all these treatises follow the traditional neo-Thomist structure. The method used is deductive – starting from general principles and then reaching certain conclusions. These are linked directly to Christology because they are based on the principle of analogy and Mary's association with Christ. The merit of these treatises lies in the fact that they have explored the mystery of Mary using the scholarly methods available at the time and thereby fostered knowledge of Mary, giving a truly theological shape to Marian doctrine.<sup>93</sup>

From 1920 onwards one begins to detect signs of renewal of Mariology. Firstly there is a noticeable growth in biblical studies. Scholars try to avoid instrumentalizing Scripture and using it mainly to provide support for conclusions already established by logical thought. Now they try to study the Bible more deeply and draw conclusions from that source. In this connexion we might cite the work of F. Ceuppens, 'De Mariologia Biblica' in volume 4 of his *Theologia Biblica*.

Due also to advances in Ecclesiology, we find a new approach to Mariology which links it with the treatise on the Church. This gives rise to a more ecclesiological type of Mariology, offered as an alternative to traditional Mariology, which is linked to Christology. An important author who follows this line is O. Semmelroth with his work *Urbild der Kirche*.

The liturgical movement, the new emphasis on Patristic sources, the anthropological emphasis which came into favour from 1930 onwards, and the intensification of ecumenical dialogue – all these factors had a positive influence on Mariology, giving it a new focus and openness and preventing its becoming closed in on itself.<sup>94</sup>

The century witnessed a very considerable growth in the study of Mary and her privileges: the cause and effect of this was the creation of specialized Marian journals such as *Marian* (1938), *Estudios Marianos* (1940), *Etudes Marials* (1943), *Marian Studies* (1949), *Ephemerides Mariologicae* (1950), *Cahiers Marials* (1956), etc.

National Mariological societies were also established – Flemish (1931), French (1934), Spanish (1940), Canadian (1948), American and German (1950), Belgian (1951), the International Marian Academy (1951), etc. and centres for Marian studies, particularly the Pontifical faculty of the *Marianum* (1950).

From 1895 international Marian congresses have been held; these were pastoral in orientation, aimed at fostering Marian devotion among the people. Since

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Flores (1987), p. 34. <sup>94</sup> All these influences are to be seen quite amply set out in *ibid.*, pp. 49–96.

1950, which Pius XII made a Holy Year, these congresses have tried to foster Marian studies and act as a meeting place for Marian specialists from different branches of theology (Liturgy, Dogmatic, Moral, Scripture, Ecumenism etc.)<sup>95</sup>

All this theological focus on the figure of the Blessed Virgin was what led the Second Vatican Council to devise a substantial Marian text which, after a somewhat chequered career, came to be included as chapter 8 of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, which we shall examine in some detail in section 6 of this chapter.

**Marian devotion** Given the general climate of this period, it was only to be expected that it should see the foundation of many religious congregations of Marian inspiration. Bergh reckons that at least 700 women's congregations were created in the 19th and 20th century which have a Marian spirituality, and whose name makes reference to Mary under some prerogative or devotion, particularly Mary Immaculate, the Assumption and the Holy Rosary.<sup>96</sup>

As has already been mentioned, Benedict XV in 1921 established the feast of Mary, Mediatrix of all graces and Pius XII (in *Ad caeli Regnam*) that of the Queenship of Mary. It was Pius XII too who made that same year, 1954, the centenary of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, a Marian year.

The Rosary received powerful backing from Leo XIII's twelve encyclicals, so much so that it became quite a standard devotion among Catholics. Pius XII consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1943, when the Second World War was at its height, and he went on to repeat this consecration a number of times.

Marian apparitions in the 19th and 20th centuries have also clearly made for a growth in Marian piety. These apparitions – to individuals, usually humble, simple folk – have acquired a public dimension and in some cases have won a degree of recognition through the Church's permitting public devotion and the insertion of a feast under the appropriate advocacy into the liturgical calendar. Up to 1975, Church authorities had approved Marian devotion at the following places: rue de Bac, Paris (1830), La Salette, France (1846); Lourdes (1858); Pontmain, France (1871); Knock (1879); Fatima (1917); Beauraing, Belgium (1932); Banneux, Belgium (1933); Syracuse, Italy (1953); as well as eight other places.<sup>97</sup>

Finally, closely linked to the apparition phenomenon, there has been a flourishing of pilgrimages to Marian shrines – Guadalupe (Mexico), el Pilar (Spain), Lourdes, Fatima, Loreto, Czestochowa, etc. This pious devotion has given a boost to Christian life in many parts of the world because it has meant that, through Mary, many people have returned to the sacraments.

<sup>95</sup> To date there have been eleven international Mariological Congresses: Rome (1950 and 1954), Lourdes (1958), Santo Domingo (1965), Fatima (1967), Zagreb (1971), Rome (1975), Saragossa (1979), Malta (1983), Kevelaer (1987), Huelva (1992). <sup>96</sup> Cf. Bergh (1954), Kohler, *Mariologia*, p. 849. <sup>97</sup> Cf. Bengoechea (1975), Billet (1976).

If we were to make a balance sheet, it would show that the growth in Marian fervour among Catholics, the wealth of the Marian teaching by the Magisterium and the scale of Marian theological writing warrant describing this period as 'the centuries of Mary'.

## 6. MARY IN THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

It has been rightly said that the Second Vatican Council represented 'a colossal ecclesiological advance'.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps for that very reason it also marked a colossal advance in Mariology. Vatican II was in fact the first Council to produce a substantial, structured treatment of Marian doctrine, and in so doing it managed to keep a nice balance between the various Mariological trends of the time. Its teaching therefore is a key point of reference for Mariological scholarship.

The Mariology situation prior to the Second Vatican Council Due possibly to the growth that took place in ecclesiology during the 20th century, a new concept of Mariology had been taking shape which linked this part of theology to the treatise on the Church. This gave rise to an ecclesiology-style Mariology, which appeared as an alternative to Mariology's traditional stance as a corollary and dependant of Christology

Both this and the traditional approach were 'global', that is, they took a basic viewpoint and then tried to view everything from that angle. It was at the Lourdes Marian-Mariological Congress (1958) that these two forms of Mariology became clearly identified. And it was Koster<sup>99</sup> who coined the terminology which has come to be used to describe the two positions: *Christotypism* or the *Christotypical trend*, and *Ecclesiotypism* or the *ecclesiotypical trend*. The holders of each position argued that there was only one valid way for Mariology to go – theirs. Both schools of thought influenced the redaction of chapter 8 of *Lumen gentium*.

The career of the Marian text in Second Vatican Council Early in 1959, John XXIII made known his desire to convoke an ecumenical council.<sup>1</sup> As we have said, the two schools of thought just mentioned were present when it came to drafting the *De Beata Virgine Maria* schema

In the first draft of the schema on the Church the subject of the Blessed Virgin was dealt with in chapter 5, under the title of *De Maria, Mater Jesu et Mater Ecclesiae* (June 1961). After various revisions by a sub-committee, the draft was sent for approval to the members of the Theological Commission with a new title, *De Maria, Matre Christi et Matre mystici corporis membrorum* (January 1962).

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Portillo (1991) <sup>99</sup> Koster (1959). <sup>1</sup> John XXIII, Address 'Questa festiva', 25 January 1959, AAS 51 (1959) 68.

In March 1962, the Commission decided to take our Lady out of the draft on the Church and give her one on her own. This independent text was called *De Beata Maria Virgine Matre Dei et Matre Domnum*, and it was given to the Council Fathers in the same dossier as the schema on the Church (November 1962).

When the *De Ecclesia* schema came to be studied, voices were raised in favour of including the *De Beata Maria* inside that text. After various vicissitudes, on 30 September 1963, at the start of the general session, the Council Fathers were advised of the possible merging of the two drafts (Mary and Church). Cardinal Frings spoke in favour of this and 66 other Fathers from Central Europe went along with him. But Cardinal Arriba y Castro, speaking for 60 bishops, argued for an independent Marian document, on the grounds that given Mary's transcendence over the Church (being Mother of the Church) she should not be brought down to the level of a mere member of the Church, albeit a sublime one.

This difference of opinion caused a good deal of tension. It was not simply a procedural matter; it called for the adoption of one or other Mariological position. Those who argued for combining the two schemata were opting for ecclesiotypism; those who wanted separate schemata were taking the Christotypical position. In order to sort the matter out it was decided that two speakers would speak for each 'side' on the same day (24 November 1963) and then the matter would be voted on.

Cardinal Santos of Manila was the spokesman for those in favour of two documents. He gave a very theological exposition, showing the place of Mary in the mystery of Christ and of the Church. Her exceptional nature and eminence were such that she could not be fitted into an ecclesiotypical scenario. For, though Mary has a close connexion with the Church, she also and more profoundly has one with Christ, being his Mother. The cardinal also said he was uneasy about including Mary in the schema on the Church because that might give the impression the Council favoured the ecclesiotypical approach.

Cardinal König of Vienna defended the other position. He recognized the doctrinal value of what Cardinal Santos had said; but for ecumenical and pastoral reasons he proposed that the Blessed Virgin be treated of in the document on the Church. It was very much in line, in fact, with the thinking of the Orthodox Church and of Protestants to consider Mary as a type of the Church; so to do this would help ecumenism. Besides, it would show Catholics that Mary was close to them, not cut off from the rest of the redeemed. The cardinal also said that if the Council went in this direction that did not mean adopting the ecclesiotypical position.

The matter was put to the vote on 29 October 1963. The chairman, Cardinal Agagianian, pointed out that this was only a procedural vote and that neither position affected the person of or devotion to Mary. The result was 1,114 in favour of one single text; 1,074 against; 5 spoilt. So, it was all very finely balanced, the required majority having been obtained by a margin of only 17 votes.

Now that the decision had been made to include everything in the one schema it was clearly going to be very difficult for *periti* to satisfy both tendencies.

**The approved text** A sub-commission was set up to draft the new schema. It included Cardinals König and Santos, and Bishops Théas and Doumith, while G. Philips and C. Bálíc were chosen as *periti*. After various revisions, consultations and discussions a text was agreed and presented to the Doctrinal Subcommittee by an agreed text (March 1964). From there it went to the Theological Commission, which did some retouching. In July Paul VI authorized the printing and distribution of the *Lumen gentium* draft to the Council Fathers.

On 16 September 1964 Monsignor Maurice Rey, archbishop of Quebec, presented chapter 8. He gave a very fair, balanced speech which came in for praise. After 33 bishops had given their views in debate and suggested variations, the general secretariate received 90 suggested changes/requests for clarification. These were worked into the text and it was voted on (29 October) – 1,559 for; 10 against; 521 for, with reservations, 1 spoilt.

Again suggested changes were collected and 26 of them were worked into the schema. On 14 November in the 125th general session chapter 8 was voted on again and this time the result was: 2,096 for; 23 against. This brings us to the solemn closing session of the third stage of the Council when the entire text of *Lumen gentium* was voted on. 2151 for, 5 against.

**The Council's Marian doctrine** Firstly, we must point out that chapter 8 is not an appendix or a document tagged onto *Lumen gentium*, it is part of the body of the constitution, and in order to understand it properly it needs to be read in the light of the doctrine given in chapters 1–7.

Before looking at the text we should bear in mind the following premises:

- It is not the aim of this Marian chapter to say everything there is to say about Mary (cf. no. 54), although 'it is the first time that an ecumenical council has offered such an extensive summary of Catholic teaching on the place the Blessed Virgin holds in the mystery of Christ and of the Church.'<sup>2</sup>

- It is not the Council's aim to resolve the on-going debate between the different Mariological trends of thought. 'Opinions which are freely put forward in Catholic theological schools on the subject of the woman who holds the loftiest position in the holy Church after Christ, and the nearest to us, do not lose their right to be preserved' (no. 54).

- The Council acknowledges the validity of Tradition and the Church Magisterium, along with Holy Scripture, for a sound development of Mariology. The Council's mind is that the Old Testament texts should be 'read in the Church' and in the light of later, fuller revelation (cf. no. 55).

<sup>2</sup> Paul VI, in *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI* (Rome, 1964), vol. 2, p. 674

- The Council seeks to scotch the dangers latent in a Mariology which is closed, autonomous and cut off from the rest of theology. To this end it places Mary in the context of the mystery of salvation, and there it looks at her and her personal privileges and prerogatives: Mary is at the centre of the pilgrim Church, adorned with exceptional gifts (nos. 53, 56, 58, 60, 63–6).

- This text of the Magisterium views Mary from a salvation–history angle, leaving to one side the theological–speculative focus which was so much in fashion in the years prior to the Council.<sup>3</sup>

- A clear ecumenical intent imbues the document. The very fact that Marian doctrine is presented on the basis of Scriptural data (nos. 55–59) opens the door to dialogue with Protestants, the intention being that that common basis should help to bring about the rapprochement the Church so greatly desires.

Looking now at the text itself: the very title 'The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and the Church' indicates the method it plans to use; setting out from the fact of Mary's divine motherhood, and her close and indissoluble relationship to Christ, the Council sets Mary into the salvific mystery, to avoid anything which might cut her off from the rest of mankind. In other words, we can say that although Mary is the most sublime and perfect of created beings, she is also the one most committed to and most closely connected with redeemed mankind (cf. no. 54).

Although the two trends that came out so clearly at Lourdes were very much present in the Council debate, the text that it approved and sanctioned transcends the Lourdes controversy and has a conciliatory quality. Because she belongs to the mystery of Christ, Mary is necessarily part of the mystery of the Church, for, according to the mind of the Council, there is really only one mystery, that of Christ perpetuated in the Church.<sup>4</sup>

This concern of the Council is evident in the very first numbers of the chapter. After identifying Mary's position in relation to the Trinity (nos. 52 and 53), it shows her solidarity with the line of Adam, involving her as a most loving Mother and 'as pre-eminent and as a wholly unique member of the Church' (no. 53).

The body of the chapter consists of four sections which we shall now take one by one.

- *The mission of Mary in the economy of salvation* (nos. 55–59). Beginning with the Old Testament (no. 55), the Council gives the Scriptural texts touching on Mary which show the intimate involvement of the 'woman' in the mystery of Christ.

<sup>3</sup> 'To eliminate any mythology there is no better method than that of the theology which considers Mary within the mystery of salvation': Philips, (1969), vol. 2, p. 408. <sup>4</sup> Cf. Aldama (1968) 31; Esquerda Bifet (1975), p. 90. However, in nos. 55–9 there is a markedly Christological stance, whereas in nos. 60–5 the ecclesiological orientation is dominant.

The figure of the woman, the Mother of the Redeemer, already found in Genesis 3:15, becomes progressively clearer; emerging as the virgin mother of the 'God with us' (Is 7:14; Mich 5:2-3; Mt 1:22-3), she is the paradigm of the poor of Yahweh and at the same time the sublime Daughter of Sion.

In the paragraphs that follow (nos. 56-59), the Council studies Mary as she appears in the New Testament, beginning with the Annunciation (no. 56), when by her *fiat* ('Let it be done ...') she consciously agrees to be the Mother of the Redeemer and from this moment on gives herself entirely – body and soul – to the person and work of her Son. We can see in the conciliar teaching that Mary's active co-operation in the liberation of mankind already finds its basis in this, her acceptance of God's plan. By taking on this role she rightly acquires the title of the 'New Eve' or 'Second Eve'. 'This union of the Mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death' (no. 57). In this lucid observation the Council epitomizes the fact that Mary is part of the *historia salutis*. It goes on to list the key points in this itinerary – the Visitation, the birth of the Saviour, the adoration of the shepherds and the Magi, the Purification, the finding of the Child in the temple (no. 57), the wedding at Cana, the pilgrimage in faith, the Cross (no. 58), Pentecost and the Assumption (no. 59).

It is worth mentioning that in this account of Mary's life, the text, in each and every scene it refers to, points up her soteriological dimension; or, to put it another way, by consecrating herself totally, as the handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son, Mary co-operated in the redemption of all human beings, thereby bringing about her own salvation and that of the human race (cf. no. 56).

• *The relationship between the Blessed Virgin and the Church* (nos. 60-65). If, as we said earlier, the Council was very conscious of the ecumenical dimension of its work, one can see very palpable evidence of this concern when at the start of no. 60 it makes an explicit allusion to the *unus Mediator* of St Paul,<sup>5</sup> so much favoured by Lutheran tradition. Taking this truth of faith as its ground, the conciliar text affirms Mary's maternal mediation on behalf of mankind, underlining her connexion with the unique mediation of Christ (cf. no. 62): Mary's maternal mission, which derives from consent and not from necessity, is grounded in the Redeemer's mediation, depends totally on it – is subordinate to it – and fosters the unity of believers with Him (cf. nos. 60 and 62).

In the two following sections (nos. 61 and 62) the basis of this maternal mediation is established.<sup>6</sup> Thus, her maternal role is justified by: her eternal predestina-

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 1 Tim 2:5-6. <sup>6</sup> N.B. The term 'Mediatrice' is used only once in the Council text (no. 62) and, from what we can infer from the Council documents, its insertion was not an easy task – not for doctrinal reasons, but rather ecumenical ones. In fact, in no. 62 it is somewhat mitigated by being contrasted with other Marian titles.

tion as Mother of God (no. 61); her consent and acceptance of the divine will by her *fiat* at the Annunciation (no. 62); the exceptionally generous way she accompanies Christ, from the moment of his conception to his death on the Cross (no. 61); because 'taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation' (no. 62).

As can be seen from this list of reasons, Marian mediation is based on two things: she is mediatrix in a mediate manner, because she conceived the Redeemer, and also in an immediate manner, because by her actions she freely and consciously unites herself to the redemptive actions of her Son. Moreover, the Council text gives grounds for saying that the Blessed Virgin's mediation extends both to the acquisition of graces<sup>7</sup> (objective redemption) and to the distribution of graces<sup>8</sup> (subjective redemption).

This section goes on to study Mary as exemplar, model and type of the Church. Her divine motherhood is the cause of her essential union with the Church (no. 63), as 'an archetype is necessarily connected with the image which is made in its likeness'.<sup>9</sup> This union, therefore, derives from a prior one – the union between Mother and Son.

This intimate union between Mary and the Church gives rise, therefore, to a series of mutual links. Mary is: a type of the Church,<sup>10</sup> by virtue of her faith, charity and perfect union with Christ (nos. 63, 64); and a model both as mother and as virgin (nos. 63 and 64).

Quite logically the text, in the following paragraph (no. 65) teases out this doctrine, displaying for the community of believers the Marian virtues which they should imitate – her eminent holiness and her theological virtues, particularly her pilgrimage in faith and her maternal love.

• *Devotion to and veneration of the Blessed Virgin* (nos. 66-67). Having studied the relationship between Mary and the Church, the text then goes on to deal with how the Church responds to Mary, a response which obviously sprang from the fact that she is the Mother of God and from the typological relationship between Mary and the Church.

This section begins with a theological statement which gives the basis for devotion to Mary: raised as she is above the angels and the rest of mankind, by her motherhood and her involvement in the work of salvation, Mary is honoured by the Church with a special cult (no. 66). The text goes on to give an historical

<sup>7</sup> See the clear allusion to this fact 'She conceived. Christ, shared her Son's sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way, she cooperated in the work of the Saviour' (no. 61).

<sup>8</sup> 'By her manifold intercession (she) continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation' (no. 62). <sup>9</sup> Aldama (1967), p. 403. <sup>10</sup> The term 'type' must not be taken in the Old Testament sense, but rather in the sense of prototype or paradigm. Thus, in stating that 'Mary is the type of the Church' we mean that Mary is that most perfect model or exemplar which serves as reference point for the whole Church.

overview of this veneration, distinguishing two stages of it – from earliest times up to the Council of Ephesus, and from that date up to our own time. It explicitly points out that Marian devotion has been marked by great growth in Christians' love for and invocation and imitation of Mary. Finally, it doctrinally evaluates this veneration, showing it to be essentially different from the worship rendered to God, and indicating that veneration offered to Mary always favours that offered to the Blessed Trinity.

No. 67 contains pastoral guidelines addressed, in the first instance, to all the faithful, exhorting them to foster liturgical veneration of Mary. Secondly, it calls preachers and theologians to avoid any type of exaggeration as also any minimalistic approach to the special position of the Blessed Virgin, and suggesting the path they should follow in that connexion: study of Holy Scripture, the Fathers and the teachings of the Magisterium. Finally, it turns again to the faithful in general, warning them against the dangers of false sentimentalism and vain incredulity, which have no part in true devotion.

◦ *Mary is a sign of true hope* (nos. 68 and 69) These paragraphs form a very appropriate epilogue to the chapter and to the entire Constitution, not only because they came last but also on account of the doctrine they contain.

The section begins with an eschatological vision of Mary, who, now that she is assumed body and soul into heaven, is the image and model of the pilgrim Church on earth. She is a sign of sure hope and consolation for all believers. Finally, the Blessed Virgin is invoked as an intercessor with her Son, so that, through Marian devotion and through her motherly mediation, she may lead all Christians and mankind at large to one People of God

**Mary, Mother of the Church** The title of *Mater Ecclesiae* is to be found very seldom in the Christian literature of the past. But as the doctrine of the Mystical Body began to be explored in more depth, this aspect of Mary began to emerge little by little.

Benedict XIV was the first pope to speak of Mary's being Mother of the Church.<sup>11</sup> In recent times the Popes – Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI and Pius XII – spoke in similar terms. But it was not until Paul VI that this title received its full definition.

Thus, in spite of the opposition that arose in the Council chamber to the proposal to include this title in the text of chapter 8,<sup>12</sup> Paul VI repeatedly defended

<sup>11</sup> Benedict XIV, Bull *Gloriosae Dominae* in *DM*, no 212, p. 131 <sup>12</sup> In effect, Cardinal Montini, the future Paul VI, in his intervention in the Council chamber on 5 December 1962, proposed the inclusion of this title in the Council documents. Despite the support of quite a number of members of the Polish, Italian, Spanish and Latin American episcopates, 150 bishops of Scandinavia, Germany and France – headed by Cardinal Bea – reacted negatively, adducing reasons of an ecumenical

this prerogative both in homilies and in addresses to the Council and at General Audiences.<sup>13</sup>

It was on 21 November 1964, in his address closing the third session of the Council that the Pope formally declared: 'For the glory of the Most Blessed Virgin and for our consolation we proclaim Mary Most Holy Mother of the Church, that is, Mother of all the Christian people, of the faithful as well as the pastors, who call her most loving Mother; and we want that from now henceforward she be honoured and invoked by all the Christian people with this most gracious title.'<sup>14</sup>

The Pope had justified the opportuneness of this proclamation when he said, on the same occasion: 'Mary's relationship with the Church, so clearly established by the conciliar constitution, allows us to believe this to be the most solemn and most suitable moment . . .'<sup>15</sup>

The grounds for the Pope giving Mary this title were, firstly, the theology of the Mystical Body, since Mary is 'Mother of the One who since the first moment of the Incarnation made himself head of his Mystical Body. Mary, therefore, as Christ's Mother, is Mother also of the faithful and of all the Pastors, that is, of the Church ...' The Pope points out, secondly, that this prerogative 'is not new for the piety of Christians; rather with this name of Mother, and in preference to any other, the faithful of the whole Church are accustomed to address Mary ..' And, thirdly, he refers to the repeated requests made from all over the Christian world and by many Council Fathers.

Some Mariologists are of the view that this declaration does not add anything to the conciliar text. If that were so, it would be difficult to see why 'the Pope himself regarded his proclamation as a finishing touch (*fastigium*) to the Constitution'.<sup>16</sup> The Pope's intention was to show Mary to be not only the Mother of the faithful, but also the Mother of the Mystical Body taken in its unity and totality. The Pope did not confine himself in this solemn address to proclaiming the title; he stated that its theological bases are the motherhood and the maternal mission of Mary in regard to the People of God.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, in the eternal plan for the salvation of mankind, God chose Mary to be the Mother of his Son. This motherhood is full and complete, in such a way that all aspects of her association with the Redemption take on a maternal character. But this motherhood could not be perfect and complete if it extended only to each

and doctrinal kind. Cf R. Laurentin, 'Mater Ecclesiae selon Paul VI: histoire, intention et portée de la proclamation du 21 novembre 1964', *MSS* 1986, pp 24–9, cf Casanovas (1982) <sup>13</sup> Cf the address of the conciliar Marian Act of 11 December 1963 in St Mary Major, which stated that the Church 'in defining herself recognizes you as her Mother'. At the closing of the Second Session (4 December 1963) he said her place is 'after Christ's the highest and the closest, in such wise that with the name *Mater Ecclesiae* we can adorn her, and this redounds to her honour and our consolation'. *AAS* 56 (1964) 37 Similarly, the Addresses at the General Audiences of 27 May 1964 and 18 November 1964 <sup>14</sup> *AAS* 56 (1964) 1015 <sup>15</sup> *Ibid* <sup>16</sup> Pozo, (1990), p 60 <sup>17</sup> Cf Bálic (1964).



Christian individual and not to all Christians assembled in the community of the Church of Christ.

'Besides, the title of "Mother of the Church" is no less necessary if we are to understand the mystery of the Church itself. It can be compared to the term "Theotokos", Mother of God; this word proved indispensable in the early centuries for a fuller understanding of the mystery of the Incarnation: to appreciate the degree to which the Son of God became Man one needs to recognize Mary as "the one who has given birth to God". There is so perfect an identity between the man Jesus and the divine person of the Word, that the Mother of Jesus is the Mother of God. Equally, to appreciate what the Church is as an extension of the Incarnation, one needs to study Mary, calling her both Mother of God and Mother of the Church.'<sup>18</sup> That is to say, Mary's motherhood is the archetype of the Church's motherhood.

This solemn declaration opens up all kinds of opportunities for going deeper into the whole matter of Mary's spiritual motherhood. So much so that, if we consider the relationship between Mary's motherhood over the Church and over the faithful, we can say that her motherhood over every single man and woman presupposes her motherhood over the Church; it is analogous to the way Christ's being head of the human race involves his being head of the Church.<sup>19</sup> Or to put it another way, Mary, through being the Mother of Christ, is the Mother of the Church and thereby the Mother of each member of the faithful.

## Mary in the Old Testament

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Old Testament narrates the history of the people of Israel, the chosen people. Through this history – by a gradual process of revelation – we come to see God acting in the life of mankind. In an ever more exact way God is preparing the way for the coming of Christ, who marks the fullness of time<sup>1</sup> and redeems mankind once and for all.

The Old Testament, then, should be seen as a prolonged, gradual preparation for the coming of Christ. All the Old Testament writings are oriented towards the Messiah, in such a way that he is present on every page of the Bible. This continuous presence of Christ in all revelation has been summarized in the aphorism, *Ubique de Ipso*: he is present all the time and throughout the history of the chosen people.

Now we ask ourselves whether the same can be said of Mary. We are so used to seeing the Blessed Virgin at Jesus' side, both in the Gospel narrative and in the liturgy and Christian piety, that the first question that comes to mind is whether this perfect association between Mary and her Son begins at the moment of the Annunciation or does not, rather, go back to the beginning of time. To put it another way, we want to see whether Mary is pre-announced in the Old Testament, or whether, on the contrary, her presence is to be found only in the Gospels and the other New Testament writings.

Catholic exegetes have replied to this question in various ways. For some, Mary is absent from the Old Testament or the allusions it makes to her are so implicit and indirect that it is just not possible to find there the least trace of Marian doctrine. Others say that Mary is to be found in all the Bible, at least indirectly, because if Christ is spoken of throughout the Bible, then, by virtue of the indissoluble union that obtains between Son and Mother, she too is spoken of there: *Ubique de ipsa*; if the Bible is the book of Christ, then it must also be the book of his Mother. In between both these solutions lies a whole range of positions, which hold that there are passages in the Old Testament which announce or show forth the Blessed Virgin. Since there is no single straightforward answer to this question, let us look first at the premises on which one might be offered.

<sup>18</sup> Galot (1982) 160    <sup>19</sup> Cf Galot (1964) 1180; Llamera (1973) 414.

<sup>1</sup> Cf Gal 4 4

Firstly, it must be said that it was not necessary – not absolutely necessary for God – to announce Mary in the Old Testament. However, in order to work out whether it was opportune or not for Old Testament revelation to anticipate the Blessed Virgin, one cannot set out by using human presuppositions. One needs to go to the inspired texts and look there.

When approaching the Old Testament it is very helpful to try to discover what exactly is the authentic meaning of the text under study. Exegetes, and recently the Pontifical Biblical Commission's document,<sup>2</sup> *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, have identified the various meanings of biblical language. Once we know the true, correct sense of the Old Testament passages, we will be in a position to say fairly accurately whether a Marian interpretation is or is not permissible.

It is useful to remember that the literal meaning, verbal or historical, is that meaning which the text itself carries in line with the norms common to human language. To put it another way, it is the meaning that is directly in keeping with the intention of the human author.<sup>3</sup> It can be *literal meaning proper*, that is, the obvious, direct meaning of the words, or *metaphorical or figurative literal meaning* which does not exceed the bounds of the hagiographer's intention.<sup>4</sup>

Since the sacred books have God as their principal author, there is also a *spiritual meaning*, which is more profound and of which the hagiographer is unaware.<sup>5</sup>

The spiritual meaning can be (a) *typical*, if it is expressed in figures, historical facts and future events; and it can be defined as 'things, persons or events mentioned in the Old Testament which, in addition to their meaning in the ancient economy, signify by way of anticipation things which definitively obtain in the New Testament';<sup>6</sup> (b) *full*, if the words are overladen with a new, higher prophetic meaning. That is to say, the *sensus plenior* refers to the same theological reality as the literal meaning, but it perceives it on a fuller, more profound, level of revelation.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (Rome, 1993) <sup>3</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 116. The document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission quoted above states (p. 79) that 'the literal sense of Scripture is that which has been expressed directly by the inspired human authors. Being the fruit of inspiration, this sense is also the one willed by God, the principal author.' <sup>4</sup> 'Does a text have only one literal sense? In general, yes; but there is no question here of a hard and fast rule, and this for two reasons. First, a human author can intend to refer at one and the same time to more than one level of reality. This is in fact normally the case with regard to poetry. Secondly, even when a human utterance appears to have only one meaning, divine inspiration can guide the expression in such way as to create more than one meaning.' Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, p. 79. <sup>5</sup> 'We can define the spiritual sense, as understood by Christian faith, as the meaning expressed by the biblical texts when read, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in the context of the paschal mystery of Christ and of the new life which flows from it' *ibid.*, p. 81. <sup>6</sup> Cf. Casciaro, 'Noemática', in GER, pp. 867–73. This typical sense can, in turn, be *allegorical, tropological and anagogical*. <sup>7</sup> 'The term "fuller sense" (*sensus plenior*), which is relatively recent, has given rise to discussion. The fuller sense is defined as a deeper meaning of the text, intended by God but not clearly expressed by the human author. Its existence in the biblical text comes to be known when one studies the text in the light of other biblical texts which utilize it or in its relationship with the internal development of revelation. It is then a question of the meaning that a subsequent biblical author attributes to an earlier biblical text, taking it up in a context which confers upon it a new literal sense.' Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, p. 83.

The Second Vatican Council provides some guidelines for accessing the texts of the Old Testament. It says: 'The books of the Old Testament describe the history of salvation, by which the coming of Christ into the world was slowly prepared. The earliest documents, as they are read in the Church and are understood in the light of a further and full revelation, bring the figure of a woman, Mother of the Redeemer, into a gradually clearer light. Considered in this light, she is already prophetically foreshadowed in the promise of victory over the serpent which was given to our first parents after their fall into sin (cf. Gen 3:15). Likewise she is the virgin who shall conceive and bear a son, whose name shall be called Immanuel (cf. Is 8:14; Mic 5:2–3; Mt 1:22–23). She stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from him.'<sup>8</sup>

This is a very concise text but it is of great value for clarifying the matter we are dealing with. The Magisterium of the Church has identified these Old Testament pericopes as having a Marian meaning. In line with the mind of the Council, then, we must say that the three passages 'refer to Mary in a truly biblical sense, and are not just Marian accommodations. According to the text of the Council, Mary really is to be seen prophetically adumbrated in Genesis 3:15 and she is the virgin of whom Isaiah 7:14 is speaking.'<sup>9</sup> Each text will now need to be analyzed to see whether Mary is present there in a proper or full sense.

Following C. Pozo we shall group the Old Testament passages that have a Mariological meaning into: texts which definitely have a Mariological meaning; texts whose Mariological meaning is disputed; texts which are Marian by accommodation.

## 2. OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS THAT DEFINITELY HAVE A MARIOLOGICAL MEANING

We begin on the basis that Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14 and Micah 5:2–3 contain an authentic revelation, albeit only in outline, about the Mother of the Messiah. This revelation will be plainly seen by applying the light afforded us by the New Testament and the standard Church interpretation.

Genesis 3:15 The literal translation of the Hebrew text can be taken as:

- 3:15a *I will put enmity between you and the woman*  
 3:15b *between your seed and her seed*  
 3:15c *he shall bruise your head, and you shall lie in wait at his heel.*

<sup>8</sup> Second Vatican Council, Const. *Lumen gentium*, 55. <sup>9</sup> Pozo (1990), p. 109.

• *Messianic meaning.* This text will be Mariological provided first we prove or discover its messianic sense, because only if Christ is present here can one identify in this pericope the presence of Mary.

However, we shall be able to state that the text is messianic if it is shown to mean the victory of good over evil, a victory gained by the offspring – in a collective or in an individual sense – of the woman. We therefore need to go to Genesis 3:15c to see if this is the case.

We note that in the text the hagiographer uses the same Hebrew verb (*shûph*) to describe the actions of the seed and of the serpent. Now, if the meaning of both actions is identical, then we cannot say that the woman's seed obtains a total, convincing victory over the serpent.

Some Protestant exegetes have interpreted both actions as meaning the same, they therefore read the text as standing for the inconclusive struggle between man and the devil: man crushes the head of the serpent, and the serpent mortally wounds man in the heel. The outcome is a dramatic one, in which no one wins, there are only victims

This interpretation seems to be incompatible with the intention of the hagiographer. Firstly, it would go against the salvific outlook that inspires the Book of Genesis. The entire narrative about the punishments and disasters caused by the original fall is set in the framework of salvation history. The promise made by God to our first parents is ratified with Noah (cf. Gen 9:8ff), with Abraham (cf. Gen 12:1ff), with Moses (cf. Ex 3), and with the other leaders of the chosen people. God promises this blessing and help to the people of Israel, which always enjoys divine protection against the onslaughts of its enemies. There is an attitude of hope underlying this entire history: in the end, God – and with him the people of Israel – will triumph once and for all through the Messiah. Therefore, this first divine oracle is set in a perspective of victory of good over evil, in which the will of God triumphs over the snares of the devil. Secondly, this text does not contain the idea of an outcome which is equally disastrous for the serpent and for the seed. This verse, then, refers to the divine punishment of the devil, and it is he alone who will receive this sanction; for the verses that follow describe the punishment meted out to Adam and Eve. In that divine oracle (cf. Gen 3:14–19) one finds, moreover, that the correction that is imposed involves a punishment performed by God and by the other interlocutors involved. Thus, for example, Eve is punished by God, and by her husband: he will rule over her. In the case we are examining now, the serpent would not be truly punished by man if the woman's seed failed to be the victor in the struggle.

As regards the use of the same Hebrew verb (*shûph*) various solutions have been put forward. Some more radical ones are that we do not have here the same verb but two different ones. *shûph* (crush) – the seed crushes – and *shâ'aph* (waylay) Lagrange,<sup>10</sup> who

thinks that the same verb is being used in both cases, says that this word has two meanings: 'to crush' (as its Aramaic root attests) and 'to waylay' (the meaning given by the Septuagint). Coppens suggests translating the first (*yeshûph*) as a future effective (which will achieve or attain its end – he will crush) and the second (*tschûph*) as a future that misses the mark (he will waylay)<sup>11</sup>

It is possible, therefore, to hold that there is in this divine oracle a prophecy of a total and absolute victory of the seed of the woman over the serpent. We must now ask: Is it the seed in general *in genere* that will defeat the serpent, or a special member – an individual – descended from her? Let us study the various nuances of this matter.

• *The woman's offspring.* The Hebrew word which the RSV translates as 'seed' (*zera'*) means, literally, seed. This is how Ceuppens translates it,<sup>12</sup> pointing out that it is predicated in the first instance of the seed of plants (cf. Gen 1:12). It also applies to offspring or posterity, both in the physical-collective sense (cf. Gen 13:15; 17:17; 22:17; etc.), that is, all humans coming from the same root or the same progenitors, and in the physical-individual sense (cf. Gen 4:25; 21:13), that is, a concrete individual descendant. This word (*zera'*) can also be taken in a moral sense: all those persons who pursue the same objective (cf. Is 1:4). Given this range of meaning that the Hebrew word has, we must now try to discover what exactly it means in the text we are examining.

Clearly in 3:15b the seed of the serpent is being used in a moral, collective sense: that is, 'the collectivity of individuals which have the nature of the serpent tempter',<sup>13</sup> that is, the devils as a whole. And the seed of the woman is being referred to in a physical-collective sense: the woman's descendants. The collective sense here is required by the parallel with the serpent's seed.

Verse 3:15c literally says: *he will crush your head, and you* – in Hebrew *hû'* (*ipsum*, he) and not *hî'* (*ipsa*, she) which is the reading the Vulgate offers. Therefore, it is the seed of the woman that will crush the head of the serpent. However, here the 'seed of the woman' should be taken as meaning an individual for the following reasons:

– The individual character of the opponent of the 'woman's seed' – the serpent – requires that the offspring be an individual. That is, the final, conclusive battle, in which the enmity reaches its climax, will take place between the serpent tempter and an individual descendant of the woman;

– Verbal predicates in this pericope are in the singular, which can lead one to posit a singular subject;

– Traditional Jewish interpretation of this text led to the Septuagint, influenced by post-exilic messianic doctrine, translating the *hû'* by *autos* (masculine) instead of *auto*, which would have agreed with *sperma* (neutral), giving an individual meaning to the 'seed of the woman'.

<sup>11</sup> Cf Coppens (1950), 14ff, Saydon (1962), 124ff    <sup>12</sup> Ceuppens, vol 4, p 3    <sup>13</sup> Ibid., cf Pozo (1990), p 102

Summing up, this internal analysis allows us to hold that this pericope has a clear messianic dimension. This in turn means we can investigate whether it does not, also, contain a reference to the Mother of the Messiah.

• *The woman.* Catholic exegetes and theologians have put forward various different opinions as to the ‘woman’ of 3:15a. We might sum these up as follows:

– Some hold that the woman is Eve and no one else, and that it cannot be proved that Mary is included either in a full sense or in a typical sense.<sup>14</sup>

– Others say that the woman is Eve in a literal sense and Mary in a typical or spiritual sense.<sup>15</sup>

– There is a group of exegetes and theologians who see the woman as being literally Mary.<sup>16</sup>

– Finally, there are those who think that the woman is Eve in a direct literal sense, and Mary in a profound and full literal sense.<sup>17</sup>

The thinking that prevails at the present time is the one last-mentioned. Thus, according to a literal reading of the texts, the woman of v. 3:15a is clearly Eve, who is one of the protagonists of the entire scene; the narrative nexus of verses 13–16 show this:

v. 13 *Then Yahweh God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.’*

v. 14 *Yahweh God said to the serpent ...*

v. 15 *I will put enmity between you and the woman ...*

v. 16 *To the woman he said.*

It would be contrary to the text to think that the woman of v. 15 is different from the woman of vv. 13 and 16.

But this reading of the passage does not mean that that is all there is to it or that it does not include a fuller or more profound literal level. It is obvious that in v. 15 ‘the woman’ is made an irreconcilable enemy of the serpent. It is an enmity that is total, absolute, radical. Accepting this, it does not make sense that Eve should be identified fully with this woman, particularly when she has just started to make friends with the serpent. Moreover, ‘what we are offered here is a victorious image of the “woman”’. If Eve were to fulfil this image entirely, it is not possible to explain why this great victorious song about Eve – the first picture Yahweh has drawn of her, the first value judgment he has spoken about her – should have no echo in

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Goossen (1939), pp 90–5, Lennerz (1957), p 935; Ceuppens (1934) <sup>15</sup> Cf. Mangelot (1913) 1212, Lagrange (1997) 354, Bonnetain (1949) <sup>16</sup> Cf. Bover (1924) 573, Roschmi (1962), vol. 1, pp 222ff <sup>17</sup> Cf. Pozo (1990), p. 162ff, Galot (1964), vol 8, pp 28–32, Rábanos in du Manoir (1964), 17ff.

Scripture. Eve never again appears in the Bible garlanded by this victorious light, but she is ever to be seen under the pathetic shadow of a woman defeated and seduced (cf. Sir 25:24; 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14).<sup>18</sup>

Fully in agreement with this interpretation, Hauret sees Mary as being represented in the person of Eve; that is, the woman in the text is Eve, but Eve is clad in the attributes of Mary, just as in the Book of Psalms the kings of Israel are adorned with the prerogatives of the Messiah.<sup>19</sup> For Rigaux the woman has an eschatological projection. That is, if the woman sets out being Eve, she is projected in an eschatological and messianic perspective into the mother of her offspring (the Messiah), that is, Mary.<sup>20</sup>

Summing up, we can say that Mary, without excluding Eve, is the Woman of the proto-Gospel; Eve is this in an obvious and direct sense; Mary in a full sense; but both in a literal sense.

#### Isaiah 7:14

• *The historical context.* The kingdoms of Israel (Ephraim) and Syria (Aram) declared war on the kingdom of Judah. The *casus belli* was the fact that Jotham, the king of Judah, failed to join the alliance of northern states when these were trying to defend themselves against the expansionist policies of Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria.

The army of Syria and Ephraim invaded Judah and became a direct threat to its capital, Jerusalem. The situation was critical, because Ahaz, Jotham’s successor, had been defeated in open battle and had to take refuge, as a last resort, within the fortifications of the capital. Then Ahaz, instead of having recourse to Yahweh and reforming his personal lifestyle, called on Tiglath-Pileser III<sup>21</sup> to come to his aid – which he did by attacking Damascus; this he took, killing the Syrian king Rezin. In payment for this support Ahaz impiously handed over the gold and silver of the temple of Yahweh and agreed that Judah should be a vassal of Assyria. Another effect of this alliance was the abandonment of the worship and teaching of Yahweh and the adoption of the Assyrian religion or at least an opting for religious syncretism. All these developments explain why Isaiah intervened as he did.

Isaiah 7:1–9 tells about Isaiah, accompanied by his son Sherarjashub, having his first meeting with Ahaz. It is just when the Syrians and Israelites have the upper hand and are on the point of attacking Jerusalem. The Jewish king trembles, and with him all his people: annihilation stares them in the face. Pekah, king of Israel,

<sup>18</sup> Pozo (1990), p 163. This opinion of Pozo is open to question, since what is presented is not directly ‘the triumphal image of the woman’, but rather a triumphal image of her ‘offspring’, which undoubtedly affects and redounds to the ‘woman’ <sup>19</sup> Hauret, *Origenes* (1950), p 197 <sup>20</sup> Rigaux (1954), 345ff. <sup>21</sup> ‘Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying, “I am your servant and your son. Come up, and rescue me from the hand of the king of Syria, and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me”’ (2 Kings 16 7).

and Rezin, king of Aram, have conspired to dislodge Ahaz and put the son of Tabeel on the throne of Judah (v. 6). This would mean the end of the Davidic dynasty. Isaiah tries to raise the spirits of Ahaz and the Jewish people, assuring them that the plans of Israel and Syria conflict with God's designs – particularly with the prophecy of Nathan<sup>22</sup> – and will therefore fail. In fact, both those kingdoms will disappear in the near future. This promise made by Isaiah is a hymn to hope and trust in Yahweh, who has guaranteed that the Davidic kingdom will endure.

The first exhortation ends with a warning to Judah and a threat: 'If you will not believe in me, surely you shall not be established' (v. 9) – a call to conversion, because salvation lies in appealing to Yahweh for help. He is the only protector the chosen people have. The meaning of this warning becomes quite clear if one looks at the punishment God says will fall on Judah and Israel for not keeping to the right path (cf. 2 Kings 17:7ff).

Isaiah 7:10–13: speaking through Isaiah, Yahweh gives Ahaz a further warning, by means of a sign confirming the help God will give. This second divine intervention shows two things: firstly, the unbelief and hardness of heart of the Jewish king who paid no attention to the prophet's earlier warning. Secondly, the mercy of Yahweh, who tries repeatedly to win back the house of David, to get them to trust in God instead of having recourse to an alliance with the Assyrian king.

Putting on a show of religious scruple, Ahaz refuses to ask Yahweh for the sign. In his disbelief he rejects this supernatural sign, and hypocritically claims that it is not right to tempt God. In spite of the king's refusal, Isaiah, justly annoyed, announces the sign, after first exposing the king's lie: 'Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also?' (v. 13).

• *The Immanuel.* The verse that follows tells what the sign is and how it will come about. It begins with the Hebrew word *laken* (Neo-Vulgate, *Propter hoc*), which, according to Criado, does not have a causative meaning; it is meant to convey emphasis. It can be translated as 'Well, then', 'That being the case' etc.<sup>23</sup> The prophet goes on to say that 'the Lord himself will give you a sign'. The word 'sign' (*ôl*, with no article in Hebrew) can refer both to a marvel (cf. Ex 7:8; Judg 6:17; Is 38:7) and to a natural event which has been foretold in advance (cf. Ex 3:12; Gen 24:13ff); in other words, it is something which clearly evidences divine intervention. Then follows the core of the prophecy:

*Behold, a young woman ['almah] shall conceive and bear a son and shall call him Immanuel.*

If the person to be born (the Immanuel) is the Messiah, this then is a messianic text, and also a Mariological text because it explicitly mentions his mother – the maiden.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. 2 Sam 7:12–6    <sup>23</sup> Criado (1960)

Its messianic sense is clear to see. In fact, a little later on (cf. Is 8:8) the prophet says that Palestine is the land of Immanuel. However, in the Old Testament Palestine is called the land of Yahweh<sup>24</sup> and never the land of anyone else, not even David. Therefore, the implication is that Immanuel is Yahweh.

In Isaiah 9:6 we see applied to Immanuel the titles of Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace – titles that define his mission. And the text goes on to say that 'of the increase of his government there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom' (Is 9:7).<sup>25</sup> All these descriptions reveal the role of this child with the enigmatic and symbolic name – God with us – identifying him with the Messiah, the Saviour of the chosen people.

Finally, in Isaiah 11:1–4 we are told that 'The spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him [Immanuel], the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh.' All these prerogatives given to Immanuel equip him to perform the charge God has given him – to establish the kingdom of righteousness and truth (cf. 11:4–5). Only the Messiah has this office, therefore, Immanuel, to whom all those prophecies apply, cannot be anyone other than the Messiah.

The messianic sense of this passage is explicitly confirmed in the New Testament. We find this in Matthew 1:22–3, where the evangelist quotes Isaiah 7:14 word for word, pointing out that this prophecy is fulfilled in the supernatural conception of Jesus. St Luke refers to the same verse and to Isaiah 9:5 in his account of the angelic greeting (cf. Luke 1:31–32).

Many scholars, therefore, are of the view that the Immanuel is, in the literal sense, the same person as the Messiah.<sup>26</sup>

• *'Almah.* *'Almah*, the Hebrew word the prophet uses to describe the mother of Immanuel, comes etymologically from the root *'alam*, meaning 'to be strong'. The literal translation is maiden, young adolescent girl. Now, the etymological meaning is not normally the only meaning, nor does it entirely dictate the meaning of the words, because the way the words are used can give them a meaning distinct or different from the etymological one. So, it is useful to analyze the biblical content of this word.

According to Ceuppens, this word appears in some other places in the Old Testament in addition to this:<sup>27</sup>

• *Gen 24:43.* 'behold, I am standing by the spring of water, let the *young woman* who comes out to draw water . . .'. Here Rebekah is referred to as a young woman *'almah*; she will marry Isaac, and a few verses back (v. 16) we are told explicitly that she is a virgin (*betûlah*).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. 1 Sam 26:19, Hos 9:3, Is 14:2, 25    <sup>25</sup> Cf. the parallelism with Lk 1:31–32, 2:14    <sup>26</sup> Cf. Pozo (1990), pp. 183–7. The objection to this literal interpretation is to ask how this oracle, which is fulfilled seven centuries later, can be considered as a sign for Ahaz. That is why some exegetes are more inclined to posit, as in the Protoevangelism, two different levels in this prophecy – one which is immediate, which would be a sign for the Jewish king, and another which is full, in which the Messiah is announced.    <sup>27</sup> Ceuppens (1948), pp. 26–7

• *Ex 2:8*: 'Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the *girl* went and called the child's mother.' From the context it can be shown that the girl, Moses' sister, is a virgin. In fact nowhere in Holy Scripture is there any trace of Mary, Moses' sister, ever having married, and Jewish tradition has it that she remained a virgin all her life.

• *Song 1:3*: referring to the Bridegroom's charm [*gamôt*] the bride tells him, 'therefore the maidens – *alamôt* – love you.' Clearly these girls could not be married women. Therefore, they are virgins.

• *Song 6:8*: 'There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens without number.' In this pericope the queens (the king's wives), and the concubines are explicitly distinguished from the maidens. The last-mentioned are young women, unmarried – virgins, therefore – who are in the king's household.

• *Ps 68:26*: 'the singers in front, the minstrels last, between them maidens playing timbrels'. Here we have a group of young people in a religious procession. The text is loosely connected with Psalm 46:1 and 1 Chronicles 15:20, where the term '*al-alamôt*' is used to indicate the music (high notes, oboes, high voices). According to Coppens,<sup>28</sup> it can mean a group of young girls attached to the court or the temple as cantors who, in keeping with the custom of the period, were unmarried. Pozo<sup>29</sup> thinks that this term has a technical meaning which includes virginity, even virginity consecrated to the Lord, if they were attached to the temple.

• *Prov 30:18–19*: 'Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden'. Here, according to the most usual interpretation, the sacred writer is thinking of the mystery involved in the natural attraction of a young man towards a maiden, with a view to marriage and sexual intercourse. Therefore, the '*almah*' of this passage connotes virginity. In fact, in the next verse (v. 20) the author speaks about the way of an adultress, which is surely an indication that the maiden of the previous pericope is meant to be radically the opposite of her.

From all these passages we can draw the following conclusions: the term '*almah*' is never applied to a young married woman; in all the verses analyzed, the '*almah*' is a young girl who is presumed to be a virgin; directly and formally '*almah*' means young girl or maiden, and indirectly it always involves virginity – quite as much as *betûlah* expresses virginity.

Following Pozo,<sup>30</sup> we can ask: Why did Isaiah use '*almah*' and not *betûlah* in this prophecy? Firstly, because *betûlah* does indeed mean virgin but it gives no indication as to the person's age. And using that word could be taken as referring to the case of an old woman who being barren gives birth to a son. Moreover, as Coppens says, *betûlah* always implies ruling motherhood out.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, '*almah*', which directly includes the notion of youth and indirectly that of virginity, does not simultaneously exclude the idea of motherhood. Finally, there is another word, *na'arah*, which means young girl but does not in any way imply virginity. Therefore, if Isaiah used '*almah*' it was because it was the best, most exact, word available to convey Yahweh's prophecy.

To conclude, we will point out that the Septuagint translates the word as *he parthénos*, virgin in the strict sense. The Syrian-Peshitte version transcribes it as *bethulta*, which also means virgin,

<sup>28</sup> Coppens (1952), pp 657ff. <sup>29</sup> Pozo (1990), p 191. <sup>30</sup> Ibid., p 194. <sup>31</sup> Coppens (1952), p 657.

and the Vulgate translates it as *virgo*. However, the Greek versions of Aquila and Symmachus translate it as young woman, with no reference to virginity one way or the other; but these versions, made after Christ, have a pronounced anti-Christian bias and try to avoid any connotation which helps the Christian reading.

To sum up, this prophecy, confirmed by the teaching contained in Matthew 1:23, refers in its literal (immediate, according to some; deeper according to others) sense to the Messiah (Immanuel) and his Mother, who will beget him virginally.

However, other, different, interpretations have been offered:

• Some Jews of the early Christian period and many Christian authors today, including some Catholics, identify Immanuel with Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, in the direct literal sense, and with the Messiah in the full sense. According to this interpretation the '*almah*' in the direct sense would be the king's wife<sup>32</sup> and in the full sense Mary.<sup>33</sup>

• Other authors identify the young woman with the prophet's wife. Certainly, Isaiah would not be very accurate describing his wife as '*almah*' when at the time of the prophecy he had a son, Sheara-jashub, who is with him when he goes to see King Ahaz (cf. Is 7:3). Besides, a little further on Isaiah calls his wife 'the prophetess' (cf. Is 8:3) who will bear his second son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz. It would be decidedly odd if he were to use a somewhat enigmatic word in v. 7:14 and not the one which identifies her directly and accurately (the 'prophetess').

Micah 5:1ff Micah, a native of Moresheth, a town in the region of Sephela in the south-west of the kingdom of Judah, exercised his prophetic ministry, as he tells us in his prologue, during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.<sup>34</sup> He was therefore a contemporary of Isaiah and the events narrated in his book are estimated to have happened about thirty years after those in Isaiah.

After announcing the punishment which will befall Judah for its unfaithfulness to Yahweh (chaps. 1–3), Micah then lists (chap. 4) all the good things which lie in the future – the kingdom of Yahweh (vv. 1–5); where the scattered flock will be reunited (vv. 6–8); and the defeat of Judah's enemies (vv. 9–13). This is the context in which the messianic prophecy comes:

<sup>32</sup> That notwithstanding, for many exegetes this theory does not fit with the chronology of events. Indeed, it is a proven fact that Isaiah began his prophetic ministry in the year 740 BC. Hezekiah began to reign between 727 and 722 BC (cf. 2 Kings 18:2) and was 25 years of age at the time. Therefore, at the time of the prophecy, he was at least eight years old. <sup>33</sup> The Pontifical Biblical Commission states that the context of Mt 1:23 gives a fuller sense to the prophecy of Is 7:14 in regard to the '*almah*' who will conceive, by using the translation of the Septuagint (*parthenos*) 'The virgin will conceive'. Pont. Biblical Commission, op cit., p 83. <sup>34</sup> That means his prophetic ministry lasted from 740 to 678 BC. Such a time-span tends to throw these data into question. Some scholars therefore think he ministered during Hezekiah's reign, because in the book no reference is made to events after this reign. Cf. George (1957) 1254–5. We should also add that most literary critics regard chapters 44 and 5 of Micah as post-exilic. But even if they are from the Exile period, they are of great interest, for they would constitute an early 're-reading' of the Immanuel prophecy.

<sup>1</sup>But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. <sup>2</sup>Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in travail has brought forth; then the rest of his brethren shall return to the people of Israel. <sup>3</sup>And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of Yahweh, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And thus shall be peace ... [JB: He himself will be peace.]

The first thing we must ask ourselves is: Who is this ruler? Some Jews say that it is Zerubbabel who held authority in Israel and brought into the sanctuary of the Lord the remains of all those Jews who had died in captivity. However, that king was not born in Bethlehem, but in Babylon.

Given the attributes this ruler has, he cannot be anyone but the Messiah. That personage, belonging to the house of David (as his birthplace certifies), is also the descendant of the woman prophesied in Genesis 3, since his origin goes right back to the earliest days of mankind (v. 2). From v. 3 we can see that there is a close connexion between this person prophesied by Micah and the Immanuel of Isaiah's prophecy. So we are justified in holding that this is an essentially messianic prophecy in the literal sense.

Having established that the ruler and the Messiah are one and the same, we must now try to discover who is she who 'is in travail'. From the connexion made in the prophecy itself we can see that she is the woman from whom the Saviour will be born in Bethlehem, that is, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The relationship between this prophecy and that of Isaiah 7:14 is inescapable. One can also see a parallel between the 'almah and Immanuel, on the one hand, and 'she who is in travail' and the ruler, on the other. 'The veiled allusion to the 'almah allows one to sense that the birth of the Saviour of Israel will be a miraculous event; it is not surprising, therefore, that this event should be a sign of a liberation soon to come.'<sup>35</sup> This prophecy complements that of Isaiah, by telling us that the 'almah will give birth to Immanuel in Bethlehem Ephrathah.

### 3. OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS WHOSE MARIOLOGICAL MEANING IS DISPUTED

**Jeremiah 31:22** Although this text has been given a Marian interpretation, especially from the Middle Ages onwards, most contemporary exegetes doubt or even reject this. The RSV reads:

<sup>35</sup> Robert (1949), vol 1, pp 38ff

*How long will you waver, O faithless daughter?  
For Yahweh has created a new thing on the earth:  
A woman protects a man [Vulgate. femina circumdabit virum].*

St Jerome gives it a Mariological interpretation when he says: 'the Lord has done a new thing on earth. Without seed of man, without carnal act, without conception, the woman will enclose the man in the haven of her womb ... the perfect man will be contained in the woman's womb for the normal period. At the same time it must be pointed out that we can describe as creation the birth of the Saviour and the conception of God.'<sup>36</sup>

Some modern authors have cited St Cyprian,<sup>37</sup> St Athanasius<sup>38</sup> and St Augustine as applying the same meaning;<sup>39</sup> however, Condamin<sup>40</sup> has shown very convincingly that the work attributed to St Cyprian really belongs to Ernardus of Bonaval, a contemporary of St Bernard, and shown, too, that the Augustine sermon is spurious. St Athanasius' text cites the Aquila translation without making any value judgment.<sup>41</sup> For all those reasons 'Catholic authors are increasingly abandoning the Marian meaning of this text.'<sup>42</sup> A philological study of the Hebrew also indicates that a Marian interpretation is unjustified. What the Hebrew text says in fact is *neqebah tesôbeb gaber*.

- *neqebah* is a word which indicates, in this case, woman as opposed to man (Gen 5:2) or male as distinct from female (Gen 6:19). Therefore, it is never predicated of a virgin, because a sexual reference is involved: it refers to woman as destined to marital union;

- *tesôbeb* is the *po'el* form of the verb *sahab*, which means to turn round, to surround, to encircle. In Deuteronomy 32:10 it is used in a moral sense, meaning to 'surround with gifts' (cf. Ps 32:10). But, Ceuppens points out, it is never applied to a mother carrying a child in her womb;<sup>43</sup>

- *gaber* (or *geber*) which literally means 'to be strong' is frequently taken as a synonym of 'ish (man), although more specifically it was used in the sense of human being of the male sex (Jer 30:6). In the case we are studying, it is a term brought in to contrast counterposition suggested by *neqebah*.

This exegesis rules out a Mariological interpretation of the pericope; therefore, the interpretation most in keeping with modern exegesis is that it refers to Israel, which has been behaving unfaithfully, abandoning Yahweh and following pagan gods. The amazing thing is that the wayward girl Israel who was roving all over the place will return again to her husband or man (Yahweh).

<sup>36</sup> St Jerome, *Commentariorum in Jeremiam prophetam*, 4, PL 24, 914ff    <sup>37</sup> St Cyprian, *Liber de carnalibus operibus Christi*, 1, PL 189, 1620    <sup>38</sup> St Athanasias, *Expositio fidei*, 3, PG 25, 205    <sup>39</sup> St Augustine, *Sermo 119*, 3 PL 39 1983    <sup>40</sup> Condamin (1997)    <sup>41</sup> Cf Ceuppens (1948), p 55    <sup>42</sup> Robert (1949), p 25    <sup>43</sup> Cf Ceuppens (1948), p. 54.

**The bride in the Song of Songs** This book, written in the post-exilic period (second half of the fifth century) runs over the main lines of Yahwistic thinking. As Robert holds, this work arose 'in an intellectual and moral milieu which lives off and prefers to draw its nourishment from the teaching of the prophets'.<sup>44</sup> Its principal biblical sources are Hos 2; Jer 31; Ezek 16 and Is 44:4-8; 61: 10-11; 63:3-5 – texts which show the relationship between the people of Israel (personified in the bride) and Yahweh.

No other Old Testament book has been interpreted in so many different ways.

These range from a naturalistic interpretation, which sees it merely as a book about human love, to a spiritual allegorical one (where the words should be taken in an improper literal or figurative sense), passing through a typical interpretation in which the words can have two meanings (one literal, the celebration of the love of Solomon for his Shunammite queen, Abishag, and the other typical, where it means the love of God for his chosen people).

The most widely held view in Jewish and Catholic tradition favours the allegorical interpretation: the nuptial love depicted in the poem stands for the supernatural love of God for human beings. The original meaning of the poem is betrothal/wedding of Yahweh and Israel. Then it widened to include the relationship between God and the Church; and 'since the Church is not an abstraction but a living community (not even Christ loves his Church as an abstraction: he loves in it every single one of its members), it was natural that exegesis tend toward greater specificity, along the line of the relationship between Christ and each soul'.<sup>45</sup> And obviously in a special, unique way, Christian interpretation, at least from the medieval period onwards, has seen it as showing Christ's love for his Mother. It was Rupert of Deutz who proposed that the whole book should be given a Marian allegorical interpretation;<sup>46</sup> up to his time the Fathers had applied some passages to Mary but not the entire book.

However, we need to ask whether a Marian interpretation of the whole book is a biblical interpretation *stricto sensu* or just an accommodated sense.

Many authors are inclined to accept that the Marian meaning of the Song of Songs is valid and true; however, others say that the Song cannot be applied to Mary in a full sense, because 'if the Song of Songs is essentially a picture of the successive purifications and revivals of repentant Israel, no one should try to see it as mirroring the soul of Mary, because the "purifications", the "repentance" and the "penance" can find no place in her'.<sup>47</sup> They base this view on a number of different passages in the book (5:2-6; 2:7; 3:5; 8:4; etc.) where one can notice a certain resistance on the bride's part to the bridegroom's loving approaches, which denotes that she is not fully faithful, not fully in tune with him – attitudes incompatible with Mary's purity and self-surrender. That is why these texts can-

<sup>44</sup> Robert (1949), p 25. <sup>45</sup> Pozo (1990), p 141 <sup>46</sup> Rupert of Deutz, *In Canticum de Incarnatione Domini libri septem*, PL 168, 839-962 <sup>47</sup> Coppens (1953), pp 124ff.

not 'be applied to the Blessed Virgin, neither in the literal sense nor in the *sensus plenior*, or in the typical sense, but only in the accommodated sense'.<sup>48</sup>

**Psalm 45** Although there have been those who saw this psalm as a profane song celebrating the wedding of a Davidic king and a foreign princess, most Jewish and Christian tradition holds that it is extolling the nuptials of the Messiah and Israel. The theme is essentially the same as that of the Song of Songs, but with this difference: the nuptials here are not between Yahweh and Israel but between the Messiah and Israel.

After a short introduction (v. 1), the text describes the personal qualities of the king-husband (vv. 3-9) – all things to be in awe of: his kingdom is everlasting (v. 6); his law is righteousness (v. 7), his sceptre equity (v. 6); his beauty before God is unique, incomparable (v. 2); God's blessing will always be with him (v. 2), and has specially anointed him (v. 7). All these attributes and gifts befit the Messiah alone, in whose eschatological kingdom righteousness will triumph. Verse 9 introduces the queen, decked out in the gold of Ophir; the rest of the psalm centres on her.

Now, if in the first part of the psalm the Messiah is being spoken about in the *sensus plenior*, are there not grounds for supposing that the queen being prophesied about in the second part is Mary?

However, in v. 10 there is a sudden change of direction. We encounter an unmistakable reproach: 'Hear, O daughter, consider, and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house.' In a literal sense proper the author is giving us to understand that he is talking about a foreign princess who is still attached to the traditions of her family and region of origin. Only by turning her back on them and breaking with the past will she be able to partake of the bridegroom's delights. The construction of the Hebrew phrase by means of a consequential *waw* ('forget. . . and [then]. . .') involves a need to renounce the past if the king is to be captivated by the beauty of the queen.

Clearly, this pericope cannot be applied to Mary in the *sensus plenior*, for, being exempt from original sin and being full of grace, she has never been separated from God; she has always loved him and desired him.

As we say at the start, the full literal sense of this psalm is that it is dealing with Israel, who is betrothed to the Messiah. For this to happen, the chosen people need to break their links with the pagan world and their reward will be happiness.

#### 4. TEXTS THAT ARE MARIAN BY ACCOMMODATION

Over the course of its own history, the Old Testament gradually approaches the fullness of revelation, which will reach its climax with the coming of Christ. This

<sup>48</sup> Robert (1949), p 33; cf Pozo (1990), pp 141-6



progressive development takes place not only by a gradual revelation of the divine mysteries but through the lives of those servants of Yahweh who constitute the pillars of the chosen people (Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, etc.) as also the 'remnant of Israel' which, despite the people's unfaithfulness, will always stay true to God. To this remnant belong the 'anawim, or poor of Yahweh, for whom God has a special love. 'These are humble people, the victims very often of abuse by the powerful, and therefore they give themselves to God more trustingly, rendering him a service of genuine religious piety and goodness. So "poor" is synonymous with "just, God-fearing". When St Luke says (2:25) that Simeon is "righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel" he is summarizing the spirituality of the 'anawim.'<sup>49</sup>

In Mary these two vibrant lines are joined: that of the spiritual giants, for Mary (who belongs to the house of David or to the priestly line) is the 'sublime daughter of Sion', and that of the poor of Yahweh, since she is the *ancilla Domini*, the handmaid of the Lord, the perfect 'anawah.

In fact the history of the Old Testament flows into Mary because, through her, Israel gives birth to the Messiah, the climax of Yahweh's self-giving to the chosen people. This confluence of history in Mary allows one to think that in some sense Mary is present in various Old Testament events. This is a presence that is not justified by a biblical-Mariological meaning contained in the texts; it is a presence by accommodation, whereby the liturgy, the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers in some way see in these pericopes the figure and prerogatives of Mary.

**Marian accommodations** There are two texts in the wisdom books that the liturgy applies to Mary in this accommodated sense:

- *Proverbs*. In the early chapters of this book (1–9) the subject of divine Wisdom is dealt with, leading to an ever deeper understanding of this divine attribute. The process reaches its climax in chapter 8; here Wisdom is depicted as personified in a prophet adorned with divine authority (vv. 6–21), who reveals the secret of his origin: 'Yahweh created me at the beginning of his way, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth' (vv. 22–23); and his mission is to establish the earth: 'When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master workman' (vv. 24–30). Clearly these words can be applied in a biblical sense only to Wisdom; however, the fact that the Church accommodates them to Mary, helps us to see that Mary is closely linked to and co-operates in the divine plan of Redemption.

<sup>49</sup> Piazza (1960), p. 47

- *Sirach 24*. This book, which does not form part of the Jewish canon, was composed by Ben Sirach very early in the second century BC (c.190). In style it is very much in line with its predecessors in the wisdom literature genre. And the teaching it contains is traditional: Wisdom comes from Yahweh, and the beginning of Wisdom is fear of the Lord. Ben Sirach is a scribe who loves the law, a devotee of the temple and its rites, a respecter of the priesthood and a person steeped in the Sacred Books. He wants to give instruction in Wisdom to the *jasidim*, that is, the 'devout', who, with a clean heart desire to defend the Jewish faith against ideas which have come into Palestine with the Seleucids, who are now in power. The splendid sweeping account of Wisdom found in Sirach 24 owes much to Proverbs 8, but the approach is different: Wisdom, whose original mansion is in heaven, comes down to earth and gives an account of her progress through the world (over which she wields power and dominion: vv. 5–7), but only among the chosen people does she find her permanent base (vv. 7–10). Here she acts in a quasi-priestly capacity ('In the holy tabernacle I ministered before him': v. 10) and in Zion he is established. His growth is described metaphorically in terms of trees and shrubs (vv. 13–18). 'Finally, the author reveals the key to this beautiful allegory: Wisdom is the Law of Moses, an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob [cf. v 23], that is, of the Jewish communities in the diaspora.'<sup>50</sup>

This text, when applied in an accommodated sense to the Blessed Virgin, offers lots of rich perspectives. The inheritance of the Lord over which Mary reigns is the souls of the righteous taken as a whole. The rich vegetation of Palestine is the variegated fruit of Marian devotion. 'In this setting the invitation extended in the pericope acquires its full meaning: "Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my produce. For the remembrance of me is sweeter than honey, and my inheritance sweeter than the honeycomb" (vv. 19–20)'.<sup>51</sup>

**Marian figures, and symbols** The liturgy, popular devotion and spiritual interest frequently apply many biblical figures and symbols to Mary in their prayer, hymns and texts.

The Marian florilegium abounds in Old Testament figures. We have to stress that these are not true 'types', that is, persons whom God meant to be taken to prefigure Mary.

Perhaps the only exception to this is the Eve–Mary parallel; there are good grounds for saying that Eve is a 'figure' of Mary.

Many Old Testament heroines and women have been taken as prefiguring Mary. Just by way of example we shall cite the following:

- Sarah, Abraham's wife,<sup>52</sup> who against all the odds (she was barren) gave birth to the promised son;

<sup>50</sup> Robert (1949), p. 31    <sup>51</sup> Pozo (1990), p. 131    <sup>52</sup> Cf. Gen 17 16–19, 18 10–14

• Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel and wife of Isaac, who when Abraham's servant met her at the spring 'was very fair to look upon, a virgin, whom no man had known'(Gen 24:16);<sup>53</sup>

• Miriam (Mary), Moses' sister, a virgin and prophetess who sings the praises of Yahweh at the crossing of the Red Sea;<sup>54</sup>

• Hannah, the mother of Samuel,<sup>55</sup> sorely distressed by the fact that she is barren; she pleads with God and gives birth to a son and is so overjoyed that she bursts into a hymn of thanksgiving;<sup>56</sup>

• Esther, the wife of King Ahasuerus who listens to her supplication and calls off the persecution that his first minister Haman has planned for the Jews;<sup>57</sup>

• Deborah, a prophetess and judge of Israel, who set her people free from Canaanite dominion;<sup>58</sup>

• Judith, the widow of Manasseh, a God-fearing woman, who cut off Holofernes' head and freed her people from the Assyrians: 'You are the exaltation of Israel, you are the great glory of Israel, you are the great pride of our nation and God is well pleased with it.'<sup>59</sup>

Devotion to Mary has sung her praises by comparing her prerogatives with analogous things found in biblical history. These symbols, sometimes very beautiful ones, provide a way of exalting her perfections. By way of example, the Blessed Virgin has been taken as symbolized by: the beauty and fertility of the earthly paradise (cf. Gen 2:8-9); Noah's ark, which floats on the waters and bears within the father of renewed mankind (cf. Gen 6); Jacob's ladder, linking heaven and earth (cf. Gen 28:12); the rainbow (cf. Gen 8:21); the burning bush (cf. Ex 3:41); the ark of the Covenant (cf. Ex 25:10-26); the golden candelbra (cf. Ex 25:31-40); the jar of manna (cf. Ex 16:33); Gideon's fleece (cf. Judg 6:36-40); Jerusalem where the Lord dwells (cf. Ps 87); the closed gate (cf. Ezek 44:1-2); etc.

53 Cf. Gen 24:12-15 54 Cf. Ex 15:20-21 55 Cf. 1 Sam 1 and 2 56 Cf. 1 Sam 2:1-10, the prelude to the Marian Magnificat 57 Cf. Esther 58 Cf. Jud 4 and 5 59 Jud 15:9.

## Mary in the primitive Christian kerygma

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the early Christian kerygma, which was centred on the figure of Jesus, Mary is not to be seen. In keeping with Jewish Old Testament tradition, Jesus surrounded himself with a group of disciples, who are the witnesses God chose to teach the 'new family'. Neither Mary nor the other women belong to this group of people charged with spreading the Good News. Mary has no directive role at all in the new community, nor does she have any special functions. In the account of the first steps taken by the nascent Church she is mentioned only once, when St Luke testifies that the disciples of the Lord, after his Ascension, 'with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren'.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. GALATIANS 4:4-5

The Epistle to the Galatians was written by St Paul in Ephesus around the year 55; it is addressed to the Christians of Galatia, to counter the damage being done by false brethren, Judaizers, who are worming their way in among the converts St Paul made there during his second and third apostolic journeys.

In the first chapters St Paul presents his credentials as an apostle – his divine vocation and his solidarity with Peter, the Head of the Church. He also defends his teaching by pointing out that 'James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of friendship'.<sup>2</sup>

After recalling the episode at Antioch, where he upbraided Peter for his actions at the time, Paul begins the doctrinal part of the letter, in which he deals with the radical difference between justification by works of the Law and justification by faith.

What he is saying is that justification is grounded on the promises made to Abraham and not on the Law promulgated 430 years later. The Law served as a teacher up to the coming of Christ, but now there is a new economy, a new regime. To show the difference between the old and the new, Paul uses a simple compar-

1 Acts 1:14 2 Gal 2:19.

ison – inheritance rights. Before Christ, men are as it were heirs who are under age; they are no different from slaves,<sup>3</sup> but:

*When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.*

This text, which is basically Christological, also has interesting Marian effects, which it would be useful for us to examine. The various Marian interpretations that have been given for this pericope are of two kinds:

(a) Some Mariologists and exegetes see these lines as expressing a synthesis of Mary's virginity, divine motherhood and spiritual maternity. Clearly the woman from whom Christ is born is the Mother of the pre-existing Son sent by the Father in the fullness of time.

The use of the word *genomenon* (born), and not *gennomenon* (generated) conveys (according to these exegetes) the idea of virginity, since 'this son born of a woman, was not however begotten by a man, that is, had no father according to the flesh'<sup>4</sup>

For another thing, the text reveals the following chiasmic structure:

	God sends	his Son
1	<i>born of woman</i>	<i>so that we might receive adoption as sons</i>
2	<i>born under the law</i>	<i>to redeem those who were under the law.</i>

From the parallel between (1) and (2) we can deduce that if the submission of the Son to the Law redeems men, then similarly the birth of the Word from a woman obtains for us divine filiation. That is, Mary gives us this privilege: Mary is the mother of all Christians.

(b) Other scholars think this is too optimistic an interpretation. They do see Mary's divine motherhood being stated in the pericope, but not her virginity. For them *genomenon ek gynaikos* (*natum ex muliere*) simply indicates Christ's human condition, for we know that the Hebrew expression 'adam *yelūd* 'issah, 'the human being born of woman',<sup>5</sup> is commonly used in Judaism. Moreover, expressions very similar to this are used in the New Testament<sup>6</sup> and in the Jewish literature of Qumran<sup>7</sup> as a Semitic turn of phrase which simply means the quality of being a human being; so, nothing hard and fast can be drawn from this as regards its containing a reference to virginity.

There is another theological argument, according to these theologians, which corroborates this theory. The chiasmic structure of the verses involves the anti-

3 Cf Gal 3 23–24, 4; 1–3. 4 Cf Winnandy (1978) 718, cf. Scott (1986), pp 10–30 5 Job 14:1; cf. 15 14, 25 4 6 Rom 1 3 (her son, born of the line of David according to the flesh), Mt 11 11 (among those born of woman)

thetical movement (2) having to be repeated in (1). One can see immediately that the dominant movement (born under the Law) is balanced by the contrary upward movement (to redeem those under the Law). And in (1) the upward movement (that we might receive adoption as sons) is balanced by the kenotic [that is, self-emptying] movement (born of woman).

That is, the parallel between (1) and (2) requires that the debasing shown in (2) – born under the Law – is repeated in (1). So, there cannot be anything in this which attracts attention and makes Christ out to be different from the rest of men; in fact, it is getting across the idea that the pre-existing Son was lowered to the level of the rest of men. So, if one were to infer the virginal birth from the text, it would be rather an odd thing to do, because this reference to a unique privilege would break the expository rhythm of the passage. To sum up: these scholars see no hint of virginal conception or virginal motherhood in this text.

However, the fact that Mary's virginity is not spelt out in this pericope does not mean it is excluded; on the contrary, according to other theologians, the literary genre chosen for this text means that it is open to complementary statements that other New Testament writings may offer concerning the birth of Christ.

The Apostle seems to see the Word's mission as coming after his birth. From an entitative point of view Christ is sent before he is born; but, logically, one can say that Redemption is a mystery of solidarity: for men to acquire divine adoption as sons, the Only-begotten Son must become man: that is birth from a woman is called for. Therefore, birth from a woman is not something accidental or secondary, for that birth marks the fullness of time and the start of the eschatological era. This pericope clearly has a Mariological dimension, at least implicitly: the Mother of Christ is closely linked to the history of salvation.

### 3. MARK 3:31–35

The Gospel of St Mark was probably written somewhere between AD 60 and 70. Some propose a date in the early 60s, working this out from a likely date of 63 for the Acts of the Apostles. Since that is St Luke's second book, his gospel would have to be dated around 62 – which would mean that Mark would have to be pushed back to around the year 60.

Others suggest it was written sometime in 64–67; the basis for this is St Irenaeus' remark, 'After his passing [death of Peter] Mark, disciple and interpreter of Peter, transmitted to us in writing what Peter had preached.'<sup>8</sup>

Mark's Gospel refers to the Mother of Jesus in two texts: 3:31–35 and 6:3. The 3:31–34 text reads: 'His mother and his brethren came; and standing outside they sent to him and called him [...]. He replied, "Who are my mother and my brethren?"' And looking around on those who sat about him, he said, "Here are my

7 I QH 13, 14, I QH 11, 21 8 St Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 3, 1, 1, SC 211, pp 22–4

mother and my brethren! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother”.’ Some scholars regard the passage as anti-Mariological, because it seems to imply that Mary has defects.

This is the case, for example, with St John Chrysostom. In his commentary on these verses he says. ‘What she did on this occasion came of ambition she wanted the crowd to take note of the power she had over her Son, of whom she had not, as yet, a high opinion For that reason she appeared so inopportunisty’<sup>9</sup> and Tertullian, during his Montanist period, accuses the brethren and mother of Jesus both of disbelief and of impatience and untimeliness<sup>10</sup>

Some contemporary theologians, influenced by liberal Protestant criticism, also interpret the message negatively. They connect it with Matthew 3:20–1: ‘He [Jesus] went home; and the crowd came together again, so they could not even eat. And when his friends [relatives] heard it, they went out to seize him, for they said, “He is beside himself”.’ These authors see these two passages as being all one continuous scene, which the evangelist has broken up by inserting a dispute with the scribes on the subject of Jesus’ authority. They go so far as to say that the suppression of the Mark 3:20–21 pericope in the other Synoptics is an additional proof of the opposition between Jesus and his family. Matthew and Luke do not include it, either out of deference to Mary or else to avoid damaging the reputation of James the Less, a relative of Jesus and one of the pillars of the Apostolic Church.

But the connexion between the two texts is not so easy to see. Firstly, the Greek expression *hoi par' autou* means ‘his entourage’ in a loose sense – including servants and slaves – or ‘his relatives’ in general. It can even be translated as ‘his friends’ (the RSV choice).<sup>11</sup> What is even less clear is the subject of *elegon* (‘they said’) in 3:21. According to Danielli,<sup>12</sup> what we have here is an undefined plural such as Mark uses on a number of occasions and always with the verb *lego*, which is the equivalent of ‘it is said’. On that hypothesis, it is not Jesus’ followers who judge Jesus pejoratively, but the crowd. Moreover, the aorist *exeste* – which is translated here as ‘He is beside himself – is not the normal translation (driven mad, to be out of one’s mind), because whenever the Gospels use that verb (four times in Mark, three in Luke and once in Matthew) it has to do not with someone being out of his mind but with being ‘bowled over by something extraordinary’.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, it is not clear, either, that these two texts belong to the same scene. They have features which argue otherwise: the first takes place indoors and everything is very crowded; the second seems to happen in a more relaxed setting, maybe out of doors. Also, the evangelist is at pains to identify the visitors in each pericope: in Mark 3:20–21 they are ‘his entourage’; in 3:31–35 ‘his mother and his brethren’.

<sup>9</sup> St John Chrysostom, *In Mattheum homiliae*, 44, 1, PG 57, 464. <sup>10</sup> Cf Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, 8, PL 2, 811. <sup>11</sup> This translation, nevertheless, should be rejected because of the context. Cf Schweizer (1971), p 91. <sup>12</sup> Danielli (1978) 94–5. <sup>13</sup> Cf Mk 2 12, 5 42, 6 51, etc.

Turning our attention now exclusively on 3:31–35: despite the texts cited earlier (which are an exception), there is a strong patristic tradition which views them in a positive light.

Let us take as an example a sermon of St Augustine on Matthew 12 49–50 (‘and stretching out his hand towards his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brethren! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister and mother”’). ‘Should the Virgin Mary not have done the will of the Father, she, who by faith believed, by faith conceived, who was the chosen one from whom our salvation should be born among men, who was created by Christ before Christ was created in her? Indeed, the holy Mary obviously did the will of the Father and therefore it is greater for Mary to have been Christ’s disciple than to have been his Mother. The truth of Christ is in the mind of Mary, the flesh of Christ in her womb; greater is what she bears in her mind than what she bears in her womb’<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, the Pseudo-Justin says ‘With these words, he does not deprive his mother of her due honour, but wishes rather to indicate under what title she must be proclaimed blessed. Since the one who hears and practises the word of God is the brother, sister and mother of God, and his mother heard and practised this word of God, then it is clear that she must be proclaimed blessed arising from this idea of mother’<sup>15</sup>

According to Braun, Christ’s attitude in this passage is an example of what he calls ‘the law of separation’. From the moment Jesus begins his public life, he wants to be completely free of blood ties, so as to make himself totally available to the will of the heavenly Father. The severity of his words is only apparent. He is simply stressing the absolute transcendence of the Messiah in his salvific mission.<sup>16</sup>

Studying the grammatical style of Mark 3:31–35, Kruse says that it is written in keeping with the rules of ‘dialectical denial’,<sup>17</sup> because in the language of the Bible (very much conditioned by Hebrew) a negative proposition (A) followed by an affirmative contrary (B) do not form an absolute but only a relative negative, which can be interpreted in this way: ‘not so much as B.’ Following this rule, the text can be read as: ‘It is not so much the one who is my mother in the natural order that is great in the kingdom of God, as, rather, the one who comes down from the heavenly Father to do his will.’

John Paul II interprets this text in that way in his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*: ‘Is Jesus thereby distancing himself from his mother according to the flesh? Does he perhaps wish to leave her in the hidden obscurity which she herself has chosen? If this seems to be the case from the tone of those words, one must nevertheless note that the new and different motherhood which Jesus speaks of to his disciples refers precisely to Mary in a very special way. Is not *Mary the first of “those who hear the word of God and do it”*? And therefore does not the blessing uttered by Jesus in response to the woman in the crowd refer primarily to her? Without any doubt,

<sup>14</sup> St Augustine, *Sermo 25*, in *Obras de S. Augustin*, ed G Morin (Rome, 1930), vol. 7. <sup>15</sup> Ps-Justin, *Quaestiones et responsiones ad orthodoxos*, PG 6, 13–87. <sup>16</sup> Braun (1954), p 62. Cf Feuillet (1959) 48. <sup>17</sup> Kruse (1954). It is also called ‘paraadoxal negation’ or ‘relative negation’. Cf Vogt (1955) 146ff; Vaccari (1933) 431.

Mary is worthy of blessing by the very fact that she became the mother of Jesus according to the flesh but also and especially because already at the Annunciation she accepted the word of God, because she believed it, *because she was obedient to God*, and because she “kept” the word and “pondered it in her heart”.<sup>18</sup>

The Pope finds in this scene a more profound dimension of the Mary/Jesus relationship than the merely biological or physical one. He stresses that ‘maternity in the dimension of the Kingdom of God’, which situated in the sphere of spiritual values, acquires a fuller meaning, the Mother thus becoming in a sense ‘the first “disciple” of her Son, the first to whom he seemed to say: “Follow me”, even before he addressed this call to the Apostles or to anyone else.’<sup>19</sup>

Relating this pericope to Mark 10:29–30 (‘Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and the sake of the gospel, who will not receive a hundred-fold” ’), further light can be thrown on the Messiah’s thought.

#### 4. MARK 6:1–3

This episode, which takes place in Nazareth, tells us quite a bit about Mary’s background at the time and how she was regarded.

*<sup>1</sup>He went away from there and came to his own country; and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup>And on the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue; and many who heard him were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him? What mighty works are wrought by his hands! <sup>3</sup>Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?’*

Comparing the text we want to use (‘Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?’) with the parallel pages in the other Gospels, we can see some slight but interesting variants:

Mt 13:55 *Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary?*

Lk 4:22 *Is not this Joseph’s son?*

Jn 6:42 *Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?*

The main differences are: (a) only Mark describes Jesus as a carpenter; (b) only in Mark is the father of Jesus not mentioned. The first difference is of little impor-

<sup>18</sup> John Paul II, *Enc. Redemptoris Mater*, 20 <sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

tance, because it is quite reasonable that the son of a carpenter should have the same trade as his father. The second is more relevant to our present purpose. Why is it that Mark, unlike the other evangelists, does not mention Joseph and why does he use the expression ‘the Son of Mary’? Five explanations have been suggested:<sup>20</sup>

- Some say that ‘Son of Mary’ is a colloquial expression, the sort of thing you would find in a small village to refer to someone everyone knew; like: ‘Oh yes, that’s Mary’s boy, from the next street’ However, this friendly sort of remark does not seem to fit the pericope, which conveys an atmosphere of incomprehension and rejection.

- Others see in the phrase a desire, on the part of Mark, to emphasize the human side of Jesus, by saying what his trade was and that he was born of a woman. According to this interpretation, the text is on the lines of Galatians 4.4, where Paul says that Jesus was ‘born of woman’. There is no evidence that this is what the evangelist had in mind, because the people who are branding Jesus as a carpenter and son of Mary are those who do not accept his authority, and therefore, of course, people Mark does not agree with.

- The author alludes implicitly to the virginal conception of Jesus. That is why he intentionally changes the oral tradition (‘the son of the carpenter and of Mary’), turning it into ‘the carpenter, the son of Mary’, in order to avoid saying anything about a human father. Although this theory could work, because it fits in with the style of Mark’s Gospel, which relates Jesus exclusively to the heavenly Father and to Mary, it does raise problems which are difficult to solve: firstly, the two evangelists of the infancy of our Lord, who explicitly maintain that Mary is a virgin, do not mind calling Jesus ‘the son of Joseph’ or ‘the carpenter’s son’; moreover, according to Mark, the statement about the virginal birth of Jesus is put on the lips of the villagers of Nazareth. How could they have known about this? And if they did know about it, then why are they so puzzled about the dignity and authority of the ‘son of Mary’?<sup>21</sup>

- Others think that the Nazarenes mean to be insulting towards Jesus and that that is why they describe him as the carpenter, that is, an uneducated artisan; and by calling him ‘the son of Mary’ they are calling his parentage into question; in other words, Jesus is an illegitimate child. Stauffer says that a remark like this in a Samaritan context has a pejorative meaning.<sup>22</sup> This theory was an argument Jews

<sup>20</sup> Cf Brown (1982), pp 61ff <sup>21</sup> D. Bertetto, in his 1988 book, states that in this text there is no mention of St Joseph, although St Mark always indicates diligently the human pedigree of the Gospel characters. For example, Mark alone names the father of the man born blind, ‘the son of Tamaeus’ (10:46) Only he translates the words of Moses quoted by Jesus, ‘Honour your father and your mother’ and ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die’ (7:10) However, St Mark never calls Jesus ‘son of Joseph’, yet seven times he calls him Son of God (Mk 1:1; 1:11; 3:11; 5:7, 9.6, 14 61, 15:39). Even more numerous are the instances of Mark calling Jesus ‘Son of man’ and four times he refers to him as ‘Son of David’ (Mk 10 47, 10 48, 12 35, 37). His testimony, therefore, regarding the virginal maternity of Mary is positive, although not explicit. Cf Bertetto (1988), p 39 <sup>22</sup> Cf Stauffer (1957), p 118

were later to use against Christians; thus, in the Talmud an attempt is made to insult Jesus by giving him the nickname of *Ben-pantera* (son of Pantera, the common name of Roman legionaires, turned into a proper name). This theory is also held by the pagan Celsus and rejected by Origen<sup>23</sup> and Eusebius.<sup>24</sup> It is unsustainable for the following reasons: (a) in the Bible, when only the mother's name is given, that does not imply illegitimacy;<sup>25</sup> (b) Mark's allusion in this pericope would be very subtle and not intelligible to the public to whom this Gospel is addressed; (c) there is no evidence of this calumny arising during Christ's lifetime; it grew out of Jewish anti-Christian polemic. The nickname *Ben-pantera* seems to be an adulteration of the word *parthenos* (virgin).

• Finally, some scholars interpret this phrase as implying that Joseph has already died and that that is why he is not mentioned. The inhabitants of Nazareth are mentioning the relatives of Jesus who live there at the time, not those who have died. This explanation would also explain and justify the absence of Joseph in the Marcan account we examined earlier (3:31–35). So, if we go along with this interpretation, the passage is telling us nothing about Mary.

## Mary in the Gospel of St Matthew

### I. THE INFANCY GOSPELS

The Infancy Gospels is the name given to those chapters of the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke which relate to the birth, infancy and life of Jesus up to the start of his public ministry. They comprise the first two chapters of both Gospels and form a sort of prologue to the public life of our Lord. These prologues were not designed like that of the Fourth Gospel (a formal theological exposition on the person and work of the Word Incarnate); they simply tell the story of events which happened in a particular time and place.

These accounts of our Lord's infancy were not written by Matthew and Luke with a primarily biographical purpose in mind; they have an 'undeniable theological purpose',<sup>1</sup> which does not mean they are not historically reliable. Luke himself explicitly says that after doing careful research he decided to write an orderly account of events in order to show how solidly grounded the faith of Christians is.<sup>2</sup> So, the historical quality of his narrative is beyond doubt – which is not to say that some have not questioned it. Most certainly these two accounts were based on distinct, independent, oral sources. Some scholars think that Matthew's text comes from a tradition connected with St Joseph's family, while Luke's comes from Mary's testimony. However, despite the differences between the two, they do have a core in common:

- the name of the young girl (Mary) and the fact that she is a virgin
- Mary is engaged to be married to Joseph, a man of the house of David
- Mary conceived before they began to live together
- the virginal conception of Jesus was brought about by the Holy Spirit
- the angel's announcements to Mary and to Joseph
- the name of the child: Jesus
- the birth in Bethlehem
- the birth takes place when Joseph and Mary are living together in legal wedlock

1 García Paredes (1988), p 52. 2 Cf. Lk 1.4

23 Cf Origen, *Contra Celsum*, PG 11, 651ff 24 Cf Eusebius, *Eglogae Propheticae*, PG 22, 1136. 25 McArthur (1973) 57 gives a decisive argument against the illegitimatist interpretation.