

But we have another answer, for God has spoken to us through His Son. Christ lived and died surrounded by the greatest chaos. For us, disorder appears as surely but less dramatically in the guise of the burden of common living and we are in desperate need of the virtues of Christ to master this disorder, to shoulder this burden. Patience to withstand the coldness of men, mercy to forgive their weakness and perversity, joy in facing life squarely: these are our common needs. Above all, we need the charity of Christ. Man's inhumanity to man is the major chaos, for men cannot live if they are unloved. A brooding prophet of God's justice has written, "When you die, that is what you take with you: the tears you have shed and the tears you have caused to be shed—your capital of bliss or terror. It is on these tears that we shall be judged, for the Spirit of God is always borne upon the waters" (Bloy). The answer to the sound and fury of every-day living is, in one word, Christ. Christ is the perfect image of His Father and to imitate God, we must imitate the charity of His Son by becoming conscious of our place in His Mystical Body, and loving one another in God.

—Thomas Le Fort, O.P.

MARIAN THEOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION

CERTAINLY there is no one reading this article who has not at some time read something about the Mother of God. If it had been written two hundred years ago, the title alone would have raised more than eyebrows. For, two hundred years ago, Marian theology or Mariology¹, the science of all sacred doctrine regarding Mary, the Mother of God, was unheard of as a special theological study. Before our times, whenever discussion about Mary arose there was no special emphasis regarding her place in the scheme of theology. Particular problems concerning Mary were considered with a view toward removing obstacles against Marian piety than anything else. Mostly all treatises on Mary were directed more toward her praise and honor than scientific investigation and theological speculation. Advancements in Marian studies occurred when controversy or error threatened the piety of the faithful. The Council of Ephesus (431), for instance, defined Mary's Divine Motherhood because some were teaching the anti-traditional doctrine that Mary could not be properly called the Mother of God. It was only in these instances that theologians probed into the mystery that is Mary. But to regard the whole of sacred

doctrine concerning Mary as an actual scientific tract of theology flowing from a principle—this was unheard of and rarely considered.

Since the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, however, there has been a greater and greater demand for a more scientific and systematic study of Mary, the Mother of God. This dogma of faith gave fresh impetus and encouragement to theologians who began to investigate the wealth of sacred doctrine about the Mother of God. Gradually there arose the idea of organizing all the doctrine and dogmas about Mary into an intelligible organic whole. What was before unheard of, far less attempted, became the project of many theologians. Soon, works appeared attempting to correlate all Marian doctrine in some sort of a logical order based upon a fundamental or unitive principle.

The demand for a greater knowledge of Mary has been influenced, no doubt, by the numerous authenticated apparitions of Our Lady. It is a tribute to our age that we are seeking for a more solid theological foundation for our Marian devotion. Perhaps it may be because we are so bent on specialization that we are discontented with a mere collection of special revealed truths about Mary. But whatever the cause for the advancement of Marian studies, we are experiencing in our times a remarkable and rich maturity in Marian thought.

Mary in the Outline of Theology

It is the prime function of theology to treat of God as He is in Himself, His nature and attributes. But theology also considers creatures inasmuch as God is their beginning and end. And as St. Thomas teaches: “. . . the more a thing approaches the true nature of divinity, the more especially should it be considered in this science (theology).”² Next to the Sacred Humanity of Christ, Mary claims the very closest relationship possible by being related to God as His Mother. The obvious and logical conclusion to this fact is that outside the tracts on God as He is in Himself and the Sacred Humanity of Christ (the Incarnation), Marian theology is the most important of theological tracts. It is well to note that this is the precise procedure of St. Thomas. After his tract on the Incarnation in his *Summa Theologica*, the Angelic Doctor immediately placed his consideration of the Mother of God.

Since the importance of Mary springs from the fact of her Divine Maternity, her unique relationship to God becomes the basis not only of all her privileges and functions but of the whole study of Mary in relation to God. Consequently theologians place the Divine Maternity as the unitive

principle of Marian theology. For Mary would have no place in theology nor indeed in the supernatural order itself were it not for her role as Mother of the Redeemer. Mindful of Mary's role as Mother of God we are continually directed back to a consideration of God's absolute gratuitousness. For Mary's predestination to the Divine Maternity reveals clearly the omnipotence and mercy of God. It is a divine gift in the most absolute sense of the word. Since Mary's greatness comes from her Divine Maternity, God's mercy is manifest. Mary, who having a human nature, by the rights of nature deserved nothing from God, received the greatest and sublimest possible gift conceivable. This absolute magnificence should serve to remind us that all good comes from God. It is perhaps the most beautiful application of that profound truth, so often repeated by St. Thomas: God does not love one because of the creature's goodness; rather one is made good because of God's love.

Marian theology, then, is not fabricated out of the thin air of sentimentality. It is not placed haphazardly "somewhere" in the framework of theology. Rather, it has evolved gradually as Christian thought itself developed. The revealed facts and truths were always there with their reasons, but the order of these facts and their relationship to one another were not always so clearly seen. One of the most significant signs that this is the Age of Mary is the mature advancement in Marian thought.

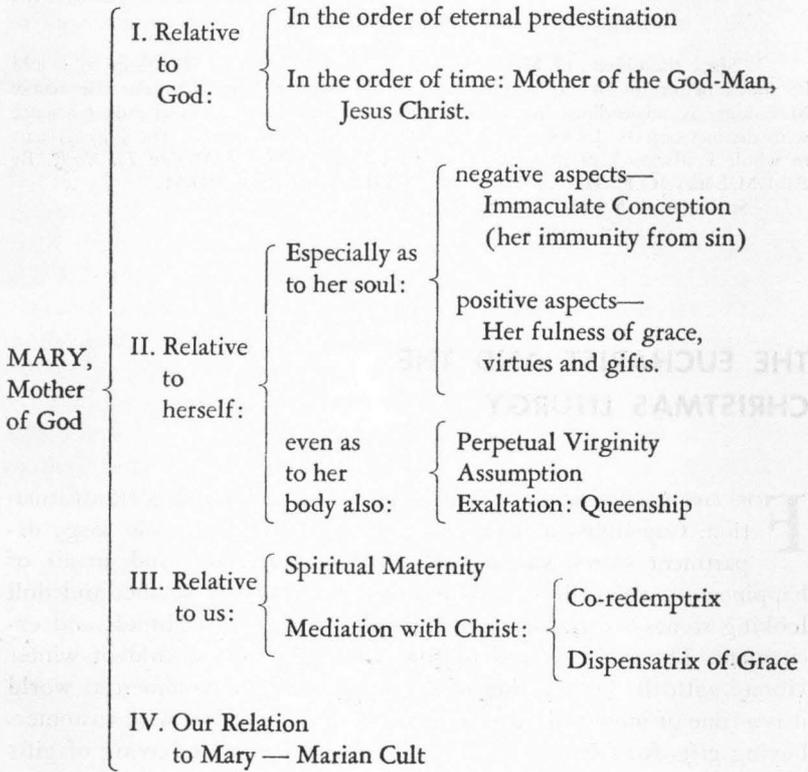
The importance of Marian theology stems primarily from Mary's privilege as Mother of God. If it were not for her Divine Maternity, Mary would then be an improper object of study in theology. Study of her would be like any other study of a human person; for example, a patient in a doctor's office or on a higher plane, the study of a human person perfected by grace, such as occurs in a canonization process. This fact clearly focuses the precise aspect under which we are considering Mary—her relationship to God. It is God Who is the center of Marian theology. It would not be theology otherwise. Thus, under the discursive light of natural reason with the positive fundamental direction of faith, God is studied through Mary.

Thus Marian theology is part of the great organic framework of theology. It is one of the windows through which we catch glimpses of God. Most certainly Marian theology does not constitute the whole of theology, no more than an arm can be called the whole man. Yet Marian theology partakes of the integrity and power of theology. Theology would be incomplete without a study of Mary just as a man would be incomplete without his arms. And as a man's arms would be useless detached from

the body, so Marian theology loses all vitality and meaning without an essential and positive relation to God. To consider Marian theology as an independent science without full reference to God would be like studying the light of the moon without reference to the sun. The only justification for Marian theology, the only life source, the only purpose we study Mary is because of our desire to know more about God. To know more about God—this is the prime purpose of the whole of theology.

To gain a true perspective of all that this study embraces, an outline of Marian theology would be of the utmost utility. From even a cursory glance at the scheme, it will become evident how wonderfully rich and profitable the study of Mary can be to anyone who ventures into this special field, this garden of delights.

Outline of Marian Theology



Bibliography for Further Study

With the increasing number of Marian books, careful selection becomes more difficult. To facilitate any further study on any particular phase of Marian theology, we recommend the following. These books contain excellent bibliographies.

1. *Mother of the Redeemer*. Edited by Kevin McNamara. Sheed & Ward. New York. 1960 pp. 258. (We highly recommend this book both for its presentation and rich bibliographies).
2. *The Mystery of Mary*. By R. Bernard, O.P. Herder, St. Louis. 1960 pp. 304. (This deals with Mary's Spiritual Maternity).
3. *Complete Mariology*. By C. Friethoff, O.P. Blackfriars. London. 1959.
4. *Mariology*. Edited by J. B. Carol, O.F.M. Bruce. Milwaukee. 1957. (Only the first two volumes have been published. Vol. 3 is in preparation. This is *the* monumental work of Marian Studies in English).

—Angelo H. Camacho, O.P.

¹ "Since the objects of Mariology are the same as those of Theology, it would be much better to give this tract the title of Marian Theology. For the name, Mariology, is misleading, inasmuch as it seems to imply an independent science with distinct objects. Its use is permissible only if its relation to Theology as part to whole is always kept in mind." *The Unitive Principle of Marian Theology*. By Paul Mahoney, O.P. The Thomist. Vol. XVIII, No. 4. pp. 450-51.

² St. Thomas. I Sentences. Ques. 1, prolog., a. 4.

THE EUCHARIST AND THE CHRISTMAS LITURGY

FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS the country has undergone a transformation. Gay lights of Christmas trees, decorations in our large department stores, singing of carols in the streets and an air of happiness are the calling cards of change. Ordinarily somber and dull looking scenes are transformed into places of joy, brightness and excitement. The drabness and routine, the darkness and cold of winter vibrate with the anticipation of a great day. In the commercial world it is a time of increased sales. Stores and shops overflow with customers buying gifts for friends and family. This giving and receiving of gifts