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# Overshadowed by the Spirit: Mary, Mother of Our Lord, Prototype of Spirit-Baptized Humanity

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Overshadowed by the Spirit: Mary, Mother of Our Lord,  
Prototype of Spirit-Baptized Humanity

Submitted to Regent University

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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Sally Jo Shelton

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This is to certify that the dissertation prepared by:

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**OVERSHADOWED BY THE SPIRIT: MARY, MOTHER OF OUR LORD,  
PROTOTYPE OF SPIRIT-BAPTIZED HUMANITY**

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PROTOTYPE OF SPIRIT-BAPTIZED HUMANITY

ABSTRACT

A major issue over which many Evangelicals differ from Roman Catholics is the status of Mary, Jesus' mother. Evangelicals critique some of the Marian dogmas and practices as excesses that challenge with Christ's sole mediation and eclipse the Spirit, while Catholics see Protestant neglect of Mary as potentially leading to failure to fully acknowledge Christ's humanity and divinity.

This dissertation attempts to bridge the gap between the Catholic and Evangelical Marys by proposing a Pentecostal Mary. After outlining the underlying pneumatic, ecumenical hermeneutic in the first chapter, in the next three I focus on the Scriptures related to Mary, including Matthean, Lukan, and Johannine literature. In the fifth to seventh chapters I survey Mary in relation to the Holy Spirit from the perspective of (1) selected theologians prior to the High Middle Ages including Ephrem of Syria, Jacob of Serugh, and Ildelfonsus of Toledo, (2) twelfth-century theologians including Hugh of Saint-Victor, Amadeus of Lausanne, and Hildegard of Bingen, and (3) modern theologians including Matthias Scheeben, Sergius Bulgakov, and Heribert Mühlen. The final chapter offers a theological construction of Mary as a prototype of Spirit-filled humanity, what might be called a "Spirit-Mariology" analogous in a limited way

to Spirit-Christology. This proposal has practical implications for life in the Spirit for all traditions, particularly the Spirit-anointing of women to fulfill their calling to motherhood and other ministries.

Overshadowed by the Spirit, Mary is a model of Spirit-indwelt humanity analogous to the Spirit-humanity of Christ. “Full of grace” and of the Holy Spirit, Mary is supernaturalized such that, without the eradication of her human nature, she undergoes a transformation, first hidden, ultimately glorious, similar to Christ’s own transfiguration and glorification. Mary’s overshadowing by the Spirit—her sanctification, divinization, *theosis*—is prototypical of the eschatological fulfillment of all humanity docile to the Spirit of Christ. Transfiguration into God-likeness is a soteriological vision that all Christians can share as together they contemplate the overshadowing of the lowly maiden of Nazareth by the Spirit of the Most High God.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I must first acknowledge my Pentecostal parents, Grant H. Moore and Wilma Marie Moore, to whom I owe an incalculable debt. Their consecration to God as missionaries to the Susu and Baga peoples of Guinea (Conakry), West Africa, was my first example of joyful, faithful, sacrificial service to God. To the end of their lives, their desire was to be totally at God's disposal.

My husband James B. Shelton has been the greatest inspiration of my life. The hours we have spent over the years talking about the things of God have helped me to develop intellectually, and his shining example of faithful prayer, selfless generosity, and devoted service have challenged me spiritually. Our entry into the Catholic Church when our children were teenagers was a major impetus for my pursuit of further theological education and choice of topic for this dissertation. The deep divisions in the church caused in large part by mutual misunderstanding and distrust has been a source of great pain to us. Our constant prayer is that God will use us to help restore mutual love and understanding that the family of God may be of one heart and one mind.

This dissertation reflects in large part my journey to better understand what the church teaches about Mary the mother of our Lord and why. I offer it with love to our families and friends as well as to the church and the academy with the prayer that it will encourage all to pursue holiness and truth even as

Mary did, to understand the Christian life as essentially life in the Spirit, and to experience such a life themselves. There is no greater joy than to say yes to God, as Mary did, and to live our entire lives totally consecrated and yielded to the Spirit of God.

I owe special thanks to my dissertation committee chair Amos Yong for his guidance and patience and to the other committee members, Dale Coulter and Elizabeth Groppe, for their helpful questions and insights. I am also deeply indebted to two brothers in the faith, Ralph Del Colle and Brother Jeffrey Gros, both of whom are now deceased, whose ecumenism, spirituality, and scholarship have greatly inspired me. I also owe thanks to my fellow Ph.D. aspirants whose friendship, courage, and determination during this time have been inspiring. Lisa Ward has been a special source of encouragement and friendship to me.

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## DEDICATION

To James B. Shelton, my beloved husband. I could not have done this without you.

To our children John and Grace Shelton, Joey Shelton, and Jenny and Raymond Foyer, and to our grandchildren. I consider it a high privilege to be your mother and grandmother. You make me proud. I love you forever and always.

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## Chapter 1

### The Problem of Mary: Towards Recovery from Excess and Neglect

In the work that Evangelicals and Catholics have done to achieve a higher degree of mutual understanding, a major obstacle has been Mary, the mother of Jesus. Reflecting on the obstacles that “beset even the most sincere desire” to achieve Christian unity, Congar predicted that even after a degree of agreement had been achieved regarding justification—the quintessential bone of contention between Catholics and Protestants—there would still be “the insuperable wall of . . . devotion to the Virgin Mary.”<sup>1</sup> My primary purpose here is to consider a path by which Catholics and Evangelicals may overcome their differences about Mary.

#### Do “All Generations Call Me Blessed”?: The Mary Gap

Let me begin by sketching the Catholic and Evangelical views of Mary along with summaries of representative voices, beginning with the Catholic. Then I will introduce my proposal of a Spirit-baptized Mary in the endeavor to close the gap between them.

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<sup>1</sup>Yves Congar, “Conquering Our Enmities,” in *Steps to Christian Unity*, ed. John A. O’Brien (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 100.

### *The Catholic Mary*

Far more can be said about the Catholic Mary than can be adequately treated here, so let me begin with a brief overview of the major points of doctrine and practice that Evangelicals and their Reformer forebears have found objectionable. Among them are the special titles and privileges that Catholics as well as Eastern Orthodox have attributed to Mary from early times, including Mother of God/God-bearer (*Theotokos*), immaculate (sinless/stainless)/all-holy (*Panagia*), and perpetual virginity/ever virgin (*Aeiparthenos*). To these may be added two Catholic dogmas defined in the two previous centuries: (1) the Immaculate Conception, which declares that God exempted Mary from original sin from the moment of her conception; and (2) the Assumption, that God exempted Mary from bodily corruption by assuming her body and soul to heaven at the end of her earthly life. Although not a formal dogma, the intercessory role Catholics ascribe to Mary is also problematic for many.

Like other successors to the Reformers, besides having doctrinal differences with Catholics, Evangelicals have difficulty with the high degree of veneration that Catholics and Orthodox offer to Mary. Historically, the primary concern for Evangelicals has been that Catholic faith and practice appear to usurp the uniqueness of Christ as the sole, sinless Redeemer and Mediator;



however, the concern is also that such faith and practice usurp the role of the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

Protestants often point to the decision at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431 to call Mary Theotokos rather than Christotokos as the origin of the Catholic tendency toward Marian excess.<sup>3</sup> Despite the reasoning behind that decision, some resist using the title “Mother of God” lest they be misunderstood by the uninitiated as attributing divinity to Mary. Most of the Marian controversies stem from the Reformation, a consequence of the paradigmatic shift that Reformers brought to the theological task in espousing *sola scriptura*, in effect, downgrading Tradition and the Magisterium, i.e., the teaching authority of the church, to the level of human apparatus, and, accordingly, rejecting them as

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<sup>2</sup>Elsie Gibson, “Mary and the Protestant Mind,” *Review for Religious* 24 (May 1965): 383–398. Lucien Marchand, “Le Contenu Évangélique de la Dévotion Mariale,” *Foi et Vie* 49, no. 6 (September-October 1951): 509–521. Philip Pare, “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Western Church,” *Theology* 51, no. 338 (1948): 293–300.

<sup>3</sup>“When this ‘theotokos’ was used to build a Mariology—I must say here, misused—it became, however unobjectionable it was and is in itself, the starting point of a development which I can only regard as grotesque.” Karl Barth, “A Letter about Mariology,” *Ad Limina Apostolorum: An Appraisal of Vatican II*, trans. Keith Crim, 59–62 (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1968), 60. *Nota bene*: Barth’s views on Mary do gradually soften, but he always prefers to honor Joseph rather than Mary. See also Tim Perry, *Mary for Evangelicals: Toward an Understanding of the Mother of Our Lord* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2006), 13.

authentic transmitters and interpreters of revelation.<sup>4</sup> Although the early Reformers including Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin continued to venerate Mary,<sup>5</sup> many of their successors, in attempted conformity to the demands of *sola scriptura*, would eventually conclude that, apart from the Virgin Birth, the Marian doctrines should be abandoned. In reaction, Catholics have clung ever more firmly to their Marian doctrines and devotion, resulting, it is admitted, in certain excesses in both thought and practice, which in turn has bolstered Protestant resolve to reject virtually all things Marian. The antipathy with which Protestants have viewed Catholic Mariology is perhaps best expressed by Karl Barth when he calls it “the one heresy of the Roman Catholic Church which explains all the rest.”<sup>6</sup> Note, however, that Barth’s stance toward the Catholic Mary softened to

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<sup>4</sup>In retrospect, we can see that *sola scriptura* as such is untenable since tradition and context always influence how we think. Rather, the actual hermeneutical issue involves the precise relation between tradition and Scripture. Heiko Oberman, “The Virgin Mary in Evangelical Perspective,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 1, no. 2 (1964): 274.

<sup>5</sup>Oberman, “Evangelical Perspective,” 288.

<sup>6</sup>Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 1, pt. 2, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), 138–146, esp. 143. See also his “A Letter about Mariology,” 60. Roger Mehl says similarly, “En elle [Mariology] se rejoignent toutes les hérésies du catholicisme.” *Du Catholicisme Romain: Approche et Interprétation* (Neuchâtel, Suisse: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1957), 91.

some degree, although he counter-proposed that greater attention be given to Joseph.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, Yves Congar acknowledged the validity of certain Protestant criticisms of Catholic Mariology, noting simultaneously the theological problems that result from Marian neglect.<sup>8</sup> During the council, acting largely in the interest of Christian unity, Catholics made a radical change in their approach to Mariology by treating it as part of ecclesiology rather than as an independent theological locus.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Karl Barth, "The Mystery and Miracle of Christmas," in *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 98–100 of 95–100. Karl Barth, *Letters 1961–1968*, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 75, 84, 245. Stina Jost, "Jesus' Earthly Father as Protector and Example in the Church: How Karl Barth's Theology Challenges the Contemporary Evangelical Masculinist Movement," in *Karl Barth and the Future of Evangelical Theology*, eds. Christian Collins Winn and John Drury (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2014), 119–128 of 115–129. Francis Felis, "Barth as Seeker of God's Truth," *Christian Century*, May 30, 1962, 686 of 685–686.

<sup>8</sup>Yves Congar, *Christ, Our Lady and the Church: A Study in Eirenic Theology*, trans. Henry St. John (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1957), 68–82. Cf. A. T. Robertson, *The Mother of Jesus: Her Problems and Her Glory* (New York: Doran, 1925), 11–20. Timothy George, "The Blessed Virgin Mary in Evangelical Perspective," in *Mary, Mother of God*, eds. Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 102 of 100–122.

<sup>9</sup>Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution of the Church], November 21, 1964.

Since Vatican II, Catholics have continued to seek ways to overcome the Marian gap. Suenens categorized Marian exaggerations as (1) overemphasis of Marian prerogatives at the expense of Christology, (2) veneration of Mary that is “too dependent upon private revelations, and too remote from biblical theology,” and (3) the appearance of substituting Mary for the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup> Warning Catholics against eclipsing the Holy Spirit’s “unique and divine role,” Suenens suggests what I attempt here: “to stress again Mary’s role in the perspective of the Holy Spirit.” When the Spirit is given proper focus, Suenens says, Mary appears “as the one upon whom the Spirit showered his graces, as the first Christian, the first charismatic.”<sup>11</sup>

More recently, Peter Hocken characterizes the historical problem of Catholic Mariology as a tendency to reflect on Mary independently from Jesus and from the church. In particular, he critiques the church’s de-emphasis of both Jesus’ Jewishness and Mary’s, and calls for a reintegration of the Christian faith

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<sup>10</sup>Léon-Joseph Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* trans. Francis Martin (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 183–184. Yves Congar attributes the apparent substitution of Mary for the Spirit to the failure of the West to adequately develop the theology of the Holy Spirit, “La Pneumatologie dans la Théologie Catholique,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 51 (1968): 252.

<sup>11</sup>Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* 183–184.

with its Jewish roots.<sup>12</sup> However, Benedict XVI's *Daughter Zion* might be understood in retrospect as an attempt to correct this.<sup>13</sup>

Although Catholics have made profound steps toward correcting Marian excesses, many evangelical clergy and laity remain unaware of them or, if aware, skeptical of their significance. Catholics' approach to Mary remains, in their view, excessive, if not heterodox, and possibly idolatrous. In fact, despite all the progress that has been made, Hocken admits that "Mary remains a highly emotive point of opposition, particularly in Catholic relations with Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians."<sup>14</sup>

What may well create even further division between Catholics and Protestants is a so-called fifth Marian dogma proposed by devotees since before Vatican II. It would define Mary's spiritual motherhood in such terms as

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<sup>12</sup>Peter Hocken, *Pentecost and Parousia: Charismatic Renewal, Christian Unity, and the Coming Glory* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 117–125. For Hocken, "the reintegration of Mary into Israel is almost certainly the only way to bridge the Marian gap between Catholics and Evangelicals" (124). However, he goes on to recognize "in the renewal of the full honoring of Mary . . . the Holy Spirit's renewing work in the reception of Scripture in the church, in the renewal of the liturgy, and in the new evangelization, all suffused with the new life of the Spirit, that is the hallmark of the charismatic renewal" (124).

<sup>13</sup>Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger), *Daughter Zion: Meditations on the Church's Marian Belief*, trans. John McDermott (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983).

<sup>14</sup>Hocken, *Pentecost and Parousia*, 117.

Coredemptrix and Mediatrix. However, since some Catholics consider such terminology ambiguous and since many Protestants and even Orthodox view it as theological brinkmanship, the Catholic Church has, for the present, given it the status of a "*quaestio disputata*, far from that substantial theological unanimity which, in relation to every doctrinal question, is the necessary prelude for proceeding to a dogmatic definition."<sup>15</sup> In any case, if ever the church should proclaim such a dogma, it would undoubtedly define it in such a way as to prescribe appropriate limits to Mary's cooperation with Christ's salvific work.

The Congregation for Catholic Education has articulated the recommended Catholic approach to Mariology in a directive how to conduct Marian research and teaching. The accent is to be on "complete and exact knowledge" of Marian doctrines including the ability to "distinguish authentic doctrine from its deformations arising from excess or neglect," "authentic love" for Mary that "expresses itself in genuine forms of devotion and is led to 'the imitation of her virtues,'" and "the capacity to communicate such love to the Christian people through speech, writing, and example."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>"A New Marian Dogma? Comment on Marian Academy's Declaration," *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, June 25, 1997, 10.

<sup>16</sup>The Catholic Church. Congregatio pro Institutione Catholica. *The Virgin Mary in Intellectual and Spiritual Formation: Letter from the Congregation for Catholic Education, March 25, 1988* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1989), §34.

*The Evangelical Mary*

In profound contrast to Catholics, Evangelicals have historically questioned whether Mary should be accorded any significant role in Christian reflection. For many, the very word Mariology suggests Mariolatry.<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly, in many evangelical churches, Mary is remembered typically only at Christmas, with perhaps a homiletical mention at some other point in the year should a text make it requisite. This minimalism contrasts strongly with the superabundance of Catholic and Orthodox reflection on Mary, which are reinforced by numerous liturgical observances celebrated in her honor through the church year.

After Vatican II, many Protestants began to regret such total neglect of Mary. Presbyterian scholar Beverly Gaventa, for example, laments that “the absence of Mary not only cuts Protestants off from Catholic and Orthodox Christians; it cuts us off from the fullness of our own tradition. We have neither blessed Mary nor allowed her to bless us.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Egon Gerdes, “Ecumenism and Spirituality: A Protestant Perspective.” *Theological Studies* 29, no. 1 (1968): 36.

<sup>18</sup>“Introduction,” *Blessed One: Protestant Perspectives on Mary*, eds. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Cynthia Rigby (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 2.

Reformation scholar, Heiko Oberman, in reconsidering what role Mary might have among Protestants, seeks a *via media* between a “Mary-less Christianity” and a “Marian personality cult.”<sup>19</sup> He recognizes the Virgin Birth as an eschatological sign and fulfillment of God’s covenantal promise to Abraham. The promise with which God blesses Sarah, enabling her to bear a son in her old age and pronouncing her a mother of nations and of “kings of peoples,” echoes in the angelic words and in Elizabeth’s prophetic word to Mary, “Blessed are you among women” (Luke 1:42).<sup>20</sup> Following Luther, Zwingli, and others, Oberman sees Mary’s *Magnificat* as “a poetic confession of justification ‘sola gratia’ and ‘sola fide.’” In this view, “the humility of Mary . . . is not seen as a disposition which provided the basis and reason for God’s choice, but is regarded rather as the result of God’s election and prevenient grace.”<sup>21</sup>

Oberman dwells on how the early reformers continued to honor Mary rather than on their rejection of certain Marian teachings, which is the more usual Protestant approach.<sup>22</sup> For Oberman, “Protestantism . . . searches to find the *via*

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<sup>19</sup>Oberman, “Evangelical Perspective,” 296.

<sup>20</sup>Oberman, “Evangelical Perspective,” 280.

<sup>21</sup>Oberman, “Evangelical Perspective,” 281.

<sup>22</sup>Oberman, “Evangelical Perspective,” 289–291.



*media*, to avoid not only Marian excesses at the right but also Marian minimalism at the left.” He recognizes as do some Evangelicals that “exactly in those traditions which one can characterize as minimalistic or even Mary-less, deep inroads have been made by the two main Christological heresies: Docetism and Adoptionism.”<sup>23</sup> He proposes that Christians think of Mary in terms of her function or office rather than her person, a proposal I find difficult to entertain since I cannot imagine God ever thinking of Mary, let alone anyone else, solely in terms of an office or function and not as a person.<sup>24</sup> Oberman prefers—in regard to all the saints, not just Mary—not “praying *to*, but *with* those who have gone before.”<sup>25</sup>

Lutheran theologian Robert Jenson, who has addressed the question of Mary in his systematic theology, asserts that while the title “Mother of God” was originally made as a christological statement, “if such an epithet is justified, it must also be right for there to be a subdepartment of theology called

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<sup>23</sup>Oberman, “Evangelical Perspective,” 294.

<sup>24</sup>Oberman, “Evangelical Perspective,” 294–295.

<sup>25</sup>Oberman, “Evangelical Perspective,” 298 (emphasis original). Daniel Migliore, “Woman of Faith: Toward a Reformed Understanding of Mary,” in *Blessed One: Protestant Perspectives on Mary*, eds. Beverly Gaventa and Cynthia Rigby (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 129 of 117–130.

mariology.”<sup>26</sup> For Jenson, Mary is a “type of the church in that the church is the prophetic community. . . . Mary is the archprophet, the paradigmatic instantiation of the church’s prophetic reality.” Mary, Jenson posits, is more like Moses than Eve, in that she “intercedes for the church as did Moses for Israel, or rather does so as Moses’ prototype, pleading God’s own Word to him.” In Jenson’s understanding, the reason “we not only invoke Mary but revere her” is her obedience, for in her Israel obeyed.<sup>27</sup> Jenson has difficulty with the dogma of the assumption, but nevertheless concludes that perhaps “the best interpretation is that the definition in fact attributes nothing to her, *in this respect*, that is not true of the blessed departed generally.”<sup>28</sup> As to the invocation of Mary, which he considers an instance of the communion of the saints, Jenson suggests that “our communion with departed saints, whatever may be included in it, is not fundamentally different from our communion with living saints. We may not ask Mary to bring us to Christ; because we are one with Christ we may address Mary.” As to whether the departed saints are conscious of our existence, he asserts a qualitative difference between the risen and not-yet-risen consciousness:

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<sup>26</sup>Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, *The Works of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 200 (emphasis original).

<sup>27</sup>Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, 2.202.

<sup>28</sup>Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, 2.204n95.

“in the Kingdom we will know one another by participation in God’s own knowledge of us. If the saints know us at all, they know us infinitely better than we know ourselves; surely this makes them attractive—and fearsome—as intercessors.”<sup>29</sup>

It is no doubt partially under the influence of such conciliatory approaches as Oberman’s and Jenson’s that evangelical theologians have continued to consider how to correct the regrettable neglect of Mary on their part. Migliore calls it an “eclipse of Mary.”<sup>30</sup> For Geisler, “Mary has hardly been given her God-appointed respect in most Protestant circles as the ‘favored one’ of the Lord (Luke 1:28).”<sup>31</sup> Miller considers Mary the “preeminent feminine model of faith and obedience—worthy of honor and admiration.”<sup>32</sup>

Perry is the Evangelical who has most thoroughly addressed the problem of Mary to this point. He is among those most concerned that “the lack of Marian reflection in modern evangelical theology” may have contributed to “an

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<sup>29</sup>Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, 2.269.

<sup>30</sup>Migliore, “Woman of Faith,” 117.

<sup>31</sup>Norman Geisler, foreword to *The Cult of the Virgin: Catholic Mariology and the Apparitions of Mary* by Elliot Miller and Kenneth Samples (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 12.

<sup>32</sup>Elliot Miller, “From Lowly Handmaid to Queen of Heaven: The Mary of Roman Catholicism (Part Two),” *Christian Research Journal* 13, no. 2 (1990): 33.

impoverished and possibly unorthodox Christology.”<sup>33</sup> He lists the kind of Evangelicals for whom Marian reflection ought to matter: those “who wish to maintain a high christology, who share a commitment to biblical exposition as the basis of doctrine, and who have a similarly shared commitment to an ecumenism of conviction.”<sup>34</sup>

Perry indicates a willingness to reconsider Mary’s perpetual virginity as well as her intercessory role although he prefers to account for her holiness more in terms of her perseverance than in terms of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>35</sup> Having engaged in intensive research on Mary, he confesses to having “come to appreciate and understand—though not to embrace—a piety that for some Christians deepens devotion to Jesus, but agrees with Catholics that its best “thought and practice about Mary is not really about her” but about Jesus although he does admit to seeing her as “a disciple wholly devoted to his [God’s] service, even when the requirements and implications of such service are unknown or unclear.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Perry, *Mary for Evangelicals*, 13–15.

<sup>34</sup>Tim Perry, “Evangelicals and Mary,” *Theology Today* 65 (2008): 227 of 226–238.

<sup>35</sup>Perry, *Mary for Evangelicals*, 307.

<sup>36</sup>Perry, *Mary for Evangelicals*, 14–15.

Abraham, in his foreword to Perry's *Mary for Evangelicals*, speaks of Evangelicals being "nervous about Mary" because "the old stereotype of Roman Catholics worshipping Mary" is so deeply entrenched. Like Jenson, he sees the issue of Mary as closely related to the communion of saints, especially as it relates to the *communio* Christians share with their brothers and sisters in Christ who have preceded them in death. For Abraham, Mary plays a crucial role in the incarnation, not as a surrogate ("rent-a-womb") but as an actual mother who shares her human nature with her Son. Abraham sees evangelical reflection on Mary as potentially fruitful for "the tangled debate about grace and freedom" as well as for such issues as ecclesiology, sexual ethics, and feminism including the role of women in the church.<sup>37</sup>

Timothy George is still another Evangelical who has undertaken the study of Mary. He considers traditional Marian motifs in terms of how they might fit into evangelical theology and spirituality. Cautioning that focus on the Christian Scriptures without sufficient focus on the Hebrew can truncate the biblical message, he allows there to be scriptural warrant for Mary as daughter of Zion, a

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<sup>37</sup>William Abraham, foreword to *Mary for Evangelicals: Toward an Understanding of the Mother of Our Lord* by Tim Perry (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 9–11.

typological motif favored by Catholics.<sup>38</sup> However, he falls back on Hilary of Poitiers and Tertullian to interpret the daughter of Zion as both faithful and faithless, *simul iustus et peccator*. George points out that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, generally held by both Catholics and Evangelicals, is crucial to substantiate not so much Christ's deity, as historically Evangelicals have tended to maintain, but primarily his humanity. For George, Mary is, as the wider Christian tradition teaches, the mother of the pilgrim and persecuted church.<sup>39</sup>

On the basis of Mary's embodiment of such Reformation principles as *sola gratia* and *sola fide*, George asserts that Evangelicals should not hesitate to extol Mary, since her praise is essentially praise of God for the favor granted Mary. In the context of explaining the early Reformers' Marian views, George asks, "Why do Evangelicals remember the Reformation critique of Marian excesses but not the positive appraisal of Mary's indispensable role in God's salvific work?" His answer is that *sola scriptura* has had a "pruning effect," the result of a sustained effort on the part of the Reformers to detach themselves from their Catholic

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<sup>38</sup>Benedict XVI, *Daughter Zion*. Lucien Deiss, *Mary, Daughter of Zion*, trans. Barbara Blair (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1972).

<sup>39</sup>Timothy George, "The Blessed Virgin Mary in Evangelical Perspective," in *Mary, Mother of God*, eds. Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson, 100–122 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 108–109, 119–120.

roots. George diagnoses neglect of Mary as an "ecclesiological hardening of arteries," in essence, a Protestant over-reaction to Catholic overemphasis.<sup>40</sup>

A particularly bold evangelical assessment of Catholic Mariology has been made by Scot McKnight, who sees the dogma of the Immaculate Conception as a reasonable way to explain how Jesus was able to inherit Mary's humanity without inheriting original sin. (The implication is that Evangelicals who believe in original sin but reject the Marian dogma will have to find another explanation of how this could happen or, like the Orthodox, simply accept it as mystery.) As to Mary's assumption, McKnight leaves it to the judgment of the individual since, though the assumption is not explicitly stated in Scripture, biblical accounts of other assumptions are (Enoch, Elijah); and, obviously, the Scriptures do not claim to record everything. McKnight, who has coined a word for Evangelicals' growing appreciation for Mary—Mariaphilia—encourages them to honor Mary for her example of faithfulness.<sup>41</sup>

Cocksworth, admitting that his own experience of Evangelicalism has been "marked more by an absence of attention to Mary than by a serious attempt

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<sup>40</sup>George, "Blessed Virgin Mary," 116–117.

<sup>41</sup>Scot McKnight, *The Real Mary: Why Evangelical Christians Can Embrace the Mother of Jesus* (Brewster Mass.: Paraclete Press, 2007), loc. 1400. Kindle. See also McKnight's "The Mary We Never Knew," *Christianity Today*, December 2006, 26–30.

to find her proper place in Evangelical life,” asks, “Why is that so when the Bible that we love speaks much of Mary?”<sup>42</sup> Cocksworth considers Marian reflection spiritually fruitful: “the one thing that Mary can do for us that even Jesus cannot do” is “to show us—and be the first to show us—what it means *to see Jesus*, to love him . . . to place one’s faith in the grace of God . . . and to give one’s life over to this transforming grace, and then to follow Jesus as a member of his messianic family.” Further, Mary shows us “what it means to be seen by Jesus—to be seen with such eyes of love that you know you will never be the same again.”<sup>43</sup>

Other Catholics besides Congar have recognized the theological poverty that can result from Marian neglect. A former Evangelical, Howard asserts that a “piety that has been afraid almost to name, much less to hail, the Virgin and to join the angel Gabriel and Elisabeth in according blessing and exaltation to her is a piety that has impoverished itself.”<sup>44</sup> But Catholics also express optimism regarding a Marian renaissance among Protestants. Beattie sees the “ecumenical

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<sup>42</sup>Ironically, some claim that the Scriptures say very little of Mary even though she is the most prominent woman in the New Testament.

<sup>43</sup>Christopher Cocksworth, “Evangelical Mary,” in *Conversations at the Edges of Things: Reflections for the Church in Honor of John Goldingay*, eds. Francis Bridger and James Butler (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2012): 68–69 of 67–75.

<sup>44</sup>Thomas Howard, *Evangelical Is Not Enough: Worship of God in Liturgy and Sacrament* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984), 88, 89.



sensitivity” generated by the dialogues of Catholics with other traditions as having borne fruit since “many non-Catholics were sufficiently reassured to begin to ask if too much had been sacrificed in denying Mary any place in their faith.”<sup>45</sup> Brown encourages Protestants and Catholics to study the Scriptures together as a way to listen to each other’s perspective on Mary.<sup>46</sup> Speaking to his fellow Catholics, Connors suggests that “though our Marian traditions remain more richly complex than theirs, the Protestant recovery of parts of our shared Marian heritage can help us, too, to see Mary with fresh eyes and renewed devotion.”<sup>47</sup>

Clearly, in the years since Vatican II, as a result of careful research and thoughtful reflection by individual scholars as well as group efforts including ecumenical dialogues, mariological societies, and local interecclesial prayer groups, Catholics and Protestants have come closer in their thinking about Mary.

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<sup>45</sup>Tina Beattie, “‘Woman Full and Overflowing with Grace’: The Virgin Mary and the Contemporary Church.” *Where Now? Women’s Spirituality after the Ecumenical Decade*, The Way Supplement, 93, ed. Joan Chittister (London: The Way, 1998), 56 of 54–65.

<sup>46</sup>Raymond E. Brown, “Mary in the New Testament and in Catholic Life,” *America*, May 15, 1982, 374–379.

<sup>47</sup>Dan Connors, “Are Protestants Rediscovering Mary? Seeing Mary through Their Eyes May Help Strengthen Our Own Faith and Devotion,” *Catholic Digest* 72, no. 2 (2007): 72.

Despite this progress, however, for many, Mary remains more of a divisive element than a unitive one. The task at hand then is to consider how to bridge the gap that remains between what has been considered by some to be mariolatry and what, on many levels, remains the virtually non-existent evangelical Mary. My proposal is a Pentecostal Mary.

*A Pentecostal Mary: A Proposal (with an Excursus on Spirit-baptism)*

Progress has been made toward bridging the gap between the Catholic and evangelical Marys through the Evangelical-Catholic, Pentecostal-Catholic, and other ecumenical dialogues; however, although theologians of these traditions have come to better understand and respect each other's points of view—success varies with individual theologians and ecclesial communities—the primary effort has been to find commonalities rather than to continuously accentuate the differences. Nevertheless, despite the points of agreement about Mary, sadly, the differences remain major roadblocks, which continue to serve as barriers—sometimes bitter—to mutual understanding and consensus.

As a way to find consensus regarding Mary, I propose a Pentecostal Mary, that is, a Spirit-baptized, Spirit-filled Mary, one whose life cannot be understood

apart from the vivifying, sanctifying, enlightening, empowering work of the Holy Spirit in and through her.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Let me explain how I came to think of Mary in Pentecostal and pneumatological terms. I am a Catholic convert with a classical Pentecostal heritage, a heritage that I highly value and for which I am profoundly grateful. While in college and in the years immediately following (the late 1960s and early seventies), I became involved with the Charismatic Movement that had emerged in the mainline Protestant churches and in the Catholic Church. I was amazed that the manifestations of the Holy Spirit that I had seen and experienced in Pentecostalism had become evident in these other traditions. What I learned was that, despite my presuppositions otherwise, God had abandoned neither the mainline denominations nor the Catholic Church as my upbringing had led me to suppose. My prejudices invalidated, I experienced a conversion, a change not only of mind but of heart toward my non-Pentecostal brothers and sisters in Christ, and with it acquired an ecumenical vision, an ardent longing for the restoration of the unity of the body of Christ.

It is a long story but, in time, first my husband, whose upbringing was also Pentecostal, and then I came to believe that God was calling us into the Catholic Church. It was hard for our evangelical and Pentecostal family, friends, and associates to understand why we thought we should become Catholic as apparently they saw it as a denial of our heritage, but for us it was not a rejection of our Pentecostalism but rather its fulfillment.

Tellingly, the Catholic practice most difficult for me to accept at that time was prayer to the saints, particularly to Mary, the dogma most problematic for me being the Immaculate Conception. Before entering the church, I recall telling Msgr. Patrick Gaalaas, our parish priest, "I know Jesus, but I don't know Mary." Apparently, he did not think that was reason enough to bar me from entry, as he welcomed me into the church only a few days later.

Ironically, it was my Pentecostal background with its emphasis on the Holy Spirit that eventually helped me to begin to better understand Mary. I began to realize that when the various Marian dogmas and other doctrines and practices are viewed pneumatologically, they were more comprehensible to me and therefore, in my experience at least, more believable. In reflecting on Mary in terms of the Holy Spirit, Mary herself has become more embraceable to me. She has become someone with whom I can relate because I see her as one as dependent on the Holy Spirit as I or any other Christian. As I research Marian

The proposal of a Pentecostal Mary—an attempt to look at Mary from a pneumatological perspective—as a way of bridging the gap between the Catholic and evangelical Marys is not totally original. As previously mentioned, for Suenens, Mary is “the first charismatic.” Concerned that Protestants view Catholics as “attributing to Mary what, in the[ir] eyes, is proper to the Holy Spirit,” he reminds Catholics that in the hierarchy of truths the Holy Spirit has the primary role while Mary’s is secondary and derivative. We must “first of all set in relief the absolute priority of the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifying Spirit. Then,

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theology and reflect on Mary, though, I find myself embracing her not merely as my sister in Christ, but as my spiritual mother, one who as mother of my Lord warrants my loving regard and devotion. I am beginning to understand the motherly love that Mary offers not as a merely natural, human love but as one that radiates from the divine love with which she is inflamed, her heart being infused by the Holy Spirit, the gift of God’s own self who in giving himself to her lavishes his grace and love in superabundance on her as well.

While I want to be candid about my own limited experience of Mary and my growing desire to understand and know her better, I am at the same time concerned that my expressing that desire might be misconstrued as somehow usurping the desire to better know and love Christ and to be more open and submissive to the Holy Spirit, as Catholics are sometimes accused. However, I believe that it is my love for Christ and my desire to allow the Holy Spirit to work more freely in my life that is the impetus for my wanting to know and love Mary better, even as it is the love of Christ that prompts all Christians to want to better know and love their brothers and sisters in Christ. In any case, hopefully this is sufficient explanation of my personal motives for pursuing this proposal.

having done this, we should reflect upon Mary as the one who, beyond all others, has been sanctified, the daughter of Sion visited by the Spirit.”<sup>49</sup>

I propose to use a Pentecostal motif “Spirit-baptism,” or “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” as the metaphor of choice to explain Mary in relation to the Holy Spirit. The term requires some explanation. It came into prominent use during the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement or, what came to be known more generally as the Renewal, which was a movement of the Holy Spirit in the global church beginning in the early twentieth century and continuing to the twenty-first. This move of God is now acknowledged to be the most widespread revival in Christian history, crossing denominational and cultural boundaries. It is characterized by a deep hunger for God, a greater emphasis on spiritual experience, and a keen interest in the exercise of the charisms, particularly glossolalia, prophecy, and healing, as well as a deep yearning for the restoration

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<sup>49</sup>Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* 185–186. Cf. Charlene Spretnak, *Missing Mary: The Queen of Heaven and Her Re-Emergence in the Modern Church* (Gordonsville, Va.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 21. See also: David Rosage, *Mary: The Model Charismatic* (Boston: St. Paul Books & Media, 1971). Mary is “our model, our ideal, to show us how to live the life in the Spirit . . . [who] personified the Holy Spirit in her own mode of living” (5). Raniero Cantalamessa calls Mary, “the first Pentecostal and Charismatic in the church,” in his *Mary: Mirror of the Church*, trans. Frances Lonergan Villa (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 169–186.

of Christian unity and the evangelization of the world in preparation for the eschaton: Christ's second coming and the establishment of God's kingdom.

Classical Pentecostalism arose, according to Donald Dayton and Vinson Synan, from Wesleyan-Holiness roots.<sup>50</sup> Significantly, Spirit-baptism language came into prominent use by those in the Holiness movement during the nineteenth century although, as early as the eighteenth century, John Fletcher, John Wesley's close associate, is credited for having retrieved the concept from Scripture and to have introduced the phrase into Holiness parlance.

Though the Spirit-baptism motif has not been commonly used by the church over the centuries, it is biblical. John, Jesus' forerunner, was the first to speak of Spirit-baptism by prophesying of one who would baptize in the Spirit in contrast to himself who baptized only in water (Luke 3:16; Mark 1:8; Matt. 3:11). Some exegetes contend that Spirit-baptism be interpreted in terms of judgment since John spoke of it in association with judgment (Luke 3:7, 9, 17; Matt. 3:7, 10, 12).<sup>51</sup> However, when the post-resurrection Christ reminded his followers of

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<sup>50</sup>Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1987), and Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

<sup>51</sup>Paul van Imschoot, "Baptême d'eau et baptême d'Esprit Saint," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 13 (1936): 653–666, cited in Francis Sullivan, "A Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Catholic Interpretation of the Pentecostal Experience," *Gregorianum* 55, no. 1 (1974): 54 of 49–68. Cf. J. Daryl Charles, "The

John's prophecy, he reinterpreted it in terms of promise, "the promise of the Father" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4–5). For the early Christians then (Acts 2:17f.; 11:16), Spirit-baptism referred to the outpouring of the Spirit foretold first by the Hebrew prophets (Isa. 32:15; 44:3f.; Ezek. 39:29; Joel 2:28f.) and then by Jesus himself (John 7:37; 14:16–17, 26; 15:26), a spiritual deluge whereby the church would be empowered by the Spirit to bear witness to Christ to the ends of the world (Acts 1:8) and individual believers would experience a new level of relationship with God through the indwelling of the Spirit (John 14:17). However, before this great outpouring could occur, Jesus had first to undergo his own baptism of fire (Luke 12:50). This is an indication that Spirit-baptism involves suffering as well as joy and fulfillment. Even as water baptism entails repentance, Spirit-baptism entails the fire of purification as well as of power.

Classical Pentecostals have used the term to refer to a spiritual experience, typically one subsequent to water baptism, by which Christians are empowered for witness (Acts 1:8). Catholics who identify themselves as part of the Renewal typically understand the experience either as a release—an actualization—of graces already received through the sacraments of water baptism and

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'Coming One'/'Stronger One' and His Baptism: Matt. 3:11–12, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16–17," *Pneuma* 11, no. 1 (1989): 37–50. R. Alastair Campbell, "Jesus and His Baptism," *Tyndale Bulletin* 47, no. 2 (1996): 191–214.

confirmation, or as a new work of the Spirit which constitutes, for some, an “adult conversion—a personal encounter with Christ that radically transforms them and sets them on the path of discipleship for the first time,” and, for others, an empowerment or preparation for a special task or mission.<sup>52</sup>

Whether Spirit-baptism is subsequent to or a part of the initiation-conversion process is a question that has been the subject of prolonged debate among Pentecostals, but from that debate has emerged a deeper understanding of Spirit-baptism both as empowerment for mission or vocation and as an immersion in or effusion of the Spirit that effects not only outward manifestations of the Spirit (as in the case of the apostles and deacons in Acts, Spirit-empowered witness accompanied by signs and wonders) but also inner transformation. The Holy Spirit baptizes the heart with the love of God, thereby reorienting the persons’ affections so that their desires are no longer directed toward self-gratification but rather toward loving and pleasing God and out of that love for God loving and serving God’s children, particularly the poor and vulnerable, the widow and the orphan, the homeless and the imprisoned, the

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<sup>52</sup>International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Doctrinal Commission, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Luton, Bedfordshire, U.K.: New Life, 2012), 70–73.



sick and the disabled, the hungry and the naked, the lost and the least (Matt. 25:35–40; Luke 19:10; Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 13; Phil. 2:3–4; Col. 3:1–2; James 1:27).

Classical Pentecostals have typically considered glossolalia, or speaking in tongues,<sup>53</sup> as “initial evidence,” or proof, of the genuineness of their Spirit-baptism, but most Charismatics including Catholics do not consider it essential, although most agree that glossolalic speech is often a sign of Spirit-baptism.<sup>54</sup> Some Pentecostals and Charismatics hold that praying in tongues is a gateway gift, or charism, which, when practiced, opens them to the free flow of the other charisms through them by the Spirit in ministry to others.<sup>55</sup> Whatever their views

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<sup>53</sup>Although scholars sometimes refer to glossolalia as “ecstatic utterance,” it does not require an ecstatic state, since practitioners volitionally yield control of their speech faculties, trusting the Holy Spirit to pray or proclaim “the mighty works of God” through them in unknown languages (Acts 2:11). “Glossolalia,” *The New International Dictionary of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 674, 670–678. Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 82.

<sup>55</sup>ICCRS Doctrinal Commission, *Baptism*, 66. Robert Menzies, “The Spirit of Prophecy, Luke-Acts and Pentecostal Theology: A Response to Max Turner,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7, no. 15 (1999): 72 of 49–74. Oral Roberts considered glossolalia not only a charism for use in public assembly provided it is accompanied by an “interpretation” (1 Cor. 14:26–28) but also for private prayer, or what he called “prayer language.” *If You Need to Release Your Prayer Language, Do These Things* (Tulsa, Okla.: Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association, 1982). St. Paul wrote, “I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue” (1 Cor. 14:18–19), the implication being that he generally prayed in tongues privately rather than

on tongues, the consensus of most Renewalists is that Spirit-baptism involves more than the operation of the charisms, since the charisms, including glossolalia and prophecy, will cease once they see God “face to face,” and “know fully, even as [they] have been fully known” (1 Cor. 13:8, 12). The *sine qua non* of Spirit-baptism then is love and holiness, which includes total devotion and consecration to Christ and docility, self-surrender, to the Holy Spirit.<sup>56</sup>

Gause and Macchia, two leading Pentecostal scholars, have each developed comprehensive understandings of Spirit-baptism.<sup>57</sup> Gause emphasizes both the inward effects and the outward manifestations of Spirit-baptism. For Gause, the significance of baptism in the Holy Spirit is both corporate and personal since the first Pentecost was an outpouring on the entire church as well as on individual members. The identity of the Spirit-filled church and the individual believer is in the presence, indwelling, and holiness of the Spirit. While not denying the role of tongues as the outward sign of Spirit-baptism,

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publicly. Pentecostals typically consider glossolalic prayer a way to obey the biblical injunction to “fan into flame the gift of God” (2 Tim. 1:6).

<sup>56</sup>Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* 81.

<sup>57</sup>R. Hollis Gause, *Living in the Spirit: The Way of Salvation*, rev. ed. (Cleveland, Tenn.: CPT Press, 2009), especially 110–123, 138–166, 177–189. Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

Gause contends that “holiness of life is the primary manifestation of the Holy Spirit filled life.” He holds that it is in the experience of Spirit-baptism that love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5) and that we become part of “an organism whose life source is love . . . the body of Christ.”<sup>58</sup>

Macchia’s understanding of Spirit-baptism parallels Gause’s in several respects including his association of it with indwelling as well as empowering: “Spirit baptism is a divine act that changes us . . . into God’s dwelling place and an experience of this divine possession and infilling that releases the Spirit as a potent force in the life of the believer.”<sup>59</sup> For Macchia, as for Gause, Spirit-baptism is both communal and personal. Macchia does not separate holiness, i.e., sanctification, from Spirit-baptism, and, in fact, suggests that such a distinction “can only be sustained through a reductionistic understanding of sanctification.”<sup>60</sup> Macchia concludes that since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love, “Spirit baptism is a baptism into divine love.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Gause, 123, 188.

<sup>59</sup>Macchia, *Baptized*, 84.

<sup>60</sup>Macchia, *Baptized*, 84.

<sup>61</sup>Macchia, *Baptized*, 258.

Another major Pentecostal scholar Amos Yong has looked at Pentecostal theology through the lens of love as well. For Yong, the *sine qua non* of Pentecostalism—the baptism in the Holy Spirit—cannot be understood apart from the love of God, as understood in the dual sense of “God is love” and “love is God,” the implication being that love is the imprint of God wherever it is manifest, whether inside or outside the church.<sup>62</sup> In other words, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is essentially a “baptism of love” poured out on all flesh.

Pentecostals’ current emphasis on love in relation to Spirit-baptism is in line with the thought of some of the earliest Pentecostals who saw it in terms of both the fruit of the Spirit and the charisms. Robeck has suggested that William Seymour, the central figure of the Azusa Street revival (1906–1908), would in time reject glossolalia as “the Bible evidence” of Spirit-baptism and come to insist on love as its true evidence.<sup>63</sup> In the first issue of the Azusa Street periodical, an early recipient of the experience described it in terms of love, namely, a “baptism

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<sup>62</sup>Amos Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2012). Cf. Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

<sup>63</sup>Cecil Robeck, Jr., “William J. Seymour and ‘the Bible Evidence,’” in *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. Gary McGee, 72–95 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991). Cf. Renea Brathwaite, “Tongues and Ethics: William J. Seymour and the ‘Bible Evidence’: A Response to Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.,” *Pneuma* 32 (2010): 203–222.

of love.”<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Patti Gallagher Mansfield, participant in the Duquesne Weekend (1967) that marked the beginning of the Catholic Renewal, describes Spirit-baptism in terms of love, by quoting Romans 5:5.<sup>65</sup>

The doctrinal commission of International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) describes Spirit-baptism as a grace by which lives are transformed. The effects are multitude including supernatural boldness and joy in the face of danger and persecution, signs and wonders, glossolalic and prophetic charisms, and deep communion with other Christians characterized by “a unity of heart that goes far beyond the limits of common interests, compatible personalities, or shared socio-economic background.” For the ICCRS, “although Pentecost is a unique, paradigmatic event for the Church, it is also a grace that is continually renewed and deepened.”<sup>66</sup> For those in the Catholic Renewal, Spirit-baptism is “to be filled with the Love that eternally flows between Father and Son in the Holy Trinity, a love that changes people at the deepest level of their being and makes them capable of loving God in return.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>*The Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles, Calif.), September 1906, 1.

<sup>65</sup>“Patti Gallagher Mansfield's Address at Vigil,” *Zenit*, June 4, 2006. *Zenit*, <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/patti-gallagher-mansfield-s-address-at-vigil>

<sup>66</sup>ICCRS Doctrinal Commission, *Baptism*, 40.

<sup>67</sup>ICCRS Doctrinal Commission, *Baptism*, 65.

Another prominent Pentecostal scholar Dale Coulter has drawn attention to “the connection between pneumatology, sanctification, and the call to holiness at the center of the spiritualities” of the Pentecostal, Methodist, and Catholic traditions, calling it “a shared soteriological synergism that conceives of salvation as participation in the triune life through the liberating effects of the Spirit.”<sup>68</sup>

Since half of American Evangelicals and a quarter of American Catholics identify themselves as charismatic if not in name at least in practice,<sup>69</sup> it seems warranted to use the Spirit-baptism metaphor as one that many Evangelicals and Catholics (as well as Charismatics in any tradition) might willingly consider as descriptive of Mary’s relation to the Holy Spirit. For these reasons, then, I propose to reflect on Mary in terms of the broad understanding of Spirit-baptism that includes indwelling, sanctification, and the spiritual fruit, in addition to empowerment and charismatic gifting. Further, in the interest of benefiting from Orthodox insights into pneumatology and soteriology, I attempt to think of

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<sup>68</sup>Dale M. Coulter, “Baptism, Conversion, and Grace: Reflections on the ‘Underlying Realities’ between Pentecostals, Methodists, and Catholics,” *Pneuma* 31, no. 2 (2009): 190 of 189–212.

<sup>69</sup>The Barna Group, Inc., “Is American Christianity Turning Charismatic?” January 7, 2008. Barna Group, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/congregations/52-is-american-christianity-turning-charismatic>.

Spirit-baptism also in terms of *theosis*, which is not the annihilation of human nature, but rather participation, or sharing, of human nature in the divine nature, or more personally, in the trinitarian life by the Spirit's indwelling.<sup>70</sup>

Viewing Mary through a Pentecostal lens helps to overcome the differences between the Evangelical and Catholic understandings of Mary. First, as one highly favored (having-been-graced) by God and, then, overshadowed by the Spirit, Mary is supernaturalized<sup>71</sup> such that, without the eradication of her human nature, she undergoes a transformation, first hidden, ultimately glorious, similar to Christ's own Transfiguration and glorification, thus becoming the

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<sup>70</sup>I use the term *theosis* in this first reference to the concept because *deification* or *divinization* is sometimes confused with apotheosis. Orthodox use the term *theosis* in reference to 2 Peter 1:4. I use all three terms interchangeably.

<sup>71</sup>I use the term *supernaturalized* in the same way that Matthias Scheeben spoke of the supernatural life, which is, as the life of God "that pours itself out into creation by virtue of the divine love." *Mariology*, trans. Theodore Geukers, 2 vols. (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1946), I.xix. See ch. 7 of this dissertation, especially 296n7. (This concept of *supernaturalization* is similar to the Eastern concept of *theosis*.) Henri de Lubac's questioning of the validity of the natural-supernatural duality in his *Surnaturel* (1946) has resulted in an important, on-going debate. Serge-Thomas Bonino, ed., *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought* (Ave Maria, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2009). To address the question as it might reflect on the present thesis would require at least another chapter; for that reason I will only say here that for Scheeben, "the supernatural action of the Holy Ghost did not exclude the cooperation of a maternal process in producing the humanity of Christ, or Christ himself, but rather explicitly intended it and directly brought it about" (*Mariology*, I.61). In other words, the supernaturalizing action of the Spirit upon humanity does not overpower human nature but rather accommodates it and promotes its free cooperation.

model of Spirit-indwelt humanity, analogous to Christ's Spirit-humanity. Mary's supernaturalization—her Spirit-baptism, sanctification, divinization, *theosis*—is prototypical of the eschatological fulfillment of all humanity docile to the Spirit of Christ.

#### “Mary Treasured All These Things in Her Heart”: Pneumatic Hermeneutic

In writing this thesis, along with using the scriptural and Pentecostal Spirit-baptism motif as a way by which to understand Mary from a pneumatological perspective, I use a hermeneutic similar to those Pentecostal scholars have articulated in recent years. I am also inspired by the method proposed by the Jesuit Thomist Bernard Lonergan that emphasizes the progressive nature of human understanding, which can eventually culminate in a conversion of love that enables persons to understand, assess, and, if deemed fitting, appropriate others' viewpoints, provided that, in their diligent pursuit of truth, they have first been willing to understand and assess their own perspective and to act accordingly.

#### *Amos Yong's Word-Spirit-Community Epistemology*

The sources of knowledge in Pentecostal epistemology are named by Amos Yong as Spirit-Word-Community and, similarly, by Kenneth Archer as



Spirit-Scripture-Community.<sup>72</sup> In Yong's triadic epistemology, Spirit indicates relationality, Word rationality, and Community dynamism. His hermeneutic is a trialectic involving the "continuous interplay of Spirit, Word, and Community." Against prioritizing one source over another, Yong proposes a matrix of overlapping and interconnecting negotiations of meaning to arrive at a trialogical re-imagination, or re-interpretation, of the encounter of God with self in the world. This re-interpretation is not absolute but rather provisional, i.e., "corrigible, fallibilistic, and open to further inquiry."<sup>73</sup>

The task of constructing an ecumenical understanding of Mary requires a theological hermeneutic such as Yong's as well as a method such as Lonergan's. It cannot be limited solely to what is written explicitly in Scripture (Word), for to do so would be to truncate what God says, just Mary herself could not have heard the angel's words for what they were—a word from God—had she confined her epistemology solely to the Scriptures of Israel. People of the Spirit must listen to the voice of the Spirit whenever, wherever, and however the Spirit speaks. *Contra sola scriptura* or reason alone or historicism alone, a Pentecostal

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<sup>72</sup>Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002); Kenneth Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture, and Community* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004).

<sup>73</sup>Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 138.

hermeneutic seeks to interpret the experience of the people of God in every age through the illumination of the same Spirit who inspired the written Word and who continues to inspire its proper interpretation today.

In a Pentecostal hermeneutic, the three epistemological sources do not act independently but rather interdependently by the Spirit: (1) The Spirit interprets the Scripture, relating it to the tradition of the community faith and to our personal experience. (2) The Spirit interprets personal experience, relating it to the Scripture and to the tradition of the community. And (3) the Spirit interprets the tradition of the community of faith in the light of Scripture and of personal experience. The same Spirit who empowers persons and communities of diverse traditions to seek mutual understanding and theological consensus binds them together in their search for truth through the love of God that they share.

Perhaps the hermeneutic described here seems to prioritize the Spirit over the Word or give undue weight to personal experience or to tradition (which I define here, deliberately redundantly, as the communal memory of the common experience of a community of faith). In fact, I do prioritize the Spirit in the interpretative process because so often the role of the Holy Spirit is downplayed or overlooked. I also understand both experience and tradition in pneumatological terms. The Spirit mediates the believer's experience with God through Word and sacrament and in everyday encounters with nature, our

fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, and, indeed, all of God's children.

Evangelicals and Pentecostals, though they have not called their shared memories or common experiences tradition, now recognize them as such, the point being that Catholics and Orthodox need to recognize the presence of the tradition of Pentecostals and Evangelicals even as Pentecostals and Evangelicals need to recognize the activity of the Spirit's activity in the older traditions.<sup>74</sup>

Tradition itself is mediated by the Spirit. In fidelity to the principle of *sola scriptura*, Protestants have historically tended to think of tradition as primarily human invention or "innovation," but, more and more, Evangelicals are recognizing that tradition, like Scripture, is pneumatic. Although human persons are instrumental in its expression and transmission, it is the Holy Spirit who continues to speak to the people of God in and through it. In this sense, the Bible itself is the written, inspired tradition of Jewish and Christian experience. James Shelton speaks of tradition as "the Holy Spirit speaking to the church through

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<sup>74</sup>The various traditions have much to learn from each other, but quite honestly I do not see the scales as entirely balanced since a two-millennia tradition would appear in the natural at least to have more weight than a one- or three- or even five-hundred-year tradition. Please pardon my Catholic bias!

the church for the last two thousand years.”<sup>75</sup> The Orthodox also understand tradition in this pneumatological sense.<sup>76</sup>

### *Mary's Pneumatic Hermeneutic*

The hermeneutic I attempt to use might also be called a “Marian hermeneutic”<sup>77</sup> in that it is one that Mary herself used: “But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Luke 2:19; cf. 2:51).<sup>78</sup> The main

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<sup>75</sup>James B. Shelton, “The Miracles of Vatican II,” lecture, Men of the Upper Room, Church of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Tulsa, Okla., 2012.

<sup>76</sup>Kallistos, Bishop of Diokleia/Timothy Ware, “Tradition and Personal Experience in later Byzantine Theology,” *Eastern Churches Review* 3, no. 2 (1970), 131-141.

<sup>77</sup>Benedict XVI encourages scholars “to study the relationship between *Mariology and the theology of the word*. . . . Mary is the image of the Church in attentive hearing of the word of God, which took flesh in her. Mary also symbolizes openness to God and others; an active listening which interiorizes and assimilates, one in which the word becomes a way of life.” *Verbum domini (On the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church)*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, September 30, 2010 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010), §27. Andreas Hoeck says that Peter uses a Marian hermeneutic in his first speech in Acts. The speech demonstrates the apostles’ high degree of sensitivity to the scriptural authority, especially that of the ancient prophets. “The Apostolic Speeches in Acts and Seminary Teaching Methods” (paper presented at the Second Quinn Conference, University of St. Thomas at Saint Paul, Minn., June 9–11, 2011), 3 of 11.

<sup>78</sup>For John Henry Newman, “Mary is our pattern of Faith, both in the reception and in the study of Divine Truth. She does not think it enough to accept, she dwells upon it . . . first believing without reasoning, next from love

verb is “treasured” (*suntēreō*, to preserve together), the participle being “pondered” (*sumballō*, to guard together), the locus of the activity being the heart (indicating more than an intellectual exercise), and the object being the “sayings” (*rhēmata*), the Annunciation and subsequent events. Even when Mary does not always understand, she treasures all the events and ponders them in her heart.

Mary’s hermeneutic can also be understood in terms of Lonergan’s cognitive model of a thinking, choosing person, the four levels of consciousness in such a person being experience, understanding, judging, and decision. In Mary’s case, as she struggles to understand the unique, revelational experiences that she undergoes, there is a constant internal dialogue as she mulls them over, arranging and rearranging them in her mind, trying to grasp their significance, then evaluating them in terms of what they demand, how to act in response to them. Finally, there is the decision stage when, after understanding and judging, the person decides to act, as Mary did when she said, “Let it be to me according

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and reverence, reasoning after believing. And thus she symbolizes to us, not only the faith of the unlearned, but of the doctors of the Church also, who have to investigate, and weigh, and define, as well as to profess the Gospel.” “The Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrine,” in *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford between A.D. 1826 and 1843* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1900), 313. Sally Cunneen also points out Newman’s appreciation of Mary’s “reliance on observation and judgment as well as her ability to live with ambivalence.” “Breaking Mary’s Silence: A Feminist Reflection on Marian Piety,” *Theology Today* 56, no. 3 (1999): 323 of 319–335.

to your word.” According to Lonergan, it is in such decision-making that a person arrives at a level of self-transcendence and achieves authenticity. I see Mary as modeling this kind of theological thinking and living.

Further, in Mary’s view, as in the gospel writers’, to grasp the significance of the events that happened to her, they had to be interpreted in light of the Scriptures, which in Mary’s time were the Hebrew Scriptures (consider, for example, her dependence on the Psalms in the *Magnificat*). This is the same approach the post-resurrection Christ used when expounding the Scriptures to the two on the road to Emmaus and later to the apostles in the Upper Room (Luke 24:27, 44–46). Therefore, I attempt to look at Mary through the same lens that she, Jesus, and the gospel writers used, the Hebrew Scriptures. This was, in fact, until the Enlightenment, essentially the same way the church itself has historically interpreted the Scriptures. So, in addition to looking at the key narratives in the Christian Scriptures about Mary, I endeavor to be sensitive not only to the insights of historical criticism but also to the types that illuminate Mary, since only as we consider her in light of her Son who fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17–18) are we able to interpret her properly.

This Marian hermeneutic has an epistemology that corresponds closely with that of Amos Yong and other Pentecostal scholars: experiential/pneumatic (Spirit), scriptural/rational (Word), and traditional/communal (Community). If

the Church is indeed the community of faith through which we today can hear what the Spirit has been saying for the last two millennia, then its tradition has an epistemological value that cannot be ignored without quenching the Spirit. If we, as an ecumenical family, seek to achieve a fuller mutual understanding of Mary, then we need to listen to what the Spirit has led the Church to understand about Mary rather than clinging solely to the letter of the Scriptures. This is the rationale behind chapters 5–7 which summarize this 2,000-year tradition of linking Mary with the Spirit.

Mary's hermeneutic is pneumatic as she relies not so much on her own intellect but on the illumination of the Holy Spirit, constantly seeking to learn from the words and deeds of others and from the events as they unfold, all the while remaining humble, admitting when she does not understand, yet always seeking to understand. That is why, on the one hand, she accepts by faith Gabriel's pronouncement as divine revelation, as the very oracles of God while, on the other, she ponders and probes. In pneumatological terms, she hears the angelic words as the voice of God's Spirit in her heart, interpreting this revelation in light of the Scriptures of Israel and the tradition of the Jewish community of faith to which she belongs.

Intrinsic to that hermeneutic, whether consciously recognized or not, is the profound effect that the tradition in which the faith of the hermeneut has

been cultivated has on the interpretation. For most Pentecostals, it is the Evangelical as well as the Pentecostal tradition that typically influences their interpretation. For Charismatics, the tradition varies according to the particular church or community of faith with which they are affiliated. In Mary's case, it is her Jewish understanding of the promised Messiah that forms the basis of her initial interpretation of who her Son is and what his messianic mission will be. Gabriel himself refers to this tradition in recalling God's promise of a king of the house of David whose reign will have no end (Luke 1:32–33; 2 Sam. 7:12–13, 16; Psa. 89:4; 132:11; Isa. 9:6–7; 16:5). However, since it soon becomes evident that her Son's kingship will not be the kind that the Jews had historically envisioned—"my kingdom is not of this world," as Jesus eventually explains (John 18:36)—Mary learns to rely increasingly on the voice of the Spirit as she hears it through the words of her Son and in her own heart as she ponders these things. In time, by observing the direction in which the Spirit is directing her Son's life, Mary slowly begins to glimpse the true nature of Jesus' kingship. It is neither Scripture alone nor the tradition of the Jewish community alone, nor is it her personal experience alone that informs Mary. Her own powers of reasoning and understanding are inadequate for the task, as Luke repeatedly makes clear. Rather it is by illumination of the Spirit upon and through her experience in light of Scripture, tradition, and reason as it aligns with that unpredictable "new



thing” that the Spirit is always doing that Mary eventually realizes the true meaning of her Son’s mission and her own calling within that mission.

*Bernard Lonergan’s Widening Horizons and Conversion*

Mary’s experience demonstrates Lonergan’s point that an authentic hermeneutic must take into account the gradually unfolding nature of human understanding. Understanding, or reason, is one aspect of the hermeneutical process that, though sometimes not explicitly stated, is integral to the interpretative task. The progressive nature of human understanding of divine revelation related to what Newman called the development of doctrine.<sup>79</sup> It is Lonergan’s underlying point in his *Insight*.<sup>80</sup> The first step toward authentic understanding is the “personal appropriation of one’s own rational self-consciousness.”<sup>81</sup> Once that has been achieved, the search for truth takes place through a series of questions and insights. Whenever an insight is gained, it is then examined for authenticity; once the insight is judged authentic, the

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<sup>79</sup>John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

<sup>80</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, 1992).

<sup>81</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, 746.

hermeneut then has the task of rethinking her position based on the new insight, which then, in turn, brings up still more questions. Lonergan's point is that the quest for truth, i.e., for a correct interpretation not only of Scripture but of the events throughout history and in our own life and times, involves continuous adjustments to our thinking as new insights bring the truth into ever clearer, sharper focus. As our horizons widen, so does our understanding.

Lonergan's concept of ever expanding horizons in *Method in Theology* helps to conceptualize what must happen for those in different traditions to come to a place that they can begin to understand each other's viewpoints regarding Mary or any other point of disagreement. Lonergan speaks of this process as a dialectic, i.e., "a generalized apologetic conducted in an ecumenical spirit, aiming ultimately at a comprehensive viewpoint, and proceeding towards that goal by acknowledging differences, seeking their grounds real and apparent, and eliminating superfluous oppositions."<sup>82</sup> Such is the aim of the effort undertaken here.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, 1990), 130.

<sup>83</sup>René Laurentin calls the different portrayals of Mary given by the biblical authors as a "biblical pluralism . . . [that] can broaden our field of vision . . . [and] lead to an open-minded re-appraisal of a fullness of light transcending the bounds of our individual horizons. The light may come to us through different intermediaries: Paul, Luke, John, but it has only one original source

Also helpful is Heiko Oberman's point that as a part of the task of broadening horizons, theologians need to hold themselves accountable to the "brethren," i.e., the community of believers, not limiting "brethren" to the members of their own ecclesial affiliation but rather extending it to "all baptized Christians and baptizing communities, the Christian Churches."<sup>84</sup> Like Lonergan, Oberman is essentially calling for a conversion of the heart toward our separated brothers and sisters, to include rather than exclude one another.

For Lonergan, dialectic suggests the possibility not only of a progression of thought, development in doctrine, or widening of horizon, but a total transformation involving a radical "change in course and direction . . . as if one's eyes were opened and one's former world faded and fell away." From such a transformation, Lonergan says, "emerges something new that fructifies in interlocking, cumulative sequences of developments on all levels and in all departments of human living." The radical type of conversion that Lonergan envisions is one that "affects all of a man's conscious and intentional operations . . . [that] directs his gaze, pervades his imagination, releases the symbols that

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shining through our differing cultures and denominations: the only Holy Spirit." "Pluralism about Mary: Biblical and Contemporary," in *Mary and Ecumenism: Papers of the 1981 International Congress of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, ed. James Walsh (London: The Way, 1982), 91.

<sup>84</sup> Oberman, "Evangelical Perspective," 273.

penetrate to the depths of his psyche . . . enriches his understanding, guides his judgments, reinforces his decisions.” This kind of conversion is requisite for ecumenists whose endeavors exceed the capacities of their initial horizons and who eventually realize that merely widening their horizons will be inadequate for the task they have undertaken. Once they come to the realization that their intellectual, moral, and/or spiritual commitments are insufficient, they must decide whether to take the leap into radical conversion.<sup>85</sup>

Such a conversion, Lonergan would insist, is not, first and foremost, a decision of the will. It is a God-given grace. Nevertheless, to appropriate that grace a person must first be open to receive it. Such a conversion involves a change of mind and, more importantly, a change of heart. Lonergan speaks of it as falling in love, specifically, falling in love with God. In the process, not only the theological task but the theologians’ entire frame of reference is revolutionized, challenging them to rethink their presuppositions and to reconsider what in the past they have summarily dismissed or simply ignored. For Lonergan, being in love with God produces such a radical conversion that there are no “limits or qualifications or conditions or reservations.”<sup>86</sup> Though

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<sup>85</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, 161.

<sup>86</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, 106.

such a conversion sounds rash, even dangerous, Lonergan emphasizes the importance of first making sound judgments. The implication is that we should not commit ourselves to such a radical change without first undergoing a thorough questioning and assessment process because, obviously, the point is not change for change's sake, but change for truth's sake and, yes, for love's sake. To consent to undergo such a conversion can be described as similar to Mary's unconditional yes to the word that she received from the angel.

In an ecumenical quest to understand Mary, as in the Evangelicals' and Catholics' search to find a measure of consensus about Mary, such conversion may well be necessary. As theologians from the different traditions, we need, if not a total conversion, at least a widening of our horizons, a willingness to put aside our personal preferences and preconceptions long enough to be able to comprehend each other's point of view. Only when we create space in our own minds to think, or at least imagine, the way the other thinks will we be able to achieve consensus or at least some measure of mutual understanding. Further, I might add, only when we ask God to enlarge our hearts to be receptive to our separated brothers and sisters in Christ will we be in a position to experience the full outpouring of God's love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5) that can convert us into persons like Mary who say yes to God unconditionally and who seek his truth unreservedly, regardless of the cost.

Inevitably, the theological conclusions reached in a hermeneutical process will only be provisional,<sup>87</sup> though not in the sense that truth itself is provisional or variable, but only in the sense that a person's or a community's capacity for understanding or ability to articulate truth always falls short. This is the case since human intellect and language are finite and consequently incapable of fully grasping and expressing infinite truth. However, these limitations need not discourage us but rather spur us to continuously pursue an ever fuller, more accurate grasp of God's truth (Hos. 6:3; John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:9–16; 13:12; 2 Cor. 5:7).

The Pentecostal hermeneutic is similar in some ways to the kind of hermeneutic that the advocates of *ressourcement* promoted. *Ressourcement* entails a return to the sources—Scripture, tradition, and spirituality—that prioritizes experience and faith including belief in the supernatural over that form of intellectualism that, in contrast, prioritizes empiricism and rigid historicity.

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<sup>87</sup>Catholic Church, International Theological Commission, "Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria," *Origins* 41, no. 40 (March 15, 2012): 641–661. Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 138. Drawing from C. S. Peirce, Yong speaks of the provisional nature of theological propositions as fallibilism: "All theological claims are fallible at worst and partial at best, subject to the ongoing quest driven by the pneumatological imagination. Yong, "The Hermeneutical Triad: Notes Toward a Consensual Hermeneutic and Theological Method," *Heythrop Journal* 45 (2004): 33. Yong, "The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of Truth: What Evangelicals Can Learn from C. S. Peirce," *Christian Scholar's Review* 29, no. 3 (2000): 570–571.

While the canon of Scripture held by Catholics differs from that of Evangelicals, who tend to follow the Reformers in this respect, both view the Scriptures as Spirit-inspired. Admittedly, some biblical scholars from both traditions place a higher value on empirical historicity than others, but historicity is only one of the criteria used to establish the interpretation of the biblical writings to the modern church. The Scriptures themselves emphasize that interpretation of Scripture must be based on the illumination that the Holy Spirit bestows.<sup>88</sup>

Raneiro Cantalamessa, preacher for the papal household since John Paul II, calls for a pneumatic hermeneutic, namely, a spiritual reading of the Scriptures that considers both the meaning intended by the human author and that intended by the divine.<sup>89</sup> He recalls the writer of 2 Timothy using the Greek *theopneustos* (God-breathed, 2 Tim. 3:16) to refer to the theandric nature of

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<sup>88</sup>Balthasar sees Christ as God's own exegesis of himself, i.e., the one who makes God known through the incarnation (John 1:18). The Holy Spirit interprets Christ to humanity in every age in a way that is ever new, yet ever the same. Hans Urs von Balthasar, "God Is His Own Exegete," *Communio* 13, no. 4 (1986): 280–287.

<sup>89</sup>Raneiro Cantalamessa, "'Scripture Breathes Forth God': 4th Lenten Sermon of Father Cantalamessa," *Zenit*, March 14, 2008, [6 p.]. Online <http://www.zenit.org/article-22059?l=english>. It is this same type of reading to which Francis Martin and Clark Pinnock refer. See, e.g., Martin, "Spirit and Flesh in the Doing of Theology," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18 (2001): 5–31. Pinnock, "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1993): 3–23.

Scripture, not only pointing to a dual authorship (human and divine) but also calling for a dual reading (literal and spiritual) of the text. Such a reading is one that looks not only back on the Hebrew Scriptures but also forward to what the Holy Spirit has continued to do and say in the church up to the present.

Referring to Lubac's words written prior to Vatican II that it would take a "spiritual movement" to allow the church today to retrieve the spiritual exegesis practiced by the early Christian theologians,<sup>90</sup> Cantalamessa says:

Looking back at these words after some decades and with Vatican II between us, it seems to me that they are prophetic. That 'spiritual movement' and that 'élan' have begun to resurface, but not because men have programmed or foreseen them, but because from the four winds the Spirit has begun unexpectedly to blow again upon the dried up bones. Contemporaneously with the reappearance of the gifts, we also witness the reappearance of the spiritual reading of the Bible and this too is a fruit—one of the more exquisite—of the Spirit.

Cantalamessa describes the kind of scriptural reading I attempt here, one that recognizes Christ and his mother in the Scriptures and that listens to what the Spirit has continued to say about them throughout the centuries. This is the kind of interpretation that Cantalamessa refers to in describing what he hears while participating in Bible study groups:

I am stupefied in hearing, at times, reflections on God's word that are analogous to those offered by Origen, Augustine or Gregory the Great in

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<sup>90</sup>Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 2, *The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. E. M. Macierowski (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 193.



their time, even if it is in a more simple language. The words about the temple, the ‘tent of David,’ about Jerusalem destroyed and rebuilt after the exile, are applied, in all simplicity, to the Church, to Mary, to one's own community and personal life.<sup>91</sup>

In this spiritual exegesis emerging from the scriptural reflections of the lay faithful can be discerned a move of the Spirit that is freeing them from the limits of scientific and historical criticism to allow them to receive a living word from the Spirit of God to the Church and the world of today.

#### “All These with One Accord”: An Ecumenical Mary

I have attempted to design the methodology of this dissertation to be consistent with the motivations and impulses that have led to its writing. The two driving motivations are, as may be evident by now, Renewalism and ecumenism, since when I became Catholic, I did not leave my Pentecostalism behind, and my longing for Christian unity only grew stronger as I experienced firsthand the pain that the divisions in the church bring, especially for those who dare to cross the bridges that ecumenism purports to build. As for the underlying impulses, the first I will mention here is my love for the Scriptures—both the Hebrew and the Christian, for I believe the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be the God and Father of Jesus Christ—and for the tradition through

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<sup>91</sup>Raneiro Cantalamessa, “Scripture Breathes Forth God.”

which the voice of the Spirit has been heard over the centuries. The second is my desire to marry my spirituality to my theology, in order that it may be fruitful, and third is the desire to remain open to conversion, that is, like Mary, to make every effort to respond to the voice of the Spirit as spoken to this present generation, as well as to past generations, regardless of the cost.

### *Motivations*

The two primary driving motivations behind this dissertation are Renewalism and ecumenism. Beginning with my upbringing as a classical Pentecostal, then being privileged to be a participant in the Charismatic Movement, followed by a lifelong attempt to live by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25), I see Renewal as central to everything I do, including and especially theology. Directly related to this commitment to Renewalism is my love for the church and longing for Christian unity. Long before becoming Catholic, I came to realize that the church is much bigger than I had ever imagined. Once my heart was opened to the church universal, I began to long for Christian unity. The songs of unity sung during the early days of the Charismatic Movement still ring in my heart:

We are one in the Spirit,  
We are one in the Lord . . .  
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love.  
 Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.<sup>92</sup>

Clearly, Lonergan's call to a conversion of love is essential not only for finding consensus about Mary but also for the entire ecumenical effort.

Admittedly, the attempt to find a Mary we can all love and honor together is no easy task. Lonergan underscores the difficulty of overcoming cultural inheritances in ecumenical undertakings. He explains that sooner or later dialogues reach a stopping point since participants' traditions ultimately present seemingly impassable divergences. Though dialogue partners can achieve a degree of respect for the other's position, they still consider it wrong. Understanding this helps me to be more realistic about what an attempt such as this can achieve. Nevertheless, Lonergan's frequent reminders of the key role of conversion in the theological process are, in themselves, an admission that, provided people are receptive and willing, the Spirit of God can and does change hearts and minds despite what, humanly speaking, are insurmountable cultural impassés.

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<sup>92</sup>Peter Scholtes. "Peter Scholtes," *The Ancient Star Song: Music of the Jesus Music Era*. Online: <http://www.theancientstar-song.com/2007/05/peter-scholtes/>. Accessed January 18, 2014.

### *Impulses*

In addition to these two major motivations are three other impulses that I wish to govern the approach that I am taking. One is the desire to ground any attempt at theological construction not on the *Zeitgeist* but on the treasures of the church. Theologians should be like the wise scribe whom Jesus described as drawing from his storehouse treasures both old and new (Matt. 13:52). A term for this approach was coined by theologians of the so-called school of *la nouvelle théologie, ressourcement*, mentioned earlier. It is “a return to the sources,” i.e., to the Scriptures and to patristics. My own interest in *ressourcement* has nothing to do with a reaction against neo-Scholasticism as apparently was the case of the first proponents of *ressourcement*. Rather it is based on the recognition of the foundational place that Scripture has in Christian theology as well as the appreciation I have acquired for the church fathers and other sources of the great tradition through exposure to the works of Thomas Oden and others. I have come to realize that the Scriptures must be interpreted not only through the lens of the church today but through that of the church of the last two thousand years.<sup>93</sup> To disregard what the church has said for the last 2,000 years is, in effect,

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<sup>93</sup>Walter Brueggeman defines hermeneutic as “a proposal for reading reality through a certain lens.” “II Kings 18–19: The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 7, no. 1 (1985): 22 of 1–42. An

to disregard the voice of the Holy Spirit throughout that time or else to suggest that the Holy Spirit stopped speaking during that time. I make this point not to deny the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ, but rather to recall what Christ told his disciples before his departure: that though he still had many things to tell them, they could not bear them yet, but when the Spirit of truth came, he would guide them into all truth (John 16:12–13).

The second impulse is the desire to keep theology and spirituality together, that is, to do theology on my knees, as von Balthasar called it (“kneeling theology”), and as Wainwright described it (“doing the theological task in a liturgical perspective”).<sup>94</sup> Anselm referred to it as “faith seeking understanding.” It is the recognition that faith and reason are both integral to theology. Lonergan speaks of it as a synthesis: “If one is not to affirm reason at the expense of faith or faith at the expense of reason, one is called upon both to produce a synthesis that unites two orders of truth and to give evidence of a

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ecumenical hermeneutic then would be one that can use different lenses as needed.

<sup>94</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar warns of “theology at prayer” being superseded by “theology at the desk.” “Theology and Sanctity,” in his *Explorations in Theology*, vol. 1, *The Word Made Flesh* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 208 of 181–209. Geoffrey Wainwright, *Orthodoxy: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life: A Systematic Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 5.

successful symbiosis of two principles of knowledge.”<sup>95</sup> In other words, reason alone is inadequate for the theological task; nevertheless, although faith always has precedence, reason is still essential since it is a God-given aspect of our humanity, an integral part of the *imago dei* that makes us unique in creation.

Finally, the third impulse is a “Yes” to the call to conversion of mind and heart. This involves continuous repentance: the recognition of the constant need to repent in terms of our attitude toward each other, particularly our lack of humility and charity that makes us think that we are better than the other, or at least that we know better than the other.

The Marian problematic, as Congar so accurately assessed it, cannot be resolved simply by attaining a degree of theological consensus regarding her. It requires “conversion,” a change of mind *and* heart. Intellectually, it involves rejection of neglect on the one hand and excess on the other. Spiritually, it involves *rapprochement*, cultivating friendships, praying together, and listening to each other’s viewpoints in “a spirit free of rancor, distrust, prejudice, and narrow-mindedness.”<sup>96</sup> Lonergan speaks of love preceding knowledge and of

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<sup>95</sup>Lonergan, *Insight*, 754–755.

<sup>96</sup>Congar, “Conquering,” 108–109.

the role it plays in ecumenism.<sup>97</sup> It is God's love for us and ours for God that inspires our love for each other and motivates us to seek common ground on which to build intellectual consensus with those from whom we have been separated for centuries. Before becoming Benedict XVI, Ratzinger called for a change of heart toward those with whom we differ. For Ratzinger, Christian unity requires more than reason:

It presupposes spiritual experience, penance and conversion. . . . It begins quite concretely by overcoming mutual mistrust, the sociologically rooted defensive attitude against what is strange, belonging to another, and that we constantly take the Lord, whom after all we are seeking, more seriously than we take ourselves. He is our unity, what we have in common—no, who is the one who is common to and in all denominations.<sup>98</sup>

Ratzinger's reference to Jesus as the focal point of Christian unity leads to the question as to whether Mary too can become a point of unity. I would argue, yes, Mary can *if* Catholics and Evangelicals will listen to each other's heart – in the spirit of her own pondering in her heart – about what they believe about her and why and *if* they will listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking through their beloved, though “separated,” brothers and sisters in Christ. It will require a deliberate effort on the part of both to seek and find together an authentic basis

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<sup>97</sup>Lonergan, *Method*, 122–123.

<sup>98</sup>Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger), “What Unites and Divides Denominations? Ecumenical Reflections” *Communio* 1, no. 2 (1972): 119.

on which to jointly honor Mary as mother of the incarnate Son of God and, in some nuanced sense at least, their shared mother in the faith and exemplar of life in the Spirit.

### *Methodology*

In this dissertation, I attempt to allow these motivations and impulses to guide me as I write. Following this introductory chapter comes the first major section (chapters 2–4) which is an analysis of what the gospels (Matthew, Luke, and John) say about Mary, especially in relation to the Spirit. The next major section (chapters 5–7) is an analysis of some reflections on Mary and the Spirit by theologians selected from the fourth century to the twentieth (chapter 5–7). Chapter 5 focuses on Ephrem of Syria of the fourth century, Jacob of Serugh of the fifth, and Ildefonsus of Toledo of the seventh. Chapter 6 focuses on Hugh of Saint-Victor, Amadeus of Lausanne, and Hildegard of Bingen, all of the twelfth century, and chapter 7 reviews the Marian views of Matthias Scheeben of the nineteenth century and Sergius Bulgakov and Heribert Mühlen of the twentieth. The study illustrates that while Mary's relation to Christ was the more dominant theme throughout church history, major theologians over the centuries also recognized the importance of Mary's relation to the Spirit. Not only was Mary



the mother of Jesus but she was closely connected to the Spirit and dependent on the Spirit.

Then, based on the insights gleaned from those studies, I attempt a constructive theology of Mary from a pneumatological perspective, or what might be called a Spirit-Mariology (chapter 8), concluding with a consideration of its potential to bring better understanding of the pastoral significance of Spirit-baptism and the practical implications a Spirit-baptized Mary has for the status of women and mothers, families and parenting, and women in ministry. My overall purpose is to offer a way that Evangelicals and Catholics can think together about Mary. It is an invitation to make a conscious decision to open our minds and hearts to each other and to each other's way of thinking in the attempt to find together the truth about Mary and what she can show us about living together in the unity, power, and love of the Holy Spirit.

## Chapter 2

### Mary and the Spirit According to Matthew

Evangelicals and Catholics agree that reflection on Mary, the mother of Jesus, must begin with Scripture.<sup>1</sup> While my treatment of the biblical Mary is limited primarily to those passages that refer to her explicitly, I occasionally refer to other passages in the effort to provide the fuller biblical context. In this chapter, I examine what Matthew says about Mary, focusing particularly on the passages that may give insight into her relation to the Spirit. In the third chapter I discuss Luke's perspective, including insights from Acts since Luke's gospel cannot be understood apart from the context of the entire Lukan corpus. Then, in the fourth chapter, I cover the Johannine perspective of Mary, including both the gospel and Revelation 12.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"The study of the sacred Scriptures . . . must be the soul of Mariology." Catholic Church, *Virgin Mary in Formation*, §24. Geoffrey Wainwright, "Mary in Relation to the Doctrinal and Spiritual Emphases in Methodism," *One in Christ: A Catholic Ecumenical Review* 11, no. 2 (1975): 141–142.

<sup>2</sup>Many scholars see the Johannine gospel and epistles as related to Revelation by their author(s) and/or by the community from which they emerged. E.g., Raymond Brown, Karl Donfried, Joseph Fitzmyer, and John Reumann, eds., *Mary in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 180. John Christopher Thomas, *The Apocalypse: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Cleveland, Tenn.: CPT Press, 2012), 50, 51. Ben Witherington, *Revelation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

In an examination of Mary in relation to the Spirit as revealed in the gospels, Acts, and Revelation, the highest priority must be given to the Lukan and Johannine perspectives, since theirs provide the most insight into that relationship. However, the order here is that of the canonical gospels, beginning with Matthew, which links Mary to the Spirit directly by pointing out that her conception of Jesus is not of man but of the Spirit. Due to space constraints I cannot include my study of the Markan Mary, so let me simply observe that Mark makes no reference to Christ's nativity. He treats Mary as one of the members of Jesus' family who does not understand his mission and whose motivation is more familial than spiritual. Mark's contribution is nevertheless significant in that he helps to establish an underlying principle for understanding Mary: the priority of the spiritual over the natural. Luke's contribution, which has the most direct significance to the present thesis, is in emphasizing an explicit link between Mary and the Spirit through the use of the same language for Mary at the Annunciation that was used in Acts to describe the effect of the Spirit on believers at Pentecost.<sup>3</sup> In John's gospel, though his pneumatological

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<sup>3</sup>Compare the key passages: "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you*, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Luke 1:35, emphasis added) and "You will receive power when *the Holy Spirit has come upon you*" (Acts 1:8, my emphasis). Not only do both passages refer to the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the recipient(s) but both also refer to power. See also Luke 24:49 and Acts 11:15.

inferences are more subtle, he not only affirms Luke's contribution but expands it theologically.

Throughout, in addition to considering the conclusions of modern historical critics, I attempt to interpret the relevant Christian Scriptures in light of the Hebrew Scriptures and the early tradition of the church, and, in connection with the Matthean genealogy, rabbinical midrash. Always, the goal is to understand the biblical data about Mary so as to have a scriptural foundation on which to base an understanding of her relation to the Spirit.

#### Orientation to Matthew

In Matthew's gospel, he focuses on Joseph rather than Mary as the primary act-or. Though insistent that Joseph is not Jesus' natural father, Matthew seeks to demonstrate that Jesus has a legal claim to the Davidic throne through his adoption by Joseph, "son of David" (1:20).<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, Daniélou asserts that Matthew begins his gospel with an infancy narrative not to establish the Virgin Birth in itself, since that was already an accepted tradition in the community of faith prior to the writing of his gospel,<sup>5</sup> but rather to establish that,

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<sup>4</sup>Jean Daniélou, *The Infancy Narratives*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 51.

<sup>5</sup>Daniélou, *Infancy Narratives*, 42. He says the same of Luke.

despite the Virgin Birth, that is, even though Jesus is not related to David by blood, he still has a valid claim to messiahship.

Besides seeking to validate Jesus' Davidic ancestry, Matthew is interested in establishing Jesus' divinity by asserting that his conception is "of the Holy Spirit," that is, not of man but of God. To give weight to this assertion, Matthew points out the divine implications of the two names he applies to Jesus: (1) Immanuel ("God with us") assigned by Isaiah (Isa. 7:14), and (2) Jesus ("God saves") prescribed by Gabriel (1:21) and given by Joseph.<sup>6</sup>

Despite focusing primarily on Joseph, Matthew makes a significant contribution to Marian thought. This is seen most uniquely in his genealogy in which he alludes to five women, the final one being Mary, "of whom Jesus was born" (1:16). Mary is the only woman in Matthew's genealogy that he presents as the mother *of* her son in contrast to the other women whose sons are said to be born *of* their father and *by* their mother (1:3, 5).

Of further Marian import in Matthew is the guardianship role that Joseph assumes in assenting to be Mary's husband (1:16, 20, 24) and father to her child (1:21, 25). Joseph's calling is primarily supportive: to protect Mary and her child. Matthew suggests this by identifying Joseph not only as the son of his father, as

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<sup>6</sup>Daniélou, *Infancy Narratives*, 51.

are all the other men in the genealogy, but also as the husband of his wife (1:16).

Of all the men in this genealogy, or in any genealogy in the Hebrew Scriptures, only Joseph is designated this way.

### Genealogy (1:1–17)

The Matthean genealogy begins with a summary statement regarding Jesus' origin, "the son of David, the son of Abraham" (v. 1) and concludes with an enumeration of the generations between Abraham and David and between David and "the Christ." By framing the genealogy in this way, Matthew points to Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham and David. Although the genealogy is Joseph's, Matthew specifies that the natural parentage belongs solely to Mary (v. 16).

In Matthew's genealogy, like all biblical genealogies, the fathers predominate, but, unlike the others, he includes five mothers. The first four can be understood as types of the mother of the Messiah<sup>7</sup> with Mary as the ultimate fulfillment since her child is both Messiah and God. Besides Mary, the mothers include Tamar (Judah's daughter-in-law), Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah

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<sup>7</sup>Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 293.

(Bathsheba). The names of the matriarchs—Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah—are omitted; only the women whose place in the genealogy is atypical are listed.

Although Matthew refrains from naming the matriarchs, at the mere mention of their husbands' names (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), their stories inevitably come to mind as anticipatory of Mary.<sup>8</sup> Abraham's wife Sarah<sup>9</sup> suffers from infertility, but God blesses her and promises her a son. Sarah as well as Abraham receives God's covenantal blessing.<sup>10</sup> In addition to bearing a son, God

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<sup>8</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2006), §591: "But it should be noted that all the miraculous conceptions which took place in the Old Testament were as a figure of that greatest of miracles which occurred in the incarnation. For it was necessary that His birth from the Virgin be prefigured by certain things, to prepare souls to believe. But it could not be prefigured by something equal, because a figure necessarily falls short of what is prefigured. Therefore, the Scripture shows the Virgin birth by the birth from sterile women, namely, Sarah, Anna, and Elizabeth. But there is a difference: because Sarah received the power to conceive from God miraculously, but from human seed; but in the Blessed Virgin He even prepared that most pure matter from her blood, and along with that, the power of the Holy Spirit was there in place of seed. For the Word was made flesh not from human seed but by a mystical spiration."

<sup>9</sup>According to the Babylonian Talmud, Sarah is one of seven prophetesses in the Hebrew Scriptures, along with Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Hulda, and Esther (Meg. 14a). In telling Abraham to heed all that Sarah says (Gen. 21:12), God indicates that she "looks with the eyes of vision," i.e., "discern[s] by the holy spirit" (R. Isaac). According to the rabbis, compared to Abraham, Sarah is more prophetically gifted (Exod. R. 1:1). Further, a pillar of cloud overshadows her tent (Gen. R. 60:16).

<sup>10</sup>David Steinmetz, "Mary Reconsidered," *Christianity Today*, December 5, 1975, 4.

promises, “she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her” (Gen. 17:16). Sarah’s impossible conception at age ninety anticipates Mary’s impossible virginal conception. Further, as mother of the son of promise and mother of nations and kings, Sarah anticipates Mary as mother of the Messiah and mother of God’s people.

The second of the matriarchs is Rebekah, whom the Scriptures portray as a woman of quick generosity, faith, and tenderness, who willingly leaves her father’s house at a moment’s notice to go to Isaac, her proposed bridegroom. Like Sarah, Rebekah waits years before conceiving; then, like Tamar after her, in answer to prayer, she conceives twins, Jacob and Esau. Rebekah contrives for Jacob, her favorite, to receive the blessing his father intends for Esau, his favorite, presumably to ensure that the word of the Lord be fulfilled, “the older shall serve the younger” (Gen. 25:23).

In the case of Leah, though Jacob’s first wife, she is, relatively speaking, unloved, her sister Rachel being Jacob’s first choice and favorite. Though Rachel, like Sarah and Rebekah, must wait many years before conceiving (Gen. 30), it is Leah’s son Judah whose line is chosen for future greatness. The matriarchs, like the patriarchs, though flawed, are clearly persons of faith; they conceive sons through whom God’s promises to Abraham will be fulfilled.



It is not the matriarchs, however, that Matthew chooses to emphasize as precursors to Mary but rather the lesser known women who are either foreigners or whose reputations have been tarnished.<sup>11</sup> Tamar, possibly a Canaanite, is the daughter-in-law of Judah (Leah's son), who denies her levirate right to marriage to his third and youngest son after the untimely deaths of her first two husbands (Judah's two elder sons). After returning childless to her father's house, Tamar resorts to subterfuge to rectify the injustice by disguising herself as a prostitute and stationing herself along a road where Judah will pass. Not recognizing her, Judah propositions her, and she consents, insisting he give her his signet, cord, and staff as pledge (Gen. 38; Jub. 41). When news of Tamar's pregnancy reaches Judah, he orders her death by fire; but when she produces his belongings as proof of his paternity, he admits the truth, declaring her more righteous than himself (Gen. 38:26). Aware of Jacob's prophecy concerning Judah (Gen. 49:10), the Genesis author inscripturates Tamar's story since she is instrumental in preserving the family line of Israel's future king.

Perhaps the most disreputable of the women in Matthew's genealogy is Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute and innkeeper in Jericho. Hearing of the miraculous passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, Rahab puts her faith in

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<sup>11</sup>Brown, *Mary in the New Testament*, 79–83.

the God of Israel (Josh. 2:10–11; Heb. 11:31; James 2:25). When the king of Jericho seeks to arrest the two Hebrew spies who have taken lodgings in her inn, she hides them on the roof, misleads the search party, and later smuggles the two over the wall to safety. In gratitude, Joshua ensures that Rahab and her household are preserved when Jericho falls (Josh. 6:17). In Matthew's genealogy, Rahab is named the mother of Boaz, who marries Ruth.

Ruth, a Moabite, is the widow of an Israelite whose family had migrated to Moab during a famine. After her husband's death, Ruth's loyalty to her widowed mother-in-law Naomi prompts her to accompany her to Judah. There, despite her alien status, Ruth wins the kindness of Naomi's kinsman Boaz, who redeems the land that once belonged to Naomi's husband and marries Ruth. In giving birth to Boaz's son Obed, Ruth becomes David's great grandmother.

The fourth woman in the genealogy is Bathsheba although Matthew refers to her only as the wife of Uriah the Hittite. If the Eliam who is one of David's warriors and the "son of Ahithophel the Gilonite," is the same Eliam named as Bathsheba's father, then she too may be a foreigner (2 Sam. 11:3; 23:34). Despite the adulterous affair with David, Bathsheba emerges as a woman of faith and strength. In collaboration with the prophet Nathan, she is instrumental in bringing her son Solomon to the throne, and accordingly ascends to the status of queen mother.

Why Matthew inserts these four women into Jesus' genealogy is a point of debate, but the most likely reason is that their stories set a precedent for Mary's own unusual circumstances.<sup>12</sup> Of particular interest here is the identification of these women by Jewish rabbis as instruments of "God's providence or of the Holy Spirit."<sup>13</sup> Concerning Rahab, Rabbah Ruth says that "the Holy Spirit rested on Rahab before the Israelites arrived in the Promised Land." Similarly, a midrash on Deuteronomy attributes Rahab's knowledge that those looking for the Hebrew spies would return in three days to "the holy spirit rest[ing] upon her" (22 on Deut. 1:24).<sup>14</sup> The rabbis acknowledge that only by the spirit could Rahab have had the faith, boldness, and wisdom to save the Hebrew spies. In

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<sup>12</sup>John Breck, "Mary in the New Testament," *Pro Ecclesia* 2, no. 4 (1993), 464. See also the analysis of Larry Lyke, "What Does Ruth Have to Do with Rahab? Midrash *Ruth Rabbah* and the Matthean Genealogy of Jesus," in *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition*, eds. Craig Sanders, and Craig Evans (Sheffield: Bloomsbury, 1998), 280–284.

<sup>13</sup>Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narrative in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, new ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 73. The spirit of God, obviously, would have been understood in the Hebrew sense, not in the Christian sense of the third person of the Trinity.

<sup>14</sup>*Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*, trans. Reuven Hammer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 44. Obviously, the Holy Spirit is understood neither by the church of Matthew's time nor by the Jews as a member of the Third Person of the Trinity, as Christians would later come to understand the Spirit.

Joshua, Rahab is noted particularly for the kindness (*hāsed*) with which she treats the spies (2:12).<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, I would suggest, Tamar's resolve to go to extraordinary lengths to conceive a child by Judah may be understood as one prompted by God's Spirit, although in her culture, as now, the means used is considered morally reprehensible. In a society in which a woman's life is perceived as worthless apart from offspring, however, her action can be understood as a choice of faith-filled initiative over hopeless passivity since by it not only is her rightful place in Judah's family restored but also the family line itself is preserved.

Ruth's circumstances are similar to Tamar's. The blessing that the elders give to Boaz when he commits himself to marry Ruth reflects that similarity: "May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah" (Ruth 4:12). What is perhaps most remarkable about Ruth is her loyalty to her mother-in-law. Even before returning to Judah, Naomi praises both Ruth and her sister-in-law Orpah for their kindness, *hesed* (1:8) to herself and to her sons.<sup>16</sup> After their return to Bethlehem, Boaz hears of Ruth's kindness to her mother-in-law, and seeing her gleaning in his field, is kind to her and blesses her, "The Lord repay

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<sup>15</sup>Elaine Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Meuchen: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 64.

<sup>16</sup>Ruth Rabbah 2:13. Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading*, 167.

you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, *under whose wings* you have come to take refuge!" (2:12, my emphasis). The same image is found in Psalm 36, where *hesed* is spoken of in terms of taking refuge under the shadow of God's wings (v. 7),<sup>17</sup> an image that evokes the angel's words to Mary, "The power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Luke 1:35).

Later, at the time of winnowing, following Naomi's counsel, Ruth lies down at Boaz's feet by night after he has fallen asleep on the threshing floor; and when he awakes at midnight, she asks him, "Spread your wings over your servant" (3:9). Ruth's reference to herself as servant brings to mind Mary's response to the angel in Luke, "I am the servant of the Lord" (Luke 1:38). As to the idiom "spread your wings," Ruth's request that Boaz extend the edge of his garment over her (Ezek. 16:8) has symbolic significance. While there may well be a sexual connotation, it is also an allusion to Boaz's earlier comment about Ruth's coming under the wings of Israel's God. As Ruth intends, Boaz interprets her words as a marriage proposal and responds positively, blessing her and extolling her kindness and virtue (3:10).

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<sup>17</sup>Ellen Davis, "Reading the Song Iconographically," in *Scrolls of Love: Reading Ruth and the Song of Songs*, eds. Peter Hawkins and Lesleigh Cushing Stahlberg, 172–184 (Bronx, N.Y.: Fordham University Press, 2006), 179.

The blessing the Bethlehem elders give to Boaz includes one for Ruth:

“May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel” (4:11). For the elders to envision for Ruth a role similar to that of the matriarchs is extraordinary in light of the prohibition against Moabites in the congregation of the Lord (Deut. 23:3).

What is most remarkable about Ruth is the *hesed*, the kindness and virtue of an ideal Jewish woman (Prov. 31:10) that she exhibits. From what resources does she draw to exhibit such character? The behavioral scientist might say she learned it from her godly mother-in-law or, alternatively, that by temperament she is naturally kind, but since in Scripture *hesed* is attributed to God, the implication is that it comes from God. If, as Josephine Massingberd Ford asserts, the Spirit is indeed the “‘personification’ of *hesed*,” then the Spirit can be said to be the source of the *hesed* manifested in Ruth’s life.<sup>18</sup> It is the Spirit that prompts Ruth to cleave to Naomi and convert to her God, engraving her so that her deeds exhibit *hesed*, the loving-kindness of God. Further, it is God’s Spirit that rewards her, making her a “mother of the Messiah.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Josephine Massingberd Ford, *The Spirit & the Human Person: A Meditation* (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum Press, 1969), 13–14.

<sup>19</sup>Jacob Neusner, *The Mother of the Messiah in Judaism: The Book of Ruth* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1993), 2. “So great is the grace that inheres in the Torah that even an outsider of an enemy nation, and even a

Significantly, the book of Ruth ends with a genealogy that begins with Perez—the elder of Tamar’s twins—and ends with David. In between are Boaz, who is Salmon’s son by Rahab, and Obed, who is Boaz’s son by Ruth, as well as others. Although the names of the mothers are not listed in Ruth’s genealogy (4:18–22), the fathers’ names match those in Matthew’s. For this reason, Matthew’s genealogy might be considered a midrash of Ruth’s that emphasizes the faith exhibited by these women in the midst of less-than-ideal circumstances and the grace of God that carves out a place for them in salvation history.

The wife of Uriah, like the other women, is a part of Jesus’ genealogy only by grace. Even though Nathan the prophet does not charge her with adultery but places primary blame on David (2 Sam. 11:27; 12:7–13),<sup>20</sup> she bears the penalty along with David: the loss of their first child. Despite this devastating loss, Bathsheba rises to a place of prominence in her husband’s kingdom and to an even higher one in her son’s. Matthew’s inclusion of Bathsheba and the other

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woman, take up the critical place in the drama of the coming of the Messiah” (129).

<sup>20</sup>Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading*, 64–65.

three women in the genealogy suggests that faith, not ethnic or moral purity, is the most essential quality required to be included in God's family.<sup>21</sup>

A discussion of Matthew's genealogy would be incomplete without contrasting it with Luke's (3:23–38). Whereas Matthew's genealogy goes back through David to Abraham, Luke's reaches as far back as Adam and even God. As Benedict XVI suggests, Luke's taking the genealogy back to the first man is a basis for identifying Jesus as the new Adam, for in him "humanity starts afresh."<sup>22</sup> The secondary implication is that Mary's conception of Jesus by the Spirit is thereby connected with the new creation,<sup>23</sup> and, consequently, in correlation with her son's identity as the new Adam, she is the new Eve, the mother of all who are spiritually alive, i.e., all who are a part of the new creation

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<sup>21</sup>The importance of moral purity, however, should not be denied since Matthew mentions Joseph's righteousness, while Luke alludes to that of Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Simeon. Luke also includes Zechariah's Spirit-filled prayer which summarizes the purpose of the Messiah's coming: "that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, *in holiness and righteousness* before him all our days" (1:74–75, my emphasis).

<sup>22</sup>Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, trans. Philip J. Whitmore (New York: Image, 2012), 13.

<sup>23</sup>René Laurentin, *A Short Treatise on the Virgin Mary*, trans. Charles Neumann (Washington, N.J.: AMI Press, 1991), 17.



by faith in her son.<sup>24</sup> In Matthew's genealogy, underlying the ostensible emphasis on Joseph and his Davidic lineage is the more subtle focus on the foremothers of the Messiah and Mary's affinity to them as a woman of the Spirit.

#### Conception by the Holy Spirit (1:18–25)

Having established the legitimacy of Jesus' messiahship through Joseph's genealogy and presented an apologetic for Mary's motherhood by associating her with the other women in the genealogy, Matthew proceeds to give an account of Jesus' birth (Gk. *genesis*). In his narrative, Matthew twice makes the point that Mary conceives by the Holy Spirit. The first time he states it passively: "she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit" (v. 18). Since Matthew does not identify who finds her to be with child or who makes the judgment that the conception is from the Holy Spirit, it is logical that a family tradition, either Joseph's or Mary's, be considered the source of the report, for who else would be in the position to have such information?<sup>25</sup> The second time, an angel tells Joseph

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<sup>24</sup>Benedict XVI does not equate the new Eve's role in the new creation with that of the new Adam since one is created and the other is Creator. The new Eve's role must be considered derivative. Jesus is Lord; Mary is, as she proclaims herself to be, the handmaid of the Lord. The sublime irony is that the Lord of creation condescends to be born of a lowly handmaid.

<sup>25</sup>Benedict XVI, *Infancy Narratives*, 16, 125.

in a dream that “that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit” (v. 20).

Only Matthew records the angelic dream to Joseph, while only Luke records the Annunciation to Mary. The two perspectives are not contradictory, but complementary since Matthew writes from Joseph’s viewpoint, while Luke writes from Mary’s. Despite the differences, the two agree on the major point. The child is not Joseph’s or any man’s; he is conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of Mary.

Matthew reinforces the point of Spirit-conception by twice asserting that Joseph has not had conjugal relations with the mother. Matthew makes the first assertion in describing the circumstances of finding Mary to be with child: “when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, *before they came together*” (v. 18, my emphasis). The second is made after the angelic dream: “he took his wife, but *knew her not* until she had given birth to a son” (vv. 24b, 25, my emphasis). The premise is reinforced further by Matthew’s assertion that at first Joseph, being both righteous and compassionate (“unwilling to put her to shame,” v. 20), resolves to divorce Mary quietly. Obviously, if he were the father, he would not have considered divorce.

Drawing on Léon-Dufour, Daniélou suggests Joseph’s hesitancy to take Mary as his wife and adopt the child as his own may be based on the fear that it would be presumptuous for him to do so. Daniélou posits that since Mary or a

family member, perhaps her mother, has informed Joseph of the conception and the revelation Mary has received concerning it, he understands that the conception is virginal and considers divorce only because he realizes that her child is “the Son of the Most High” and recognizes Mary’s sacred calling.<sup>26</sup> Joseph would have severed his relationship with Mary and the child had not the angel revealed to him that it was God’s plan for him to take the mother as his wife and adopt the child as his own. Joseph’s obedience ensured Jesus’ legal status as a descendant of David as well as the safety of the child and his mother.

Besides showing that Jesus has a legitimate claim to the Davidic throne, Matthew is interested in establishing Jesus as the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures. Matthew does this by inserting scriptural citations strategically throughout his gospel and re-interpreting them in light of Jesus, even when this was obviously not the original intent of the human author.<sup>27</sup> The first of these quotations is from Isaiah: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (7:14; Matt. 1:23). As early as the second century Trypho contests Matthew’s reference to this verse as a prophecy of the

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<sup>26</sup>Daniélou, *Infancy Narratives*, 40. Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Études d’Évangile: Parole de Dieu* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965), 72–75.

<sup>27</sup>Luke 1:23; 2:15, 17, 23; 3:15; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9. Daniélou, *Infancy Narratives*, 52.

virginal conception since the Hebrew word *almah* used by Isaiah does not denote a virgin as such, but only a young woman of marriageable age who may or may not be a virgin. Trypho further argues that the prophecy has already been fulfilled in the birth of Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz.<sup>28</sup> Although Matthew no doubt accepts Hezekiah as a historical fulfillment of the prophecy, he sees Jesus as the greater fulfillment (*sensus plenior*). Matthew, however, does not use the Hebrew word *almah* but rather the Greek word *parthenos*, which, in contrast to *almah*, literally means virgin. Despite the less specific word used in the Hebrew text, since the Septuagint—the translation used by Matthew—has *parthenos*, there is no doubt that Matthew’s intent is to say that Mary is a virgin, a young girl who has not had sexual relations. The point Matthew makes is that a man has had nothing to do with Jesus’ conception. Only the Holy Spirit is responsible for it.

#### The Adoration of the Magi (2:1–12)

Although at first glance the account that Matthew gives of the magi seems to provide little insight into Mary, it is noteworthy that the prophecy—Micah 5:2—to which the chief priests and scribes turn to answer the magi’s question, “Where is he who is born king of the Jews?” (Matt. 2:2), comes within a context

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<sup>28</sup>Daniélou, *Infancy Narratives*, 48. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, §§67–68.

that includes an image of the Daughter Zion laboring to give birth, being exiled, and receiving the promise of redemption from the hand of her enemies (Mic. 4:10; 5:3; cf. Luke 1:71, 74). Since a study of this passage would not be to the point here, suffice it to say that this is not the only time that the evangelists associate Mary with the image of Daughter Zion.<sup>29</sup> It is noteworthy too that Matthew does not mention the child apart from his mother in this event or in any that immediately follow: the flight to Egypt and the return to Nazareth.

When the magi follow the star to Bethlehem, after first stopping to making inquiries in Jerusalem, Matthew says that “going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him” (2:11). Despite Matthew’s earlier placement of Mary in the background, in this instance he omits Joseph from the scene and puts the spotlight on the child with his mother, making it clear, though, that the object of the magi’s worship is not the mother but the child.<sup>30</sup> Like the coming of the shepherds to see the baby lying in the manger in Luke, the coming of the magi in Matthew serves as confirmation

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<sup>29</sup>See more on Daughter Zion in ch. 3.

<sup>30</sup>While the magi’s example indicates that while only the son is due the worship rendered to deity, Mary, as one highly favored of God and mother of the Lord, is due high honor, as the example of both the God-sent Gabriel and the Spirit-filled Elizabeth indicates (Luke 1:28, 42–45). *Lumen gentium* §66.

that Mary's child is destined to be, in the magi's words, "king of the Jews" (2:2), the same phrase that Pilate later has affixed to the cross (27:37; John 19:19).

At the time of the magi's visit, the family is living in a house. Some scholars see this as contradicting Luke's account of Jesus' birth in a stable or cave with a manger at hand to use as a makeshift crib. However, the time lapse between the birth and the magi's arrival—perhaps a year or longer—easily accounts for the difference. Similarly, Matthew's failure to mention Mary's previous residence in Nazareth does not create an insoluble conflict either. These supposed discrepancies occur because the evangelists do not attempt to write complete biographies but rather select and incorporate events into their gospels that serve their particular redactional purposes.

#### The Flight to Egypt and the Massacre of the Innocents (2:13–18)

After the magi fail to return to Jerusalem, Herod orders the massacre of all boys two years and younger in Bethlehem and its vicinity.<sup>31</sup> Herod targets this age group based on the time the magi first saw the star. Warned in a dream, Joseph takes Jesus and his mother and flees to Egypt by night, remaining there

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<sup>31</sup>Though Matthew may be unacquainted with Simeon's prophecy (Luke 2:34) that Jesus will be a sign of contradiction, he illustrates the point by showing how Jesus provokes both the magi's adoration and Herod's animosity.

until Herod's death. Matthew considers the exile and return a fulfillment of the prophecy, "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (2:15; Hos. 11:1).<sup>32</sup> Later, when alerted in another dream of Herod's death, Joseph returns to Israel with the child and his mother; but learning that Herod's son Archelaus is reigning in Judea in his father's stead, Joseph turns toward Galilee, where the family settles in Nazareth.

Matthew gives no hint as to how Mary feels about her son's narrow escape except by quoting the prophecy about Rachel weeping for her children (3:18; Jer. 31:15). Since, of the evangelists, only Luke gives voice to Mary's perspective, we can turn to his portrayal of Mary as one who treasures all these events in her heart, to imagine how she might have felt about the escape and exile. From Luke, it can be surmised that in reflecting on these experiences, Mary begins to understand how costly her obedience will be. The lesson is affective as well as intellectual because, despite her relief that her own son is safe, she cannot but grieve with "Rachel" — the bereaved mothers — for the slain innocents,

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<sup>32</sup>Benedict XVI, *Infancy Narratives*, 111, 112, 119. Some scholars see the massacre of the innocents and the Egyptian exile as Matthew's contrived attempt to draw parallels between Jesus and Moses, but lack of corroborating historical evidence does not require that these events be dismissed as mere fabrications. One of history's limitations is its inability to prove that something did not happen.

recognizing perhaps for the first time the possibility that one day her own son will suffer a violent death.

To summarize, then, in Matthew's infancy narrative, the evangelist associates Mary with the other women in Jesus' genealogy, hinting that the unusual circumstances in which Mary has been placed are a sign of the Holy Spirit at work in and through her even as the Spirit worked in and through Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba to fulfill God's purposes in their personal lives and in the preservation of the Davidic line. In the birth account itself, Matthew affirms repeatedly that the conception of Mary's son is not by human means but through the Holy Spirit, indicating that the Spirit works in Mary in an ineffable manner to bring about the conception and birth of the Messiah, the Savior-Immanuel. Although Matthew spotlights Joseph as the one who receives the dreams and takes the action, the evangelist places the child and his mother at the center of the narrative, for it is with their safety that Joseph is charged and it is in the interest of their well-being that he receives divine direction.



### Chapter 3

#### Mary and the Spirit According to Luke

To understand Mary in relation to the Holy Spirit as Luke portrays her, we must first consider the infancy narratives in his gospel (Luke 1–2) in light of the fuller context of the Luke-Acts corpus. To begin, I summarize the most prominent of Luke’s theological interests—the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ and in the early church<sup>1</sup>—and consider its general implications for understanding Mary in relation to the Spirit. I then analyze various passages within Luke’s infancy narrative for more in-depth insight into that relationship. Luke agrees with Matthew that Mary’s conception of Jesus is by the Holy Spirit but broadens the implications by using language reminiscent of the Hebrew Scriptures and anticipatory of Pentecost.

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<sup>1</sup>James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991). “‘Filled with the Holy Spirit’ and ‘Full of the Holy Spirit’: Lucan Redactional Phrases,” in *Faces of Renewal: Studies in Honor of Stanley M. Horton Presented on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Paul Elbert (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988), 81–107. Roger Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture & Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Baguio City, Philippines: Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press, 1995), 79–98.

## The Holy Spirit in the Lukan Corpus

To understand how the role of the Spirit in the Lukan infancy narrative in relation to Mary, we must first consider how Luke speaks of the Holy Spirit in Acts. In the Pentecost sermon, which serves as an apologetic for the day's events, Peter recalls Joel's prophecy that God will "pour out his Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2:17, 18; Joel 2:28–29) and proclaims that those who repent, believe, and are baptized will be given the "gift of the Holy Spirit" (2:38). Believers receive the promised Holy Spirit through prayer (Acts 1–2),<sup>2</sup> the laying on of hands (8:17; 9:17; 19:6),<sup>3</sup> and/or the hearing of the word (10:44).

In Acts, the phrase Luke most frequently uses to describe the effect of the Holy Spirit on individuals or a body of believers is "filled with the Holy Spirit." Variations include "full of the Holy Spirit," "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (6:3), "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (6:5; cf. 11:24), and "filled with joy and the Holy Spirit" (13:52). When persecution of the early church begins and Peter and John are forbidden to preach in Jesus' name, the community of faith prays

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<sup>2</sup>The Holy Spirit descends on Jesus as he is praying after his baptism (Luke 3:21).

<sup>3</sup>Raneiro Cantalamessa, *Sober Intoxication of the Spirit: Filled with the Fullness of God*, trans. Marsha Daigle-Williamson (Cincinnati, Ohio: Servant Books, 2005), 53–56.

for boldness, resulting in the believers being “all filled with the Holy Spirit” and “continu[ing] to speak the word of God with boldness” (4:11).<sup>4</sup>

The use of the phrase “filled with/full of the Spirit” is Luke’s indication that a person or group has received the Holy Spirit, that is, has been “baptized in the Holy Spirit,” and/or inspired by the Spirit to speak authoritatively.<sup>5</sup> In other words, they have received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit has fallen or come upon them or been given to them either for the first time or for renewal or emboldening. The words “filled” and “full” suggest that this baptism involves more than an effusion or outpouring but an infusion or inner fullness resulting from the flow of the Spirit’s presence and power in and through a person’s life.<sup>6</sup>

Luke presents the annunciations and subsequent nativities of John and Jesus using the same terminology, particularly “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Before he is born, John, whom the angel predicts will be “filled with the Spirit, even from his mother’s womb” (1:15), leaps for joy at the sound of Mary’s

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<sup>4</sup>James B. Shelton, “Holy Boldness in Acts with Special Reference to Pauline-Lukan Intertextuality,” in *Trajectories in the Book of Acts: Essays in the Honor of John Wesley Wyckoff*, eds. Paul Alexander, Jordan May, and Robert Reed, 300–320 (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 312.

<sup>5</sup>Shelton, ““Filled with the Holy Spirit,”” 87–90.

<sup>6</sup>Paul confirms this idea (Rom. 5:5).

greeting when she visits Elizabeth (1:41, 44). Elizabeth and Zechariah are both “filled with the Holy Spirit” (1:41, 67). Of Simeon, Luke says not only that “the Holy Spirit was upon him” but that “it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit” that he would not die before seeing the Messiah. Simeon comes “in the Spirit” to the Temple on the day Mary and Joseph come to present Jesus to the Lord (2:26, 27). Luke declares Anna, an elderly widow dedicated to prayer in the Temple for many years, a prophetess, describing her from the moment of seeing Jesus as beginning “to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem” (2:38). Because Luke associates the eye witnesses of Jesus’ birth with the filling of the Holy Spirit, Luke 1–2 can be understood as a proleptic Pentecost, an anticipation of Acts 2 in which the Holy Spirit falls on women and men, young and old alike.

It is further significant that Luke speaks of Jesus himself as filled with the Spirit and manifesting signs of the Spirit’s operation. The child Jesus, Luke says, is “filled with wisdom. And the favor [grace] of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40, cf. 2:52). Jesus, John predicts, will “baptize . . . with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3:16). At Jesus’ baptism, the Holy Spirit descends on him “in bodily form, like a dove” (3:22). Following his baptism, Jesus, “full of the Holy Spirit,” is “led by the Spirit” into the wilderness (4:1), and after the temptation, he returns “in the power of the Spirit” (4:14). At the Nazareth synagogue, in inaugurating his

ministry, Jesus reads, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me . . .” (4:18f.; Isa. 61).

As Jesus begins his ministry, the question as to the source of his authority arises repeatedly, the explicit and implicit answer being the Holy Spirit (4:14), or “the power of the Lord” (5:17, 6:19, 8:46). Jesus shares this power and authority with his disciples (9:1; 10:19) and rejoices “in the Holy Spirit” that God has hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to little children (i.e., the simple, *nēpiois*, 10:21). Jesus teaches that God gives the Holy Spirit to “those who ask him” (11:13). Further, he warns against blaspheming against the Holy Spirit (12:10) but promises that in time of persecution the Holy Spirit will “teach you in that very hour what you ought to say” (12:12).

Before his Ascension, Jesus reminds his disciples of “the promise of the Father,” which he associates with John’s teaching that while he the son of Zechariah baptizes with water, Jesus will baptize in the Holy Spirit. Luke records Jesus’ reference to the promise of the Father twice (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5). Ten days later, the Holy Spirit is poured out, and the disciples are “all filled with the Holy Spirit” and speak in tongues “as the Spirit gave them utterance” (2:4).

Later, the Holy Spirit falls on the household of Cornelius, Gentiles who are neither circumcised nor baptized. Peter responds by immediately calling for their baptism, asking, “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people,

who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (10:47). Baffled that the Holy Spirit would fall on "unclean" Gentiles, the members of the circumcision party complain. Peter explains the events of the Gentile Pentecost in terms of Spirit-baptism: "I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 11:16).

In Luke-Acts, Luke associates the Holy Spirit with power, but the association is somewhat nuanced.<sup>7</sup> Luke closely associates the Spirit and power in Luke four times and in Acts once. The angel tells Zechariah that his son will go before the Messiah "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (1:17), and then tells Mary "the Holy Spirit will come upon you" and "the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (1:35). Luke says that Jesus returns from the Temptation "in the power of the Spirit" (4:14). Finally, in anticipation of Pentecost, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit in term of power, "Behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from

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<sup>7</sup>Robert Menzies, "A Pentecostal Perspective on 'Signs and Wonders,'" *Pneuma* 17, no. 2 (1995): 268–269: "The evidence from Luke-Acts suggests that for Luke, the primary manifestation of the Spirit was not miracle-working power, but rather bold and inspired verbal witness, particularly in the face of persecution." Further, "Luke has consciously distanced the Spirit from direct or exclusive association with miracles by altering his sources and using δύναμις as an important qualifying term."

on high" (24:49) and, similarly, "You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit comes upon you" (Acts 1:8).

In Acts, in the aftermath of the coming of the Spirit and power at Pentecost, Luke alludes to signs and wonders frequently. Prior to Pentecost, only specially chosen individuals and groups performed miracles—Moses and the prophets, for example, in the Hebrew Scriptures and Jesus and the Twelve in Luke (4:36; 5:17; 6:19; 8:46; 9:1; cf. Acts 2:22). In Acts, signs and wonders are attributed ultimately to God: "And I will show wonders in the heavens above / and signs on the earth below" (2:19). While the apostles and deacons are clearly the agents through which the signs and wonders are performed (3:6; 4:30; 5:12, 15, 16; 6:8; 8:6, 7, 13; 9:41; 14:3; 18:4–11; 15:12), the source of their power is God (2:43; 4:30; 19:11). Strangely, though, Luke does not refer to the filling or fullness of the Holy Spirit in connection with signs and wonders as he does inspired speech. He places the emphasis rather on their connection with Jesus' name (3:6; 4:9, 10, 30). Luke is careful to show that the power and authority to perform mighty works resides in God<sup>8</sup> and is not a possession to be purchased as Simon the magician mistakenly believes (8:19).

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<sup>8</sup>Menzies, "Pentecostal Perspective," 267. Luke's "Pentecostal narrative contains a promise of divine enabling which extends to every believer" (278).

Luke's portrayal of Mary in relation to the Spirit must be considered within this broad context, in which the witnesses of Jesus' birth, Jesus himself, and the early church—Jews and Gentiles—are all described in terms of the Spirit. While the coming of the Holy Spirit empowers, emboldens, and inspires prophetic witness, the Spirit also fills with grace, faith, joy, and wisdom. In looking at Mary from the perspective of the Spirit in Luke 1–2, I search for such signs of the Spirit in Mary.

In Luke's treatment of Mary, while he clearly associates Mary with the Holy Spirit, he does so avoiding his usual phrases "filled with" or "full of the Holy Spirit." Instead, he says that the angel tells Mary, "the Holy Spirit will come upon you" (Luke 1:35). Significantly, this is the same expression Jesus uses when, prior to his Ascension, he tells his disciples, "You will receive power when *the Holy Spirit has come upon you*" (Acts 1:8, my emphasis). A second phrase Luke uses to describe the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary is, "the power of the Most High shall overshadow you" (Luke 1:35). The significance of these two phrases is part of what will be discussed in more detail in the following analysis of selected Lucan texts: the Annunciation to Mary, the Visitation, the birth and the annunciation to shepherds, and the presentation in the Temple in Luke 1–2, and then, in Acts 1–2, the prayer gathering in the Cenacle, or Upper Room, in the days preceding Pentecost, and the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of



Pentecost. Clearly, Luke's language for Mary indicates that he sees her association with the Spirit as distinctive, yet not totally dissimilar to others.

#### The Annunciation to Mary (1:36–38)

The narrative of the angel's address to Mary reveals Luke's understanding of Mary in relation to the Spirit. While written primarily in the genre of a birth announcement, the event is written secondarily as a vocation narrative similar to Gideon's (Judg. 6:11–24).<sup>9</sup> Gabriel informs Mary that she will conceive and that she will be the mother of the Messiah. This aligns with the dignity God grants to human beings in general and to those called for divine purposes in particular.

First, the angel Gabriel hails Mary saying, "Greetings [*chaire*], O favored one [*kecharitōmenē*], the Lord is with you!" (1:28). As she is naturally troubled by the greeting and ponders its meaning, the angel reassures her of God's favor and then delivers the message concerning the conception. In answer to Mary's question, "How can this be?" the angel explains, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (1:35), and then tells her of the sign God is giving her though, unlike Zechariah, she does not ask for one: Elizabeth, her kinswoman who has been unable to have children, has

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<sup>9</sup>Ignace de la Potterie, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*, trans. Bertrand Buby (New York: Alba House, 1992), 7–10.

conceived a child in her old age. Mary responds to God's call, saying, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (1:38).

*Rejoice: Chaire*

The literal meaning of the verb *chairō* is "Rejoice," two cognate nouns being *charis* (grace) and *chara* (joy). However, some historical critics see little significance in the imperative *chaire* apart from its standard use as a salutation (usually translated "Greetings" or "Hail").<sup>10</sup> Considering the uniqueness and joyousness of the occasion—the good news of the conception of the Son of the Most High—I cannot conceive of a divine messenger addressing the future mother of God's Son using a polite nothing.<sup>11</sup> It makes more sense to think that Luke used the formulaic greeting ("Hail!") with the intention that his readers

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<sup>10</sup>Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX*, The Anchor Bible, 28, eds. William Albright and David Freeman, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986), 344–345.

<sup>11</sup>Even though historical critics may not be able to confirm the historicity of Luke's infancy narrative and even though Luke may have a different historiography than that used by present-day historians, I choose to take the author at his word that he has "investigated everything carefully from the beginning" and inscribed it so that his readers "might know the exact truth about the things that [they] have been taught" (1:3–4).

understand it in terms of its literal meaning (“Rejoice!”).<sup>12</sup> In light of the good news that the angel brings, both logic and faith suggest that if ever there is a time to rejoice, this is it. Mary’s song, the *Magnificat*, is her eventual response to the angelic exhortation to rejoice, “My spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (1:47). Mary, like Daughter Zion, rejoices in God’s promise of salvation: “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD” (Zech. 2:10; 9:9 [cf. John 12:15]; Zeph. 3:14–17).<sup>13</sup>

“You-Who-Have-Been-Graced”: *Kecharitōmenē*

The name by which the angel addresses Mary is not Miriam, the name her parents gave her, but *kecharitōmenē*, the meaning of which is even more debated than *chaire*. *Kecharitōmenē* is the perfect passive participle of *charitoō*, which

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<sup>12</sup>La Potterie, *Mary in the Mystery*, 14–17. Not only the Annunciation, but the entire Lukan infancy narrative is “an appeal to joy” (p. 16), especially when John leaps for joy in his mother’s womb (1:44), Mary rejoices in her spirit (1:46), and the angel announces the joyous news to the shepherds (2:10).

<sup>13</sup> See also Psa. 9:14; Isa. 62:11. Benedict XVI, *Infancy Narratives*, 26–27. Brown prefers not to relate *chaire* to the rejoicing of Daughter Zion (Zeph. 3:14) as he sees Mary as one of the *anawim*, the lowly remnant (Zeph. 3:12–13). *Birth of the Messiah*, 353n45. However, I see no reason to insist on only one of these images as typical of Mary since Zephaniah himself speaks of Daughter Zion in the same context as the *anawim*, thereby associating them with the faithful of Zion (2:3). Luke, then, can be understood as seeing Mary both as a member of the *anawim* and the personification of Daughter Zion.

means “to grace,” “to endow with grace,” or “to give favor.” As a perfect participle, it denotes an action in the past with effects that continue into the present. As the recipient of that action, Mary has been bestowed with grace or favor, the implied giver being God. Historical critics as a rule minimize the significance of this word as they do *chaire*, considering it to be another component of the formulaic angelic greeting. They translate the word as simply “favored one,” using as confirmation the angel’s reiteration of God’s favor in a later verse (v. 30).<sup>14</sup>

Such a reduction of the meaning of *kecharitōmenē* may well be, in part, a consequence of a reaction to the Vulgate translation of the term as “full of grace” (“*Ave gratia plena*”). For some, such a translation gives too much praise to Mary, while for others it is the preferred translation.<sup>15</sup> Such terminology for Mary is typically deemed to detract from her Son. Why call the mother full of grace when John says that it is the only Begotten of the Father who is “full of grace and

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<sup>14</sup>Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 344–345.

<sup>15</sup>Carlo Buzzetti, “‘Kecharitōménē’ = ‘Full of Grace’? Translating Today under Three Influences: The Greek, the Vetus Latina, the Vulgate,” in *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia*, ed. Jože Krašovec, 1329–1340 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 1333–1334.

truth” (John 1:14)?<sup>16</sup> But since Luke also describes Stephen as “full of grace and power” (Acts 6:8; cf. 6:10), saying as much of Mary hardly seems extravagant. In any case, the literal translation of the vocative *kecharitōmenē* is not “full of grace” but rather “you (feminine) who have been and continue to be endowed with grace.”

That the angel pronounces Mary to be one who has been graced or favored suggests more than that God has granted her a gratuitous or unmerited favored status but that God has performed and continues to perform an action (the bestowal of grace or favor) that has an enduring effect on Mary, making her “favored” or “graced” in an actual, not a merely juridical sense. Further, the perfect tense indicates that this action precedes the Annunciation itself. In other words, the angel is not saying that God initiates this favor at the moment of the Annunciation, but rather that prior to it God had already graced her. The angel is calling her by a name that reveals what God has previously done for her.

In presenting his philological argument for the Spirit’s ontological effect of grace on Mary, Laurentin explains that Greek verbs that end in *oō* typically “signify a transformation of the subject.” Among the examples he gives are

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<sup>16</sup>Gregory Lockwood, “Pope Benedict XVI on Christology, Mariology and Sacred Scripture,” *Lutheran Theological Journal* 47, no. 1 (2013): 39.

*chrysoō* (to gild), *douloō* (to enslave), and *typhloō* (to blind).<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, *charitoō* means to “en-grace,” to transform with grace-like qualities, or, as the Scholastics have expressed it, to make pleasing. From this explanation of the word, it is not hard to understand why some have come to think of the quality that the angel attributes to Mary as being the effect of sanctifying grace.<sup>18</sup>

For some of those who acknowledge that Mary was given prevenient grace, the tendency is to see this grace as limited to Mary’s election and Jesus’ conception.<sup>19</sup> They overlook the reality that motherhood only begins at conception and that after childbirth it encompasses the child’s upbringing, a task as crucial as the birthing. Further, the mother-child relationship continues throughout life, even after the child is fully grown, since the mother and child have an ontological relationship. From this perspective, it is not logical or fitting

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<sup>17</sup>Laurentin, *Short Treatise*, 18.

<sup>18</sup>Modern exegetes tend to deny that Luke here is suggesting any sanctifying effect (*gratia gratum faciens*) on Mary; rather they understand the evangelist as speaking of the Spirit’s effect solely in terms of charism (*gratia gratis data*). As such, they posit that the Spirit effects the conception within Mary without affecting her personally. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 345–46. Ignace de la Potterie, however, argues that the perfect participle indicates that God has, prior to the Annunciation, effected (sanctifying) grace in her. “Κεχαριτωμένη en Lc 1,28: Étude Philologique,” *Biblica* 69 (1987): 357–382. “Κεχαριτωμένη en Lc 1,28: Étude Exégétique et Théologique,” *Biblica* 69 (1987): 480–508.

<sup>19</sup>Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 345–346.

to limit God's "engracement" of Mary only to the conception. Surely such a gifting is intended for the entirety of her motherhood, not just its beginning, even as Paul tells the Philippians, "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (1:6). As will be shown later, such gifting in Mary is showcased in the Johannine gospel both at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and at its completion on the cross. In any case, it would be contrary to God's nature to give a vulnerable young woman such an essential, dangerous task only to remove the overshadowing of the Spirit from her, more or less abandoning her to her own resources, once the conception and birth occur. God does not use people and then abandon them. For God, Mary is not a "womb-for-rent," a mere surrogate, but a true mother.<sup>20</sup>

Significantly, this is the only time Luke uses the verb *charitoō* within his entire corpus. The only other time the verb is used in the Scriptures is in Ephesians. Using the aorist indicative form of the verb, the Ephesians author speaks of "the praise of [God's] glorious grace that he freely [more literally, "graciously"] bestowed on us in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6, NRSV). "Freely bestowed" is the translation of *charitoō* here. The recipients of this freely bestowed grace ("us") are those "blessed . . . in Christ with every spiritual

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<sup>20</sup>McKnight, *Real Mary*, 36.

blessing . . . chose[n] in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love” (1: 3–4). In verses 7–8, the author reiterates the same thought, this time using the verb *perisseuō* (aorist active): God *lavishes* the riches of his grace on those in Christ, the Greek word for lavish suggesting superabundance. Since God bestows such lavish grace on those in Christ, how much more on the mother of Christ?<sup>21</sup> Is she not after all, as Elizabeth proclaims, blessed above all women (1:42)?

Surely, in calling Mary *kecharitōmenē*, “you (or she) upon whom grace has been lavishly bestowed,” the angel is not calling her a merely formulaic name but rather a name with profound implications,<sup>22</sup> even as the angel who appears to Gideon in the Hebrew Scriptures calls him “mighty man of valor” (Judg. 6:12). Just as such a name has ontological implications for Gideon, indicating the importance of the mission he has been given, so the name the angel gives Mary

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<sup>21</sup>John Paul II, *Redemptoris mater* [Mother of the Redeemer], encyclical on the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Life of the Pilgrim Church, March 25, 1987, in *Mary, God’s Yes to Man: Pope John Paul II*, intro. Joseph Ratzinger and comm. Hans Urs von Balthasar (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), §11. “She who belongs to the ‘weak and poor of the Lord’ bears in herself, like no other member of the human race, that ‘glory of grace’ which the Father ‘has bestowed on us in his beloved Son,’ and this grace determines the extraordinary greatness and beauty of her whole being.”

<sup>22</sup>René Laurentin, *The Meaning of Christmas: Beyond the Myths: The Gospels of the Infancy of Christ*, trans. Michael Wrenn et al. (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede’s, 1986), 18–19.



indicates the importance of the mission God has given to her. As an angel once called Gideon a mighty man of valor, so now an angel proclaims Mary to be a woman of grace *par excellence*.

The relation of *kecharitōmenē* to the Spirit may not immediately be apparent unless the overall context of Luke-Acts is recalled, particularly the reference in Acts 6 to Stephen being both “full of faith and the Holy Spirit” (v. 5) and “full of grace and power” (v. 8). Clearly, Stephen’s being full of grace is related to his being full of the Spirit. The author of Hebrews makes a further association of the Spirit with grace by calling the Holy Spirit “the Spirit of grace” (10:29; cf. Zech. 12:10). For Paul as well, the bestowal of grace is associated with the Holy Spirit. The charisms (*charismata*) are manifestations (*phanerōsis*) of the Spirit, grace-gifts imparted by the Spirit to whom the Spirit wills for the purpose of edifying the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:1–11; 14:1, cf. Rom. 1:11). When the Spirit pours God’s love into believers’ hearts (Rom. 5:5) and bestows God’s gifts upon communities of faith, grace is made evident (Acts 11:23), even as grace is manifested in the life of Mary.

*“The Lord Is with You”*

After calling Mary, “you upon whom God’s grace has been lavishly bestowed,” the angel tells her, “the Lord is with you.” This assurance of God’s

presence is a further indication of God's grace and favor. "The Lord is with you" is the same phrase that the angel uses in addressing Gideon in Judges (6:12). In Gideon's case, the angel does not say that God has favored him *per se*, but Gideon understands the assurance of God's presence with him as a mark of God's favor (Judg. 6:12, 16, 17). In the case of Moses, the favor he finds in God's sight is associated with God both knowing his name and going with him (Exod. 33:13, 17). After Israel sins, God initially tells Moses to take the people to the promised land but declines to go with them because, as a result of their sin, his presence would destroy them; but when Moses pleads for God to accompany them, God relents (Exod. 33:3, 12–17; 34:9). Moses associates God's presence with his favor: "For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us?" (Exod. 33:16). The same is true in Mary's case; she is favored because the Lord has been with her and continues to be with her (Luke 1:28, 30).

Some scholars relate the phrase, "the Lord is with you," to the Zephaniah passage addressed to Daughter Zion, "the King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst" (3:15) and "the Lord God is in your midst" (3:17),<sup>23</sup> but most scholars reject the suggestion that these phrases refer to the presence of the Son of the

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<sup>23</sup>E.g., Max Thurian, *Mary, Mother of All Christians*, trans. Neville Cryer (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), 16–18.

Most High “in the midst” (i.e., in the womb) of Mary.<sup>24</sup> Although Luke may not have these passages in mind when he pens these words, there is no reason not to consider such an understanding as a *sensus plenior* inspired by the Spirit.<sup>25</sup>

In response to Mary’s initial reaction, which includes agitation and uncertainty (1:29), the angel reassures her by telling her not to be afraid and, calling her by her given name Miriam, reiterates that she has indeed found favor or grace with God (1:30). However, instead of repeating the perfect participle, the angel now uses the aorist, the verb *heures* (have found) plus the noun (*charis*). While this reassurance of God’s favor is often seen as merely confirmatory, de la Potterie suggests the angel is speaking rather of a secondary stage of grace. In the first stage (v. 28), God prepares Mary for her special calling by an action of grace that results in a state of being that becomes the basis, in the second stage (v. 30), of God bestowing her with the favor of becoming mother of the holy Son of

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<sup>24</sup>Brown, *Mary in the New Testament*, 132.

<sup>25</sup>Simply because the human author may not consciously intend to allude to a scriptural passage does not mean that the divine author, i.e., the Holy Spirit, does not intend the readers to make such a connection. To limit Scripture to what scholars calculate to be the conscious intent of the human author, or to historical critics’ opinion as to what is historical, is to be in danger of muffling the Spirit. This is not to say that endeavors to understand authorial intent or determine historicity are valueless, but rather to recognize that such attempts are only educated guesswork since it is often difficult to comprehend the thinking of others in one’s own culture let alone that of those in the distant past. In any case, scholars’ opinions differ widely on such matters according on their perspective.

God.<sup>26</sup> If such indeed is the case, then the first is a stage resulting from grace given at an unspecified time in the past, while the second is a fresh act of grace given at a point in time, presumably at the moment of the Annunciation itself. The angel is essentially telling Mary that God has graced her in the past to prepare her to receive the grace of motherhood in the present.

*"How Will This Be?"*

In verse 31, immediately following the second reference to God's favor, the angel announces that Mary will conceive a son who "will be great and [who] will be called the Son of the Most High" and to whom "God will give . . . the throne of his father David . . . and [whose] kingdom will have no end" (1:32, 33). Hearing such news, Mary asks, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" (1:34).

Some scholars say that Luke has Mary ask this question merely as a prompt for what the angel says next.<sup>27</sup> The traditional supposition, however, has been that Mary would not have asked such a question unless she had previously taken a vow of virginity.<sup>28</sup> Otherwise, so the reasoning goes, she would have

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<sup>26</sup>La Potterie, "Κεχαριτωμένη: Étude Philologique," 381; La Potterie, "Κεχαριτωμένη: Étude Exégétique," 482.

<sup>27</sup>Brown, *Mary in the New Testament*, 115.

<sup>28</sup>Laurentin, *Short Treatise*, 17–19.

naturally assumed that the conception would take place through the consummation of her marriage to Joseph. Considerable doubt has been cast on the likelihood that she would have made such a vow,<sup>29</sup> however, because celibacy was relatively rare among the Jews of the Second Temple period, especially among women. Nevertheless, it is a possibility since the elderly widow Anna who, according to Luke, prayed day and night in the Temple for many years may be an early example of a woman who practiced celibacy after her husband's death and perhaps even took a vow of celibacy.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Perry, *Mary for Evangelicals*, 281. Though Perry rejects the idea of Mary taking a vow of virginity, he sees merit in Jaroslav Pelikan's suggestion that since, according to the understanding that the economic Trinity reflects the immanent Trinity, Mary's perpetual virginity and therefore her Son's status as her only Son reflects the only-begottenness of the Son within the Trinity *in se*. Pelikan, "Most Generations Shall Call Me Blessed," in *Mary, Mother of God*, eds. Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 8. "The single and only-begotten Son of God [is] . . . also the single and only-begotten Son of Mary."

<sup>30</sup>Even though Jews of the Second Temple period as a rule did not make such vows, certain groups among the Essenes did. Linda Bennett Elder, "The Woman Question and Female Ascetics among Essenes," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 57, no. 4 (1994): 220–234. Scriptural examples of women involved in cultic service, possibly taking vows of virginity, are the young women who served at the entrance of the Tabernacle in Eli's day (1 Sam. 2:22) as well as Anna (Luke 2:36–38). Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109, no. 3 (1990): 456. Brown's linking of the *anawim*, of which he considers Simeon and Anna a part, with the Qumran community suggests the possibility that one or both practiced celibacy. *Birth of the Messiah*, 350–352.

Why Mary would marry Joseph if she has vowed virginity is considered by some to be problematic. Although Luke does not provide an answer, such an arrangement would not be unreasonable in a culture where a woman without the protection of a husband or father would be vulnerable. If, as the *Protoevangelium of James* suggests, Joseph is an elderly widower, then conceivably he could have agreed to marry Mary with the intention of honoring her vow, especially if he already had sons.

Biblically, though, this is largely speculative since Luke does not explore Mary's motive; he merely presents the angel's response: "The Holy Spirit will come upon [*epeleusetai*] you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow [*episkiasei*] you" (1:35). Since the angel's response is formulated as a parallelism, the "power of the Most High" should be understood as another way of referring to the Holy Spirit.<sup>31</sup> With both verbs in the future tense, the implication is that the conception has not yet taken place, a logical assumption since Mary has yet to give her consent.

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<sup>31</sup>In light of Jesus' association of power with the Spirit in Acts, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (1:8), this seems to be the only reasonable interpretation although some church fathers understood the "power of the Most High" as referring to the Word rather than to the Spirit.

*“The Holy Spirit Will Come upon You”: Epeleusetai*

The verb in “The Holy Spirit will come upon you” (Luke 1:35) is the future of *eperchomai*, the same verb used in Acts 1:8: “when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” The difference is that the verb in verse 35 is future indicative, while the one in Acts 1:8 is an aorist participle. Since the verb in the main clause of verse 8 is future, both refer to the coming of the Spirit in the future, in both cases, the near future. In using the same word to describe the Spirit’s coming on Mary that Jesus uses to foretell the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Luke suggests that the two comings are congruent.<sup>32</sup> In effect, the overshadowing of Mary by the power of the Most High is an anticipation of Pentecost. In Mary’s case, though, since the purpose is to effect Jesus’ conception, the Spirit’s coming sets her apart, empowering her for a unique vocation.

The verb *eperchomai* denotes a “coming upon” as in Isaiah 32:15: “until the Spirit from on high shall come upon you.”<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, in the Christian Scriptures, only Luke uses *eperchomai* to speak of the Holy Spirit coming upon chosen individuals. With the single exception of Ephesians 2:7, in which the

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<sup>32</sup>Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 90.

<sup>33</sup>Johannes Schneider, “ἐρχομαι, ἔλευσις, ἀπ-, δι-, εἰς-, ἐξ-, ἐπ-, παρ-, παρεισ-, περι-, προσ-, συνέρχομαι,” *TDNT*, eds. G. J. Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-), 2:666.

author speaks of the coming ages in which God will “show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus,” the other uses of *eperchomai* involve the coming of judgment.<sup>34</sup> Here the Holy Spirit comes upon Mary not merely to inspire her prophetic witness to Christ in the same way the Spirit inspires the prophecies of Elizabeth, Zechariah, and Simeon, but to have a creative effect on her. Ratzinger sees the expression as an allusion to the first creation (Gen. 1:2).<sup>35</sup> The primary effect is the conception, but implied also is a personal effect, whereby Mary is empowered by the Spirit from on high to be the mother of the Son of the Most High. The most obvious effect is faith, for it is by faith that Mary can give her unconditional yes to God. As Luke indicates in describing Barnabas as “full of the Holy Spirit and of faith,” faith is a mark of the Spirit (Acts 11:24; cf. Gal. 5:22).

*“The Power of the Most High Will Overshadow You”: Episkiasai*

The second verb the angel uses to explain the means by which Mary will conceive means “to overshadow” (*episkiazō*): “the power of the Most High will overshadow you.” The preposition *epi-* (“upon”) is the prefix of the verb *skiazō*

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<sup>34</sup>Schneider, “ἐρχομαι,” 2:681.

<sup>35</sup>Benedict XVI, *Daughter Zion*, 44.



("to cast a shadow"). The word is the same as the one used in the Synoptics to speak of the cloud that overshadows Jesus at the Transfiguration (Luke 9:34; Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7)<sup>36</sup> and that Luke uses in reference to Peter casting a shadow (*episkiasē*) on the sick (Acts 5:15).

The overshadowing of Mary by the Holy Spirit brings to mind several images from the Hebrew Scriptures, including the hovering or brooding of the *ruach* of God over the waters at creation (Gen. 1:2) and the fluttering of a bird's wings, catching, bearing, hiding, protecting her young (Deut. 32:1, Psa. 17:8). The Septuagint uses the same image in Psalm 91:4 ("He will cover [*episkiazō*] you with his feathers") and in Deuteronomy 33:12 (literally, "The Lord shadows over [*skia epi*] him all the days"). In Exodus 40:35 LXX, "Moses was not able to enter the tent of testimony, for the cloud overshadowed [*epeskiazen*] it.") This is the same cloud that covered Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:9; 24:15; 34:5; Deut. 4:11, 12; 5:22), led the people of Israel through the desert (Exod. 13:21; 14:20; 16:10; Num. 9:18, 22; 10:34; 14:14; Deut. 1:33; Psa. 78:14; 105:39; 1 Cor. 10:1–2), and consecrated the

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<sup>36</sup>While admitting that the overshadowing of Mary at the conception has "resemblances" to the overshadowing at the Transfiguration, Brown casts doubt on whether it would "invoke the imagery of Mary as the Tabernacle or the Ark of the Covenant." However, he also admits that the transfiguration account "has been affected by OT accounts of God's glory overshadowing the Tabernacle and the Temple," which weakens his argument. *Mary in the New Testament*, 133.

Temple (1 Kings 8:10, 11; 2 Chron. 5: 13, 14; Ezek. 10:4), the same one that Isaiah prophesied would one day cover Mount Zion (4:5).

The cloud overshadowing the Tabernacle and the Temple is associated with the glory of the Lord. The glory dwells on Mount Sinai (Exod. 24:16) and fills the Tabernacle (Exod. 29:43; 40:34, 35) and the Temple (2 Chron. 7:1–3). Significantly, the verb for “fill” used in Exodus 40:34, 45 LXX (*eplēsthē, plēthō*) is the same used by Luke to speak of believers who are filled with the Holy Spirit. The glory too is associated with the Ark of the Covenant, particularly the cherubim (Exod. 25:20; 1 Sam. 4:21, 22), since God speaks to Moses from between the cherubim (Exod. 25:22; Num. 7:89; cf. Num. 11:25; Lev. 16:2). In Exodus 25:20 LXX, a verb with the same root as *episkiazō* is used to describe how the wings of the cherubim overshadow (*suskiazovtes*) the mercy seat.<sup>37</sup> Another verb with the same root (*kataskiazovta*) is used in Hebrews to make the same point: above the Ark of the Covenant are “the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat” (9:5).

In light of such associations, it is understandable how Mary, the only person—male or female—in the gospels pronounced by an angel to be overshadowed by the power of the Most High, has come to be seen not only as a

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<sup>37</sup>Neal M. Flanagan, “Mary, Ark of the Covenant,” *Worship* 35, no. 6 (May 1961): 373.

tabernacle of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit but a living Ark of the Covenant, a sacred vessel consecrated to the holiest of all conceivable purposes, to be the mother of the holy Son of God.

### “Nothing Will Be Impossible with God”

After explaining the conception in terms of the Holy Spirit, the angel gives Mary a sign: her aged, barren relative Elizabeth has conceived a son and is in her sixth month (1:36). The sign demonstrates that with God nothing—not even a virginal conception—is impossible (*adunateō*) (1:37). Significantly, the same word is in God’s response to Sarah’s laughter when she hears she will conceive in her old age: “Is anything too hard [*adunateō*] for the Lord?” (Gen. 18:14 LXX). Perhaps Jesus hears the saying from Mary’s own lips because he later teaches, “What is impossible with man is possible with God” (Luke 18:27).

Mary accepts the sacred calling that God extends to her through the angel by saying, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). Taking the angel at his word, Mary generously proclaims herself God’s handmaid (*doulē*, i.e., slave), placing herself unreservedly into God’s service.<sup>38</sup> Mary’s words bring to mind what Abigail says when David asks

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<sup>38</sup>Although slavery is abhorrent to today’s sensibilities, I would argue for its appropriateness so long as a clear distinction is made between slavery to

her to marry him: “Behold, your handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord” (1 Sam. 25:41; cf. Ruth 3:9; cf. 2:13). Later, in the *Magnificat*, Mary reaffirms her humble status as God’s handmaid (1:48). Then, magnifying God for exalting the humble, she acknowledges the high honor God has granted her (1:52).

“Let It Be”: *Fiat*

After acknowledging herself to be God’s servant, Mary says the words that mark her for life, “Let it be to me according to your word” (1:38). Mary’s *fiat* (the Latin for “let it be”) is the unconditional surrender of her will to God’s. Although her human mind does not and cannot comprehend fully what God is asking of her, she chooses to believe what the angel has said and says “yes,”

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human beings and slavery to God. Unquestionably, the involuntary enslavement of one human being to another, or of one class to another, is morally outrageous and intolerable under any circumstances. But freely-offered service, inspired by love and the desire to worship and honor, is always due to God. A lesser degree of freely-given service may also be rendered and, in some cases, is due to other human beings such as spouses, young children, aging parents, and the poor and sick, although not to the full extent due solely to God. In light of the kenotic service offered by Mary’s Son to the heavenly Father and, secondarily, her own radical obedience to God, the metaphor of *doulē* with which she self-identifies is not one of wretched oppression but rather one of joyous abandonment to the will of God, for only in such self-abandonment is her calling fulfilled. Contra Elizabeth Johnson, *Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 254–256.

entrusting herself totally into God's hands, although, by doing so, she is, in the natural, putting her future in jeopardy. She risks everything—the security of husband and home, social status, her very life—to say yes to God's high calling.<sup>39</sup>

How can this unpretentious young girl give her consent so unreservedly, courageously, and selflessly? It seems only reasonable to conclude that the Holy Spirit prepared her for this daunting task by granting her the grace to do so in advance. Such total surrender to the will of God could arise only from a heart purified of all self-interest.

Luke contrasts Mary's faith to Zechariah's disbelief when the same angel appears to him, bringing the joyous news that God has heard his and Elizabeth's prayers and that she will conceive in old age. As a priest, Zechariah holds a prestigious, privileged position in sharp contrast to Mary's lowly and impoverished state. After Zechariah's initial reaction of agitation, similar to Mary's own, the angel explains that his son will be great before God and "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb," and that, in the spirit and power of Elijah, he will make ready the people for the coming of the Messiah by turning many back to God and "the hearts of the fathers to the children" (1:13–17). In response, Zechariah, like Mary, asks a question, "How shall I know this?"

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<sup>39</sup>Green, *Luke*, 92.

since both he and Elizabeth are long past the age of conceiving children; unlike Mary, however, he asks in disbelief since the angel tells him that because he does not believe he will be unable to speak until his son is born. Luke draws this contrast to emphasize Mary's humble faith.

#### The Visitation (1:39–45)

Having proclaimed herself God's servant and given her *fiat*, Mary hurries into the Judean hill country to see for herself the impossible thing that is possible for God: her relative Elizabeth has after a lifetime of sterility miraculously conceived in her old age. Entering the house, Mary greets Elizabeth; and as soon as Elizabeth hears the greeting, the baby in her womb leaps for joy, and Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and prophecies. Mary's voice apparently serves as a conduit of the Spirit, communicating to both the unborn John and to his mother the presence of Mary's unborn child.

While John's response is a leap of joy, Elizabeth's is an exuberant outcry, calling both Mary and the fruit of her womb blessed. Elizabeth's words of praise for Mary are similar to those the prophetess Deborah sang in praise of Jael and that Uzziah sang in praise of Judith ("Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, of tent-dwelling women most blessed," Judg. 5:24; "O daughter, you are blessed by the Most High God above all other women on

earth,” Jud. 13:18–20).<sup>40</sup> The phrase “blessed among women” indicates not only that Mary is blessed but that of all women, she is the most blessed. Elizabeth then asks why she has been given such an honor as to be visited by the “mother of my Lord” (v. 43). Elizabeth’s calling Mary’s unborn baby “my Lord” indicates that the Holy Spirit has revealed to her that Mary’s child is the one to whom David himself referred as “Lord” (Psa. 110:1). Later in the gospel, Luke recounts Jesus’ allusion to this same Scripture while conversing with the Sadducees, indicating that Jesus recognized himself to be David’s Lord (20:42). Elizabeth’s expression of wonder suggests both recognition of the lordship of Mary’s Son and deference for Mary herself as the mother of the Lord.

At the end of Elizabeth’s prophecy, she calls Mary blessed a second time: “And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” By the illumination of the Spirit, Elizabeth

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<sup>40</sup>Laurentin asserts that the blessing that Judith receives parallels more closely the one Elizabeth gives Mary than the one Deborah gives Jael because Judith’s is followed by “and blessed be the Lord God” much as Mary’s is followed by “and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” Laurentin also points out the parallels between Melchizedek’s blessings of Abraham (Gen. 14:19) and the blessing given to Judith (Jud. 13:18), thereby suggesting an indirect comparison between Abraham’s blessing and Mary’s. Yet another parallel can be drawn between Zechariah’s prophecy in which he speaks twice of God delivering Israel from the hand of their enemies (Luke 1:71, 74) and Melchizedek’s in which he blesses God for delivering Abraham’s enemies into his hand (Gen. 14:20). *Structure et Théologie de Luc I–II* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1957), 81–82.

recognizes Mary's faith as the primary reason for her blessedness, just as Jesus later tells the woman who calls his mother blessed because she has had the privilege of carrying him in her womb and nursing him at her breast, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:28). Luke is clearly emphasizing that Mary's faith—her attentiveness to God's word and determination to keep it—is a grace, an effect of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, how could she, a woman born after the Fall, choose to obey when the woman before the Fall—Eve—did not? To say that Mary does so of her own free will without God's assistance (grace) would be tantamount to Pelagianism.

Various scholars have noted parallels between the biblical accounts of the Visitation and the return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem that can hardly be dismissed as coincidental.<sup>41</sup> Both events begin with the protagonist making a decisive move. As "David arose and went" to retrieve the Ark from a house on a hill in a city of Judah, so "Mary arose and went" into the hill country, to a house in a town of Judah (2 Sam. 6:2; Luke 1:39).

Next, Luke uses a Greek word for Elizabeth's loud exclamation upon Mary's arrival—*anaphōneō*, "she cried out"—which is a *hapax legomenon* in the

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<sup>41</sup>Flanagan, "Mary, Ark of the Covenant," 372. "The essential function of the . . . ark and our Lady was almost identical—that of being the instrument through which God abode upon earth." For Flanagan, "all that the ark meant to the . . . Jews, all that and more does our Lady mean to us" (375).



Christian Scriptures and used in the Septuagint only on the occasions of the Ark's entrance into Jerusalem, its placement in the tent in Jerusalem and, later, its transfer to Solomon's Temple (1 Chron. 15:28; 16:4; 2 Chron. 5:13). In raising her voice in blessing to Mary and her unborn child, Elizabeth follows the lead of her levitical antecedents who joyfully raised their voices at the return of the Ark and with it God's presence dwelling among them. Although different—the Ark carries the law inscribed on stone whereas Mary bears the Word made flesh—they are each the means by which God is made present.

Further, as David asks, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" (2 Sam. 6:9), so Elizabeth asks, "How can the mother of my Lord come to me?" As David leaps and dances before the Ark (2 Sam. 6:16), so John leaps in his mother's womb when Mary enters the house. As the Ark stays for three months in the house of Obed-edom, so Mary stays with Elizabeth for three months.<sup>42</sup>

The church later calls Mary the Ark of the New Covenant<sup>43</sup> because, for nine months, her womb contains the Word of God who is the Bread of life and

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<sup>42</sup>Scott Hahn, *Hail, Holy Queen: The Mother of God in the Word of God* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 63–64.

<sup>43</sup>Maximus of Turin, d. c. 408–23: "But what would we say the ark was if not holy Mary, since the ark carried within it the tables of the covenant, while Mary bore the master of that same covenant?" *The Sermons of St. Maximus of Turin*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, *Ancient Christian Writers* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 107.

the great High Priest, even as the Ark of old held the tablets of the covenant, the golden urn of manna, and Aaron's staff that budded (Exod. 16:33; Num. 17:10; Heb. 9:4). Further, as mentioned earlier, Mary is overshadowed by the power of the Most High in a manner reminiscent of the overshadowing of the Ark by the cherubim of glory (Heb. 9:5). Taken together, these similarities suggest that Luke is intentionally drawing a parallel between Mary and the Ark.<sup>44</sup>

#### The *Magnificat* (1:46–56)

Mary's response to Elizabeth's prophetic confirmation of what the angel has told her is a hymn of praise comparable to the hymns and prayers of thanksgiving in the Hebrew Scriptures. The prayer to which the *Magnificat* is said to be most similar is Hannah's hymn of praise after God has answered her prayer for a son (1 Sam. 2:1–10).<sup>45</sup> Mary, like Hannah, exults the Lord first for what God has done for her personally and then for what God will do for the poor and for

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<sup>44</sup>Some scholars see the parallel reiterated in Revelation, with the association of the Ark (11:19) with the woman clothed with the sun (12:2). Hahn, *Hail, Holy Queen*, 24, 54–55.

<sup>45</sup>Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 357. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 359. Hannah's song of praise (1 Sam 2:1–10) is the "principal model" for Mary's song. Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1977), 30.

Israel in general, concluding with a litany of the reversals that God will perform. Hannah's litany is longer than Mary's: God rebukes the arrogant, breaks the power of the strong while strengthening the feeble, allows the full to beg for bread while satisfying the hungry, blesses the barren while allowing the mother of seven to be forlorn, enriches the poor while impoverishing the rich, exalts the lowly, guards the faithful while cutting off the wicked, and breaks his adversaries while strengthening his anointed. Though Mary's litany is shorter, the message is the same: God scatters the proud, casts down the mighty from their thrones while exalting the humble, and fills the hungry while sending the rich away empty. The shared theme of these litanies is the exaltation of the humble as contrasted to the downfall of the proud.

Both Mary's prayer and Hannah's begin personally. Mary's begins, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46–47), while Hannah's begins, "My heart exalts in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation" (1 Sam. 2:1).<sup>46</sup> Mary speaks of her soul magnifying God and her spirit rejoicing, while Hannah speaks of her heart exalting God and her mouth deriding her enemies.

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<sup>46</sup>Laurentin, *Short Treatise*, 21.

Both refer to God's salvation, with Hannah rejoicing in God's salvation, while Mary rejoices in God her Savior.

After this initial praise, Mary elaborates on all that God has done for her, saying that God has looked upon her humble estate as his servant much as Hannah had once acknowledged herself to be God's servant and asked God to look on her affliction and remember her by giving her a son (1 Sam. 1:11). Mary then concludes the personal part of the hymn by affirming the blessedness which Elizabeth has twice attributed to her: "For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed, for he who is mighty<sup>47</sup> has done great things for me,<sup>48</sup> and holy is his name" (48–49; cf. Gen. 30:13; Deut. 10:21; Psa. 111:9).<sup>49</sup>

In the last part of the *Magnificat* (vv. 50–55), Mary extends her praise beyond what God has done for her personally to extol God's mercy on those who fear him in every generation and his strength that scatters the proud (vv. 50–51;

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<sup>47</sup>Breck suggests that by calling Jesus great (*megas*), Luke identifies him with the one the Psalmist called "great" (Psa. 48:1–2; 135:5). "Mary in the New Testament," *Pro Ecclesia* 2, no. 4 (1993), 466.

<sup>48</sup>Note the contrast: God does "great things" for Mary, while her Son is great in and of himself, the veritable Son of the Most High (1:32). Though John too is called great, the angel qualifies his greatness as "before the Lord" (1:15), and later Jesus qualifies it still further (Luke 7:28; Matt. 11:11). Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 325. Laurentin, *Structure*, 36. The one who does great things for Mary is the mighty one reminiscent of the "mighty one who will save" (Zeph. 3:17; Isa. 63:1).

<sup>49</sup>Laurentin, *Short Treatise*, 22.

Psa. 102:17).<sup>50</sup> Hannah, too, praises God's holiness and strength: "There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God"

(2). Mary recalls God's help to his servant Israel in keeping with his promise to Abraham and David and to their offspring (Psa. 98:3; Mic. 7:20; 2 Sam. 22:51).<sup>51</sup>

The reference to Israel as servant brings to mind again Hannah's prayer that God remember her, God's servant,<sup>52</sup> and Mary's references to herself as God's servant at the Annunciation (1:38) and in the earlier part of the *Magnificat* (1:48). Taken as a whole, the hymn suggests that as servant, Mary is representative of Israel, God's servant (Isa. 41:8).<sup>53</sup> Although from the angel's description ("he will be great" and "of his kingdom there will be no end"), Mary knows that her Son is the servant who will bring about the reversals of which she is prophesying,<sup>54</sup> she sees herself also in God's service, cooperating by faith and

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<sup>50</sup>Laurentin, *Short Treatise*, 23.

<sup>51</sup>Laurentin, *Short Treatise*, 23.

<sup>52</sup>Laurentin, *Short Treatise*, 22.

<sup>53</sup>Laurentin, *Short Treatise*, 23. Breck suggests that the second section of the hymn (vv. 50–55) is part of "what was most likely an ancient Jewish liturgical hymn that St. Luke . . . attached to Mary's song." Breck, "Mary in the New Testament," 467.

<sup>54</sup>Both in Peter's sermon to explain the lame beggar's healing (Acts 3: 13, 26) and in the persecuted church's prayer for boldness (4: 27, 30), Jesus is referred to twice as God's servant (four times total). Significantly, Luke uses *paida or*

obedience in the fulfillment of God's promises by becoming the mother of the Son of the Most High. Undoubtedly, in reading Psalm 116:6—the Psalmist's statement that not only is he God's servant but also "the son of [God's] maidservant"—Jesus and his mother see a foreshadowing of themselves.

Mary's self-identification as servant brings to mind other women in the Hebrew Scriptures who are servants. Besides Hannah, Ruth, and Abigail mentioned earlier, Hagar, Zilpah, and Bilhah—who are drafted into bearing children in their mistresses' names—come to mind. Although they do not freely choose their service, God blesses them with children and, as in the case of Hagar, comforts and answers their prayers (Gen. 16:7–13; 21:15–21; Isa. 41:17). In Scripture, God does not forget the lowly handmaidens and promises to pour out his Spirit on them, as on all flesh (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:17–18).

The lowliness —*tapeinōsis*—that Mary embraces as God's handmaiden (1:48) identifies her as one of the *anawim*, Yahweh's poor,<sup>55</sup> the faithful remnant (Isa. 49:13, 16). The same word is used in 1 Samuel 1:11 LXX to speak of Hannah's humiliation in being childless. Contrasting her powerlessness with the

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*paidos* to refer to Jesus, but in referring to Jesus' disciples as God's servants he uses *doulois*, although he reverts to *paidos* in the case of David (4:25). This makes sense in light of God's adoption of David as son at his coronation (Psa. 2:7), since this would make him both God's son and God's servant.

<sup>55</sup>Brown, *Mary in the New Testament*, 142–143.

Powerful One—the One to whom all things are possible—and her lowliness with the great things (*mēgala*) that God does for her, Mary revels in the irony that God chooses the lowly to shame the powerful, those with virtually nothing “to bring to nothing the things that are” (1 Cor. 1:27–28).<sup>56</sup>

The litany of reversals that Mary prays is more fully understood in the light of the rest of the Lucan corpus. Jesus’ own litany of blessings on the poor and woes on the rich is much like Mary’s (6:20–26). Could it be that Jesus first learned about such reversals from Mary’s own lips<sup>57</sup> before reading about them in the Scriptures (e.g., Job 5:11–16; Psa. 75:7; 107:40–41; 113:7–9; 146:7–9; 147:6; Ezek. 21:26; Eccclus. 10:14–15)? Throughout his ministry, Jesus teaches parables of such reversals: the rich fool (12:13–21), the narrow door (13:23–30), the wedding feast (14:7–11), the banquet (14:12–24), the rich man and Lazarus (16:19–31), and the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9–14). Watching people drop their money into the offering box, Jesus declares the widow’s pittance more than the large sums contributed by the rich (21:1–4; Mark 12:41–44). For Jesus, the overthrow of the powerful and the exaltation of the poor are signs of the kingdom, along with the release of captives, the restoration of sight to the blind, and the deliverance of

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<sup>56</sup>Albert Gelin, *The Poor of Yahweh*, trans. Kathryn Sullivan (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1964), 95.

<sup>57</sup>Gelin, *Poor of Yahweh*, 98.

the oppressed (Luke 4:18; cf. 7:22). The only way for the privileged and powerful to avoid such involuntary reversals is by repentance and restitution, e.g., Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8). In light of Jesus' teachings, Mary's profound spiritual insight in the *Magnificat* can be understood as a charism of the Spirit. Indeed, since the message of the hymn is consistent with the pneumatic theme of Jesus' reading at Nazareth (Isa. 61:1–2), it represents a word from the Spirit of Yahweh! There are those who would prefer to take the words out of Mary's mouth,<sup>58</sup> but even if the words themselves are not Mary's, there is no reason to deny that they accurately represent the reflections of the mother who guarded in her heart and rehearsed in her mind all that she witnessed and experienced in regard to her Son.<sup>59</sup>

#### The Birth and the Annunciation to the Shepherds (2:1–20)

Jesus' birth takes place in Bethlehem, where Joseph and Mary go to register in compliance with Caesar's decree (2:4). Luke has previously described

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<sup>58</sup>Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 352–55. Fitzmyer is convinced by Brown's argument that the canticles in Luke's infancy narrative are quite possibly the compositions of "a Greek-speaking Jewish Christian community . . . influenced by Jerusalem Christianity" (355). Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 361–62.

<sup>59</sup>Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 359.



Mary as a virgin betrothed to Joseph (1:27), but he repeats it here, perhaps, like Matthew, as a reminder that the child she bears is not Joseph's.<sup>60</sup>

Mary's and Joseph's inability to find a place to stay when it comes time for the child to be born undoubtedly indicates their poverty, and so confirms Mary's identification with the poor in the *Magnificat*. The baby is born into the deprivation of their impoverishment. Mary wraps him in swaddling clothes and lays him in a manger (2:7). Though swaddling clothes are in common use at that time, a manger is not, and is therefore a sign of poverty.

Keeping the account of Jesus' birth itself brief, Luke turns quickly to the annunciation to the shepherds (2:8–18). The third of three such annunciations in Luke, this is the only one in which he records that "the glory of the Lord" is manifested (v. 9). At the angel's appearance, the shepherds are fearful, as Zechariah and Mary were, but the angel stills their "great fear" by telling them the good news of "great joy," the birth of "a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (vv. 10–11). The angel then mentions the sign of the swaddling clothes and the manger (v. 12). Then, in a grand finale of sorts, a host of angels appears,

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<sup>60</sup>Luke points this out again in his version of Jesus' genealogy in 3:23 when he refers to Jesus as "the son (as was supposed) of Joseph." Luke also portrays the people of Nazareth as considering Jesus to be Joseph's son: "Is not this Joseph's son?" (4:22).

proclaiming glory to God in heaven and peace on earth among those with whom God is pleased (v. 14).

This annunciation is significant because God chooses as recipients not those in power but lowly shepherds.<sup>61</sup> Again, Luke seems to be deliberately identifying Jesus and his mother with the *anawim*, the lowly ones. Later, in the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus inaugurates his ministry by reading from Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18, 23; Isa. 61:1). Jesus understands his mission as a Spirit-anointed one directed to the poor.

As Jesus uses the term, the poor implies not merely the physically destitute but the spiritually poor, grief-stricken, and persecuted (6:20–22). Jesus enjoins those who endure such sufferings to “rejoice and leap for joy,” for they are being treated like the ancient prophets and, accordingly, their reward will be great (6:23). Jesus himself experiences persecution firsthand because, immediately after his proclamation of himself as the fulfillment of Isaiah 61, the

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<sup>61</sup>Although, according to some rabbinic sources, shepherds were considered lower class and of ill-repute, in the Scriptures shepherds can be good or bad. Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd in contradistinction to hirelings. François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, trans. Christine Thomas, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 86–87, who cites Strack-Billerbeck 2:113–14. Cf. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 304–305. See Jer. 23:1–3; 25:34–37; Ezek. 34:1–24; Zech. 11:4–17; cf. Ps. 1; John 10:1–16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25.

hometown people, filled with rage, drive him out of the town to push him over a cliff, although mysteriously he slips undetected through their midst to safety.

In Acts, Luke supplies frequent examples of such persecution and the joy that the Spirit gives in the midst of it. After Pentecost, with many signs and wonders occurring at the hands of the apostles and large numbers of people converting, the high priest and Sadducees become jealous and arrest the apostles and bring them before the council for questioning. In the end, the apostles are beaten and forbidden to speak in Jesus' name; but when released, they leave "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name" (5:41).

In a similar way, after Paul and Barnabas have been persecuted and driven out of Antioch in Pisidia, Luke records that "the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (13:52). In Philippi, beaten and imprisoned, their feet in stocks, Paul and Silas pray and sing hymns at midnight while the other prisoners listen (16:25). Joy and rejoicing, according to Luke, are manifestations of the Spirit that go hand in hand with persecution and suffering. Mary who experiences the joy of the Savior's coming does so in the midst of suffering, first as a result of poverty and misunderstandings concerning Jesus' conception and later in seeing her son rejected by the people of Nazareth and persecuted by the authorities in Jerusalem.

When the shepherds hear the angel's good news, they do as Mary did when the angel told her about Elizabeth. They go "in haste" to see for themselves the baby lying in a manger just as Mary had gone "in haste" to see for herself Elizabeth's miraculous pregnancy. After seeing the baby with Mary and Joseph, Luke says, the shepherds spread the news before returning to their flock, "glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard" (2:20).

Although this passage tells more about the reaction of the shepherds than about Mary, Luke notes afterwards that "Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart" (2:18). Surely, part of what Mary treasures is the joy she experiences at the birth of her Son who is also, as the angel has told her, the Son of the Most High. Nor does she forget the joy she sees on the shepherds' faces as they gaze on her newborn Son.<sup>62</sup> Only months before, Mary herself had said, "My spirit rejoices in God my savior" (Luke 1:47). Now the joy welling up in her spirit is from the Holy Spirit confirming that this—her newborn Son—is the long-awaited Savior-Messiah for whom her people have so long prayed and yearned. The shepherds' witness to the glory of God streaming around them, and the heavenly host proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth

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<sup>62</sup>In Matthew, the magi are described similarly when the star reappears to them: "they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy" (2:10).

peace,” confirms to Mary again what the angel foretold and Elizabeth’s prophecy declared.

#### The Presentation (2:21–40)

When Mary and Joseph go to the Temple to present Jesus, as was required by Jewish law, Simeon and Anna also confirm that Jesus is who the angel said he would be. Luke considers Simeon a prophet and Anna a prophetess, mouthpieces of the Spirit. Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, they are part of the faithful remnant of Israel who, despite the centuries-long delay, wait faithfully and pray ceaselessly for the coming of the Messiah. Simeon’s prophecy sheds light on Mary. In his first speech, holding Jesus in his arms and addressing himself to God, Simeon confirms Jesus’ salvific role: “my eyes have seen your salvation . . . a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel” (v. 32). Mary’s and Joseph’s reaction is to marvel, *thaumazō*, the implication being that what Simeon says is too wonderful for them to understand fully.

Simeon’s second speech, directed particularly to Mary, offers the first hint of the suffering that her Son will undergo and that she as his mother will also experience. Jesus is destined, Simeon tells her, to bring about the fall, or ruin, of many in Israel, while bringing about the rise, or restoration, of others. What is

more, Jesus will be a “sign of contradiction,” someone who will be opposed. As for Mary, a sword will pierce her soul. Simeon does not specify the cause of the piercing pain that Mary will experience, but the context makes it clear that the sorrow she will bear will be related directly to her Son. Simeon warns Mary that Jesus will suffer opposition—be hated, excluded, reviled, betrayed (cf. Luke 6:22; 21:16). It is Mark, however, not Luke, who indicates that Jesus suffers opposition from his own family members as well as from the religious authorities; and it is John, not Luke, who records Mary at the Cross, where the opposition eventually leads. Clearly, whether Luke understands the sword in Simeon’s prophecy to refer to family conflict or to the Cross, or both, Mary’s soul is pierced as a consequence of the opposition that her Son inevitably faces.<sup>63</sup>

Luke concludes the scene of the presentation with an account of the family’s return to Nazareth and the observation that “the child [Jesus] grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40). Later, after the incident at the Temple when Jesus was twelve years old, Luke similarly observes: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (2:52). Both comments are similar to the saying about Hannah’s child (1 Sam. 2:26), except that Luke also attributes wisdom to Jesus.

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<sup>63</sup>Breck, “Mary in the New Testament,” 468.

Simeon's prophecy at the presentation is one in a line of repeated confirmations that Mary receives through various Spirit-filled witnesses, all indications that the Holy Spirit is at work to help her to better understand her Son's calling and to prepare her for what lies ahead. In this case, Simeon goes beyond offering confirmation to indicate that Jesus will undergo suffering in fulfilling his mission and that his mother too will suffer in the process.

#### The Boy Jesus in the Temple (2:41–52)

Luke skips from Jesus' infancy to Jesus at the age of twelve when he accompanies his parents to Jerusalem for Passover. The incident in Jerusalem is remarkable on many levels, but of particular interest here is what it reveals about Mary. On their way home from Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph realize that Jesus is not with them, and after searching for him unsuccessfully among their acquaintance, they return to Jerusalem, to find him sitting in the Temple with the rabbis, amazing everyone with his understanding (*sunesis*). Mary and Joseph are astounded too, but, like almost any anxious mother would, Mary chides Jesus, calling him "child" and asking him why he has treated them like this, "Your father and I have been searching for you in much distress."

Surprised that they would not have immediately realized where he was, Jesus replies, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be

in my Father's house?" Apparently, by the age of twelve, Jesus is fully conscious of who he is and what his mission is, while his parents still do not understand (*suniami*, same root as *sunesis*, the noun Luke uses to denote Jesus' understanding). Nevertheless, Luke says Jesus goes home with them and is obedient to them, and then reiterates what he said earlier, "his mother treasured up all these things in her heart" (2:51b). The message Luke conveys is that although Mary treasures her memories of these events and sayings of Jesus' infancy and youth, rehearsing them repeatedly in her mind, she still struggles to understand, while her young son understands far beyond his years.<sup>64</sup>

Since three days intervene between the time Mary and Joseph first realize Jesus is missing and the time they find him, this event is sometimes seen as a foreshadowing of what Mary endures at the Crucifixion and in the three days until the Resurrection.<sup>65</sup> If so, it would be an indication that even at the Cross Mary would not fully understand. She comes to understand only as the church itself gradually comes to more fully understand the implications of the incarnation and the death and Resurrection of Christ. Mary, however, is not like the two on the road to Emmaus whom Jesus chides for being unthinking (*anoētoi*)

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<sup>64</sup>Laurentin suggests that Jesus' purpose for staying behind in Jerusalem is "testing and pedagogy." *Meaning of Christmas*, 84.

<sup>65</sup>Laurentin, *Meaning of Christmas*, 212, 214.



since Luke reaffirms that Mary carefully keeps (*dietērei*) all these things in her heart (2:51).

Mary's constant struggle to understand does not indicate a lack of faith as some suppose<sup>66</sup> but rather the reality that God does not fully disclose his plans and purposes to those he calls. The struggle to understand is typical of any anyone who attempts to walk in the Spirit, to walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). The struggle reveals Mary's faith, i.e., believing without seeing (Heb. 11:1). The fact that she treasures these things and ponders them in her heart even while not fully understanding them is an indication that she is who she declares herself to be—the servant of the Lord (John 15:15). Mary demonstrates that faith is not understanding; it is obeying, all the while striving to hear more clearly the voice of the Spirit and to follow more closely.

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<sup>66</sup>While admitting to Mary's obedience and her motherly sorrow at the Cross, Steinmetz holds to this negative view: "She is . . . one who does not understand what God's purposes are, who intervenes when she ought to keep silent, who interferes and tries to thwart the purpose of God, who pleads the ties of filial affection when she should learn faith." "Mary Reconsidered," 7. Such a judgment overlooks Luke's frequent indicators that though Mary does not understand, she constantly attempts to understand. Further, by saying that Mary "tries to thwart the purpose of God," Steinmetz asserts what not even Mark asserts. Mark suggests that the family's proposed intervention may interfere with God's purposes, not that the family is deliberately trying to subvert them.

### Jesus' Mother as Hearer and Doer of the Word (8:19–21)

A final affirmation of Mary's faith in Luke comes on the occasion that she and Jesus' brothers come to see him, but are unable to reach him because of the crowd. When Jesus is told that they are there, he uses the occasion to explain who his true mother and brothers are: "those who hear the word of God and do it" (v. 21). The context for this saying is the parable of the sower in which Jesus describes the good soil as "those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience" (8:15). Luke depicts Mary as the good soil, the one who on hearing the word treasures it in her heart and bears fruit accordingly.<sup>67</sup>

In contrast to Matthew and Mark, Luke portrays Mary as a believer, a member of Jesus' eschatological family, and a model disciple.<sup>68</sup> If Mary's discipleship is interpreted in light of Jesus' teaching on discipleship as inscribed by Luke, then hers is a radical one. By saying yes to God, Mary sets herself up not only to be a potential source of division in her family (12:49–53), but also as having the mandate to "hate" (in contrast to her commitment to love God) her family and even her own life. She commits herself to bearing a cross and

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<sup>67</sup>Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 199.

<sup>68</sup>Brown, *Mary in the New Testament*, 168.

renouncing everything (14:25–35), allowing herself to become—like her Son—the object of hate, exclusion, defamation, rejection, and persecution (6:22). She does so willingly because Mary knows that “a disciple is not above his teacher” (6:40), nor “a servant above his master” (Matt. 10:24).

#### Pentecost (Acts 1–2)

In Acts 1, Luke sets his mention of Mary the mother of Jesus praying in the Upper Room (the Cenacle) in one accord with the apostles along with the other women and brothers in the context of Jesus’ command to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4–5). Jesus associates the promise of the Father with Spirit-baptism. Before Jesus begins his public ministry, John speaks of him as one mightier than he who will baptize not with water but with the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16). Later Jesus speaks cryptically of having come “to cast fire on the earth,” and having a baptism that he himself will be baptized with, and the urgency he feels until the fire is kindled and his baptism is accomplished (Luke 12:49–50). As becomes apparent, the Cross is both this baptism and the kindling for the fire that Jesus will cast on the earth at Pentecost: the Holy Spirit.

Mary and the 120 pray for this fire in the days between the Ascension and Pentecost (1:15). Finally, on the day of Pentecost, at nine o’clock in the morning,

the fire falls. Although Luke does not mention Mary by name in Acts 2, there is no reason she would not have been there along with the rest of the 120 since Luke says, “they were all together in one place” (2:1). Like the others present, Mary hears the sound of a mighty rushing wind (v. 2; cf. 1 Kings 19:11; Job 38:1; Ezek. 1:4), watches the tongues of fire as they appear over the others (v. 3), and is conscious of a flame coming to rest on her. With the others, she is filled with the Holy Spirit, and speaks in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (v. 4). As was foretold, Jesus baptizes Mary along with the apostles and his other followers with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

While the reason wind is used as a symbol for the Spirit in the Scriptures is obvious since in both Hebrew and Greek wind and spirit are expressed by the same word (Heb. *ruah*, Gk. *pneuma*), the reason fire is used as a symbol of the Spirit is perhaps less apparent. In Scripture, fire is associated with the manifestation of God’s presence as in the burning bush, the fire on Mount Sinai, and the pillar of fire by night (and the pillar of cloud by day) that guides the Israelites through the wilderness. God sends fire from heaven to ratify the covenant with Abraham, as well as to accept Elijah’s offering in his contest with the prophets of Ba’al. In Scripture, fire is also associated with the purification or refining process, the burning away of the dross (Psa. 66:10, 12; Isa. 48:10; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:2, 3; 1 Pet. 1:7), and accordingly with sanctification, the work of the

Spirit. Though the process is painful, God allows his children to endure discipline “for our good, that we may share his holiness” (Heb. 12:10f.). In Acts, Jesus not only baptizes in the Holy Spirit and fire but speaks of his own baptism in fire, the Cross. Like her Son, Mary too is tested by fire: the piercing of her soul. Like her Son, she too learns obedience and is perfected through suffering (Heb. 2:10; 5:8). Finally, at Pentecost, the fire that Mary experiences is a flame that not only rests on her head but fills her body and soul with God’s presence by the Holy Spirit.

Since Mary has already experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit on her at the Annunciation (Luke 1:35), the Pentecost event must, for her, be understood as a new encounter with the Holy Spirit, a renewal, a fresh empowerment for her calling as a perpetual reminder of Jesus’ humanity and a praying member of the church. Significantly, this is the last in a series of confirmations that Luke records that Mary receives after the Annunciation. Even John’s prophecy regarding Spirit-baptism is fulfilled in her lifetime. She experiences firsthand along with the apostles and the other privileged witness-participants the pneumatic fire that John predicted and Jesus himself promised. Although Luke elaborates no further on Mary’s role in the early church—in fact, this is the last time he mentions her—he clearly sees her as having a place of honor in the early church since she is the only woman and the only member of Jesus’ family that Luke names among those

present in the Upper Room. Further, by associating her with prayer, he lays the foundation for the intercessory role that the church attributes to her.

## Conclusions

The fact that Luke does not use the words “filled with” or “full of the Holy Spirit” in reference to Mary is significant. If indeed, as Pentecostal scholars indicate, Luke’s primary association of the infilling of the Spirit is with inspired speech, perhaps this explains why. The Holy Spirit’s coming upon Mary has less to do with inspired speech than with the “great things” that God has done for her, first and foremost, the conception of Jesus. For Luke to speak of Mary using the same terminology he uses to describe the others in the infancy narrative would be an understatement. Instead Luke uses the imagery he later uses in referring to the Transfiguration: “a cloud came and overshadowed them” (9:34).

When Mary is overshadowed by the Spirit, she conceives Christ, and in the process she herself is transformed. It would be unthinkable for the Holy Spirit to form Christ in her womb without also affecting her personally. God is not man that he should use a woman as a mere surrogate. Not only does God wait for Mary to consent before overshadowing her with the Spirit but continues to indwell her by the Spirit even after she delivers her Son. God treats Mary not like a disposable instrument but as a beloved daughter.

Some have difficulty with the idea of Mary herself being personally affected by Jesus' conception by the Spirit, but if a natural birth permanently marks a woman, body and soul, how much more would a supernatural one? Even as the overshadowing of the cloud of God's presence sanctifies the Ark of the Covenant to the point that to touch it is to die, so the overshadowing of the Spirit, which effects the indwelling of the Word made flesh, sanctifies the mother, body and soul. The power overshadowing her and forming Christ in her fills the deepest recesses of her soul with the Holy Spirit, bringing her into communion with the Holy Trinity. Although the coming of the Holy Spirit on her can be seen as a foreshadowing of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples at Pentecost, Mary's encounter with the Spirit is unique. Her experience must be described in exceptional terms because, according to Luke, only she is engraced to the point that she conceives God's Son and only she is proclaimed to be the most blessed of women. Admittedly, Mary does engage explicitly in Spirit-inspired speech since the *Magnificat* is an expression of the overflow of the deep-seated faith, joy, and hope that arise in her spirit because of the "great things" God has done for her. However, Luke depicts Mary as more than a prophetess. She is an engraced woman whose faith perseveres even when she does not understand and who experiences the Spirit as an overshadowing resulting in the conception of the Son of the Most High and, by implication, the

continuous indwelling by the Spirit effecting her personal transformation, ongoing sanctification, and deepening understanding.



## Chapter 4

### Mary and the Spirit According to the Johannine Traditions

Both the Johannine gospel<sup>1</sup> and the Apocalypse speak of Mary in relation to the Spirit although primarily in a symbolic rather than an overt way. The evangelist does not begin his gospel with a nativity account as do Matthew and Luke, but the first eighteen verses of the first chapter serve as an introduction to the gospel. I begin my analysis with a brief look at these first eighteen verses, and then proceed to the accounts of Mary at Cana, Mary at the Cross, and, finally, Mary in the Apocalypse, where I see a link between the Revelation 12 woman and the Bride, who together with the Spirit prays, “Come.”

#### The New Creation (1:1–18)

Although John<sup>2</sup> does not include an infancy narrative as such in his gospel, the opening eighteen verses of the first chapter can be understood as an account of the new creation that parallels the account of the original creation (Gen. 1). In Jesus is life, and his life is the light that shines in the darkness (1:4). Although the world does not know him, and “his own” do not receive him, he

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, The Anchor Bible, 29 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 4, 6.

authorizes all who do receive him, i.e., all who believe in his name, to become God's children, to be born not of the flesh—nor of human generation, nor of carnal desire, nor of a husband's desire—but of God, i.e., of the Spirit (1:12–13).

Despite lack of textual evidence, some interpreters follow the early fathers in seeing the threefold negation in verse 13 as alluding to the Virgin Birth rather than to the spiritual regeneration of believers. They insist on this even though the verb is plural, not singular.<sup>3</sup> It seems to me that an understanding that allows the text to stand as is would be preferable. For an evangelist who specializes in *double entendre* as John does,<sup>4</sup> it is likely that he sees these negations both ways, as pertaining directly to the spiritual rebirth of believers while simultaneously alluding indirectly to the spiritual origin of “the Word made flesh.” Believers are reborn not of the flesh but of the Spirit (John 3:5, 6) even as the one in whom they

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<sup>2</sup>The identity of the author(s) is not crucial to the analysis of the Marian texts in the Johannine literature. Out of respect for the tradition and as an expression of my faith I occasionally refer to the Johannine author as John.

<sup>3</sup>See, e.g., John McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1-4*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 107–110; and Jordan May, “The Virgin Birth in the Fourth Gospel? A Brief Note on the Triple Negation in John 1:13,” in *But These Are Written . . . : Essays on Johannine Literature in Honor of Professor Benny C. Aker*, eds. Craig Keener, Jeremy Crenshaw, and Jordan May (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2014): 59–64.

<sup>4</sup>R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 165.

believe is himself conceived (“made flesh”) by the Spirit. Whether or not the Johannine evangelist was familiar with Matthew’s or Luke’s infancy narratives, his concept of believers being reborn not of human will but of God’s may well be an indication that he himself was familiar with the tradition that Jesus’ conception was not by the will of man but by the Spirit. Although John’s intention here is not to make a mariological statement *per se*, this indirect reference to Jesus’ virginal conception is also an indirect allusion to his virginal mother.<sup>5</sup>

John goes on to speak of Jesus as “the Word made flesh” who comes to dwell among “us” (1:14). By using the first person plural, the author includes himself among those who have seen Jesus with their own eyes (cf. 1 John 1:1, 3).<sup>6</sup> These firsthand witnesses see in Jesus the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, “full of grace and truth” (1:14). Further, John explains, “from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace” (1:16). Jesus’ fullness here is reminiscent of Luke’s repeated allusions to the fullness of the Spirit. John speaks of Jesus’ fullness in terms of grace and truth, which have been associated with God’s

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<sup>5</sup>In saying, “We were not born of sexual immorality” (John 8:41), Jesus’ opponents may be casting doubt on his legitimacy.

<sup>6</sup>Many biblical scholars dismiss the idea that the author was one of the Twelve.

covenant love (*hesed*) and fidelity (*emeth*) toward Israel (Exod. 34:5),<sup>7</sup> the implication being that the grace and truth of which Jesus is full is the same which the God of Israel has given to the people of Israel.

Further, those who believe in Jesus receive “grace upon grace” from his fullness (1:16). One possible meaning is a new grace greater—fuller—than the former, but another possibility is grace added to grace. Again, John’s use of *double entendre* suggests that one interpretation need not be preferred over another. John returns to the point of fullness of grace later by using the concept of “without measure”: “For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand” (John 3:34–35). Although the word *fullness* is not used in chapter 3, it is implied. Interpretations vary, but the majority agree that God gives Jesus the Spirit without measure, even as God gives all things into his hands (13:3; cf. Col. 1:19). The meaning of 1:16 becomes clearer in light of this. Jesus’ fullness is related to the Spirit being given to him without measure. Similarly, Jesus gives the Spirit to all those who believe in him from his fullness of the Spirit even as he gives “grace upon grace” to them from the fullness of his grace.

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<sup>7</sup>Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:416–417.

While John intends no mariological statement here, reflection suggests that Jesus' mother cannot be excluded from receiving the same benefits that his other witnesses receive, for if anyone is an eyewitness of Jesus it is Mary. Not only has Mary seen Jesus with her eyes, heard him with her ears, and touched him with her hands (1 John 1:1) but she has carried him in her womb and nursed him at her breast. Even more to the point, she has conceived him of the Holy Spirit. This being so, Mary must be counted among those who have received grace from her Son's fullness. As she is the first not only to witness Jesus but to experience his indwelling presence, there can be nothing objectionable about contemplating Mary as at the very least one of the first recipients of the gift of grace, i.e., of new life in the Spirit. While no one can legitimately object to Mary to being *the* primary eyewitness of her own son, some still question her status as a believer; however, in the two events that John the evangelist records in which Mary is a key figure, it is quite apparent that she is his first believer and one of only a handful to cling to him faithfully to the end.

#### Mary at Cana (2:1–12)

Mary's presence as Jesus performs his first sign, revealing his glory and confirming his disciples' faith, is not insignificant. The setting is a wedding in Cana to which Jesus and his disciples are invited as well as his mother. Here, as

throughout his gospel, John refrains from naming Mary, referring to her repeatedly as the mother of Jesus (vv. 1, 3, 5, 12), with Jesus addressing her not as mother but as “woman.” Although the bride and groom are unidentified, her personal concern and the initiative Mary takes in addressing their predicament suggests she is their relative. Realizing they have run out of wine, Mary confides to her Son, “They have no wine” (2:3). Scholars debate Mary’s motive for mentioning the deficiency to Jesus, some speculating that she is hinting to Jesus that he and the disciples leave because their presence is, at least in part, the reason the wine has run out.<sup>8</sup> However, this is only conjecture. In any case, by this point, their departure would not help because there would still be no wine. It is reasonable to assume that Mary tells Jesus about the shortage because she believes he can remedy the situation. In fact, Jesus’ response, which is essentially a refusal, indicates that he considers her comment a request. Exactly how Jesus’ response should be translated is debated, but the gist is, “Woman, what does this concern of yours have to do with me?” or literally, “What to you and me?” Jesus then explains why he thinks he should refuse: “My hour has not yet come.”

Jesus’ response is perplexing on several levels. His use of the word *woman* to address his mother in the gospel of John, for example, is unusual, in fact,

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<sup>8</sup>Perry, *Mary for Evangelicals*, 99. Brown, *Mary in the New Testament*, 188.

unique in the entire corpus of literature, sacred and secular, of that day.<sup>9</sup> Clearly, no disrespect is intended, though, since he addresses his mother the same way from the Cross (20:13). In any case, as noted, in John, Jesus' general practice is to address women as *woman* (4:21; 8:10; cf. Matt. 15:28; Luke 13:12). Because in his day it was virtually unprecedented for a man to address his mother this way, his use of the word in reference to his mother can be understood as symbolic. Many commentators have concluded that the Johannine evangelist is associating Mary with the woman in Genesis 3:15, whose offspring will bruise the head of the serpent, similar to the revelator's reference to the woman in Revelation 12.<sup>10</sup> Since, for the evangelist, Jesus is the one who has life and is life (1:4) and whose coming initiates the new creation, his mother can, by association, be considered the new "woman" or the new Eve (Gen. 2:23) and, accordingly, the new "mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20).

Speaking in terms of the Spirit, to whom John refers repeatedly later in his gospel, then, Mary can then be seen symbolically in John not only as mother of Jesus, who is born not of the will of man but of God, but also mother of all who

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<sup>9</sup>Brown, *John I–XII*, 99.

<sup>10</sup>The Vulgate translation of Genesis 3:15 in which the woman is said to crush the head of the serpent rather than her offspring has influenced how this passage has been traditionally understood in the Latin West.

are born of the Spirit (v. 13). This may be deduced especially in light of the Scriptures that proclaim Jesus to be the brother of those born of the Spirit (John 20:17; Matt. 28:10; Gal. 4:26–31; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11–18).<sup>11</sup>

In regard to Jesus' response to his mother's remark that the wine has run out, Jesus' apparent refusal is puzzling especially in light of its immediate reversal by his performing a miracle that meets the need. Jesus' hesitancy must be explained by his statement, "My hour has not yet come." His foremost consideration in initially refusing his mother's request is to avoid performing a miracle that might draw untimely attention or otherwise forestall his ministry. Some scholars suggest that, in answering the way he does, Jesus is telling his mother that he cannot allow family concerns to control his timetable. The Synoptic writers make a similar point, with Mark even having Jesus seemingly snub his mother and brothers when they ask to see him and with Luke portraying Jesus at age twelve as consciously giving primary allegiance to his

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<sup>11</sup>In Galatians 4, Paul's allegorical presentation of Hagar and Sarah as types of those bound and free parallels the Eve/Mary contrast of which John hints and which some of the church fathers later allude. Paul describes these types in terms of the "present Jerusalem," who "is in slavery with her children" and "the Jerusalem above," who "is free" and who "is our mother" (vv. 25, 26). Paul describes the children of each using the flesh/Spirit terminology: Hagar's are those born according to the flesh, while Sarah's are those born according to the Spirit (v. 29). While the original intent is not Marian *per se*, reflection on the role Mary plays in conceiving Jesus by the Spirit suggests the idea of Mary as mother also of Jesus' spiritual brothers and sisters, i.e., those born of the Spirit.



heavenly Father rather than to his earthly father and mother.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, here in John 2, Jesus hesitates to do what his mother asks lest he do anything that might divert his ministry from its divinely appointed course.

Even so, Jesus' response does not have to be viewed as an absolute refusal or a rebuke. It can also be understood in terms of a hesitation or reluctance that Jesus displays for the purpose of revealing the quality of the faith of the one making the request. Such is more clearly the case in the second miracle that Jesus performs in Cana, the healing of the official's son who is near death (4:46-54).<sup>13</sup> In that case, after Jesus expresses his hesitation to perform the miraculous healing (v. 48), waits for the father to persist; and when the father does, Jesus performs the healing (v. 50), the result being not only the son's healing but the confirmation of the father's faith. In the same way, here in the first miracle in Cana, even though Jesus initially seems to refuse his mother's request and even to distance himself from the family's concerns, his mother remains undeterred. Making no further plea to Jesus, Mary instead addresses the servants, instructing

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<sup>12</sup>"As Mary and Jesus worked out this very special relation between them, a love-relation transcending all ordinary filial relations, there were bound to be some moments of tension, as still reflected in the gospel record." John Macquarrie, *Mary for All Christians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2001), 36-38.

<sup>13</sup>Perry, *Mary for Evangelicals*, 100. Brown, *John I-XII*, 102. For Brown, "such persistence always seems to win Jesus over to acting."

them to “do whatever he tells you” (v. 5). Then Jesus, having made his point by giving his mother the opportunity to demonstrate her perseverance in faith, complies with her request and performs the miracle.

The other possibility mentioned earlier is that Jesus intends to comply with his mother’s request from the beginning but first uses the occasion to clarify to her, as he did when he was twelve, that his primary allegiance is to the heavenly Father and that his focus must be on doing his Father’s will, not resolving family predicaments. In the end, though, he accedes to his mother’s request because, committed as he is to doing the Father’s will and as attuned as he is to God’s timetable, he ultimately sees no conflict in fulfilling his mother’s request.

Though this theory may be the correct one, the question remains as to why Jesus would initially say that he sees a conflict in complying in Mary’s request but then decide there is none. What is it precisely that changes Jesus’ mind? Luke does not say, but Brown attributes it to Jesus’ inability to “resist faith.”<sup>14</sup> Though what Jesus’ mother asks of him is not something he anticipates doing, he apparently adjusts the timetable to accommodate her request. God builds enough flexibility into the divine timetable to allow Jesus to comply with

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<sup>14</sup>Raymond Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: A Concise Commentary* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1988), 29.

his mother's request. How better to honor a mother than by granting her request even though it is inconvenient? What is more, recognizing the wedding as symbolic of the messianic age and the turning of water into wine as symbolic of the overflow of the Spirit that will come as a result, Jesus seizes the moment to manifest his glory in a superabundant, faith-inspiring way.<sup>15</sup>

How does Jesus perform the miracle? The evangelist does not say, but it happens between the time Jesus tells the servants to fill the six large water pots with water and the time the headwaiter sips the sample the servants bring to him. Tasting the water turned wine, the headwaiter—unaware that a miracle has occurred—calls the bridegroom to compliment him on the exceptional quality of the wine while chiding him for saving the best for last.

The only way to account for a total depletion turning into such superfluity is to explain it as a miracle. John records two other such miracles of superabundance: one, the feeding of the five thousand (6:1–15), and the second, the post-resurrection miracle catch of fish (21:4–11). Significantly, the danger that Jesus foresees that prompts his initial hesitation in acceding to his mother's request is revealed after the feeding of the five thousand. Once the crowds

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<sup>15</sup>Many also see Eucharistic significance in this miracle, but this is not immediately germane here.

realize Jesus' miraculous power, they try to take him by force to make him king, compelling him to sequester himself on a mountain (6:14, 15).

What is Mary's role in the miracle at Cana? It is essentially one of seeing a need and bringing it to Jesus' attention, or, in a word, intercessor. This is a point at which many Evangelicals and Catholics tend to disagree, with Catholics having no difficulty with such a concept and Evangelicals traditionally resistant to it.<sup>16</sup> However, if Mary is compared to the official whose son is close to death in chapter 4 and who—it cannot be denied—intercedes for his son, then it must be admitted that Mary too intercedes for the wedding party. Recognizing the problem but having no solution herself, she brings it to her Son's attention. Then, despite his expressed reluctance, she follows through by telling the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them. Throughout Mary exhibits indomitable faith in her Son. John concludes by saying that as a result Jesus' disciples believe in him even as the evangelist later observes that the official believes when his servants tell him of his son's recovery. Luke makes no mention of Mary's faith because there is no need, Mary having clearly demonstrated it.

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<sup>16</sup>Even Perry, despite his valiant efforts to be open to Catholic concepts about Mary, cannot bring himself to support such an idea here. *Mary for Evangelicals*, 103n22.

John does not mention whether Jesus' brothers<sup>17</sup> believe in him here (ch. 2), but later states explicitly that they do not (7:5). The brothers' disbelief is indicated by the conditional clause they use when at a later time they urge Jesus to go to the feast in Jerusalem: "If you do these things, show yourself to the world." The "if" implies doubt in Jesus' miraculous power, similar to the if-clauses in the temptation accounts: "if you are the Son of God" (Luke 4:3, 9; Matt. 4:3, 5). Perhaps worse than the brothers' unbelief is their lack of concern for the danger that awaits Jesus in Jerusalem. His answer, "My time [*kairos*] has not yet come" (7:6, 8), is similar to his response when initially refusing to intervene in Cana, "My hour [*hōra*] has not yet come." Why Jesus uses *kairos* here instead of *hōra* is unclear, but what John indicates about the brothers is clear: they do not believe, their scornful attitude reminiscent of Joseph's brothers' as they sold him into slavery (Gen. 37). Ironically, soon after his brothers' departure, Jesus reverses his decision much as he did at Cana and leaves for Jerusalem, thereby distancing himself from them.

When Jesus' interaction with his brothers here is compared to his interaction with his mother at Cana, light is shed on Mary and her faith.

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<sup>17</sup>There is no time or space here to address Jesus' relationship with his brothers in terms of whether they are his blood brothers, step-brothers, cousins, or some other type of relative except to say that the Scriptures nowhere assert that these brothers are Mary's sons.

Although in my reading her faith is self-evident, it may seem questionable to some because, like Jesus' brothers, Mary suggests an action that Jesus initially refuses because it does not fit his timetable. However, there is a clear difference between Mary's motive and the brothers'. They scornfully press Jesus to go to Jerusalem out of their disbelief and antipathy, while she humbly asks for Jesus' intervention out of loving concern for the wedding party. Luke sheds light at this point, since he refers on more than one occasion to Mary's inability to understand despite her faithful, persistent efforts to do so (1:34; 2:18–19, 50–51). John, like Luke, suggests that though Mary does not fully understand, her faith remains constant.

After the wedding, John reports, Jesus "went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days" (v. 12). With no hint of dissonance in this aftermath, the impression John gives is one of familial companionship, a mother and son spending a few days together in the company of other family members and Jesus' new disciples before his ministry accelerates. This is the last time recorded in Scripture that Jesus and his mother spend a significant period of time together before Jesus' hour comes.

### Mary at the Cross (19:25–27)

Of all the evangelists, only John portrays Jesus' mother as standing at the foot of the Cross. With her are two, possibly three other women. Two are Marys, one the wife of Clopas and the other Mary Magdalene. John lists Mary's sister too, but it is unclear whether he intends the sister as an appositive of the wife of Clopas or a different woman. For those who assume she is a different woman, she is sometimes identified with Salome whom Mark mentions by name as one of the women who watch from afar during the Crucifixion and who bring spices to the tomb early on Sunday morning (15:40; 16:1). Salome is often assumed to be the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, since Matthew lists her among the women at the Crucifixion (27:56). However scholars might identify this sister, some prefer a count of four, since then the four women would function as counterparts to the four Roman soldiers (19:23).<sup>18</sup>

After the soldiers crucify Jesus and divide his clothing among themselves, Jesus sees his mother and the beloved disciple standing nearby. John's indication that they are close enough for Jesus to address contrasts with the accounts of the other evangelists who mention neither Jesus' mother nor the beloved disciple as

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<sup>18</sup>Brown gives little weight to such a consideration. Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to Luke XIII–XXI*, The Anchor Bible, 29A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), 904.

present at the Cross and who describe the women as observing from a distance (Matt. 27:55, 56; Mark 15:40; Luke 23:49). Such a difference need not detract from the historicity of the Johannine account since it would be quite natural, once the Crucifixion has taken place, for close friends and family to draw closer.

John gives no description of Mary's state of mind as she stands there though it might well be imagined. How would any mother feel who watches her son die an agonizing death? In an earlier chapter John provides a hint when he records that Jesus describes the disciples' approaching sorrow in terms of a mother's in giving birth (16:20–22):

Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

At the foot of the Cross, Mary suffers the same grief that Jesus anticipates for the disciples and undoubtedly much more.

Seeing his mother and the beloved disciple standing nearby, Jesus, in an incomparable gesture not simply of filial duty but of acknowledgement of his most faithful and beloved followers, unites them into a new spiritual family.

"Woman, behold your son. . . . Behold your mother" (19:26f). It might be tempting for some to pass over the fact that Jesus first gives the beloved disciple



to his mother as her son as this can be seen as substantiating the claim that Jesus sees the woman not only as his own but as the mother of his new family of believers; nevertheless, this is the case. Jesus clearly intends the woman standing beside the beloved disciple to be the spiritual mother of his new eschatological family.

Jesus' gift of his mother to the beloved disciple is significant in the same way. As John has made abundantly clear, Jesus' primary focus is not on natural or familial concerns but on doing his heavenly Father's will. That is why scholars generally insist that this event has theological value for the entire church as well as for the individuals involved.<sup>19</sup>

In Jesus' gift of his mother and the beloved disciple to each other, he bequeaths to them the best that he has on earth, to love each other even as he has loved them (13:34). In effect, as part of his last will and testament, he gives those he holds dearest in this life to each other as mother and son to form the nucleus of his new eschatological family. The words of Jesus as his hour arrives come to mind: "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" (13:1). Just as at the wedding in Cana, Jesus does not act solely to meet a familial

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<sup>19</sup>E.g., Francis Moloney, *Mary: Woman and Mother* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 1988), 43–50. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 503–504. Brown, *John XIII–XXI*, 923–924.

need, so here too Jesus' action must be considered not only the performance of a filial duty but an act whereby he completes the mission given to him by his Father. In giving his mother and the beloved disciple to each other as mother and son, Jesus creates a new family whose members, like himself, are born of the Spirit. In creating this new family, John says, Jesus sees his work as complete (19:28, 30).

The beloved disciple's response to Jesus' presentation of Mary to him as his mother is one of active reception (*lambanō*). John welcomes Mary into his life not as a sister but as mother. "Behold your mother!" This welcome contrasts with the rejection, i.e., non-reception, of Jesus' own in John 1 (v. 11) and coincides with the reception by those who believe in his name (v. 12). The relationship that Jesus establishes between Mary and the beloved disciple is symbolic of the ideal relationship between Jesus' mother and believers. It does not involve worship, which is due to God alone, but rather welcome, love, and honor of the mother of the crucified Lord as one's own.

Not surprisingly, Perry demurs at this point, limiting Mary's motherhood to the beloved disciple alone, thereby disallowing her role as mother of the family of faith. He attempts to justify this truncation by saying that Mary's motherhood must not be seen as personal but only as corporately symbolic of the church's motherhood of all believers. However, such a stance is inconsistent with

Perry's affirmation that Jesus established the eschatological family from the Cross.<sup>20</sup> The context demands that if Jesus is understood as establishing his new eschatological family from the Cross, then his mother must also be understood as the eschatological mother. If Jesus has indeed established such a family by giving the woman and the beloved disciple to each other as mother and son, then just as Mary is not the beloved disciple's sister but his mother, so also, within the family of faith, Jesus does not grant her parity with the beloved disciple but rather the favored, elevated status of mother. Since "a person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven" (John 3:27),<sup>21</sup> Mary does not merit this special status by her own innate goodness but by the grace that God grants her. God privileges her by grace to become mother, first, of his only begotten Son and then, secondly, of her Son's spiritual brothers and sisters (20:17; cf. Heb. 2:11; Rom. 8:29).

The challenge the Johannine evangelist presents to those of the entire family of faith is to, like the beloved disciple, open their hearts to the mother of their elder Brother, welcoming her into their lives, to cherish and honor as their own mother in the faith. Such a welcome can come only from those whose minds

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<sup>20</sup>Perry, *Mary for Evangelicals*, 106–107.

<sup>21</sup>Jesus denied having anything of himself (John 5:19, 30; 8:28; 12:49).

and hearts are converted by the Spirit to recognize Mary as the “mother of my Lord,” as Elizabeth did, and to count themselves as beloved disciples to whom Christ presents his mother with the same words with which he presented her from the Cross, “Behold, your mother.”

As already intimated, in sharing his mother with his beloved disciple, Jesus makes the disciple his brother as well as his mother’s son. The love of the mother and her new son for each other, though distinct, is indivisible from their mutual love for Jesus. Theologically, this love can be understood in terms of the Holy Spirit. The evangelist confirms this by describing Jesus’ last breath in terms of Jesus handing over (*paredōken*) his Spirit (19:34). To hand over implies more than exhaling one last time. It suggests that in breathing his last, Jesus bequeaths his Spirit to his new spiritual family (John 10:17–18). Jesus gives his life and love to the members of his family by giving them his Spirit.

John reinforces the point in the next scene in which a Roman soldier pierces Jesus’ side with a sword, resulting in blood and water gushing forth (19:34). For John, this outpouring of blood and water is not a mere phenomenon to be reported, but a symbolic event. For many scholars, the blood and water symbolize the sacraments of the Eucharist and water baptism.<sup>22</sup> While this is the

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<sup>22</sup>Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2<sup>d</sup> ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), §1225.

primary interpretation from a sacramental point of view, water in John also symbolizes the Spirit.<sup>23</sup> Earlier in John, Jesus explains spiritual rebirth to Nicodemus in terms of water and Spirit (3:5) with the water referring to John's baptism of repentance and the Spirit referring to John's prophecy that Jesus will baptize not in water but in the Holy Spirit. Another parallel is found in 1 John: "This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood . . . For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood" (5:6–8). The significance of blood and water for believers is the cleansing (Zech. 13:1) effected by Jesus on the Cross and celebrated in the Eucharist. In 1 John, the Spirit is mentioned too, since the Spirit is the one who makes the sacraments efficacious, thereby administering new life to believers.

For John, then, water symbolizes not only cleansing but new life in the Spirit. This is established earlier in his gospel. At Jacob's well, Jesus tells the

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<sup>23</sup>Joseph Grassi, "The Role of Jesus' Mother in John's Gospel: A Reappraisal," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (1986): 75. Kevin Vanhoozer, "Body-Piercing, the Natural Sense, and the Task of Theological Interpretation: A Hermeneutical Homily on John 19:34," *Ex Auditu* 16 (2000): 21–22. Peter Leithart asserts that the order speaks of "something *other* than sacramental imagery": "First the blood of the cross and then the rushing outpouring of the Spirit." "Blood and Water," *First Things*, May 31, 2014. Online: <http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/leithart/2014/05/blood-and-water>.

woman of Samaria about the living water he has to offer: “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (4:13–14). Later in Jerusalem Jesus stands up on the last great day of the feast to proclaim, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’” (7:37f.). John then states explicitly that Jesus is speaking of the Spirit. For John, then, the blood that flows from Jesus’ side symbolizes both the forgiveness provided by Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and his own life that he continually gives in the Eucharist while the water represents the Spirit given to all those who believe in Jesus, uniting them by their mutual love for him into one spiritual family.

A further scene in John’s gospel that reinforces this concept of Jesus bequeathing his Spirit to his disciples occurs in one of his post-resurrection appearances. Jesus breathes on the disciples and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). Jesus gives the Holy Spirit here in the context of commissioning the disciples to forgive and to withhold forgiveness (vv. 21, 23). In this instance, like the one in which Jesus exhales his last breath, the symbol for Spirit is breath rather than water, but the concept is the same: life. Jesus’ entire ministry is focused toward giving his life on the Cross so that in turn he can give his life—

his Spirit—to those who believe in him. Though John does not say explicitly that Mary receives the Spirit as Luke does, her presence at the Cross as the blood and water flow from Jesus' side suggests that she and the beloved disciple are recipients of his Spirit.<sup>24</sup>

#### Mary of the Apocalypse (Rev. 12:1–11)

The final Johannine text to be considered here is the sign of the woman in Revelation 12. This is the most controversial of the Johannine texts in regard to its Marian significance. Mary can reasonably be associated with the woman in Revelation 12 since her male child, like Mary's son, is destined to rule (Matt. 2:6; Mic. 5:2; Ezek. 34:23; Rev. 7:17; Heb. 1:8; Psa. 45:7). The rod of iron (12:5; cf. Rev. 2:26–27; 19:15) with which he will rule is a reference to Psalm 2:6–9. The anointed one is the Lord to whom Elizabeth, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, alludes when she calls Mary “the mother of my Lord” (Luke 1:43). Jesus refers to the same Psalm when he asks how the Messiah can be David's son since David calls him Lord (Luke 20:41ff.).

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<sup>24</sup>Perry suggests that John took Jesus' mother away before Jesus breathed his last, but the words, “from that hour,” do not warrant such a conclusion (John 19:27). *Mary for Evangelicals*, 105f.

Many scholars prefer to avoid any Marian interpretation of the woman of the Apocalypse, but for virtually any Christian of any age, the image of a glorified woman giving birth to a son who will rule the nations with a rod of iron will inevitably give rise to the thought of Mary and her Son. Perry argues that this is so only because of the passage's canonical context.<sup>25</sup> In other words, because Christians are acquainted with infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke, they cannot help but think of Mary when they read this passage. It is hard to disagree since the first readers of the Apocalypse may have been acquainted with the gospels of Matthew and Luke. However, added to this is the fact that the stated purpose of the Apocalypse is the revelation of Jesus Christ. One might argue that the Mary of Matthew and Luke is too humble and lowly to be the model for the woman in Revelation 12, but perhaps this is part of the revelation. An obscure Jewish girl from the backwaters of Nazareth is revealed to be a central figure in God's eternal plan of salvation.

To assert that the majestic celestial figure of Revelation 12 is Mary, however, is not to deny her corporate symbolism. Since here she is spoken of as "woman" as Jesus addresses her in the Johannine gospel, she can be identified with the woman in Genesis 3:15. In declaring the woman a great sign in heaven,

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<sup>25</sup>Perry, *Mary for Evangelicals*, 112.



the revelator indicates that the figure has significance beyond her own person. This does not eradicate her individual identity but suggests her representative status. By describing her as clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and wearing a crown of twelve stars, the revelator indicates her exalted status.

While many associations with the culture of that time can be made with such an image, for the Jewish readership of that day, the Hebrew associations would have been the first to come to mind, the twelve stars, for example, bringing to mind Joseph's dream of the sun, moon, and eleven stars (Gen. 37:9),<sup>26</sup> while the Greeks (of which the seven churches would have been primarily comprised) may have thought first of the legend of Apollo, son of Zeus, who at birth was saved from the dragon Python and in adulthood slew the dragon.<sup>27</sup> Since John later identifies the woman's opponent, the dragon, as the serpent, the woman of Genesis 3 is brought to mind along with her age-old conflict with the

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<sup>26</sup>The Genesis author comments that Joseph's father "kept this saying in mind" (37:11). Interestingly, in the LXX, the Greek verb for "keep" (*diatēreō*) is the same used by Luke in describing how Mary treasured all these sayings in her heart (2:51). Song 6:10 also refers to a woman in terms of the moon and the sun in the bridegroom's description of his bride: "Who is this who looks down like the dawn, / beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun, / awesome as an army with banners?" He also describes the bride as "lovely as Jerusalem," calls her a dove, extols her perfection, uniqueness, and purity, and tells how the queens, concubines, and young women call her blessed and praise her (vv. 4, 9).

<sup>27</sup>Gordon Fee, *Revelation: A New Covenant Commentary* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2013), 164.

serpent (v. 15). Since the woman is giving birth, she also brings to mind Daughter Zion in the throes of childbirth as depicted by Micah the prophet (4:9–10).

These allusions suggest the woman to be a composite figure of the faithful of the past, present, and future with Mary as representative of Israel (Daughter Zion) and of the church. Since the child to whom the woman gives birth can only be Christ, the allusion to the person of Mary is inescapable;<sup>28</sup> nevertheless, she is also the embodiment of faithful Israel and the archetype of the church.

Catholics hold that as a result of Mary's exemption from original sin (the Immaculate Conception), she was freed from the physical pain of childbirth, which was its consequence (Gen. 3:16). Therefore, they see the pain of the Revelation 12 woman as representing not the physical pain of giving birth but the suffering the mother endures in solidarity with her Son "in bringing many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10).<sup>29</sup> The woman's suffering can also be understood as the

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<sup>28</sup> Thomas, *The Apocalypse*, 359–360. For Thomas, the sun "conveys a sense of magnificent radiance," which combined with her presence in heaven indicates "close proximity to God," while in light of Rev. 2:10; 3:11; 4, 10, her crown should be understood as faithfulness (353–354).

<sup>29</sup>The use of childbirth as a metaphor for suffering is not uncommon in the Scriptures (Isa. 26:17–18; Jer. 4:31).<sup>29</sup> Paul himself speaks of the whole creation suffering the pangs of childbirth as it waits for the revelation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:22, 23). He even speaks of himself as being in labor until Christ is formed in the Galatians (4:19). Jesus too can be understood as enduring the suffering of

anguish Israel itself endured throughout the millennia during the unspeakable suffering of enslavement, dispersion, and genocide as well as the perennial suffering of the church caused over the centuries by persecution and division. Israel's anguish has been immortalized in her psalmic laments and prayers for the Messiah, while the church's is best expressed in the prayer of the martyrs, "How long, O Lord?" (Rev. 6:10) and in the sighs of those who eagerly await Christ's return in glory, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

The woman's flight into the wilderness is reminiscent of Israel's flight into the wilderness and the flight by night of Joseph and Mary with the infant Jesus to escape Herod's wrath. Though the details do not match precisely those recorded in Matthew, the allusion still seems clear. Herod's wrath expressed in the massacre of the innocents in Bethlehem is a type of the persecution that the dragon prosecutes against the rest of the woman's offspring who "keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (v. 17). While, in Genesis, the woman's Son is the one who crushes the head of the serpent, here Michael and the angels fight the battle in the heavens while the rest of the woman's offspring enter into the fray on earth, the martyrs being numbered among those who overcome the serpent by "the blood of the Lamb and . . . [by]

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the Crucifixion in order to birth the new creation. In sharing in Christ's sufferings, Mary enters into the throes of Christ birthing the church (Rom. 8:17; 2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24; 1 Pet. 4:13).

the word of their testimony, and [who] did not love their life even to death" (v. 11).

The wings of an eagle that enable the woman to fly to "her place" of refuge in the wilderness where she is nourished (v. 14) bring to mind God's protection of Israel during the wilderness sojourn as well as the provision of manna (Exod. 19:4; Deut. 32:11; Isa. 40:31). Similarly, God sustains, nourishes, comforts, and edifies the church during its earthly exile through the Word, the sacraments, the charisms, and the indwelling presence of God by the Spirit.

In the Apocalypse Mary, who is representative of the church, the bride, is the dwelling place of God, as she was as Jesus' earthly mother (Rev. 21:2–3). As bride, she is linked with the Spirit in the final chapter where together the Spirit and the bride call for the coming of the bridegroom (Rev. 22:17).<sup>30</sup> The implication is that Mary (the church) is so in sync with the Spirit that even her prayers and deepest longings correspond to those of the Spirit. With the Spirit, Mary points not to herself but to Christ, seeking his glory, not her own (John 16:14–15). The antithesis of the prostitute (Babylon), who "glorified herself and lived in luxury" and who presumed to "sit as a queen" (Rev. 18:7), Mary is the

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<sup>30</sup>The woman of Revelation 12 is revealed to be the bride of the Lamb (19:7; 22:17), the New Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God (21:2–3), in utter contrast to Jezebel (Rev. 2:20) and the great prostitute, who is Babylon, the dwelling place of demons (14:8; 17:16–21; 18:2).

bride (the new Jerusalem) to whom it is granted to make “herself ready . . . to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure . . . the righteous deeds of the saints” (Rev. 19:7–8).

## Conclusions

The Johannine Mary then, like Luke’s, is a pneumatological Mary. She is the woman of faith whose intercession on behalf of the wedding couple at Cana leads to the initiation of Jesus’ public ministry, and the one who stands in faithful solidarity with Christ at its end on the Cross. She is the woman to whom Christ presents the beloved disciple as her son and whom he presents to the beloved disciple as mother. When Jesus breathes his last, releasing his spirit, he bequeaths, as it were, the Spirit to them. Then, when the blood and water flow from his pierced side, the mother and son of Christ’s newly established family are the first to receive the rivers of living water, of the Spirit, of which Jesus spoke in John 7:38f. In Revelation 12, the woman clothed in the sun is not only a corporate symbol of Israel and the church but also of the Genesis 3:15 woman, the mother of the one who bruises the head of the serpent and against whose other offspring the dragon wages war (Rev. 12:17). While the Johannine author is more subtle than Luke in his portrayal of Mary as a woman of the Spirit, she

emerges from his pages as the New Eve, mother of all who are reborn of the Spirit (John 1:12f.).

To summarize, then, Matthew, Luke, and the Johannine gospel reveal Mary to be closely associated to the Spirit. Matthew and Luke both portray her as conceiving God's Son by the Holy Spirit. This is reinforced by the Johannine author, though more abstractly. I have not included my study of Mark here, but I can say that though he paints what on the whole appears to be a negative portrait of Jesus' family, he lays down a foundational principle for a biblical understanding of Mary: the principle of the priority of the spiritual family over the natural. To synthesize what all the evangelists say about Mary, she is the woman of whose flesh the Son of God partakes by the Spirit to become incarnate. The irony at which the Johannine author hints is that the conception by which the Word is made flesh is not of the flesh but of the Spirit.

Luke's primary contribution is to explicitly link Mary to the Spirit in both the infancy narrative and at Pentecost. His contribution is unique because he ties Mary to the Spirit by using the language of Pentecost, particularly the phrase, "the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."

While Luke and Matthew agree on the essential point that the Holy Spirit is the agent of Jesus' conception, they differ in their treatment of Mary. Luke

treats Mary as the primary human act-or, leaving Joseph in the background, whereas in Matthew, Joseph is the primary act-or, Mary being essentially passive, in fact, in that respect remarkably dissimilar to the other women Matthew features in his genealogy. Nevertheless, for Matthew, the child and his mother are the center of concern, Joseph serving as their guardian.

Luke, like Matthew, links his gospel with the Hebrew Scriptures, but in addition to quoting them explicitly (e.g., 3:4–6; 4:4, 8, 10–12, 18–19), he makes numerous other allusions to them, as in the *Magnificat*. This establishes a biblical precedent for recognizing the foreshadowing of Mary in the Hebrew Scriptures. Matthew provides another such precedent by including women to his genealogy and linking the virginal conception to Isaiah 7:14, Bethlehem as birthplace of the Messiah to Micah 5:2, and Mary to Daughter Zion in Micah 4:9–10.

Like Matthew and Luke, the Johannine evangelist suggests a link between Mary and the Spirit, but does so using a symbolism that is sometimes overlooked. John uses both water and breath to symbolize the Spirit, but does not unpack their theological implications or potential application to Mary, leaving to the later church the task of discerning their meaning in light of the other Johannine writings and the Scriptures as a whole.

Taken together, the gospels indicate Mary to be a woman of the Spirit whose life is characterized by grace, faith, and faithfulness. While honored as the

mother of the Lord, she is portrayed ultimately as one who believes, i.e., who hears God's word and keeps it (Luke 1:45; 11:17). Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit may then be described in terms of faith and receptivity. When she says yes to God at the Annunciation she is expressing her openness to the Holy Spirit who will come upon her and overshadow her. In bringing about the conception of Jesus, the Holy Spirit also indwells her and fills her with God's love (Rom. 5:5). She continues to remain receptive to the Spirit even when Jesus appears to deny her request at Cana since, undaunted, she tells the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." She remains undaunted as well when Jesus does not respond to her request to see him at the house at Capernaum, as his words reveal that his focus must now be on his ministry and not on his natural family. Mary's continued faithfulness and openness are confirmed by her presence at the Cross. She is one of the few who stand near the Cross, to watch faithfully until he commits his Spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46), and the water and blood flow from his pierced heart (John 19:34). Finally, Mary remains open to still more of the Holy Spirit after the Ascension because she prays along with Jesus' other disciples for the promise of the Father, anticipating what God has for the church as a whole and for herself personally.

Whether this is a valid interpretation of what the evangelists say about Mary, may be debated, but what is not debatable is that it is representative of the



way that the church over the centuries has come to understand Mary. Whether one holds to the authority of the church to make such interpretations often determines whether one accepts their legitimacy. However, as persons who profess to listen to the Spirit in every age, we cannot dismiss this interpretation out of hand. Like Mary, we can only treasure these things in our hearts and ponder them, as we wait for the Spirit of truth to more fully reveal the truth to us as we are able to bear it (John 16:12–13).

In the next three chapters I analyze selected works of theologians from the fourth through the twentieth centuries to see how they view Mary, particularly how they conceptualize her in relation to the Spirit. Since the church has held to the unity of the Scriptures, it should not be surprising that these theologians draw upon the Hebrew Scriptures as well as the Christian to better understand Mary in relation to the Spirit and her role in salvation history.

## Chapter 5

## Mary and the Spirit from the Fourth to Seventh Centuries

I have selected Ephrem of Syria, Jacob of Serugh, and Ildefonsus of Toledo to represent pneumatological Marian thought in the centuries prior to the High Middle Ages. While other early theologians also recognized the relation between Mary and the Spirit,<sup>1</sup> Ephrem and Jacob were two of the most prolific. Both hymn writers in the Syriac tradition, they, like many of their Eastern confrères, placed more emphasis on pneumatology than their Western counterparts. Ildefonsus is an important representative of the West because of his prayer to Mary regarding the Spirit. Although controversial, the association Ildefonsus makes between Mary and the Spirit is of particular relevance to this thesis. Together the work of these three theologians demonstrates that even prior to the High Middle Ages Mary was not seen solely from the viewpoint of Christology. While they recognize the essential role the Holy Spirit plays in preparing Mary to be the mother of the incarnate Son, they also see that preparation as having had

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<sup>1</sup>In the third century, e.g., Origen saw the Spirit not only activating Christ's conception, but filling Mary, making her a prophet, and effecting the spiritual progress of Elizabeth and the unborn John. Homilies 7–9, pp. 28–29, 33, 37, in Origen, *Homilies on Luke; and, Fragments on Luke*, trans. Joseph Lienhard, FC, 94 (Baltimore: CUA Press, 1996). In *Lucam Homilia*, PG 13.1817–1823.

such a sanctifying effect that makes Mary a sanctuary, i.e., a permanent residence, of the Spirit.

Another reason I selected these theologians was their ardent spirituality, humility, profound knowledge of the Scriptures, and their desire to be faithful to the tradition they had received. Their focus was not on innovation but on handing on the truth as it had been passed down to them. They repeatedly expressed their need for the Holy Spirit to enable them to accurately understand and communicate the truth. Further, they each displayed an ardent devotion to Christ of which their Marian devotion was only a part, although for them an unexpendable part, since in their view one cannot properly honor the Son without honoring the mother.

## Mary and the Spirit According to Ephrem of Syria

### *History and Hermeneutic*

Ephrem of Syria (*ca.* 306–373), “the lyre of the Holy Spirit,” is a poet-theologian and arguably the greatest Christian hymnologist of all time.

Venerated as a saint by both East and West,<sup>2</sup> Ephrem was proclaimed a doctor of

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<sup>2</sup>John Wesley called Ephrem “the most awakening writer, I think, of all the ancients” in his journal entry dated October 12, 1736. *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Albert Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 18:172.

the church by Benedict XV in 1920. Born in Nisibis, Syria, in present-day Turkey, he served the church there until the Persians exiled the Nisbene Christian community. Removed to Edessa, Ephrem served as a deacon there for the rest of his life, writing hymns, sermons in verse, and exegetical works in prose.

Ephrem speaks from a perspective of faith and wonder rather than “investigation,” although he does not totally dismiss inquiry.<sup>3</sup> Much of his writing is in the form of catechetical hymns (*madrashē*) intended for women’s choirs, finding it fitting that the songs of Mary and her Son be sung by women.<sup>4</sup> Following the Pauline definition of “filled with the Spirit,” Ephrem exhorts his fellow Christians through “hymns and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19).<sup>5</sup> Ephrem explains his method of composing as opening his mouth and mind and trusting God to fill them.<sup>6</sup> The hymns focus on Christ in whom divinity entered into humanity so that, in turn, humanity might enter into divinity.

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<sup>3</sup>Hymn 2.2–19, in Ephrem the Syrian, *The Hymns on Faith*, trans. Jeffrey Wickes, FC, 130 (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2015), 63–67.

<sup>4</sup>Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Song and Memory: Biblical Women in Syriac Tradition*, The Père Marquette Lecture in Theology, 2010 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010), 35–38.

<sup>5</sup>“His lips have sung / The psalms of the Spirit.” Hymn 16 in *Select Metrical Hymns and Homilies of Ephræm Syrus* (London: Blackader, 1853), 44.

<sup>6</sup>Hymn 10.1. *Hymns on Faith*, 121.

Ephrem's hermeneutic is based on his view of the inspiration of the Scriptures. They are inspired not only in the historic sense of the Holy Spirit moving upon human authors to write them but also existentially, at the moment they are read, the Spirit enlightening the reader's/hearer's mind to interpret their meaning.<sup>7</sup> In Ephrem's epistemology, the primary sources are Scripture and nature, Scripture providing two Testaments and nature comprising the third, together forming a single revelation:

The Word of the Most High came down and put on  
a weak body with hands,  
and He took two harps [the two Testaments]  
in His right and left hands.  
The third [nature] He set before Himself  
to be a witness to the [other] two,  
for the middle harp taught  
that their Lord is playing them.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ephrem the Syrian, *The Harp of the Spirit: Poems of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., trans. Sebastian Brock (Cambridge: Aquila Books, 2013), 12. Ephrem, Hymn on the Church 37.1: "Illumine with Your teaching / the voice of the speaker / and the ear of the hearer: / like the pupil of the eye / let the ears be illumined." Trans. by Sebastian Brock in *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*, (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1992), 71.

<sup>8</sup>Hymn on Virginity 29.1, in Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns*, trans. Kathleen McVey, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 390–391. Bertrand Buby, *Mary of Galilee*, vol. 3 (New York: Alba House, 1997), 305–306.

## *Theology*

Since he sees the Scriptures as forming a cohesive whole, Ephrem in his *Hymns on the Nativity*, like Matthew's genealogy, presents Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth as types of Mary. Tamar and Ruth seek the coming King hidden in the loins of Judah and Boaz,<sup>9</sup> while Rahab, Tamar, and Ruth "pursue men" out of their desire for God. Even Tamar's adultery is "chaste" because she does it out of longing for God, her father-in-law having prevented her from drinking from the "Pure Fountain," God.<sup>10</sup> Though slandered, Mary rejoices, confident that, as Judah vindicated Tamar, so her Son will vindicate her.<sup>11</sup> Since the two Testaments are a unit, one can be understood fully only in light of the other, Ephrem likens Joseph's stance toward Mary, rising "to serve in the presence of his Lord Who was within Mary," to that of a priest toward the Ark of the Covenant, who stood before it in honor of the holy presence within it.<sup>12</sup>

Though Ephrem considers God *in se* unknowable, he holds that, out of love for humanity and in condescension to human weakness, God has revealed

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<sup>9</sup>Hymn on the Nativity 1.12–13; McVey, *Hymns*, 65. See also Hymn on Virginity 22.19–20, in McVey, *Hymns*, 359–360

<sup>10</sup>Hymn on the Nativity 9.10; McVey, *Hymns*, 126.

<sup>11</sup>Hymn on the Nativity 15.7–8; McVey, *Hymns*, 146–147.

<sup>12</sup>Hymn on the Nativity 16.16; McVey, *Hymns*, 151.

himself not only through Scripture but through the signs and symbols of the natural world:

In every place, if you look, His symbol is there,  
and when you read, you will find His prototypes.  
For by him were created all creatures,  
and he imprinted His symbols upon His possessions  
When he created the World,  
He gazed at it and adorned it with His images.  
Streams of His symbols opened, flowed and poured forth  
His symbols on its members.<sup>13</sup>

The underlying presupposition of Ephrem's Marian reflection is that the humanity into which God's Son entered was not generic human matter, for such does not exist, but rather that of a specific human being, a young Jewish girl named Mary. At the moment of the Holy Spirit's descent, Mary conceives, and in due time, gives birth, sharing her Son with the world for its restoration. However, this birth from Mary is not the Son's first but rather his second, since the first is his eternal generation from the Father. God the Father from all eternity proposed his Son as the gift of himself to creation, willing his Son to die so that his creation, of which humanity was the crown, might live. The mother, in contrast to the divine Father, was only human, a young girl whose perspective was naturally limited. Yet God asked her to make a decision that required an

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<sup>13</sup>Hymn of Virginité 10.12; McVey, *Hymns*, 41–42. Buby, *Mary of Galilee*, 307.

eternal perspective. Not only did he ask her to become the mother of his Son, but ultimately, like himself, to consent to her Son's death so that others might live, in other words, to collaborate with him in actualizing the incarnation. While Augustine speculated that God could have incarnated his Son without a human mother, that is not what God did.<sup>14</sup> He chose instead to send his Son to be born of a humble young girl who by grace willingly consecrated her life to mothering his Son.

Ephrem writes his nativity hymns as lullabies sung by Mary to her infant Son, in which she ponders the mysteries of the incarnation and her role as mother of her incarnated Lord. In Hymn 16, she contemplates her Son's indwelling from conception to birth, and after birth, the continuation of the indwelling of his "hidden power," or divinity (16.2).<sup>15</sup> While Ephrem specifies the presence of the Father along with the Son within her, the implication is that the indwelling of the divine Trinity is actuated by the Spirit (16.3).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Sermon 51, in *Sermons (51–94) on the New Testament*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, III/3, ed. John Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New City Press, 1991), 21–22. By electing a human woman to mother his Son, God demonstrates his redemptive love for women as well as men, graciously choosing a person of the same gender as Eve, who had served as an accomplice in humanity's fall, to be a collaborator in its restoration.

<sup>15</sup>McVey, *Hymns*, 149.

<sup>16</sup>McVey, *Hymns*, 149n355.



Inspired by the indwelling Spirit, “a new utterance of prophecy seethes” in Mary, resulting in her singing of her Son’s conception as “a new thing” (cf. Isa 42:9; 43:19; 48:6) and his birth as a miracle (9.8).<sup>17</sup> Mary revels in the various facets of her relationship with her Son who is also her Brother, Bridegroom, and Lord, making her not only mother but sister, bride, handmaiden, and even daughter (§§9–10; cf. Hymn 11, §2). In birthing her Son, she herself receives a second birth (§11), his birth being her baptism.

Ephrem understands baptism as the washing of the body with water to make it “fit for the robe of the Spirit imparted by our Lord.” In water baptism, “the Spirit, which cannot be seen” is mixed, or united, “with water, which can be seen, so that those whose bodies feel the wetness of the water should be aware of the gift of the Spirit in their souls, and that as the outside of the body becomes aware of water flowing over it, the inside of the soul should become aware of the Spirit flowing over it.”<sup>18</sup> The implication is that for Ephrem water baptism involves Spirit-baptism, the water cleansing the flesh as a sacramental act symbolic of inner purification, or the sanctification of the soul, by the Spirit. Whereas in modern parlance a symbol does not necessitate an actuality, for

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<sup>17</sup>McVey, *Hymns*, 150.

<sup>18</sup>“Homily on our Lord,” §55, in *Selected Prose Works*, ed. Kathleen McVey, trans. Edward Mathews and Joseph Amar, FC, 91 (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1994), 329.

Ephrem a symbol is the visible manifestation of an invisible reality. The coming of the Spirit on the baptized is understood as the donning of the robe of the Spirit. As Christ “put on our visible body” as a garment so, in turn, redeemed humanity puts on God’s “hidden power,” the Spirit, as a robe.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Ephrem implies that Mary herself is robed in the Spirit of God, not only at the conception or during her pregnancy but throughout her life.

Besides using the baptismal robe as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, Ephrem symbolizes God’s indwelling of Mary using such natural elements as light, heat, and fire. The problem at times is that Ephrem writes with a poetic ambiguity which makes the referents for the symbols uncertain. An example is that of fire, which Ephrem uses variously, sometimes to refer to divinity in general and at other times either to the Son or to the Spirit. In the case of Ephrem’s use of light in Hymn on the Church 36.2, however, there is no ambiguity, the light clearly symbolizing Christ and the effect of Christ’s indwelling on Mary. Christ the Light enters Mary’s eye, making it luminous:<sup>20</sup>

As though on an eye,  
the Light settled in Mary,  
it polished her mind,

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<sup>19</sup>Hymn on the Nativity 22.39, McVey, *Hymns*, 185.

<sup>20</sup>Sebastian Brock, trans., *Bride of Light* (Kerala, India: SEERI, 2009), 41. Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 71–76.

made bright her thought  
and pure her understanding.

The reason Mary thinks so clearly is that God's Light is within, illuminating her mind, clarifying her understanding. Reverting to the parallel he draws between baptismal waters and Mary, Ephrem refers to the "womb of water" that "conceived Him in purity" and "bore Him in chastity" (36.3-4). As the Daystar shone brilliantly at Jordan and from the tomb and on the mountain top at the Transfiguration and Ascension, so the same Light illumines Mary's womb (36.5). For, if Moses' face reflected God's Light though it did not reside in him, how much more would the Light that did reside in Mary cause her body to "gleam from within" (36.6-8)? Similarly, in Hymn on Faith 74, Ephrem uses the imagery of heat in clear reference to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the heat of the Trinity, the Father being the sun and the Son the ray or radiance,<sup>21</sup> the power of which "dwells in everything" (74.3). The heat "extends to creatures," each bearing "the power of the heat / Insofar as it is able" (74:5).<sup>22</sup>

In Ephrem's Hymn of Faith 10, the referent for fire is unclear. While in Hymn on Faith 40.10, Ephrem identifies fire explicitly as "the mystery of the

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<sup>21</sup>Hymn on Faith 73.1; Wickes, *Hymns on Faith*, 349.

<sup>22</sup>Wickes, *Hymns on Faith*, 352.

Spirit” and “the type of the Holy Spirit,”<sup>23</sup> in the tenth hymn he speaks of “fire and Spirit” together, as though they are two distinct entities, the context not adequately clarifying the meaning. In conceiving Christ, Ephrem says, Mary is indwelt by “fire and Spirit,” leaving to the reader/listener to discern whether fire refers to divinity in general or to the Son specifically, or whether it might be a metonym of the Spirit.<sup>24</sup> Whatever the referent, however, the pneumatological implications are clear.

In Hymn 10, Ephrem draws a parallel between the indwelling of fire and Spirit in Mary and their presence in Eucharistic wine and bread and in baptismal waters (10.8–9, 12).<sup>25</sup> Fire and Spirit are in Christ’s baptism as well as in his conception, and similarly in all Christian baptism as well as in the Eucharist. Ephrem also speaks of “a font in a veil—the bosom of Mary!” (10:15). From this

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<sup>23</sup>Wickes, *Hymns on Faith*, 227.

<sup>24</sup>Though he explicitly identifies fire as a “type of the Holy Spirit” (Hymns on Faith, 40.10, 227), for Ephrem, fire is more closely associated with the divinity of the Son. In an earlier hymn, for example, he refers to the “Fire [that] entered the womb [of Mary], / Put on a body and went forth” (4.2; Wickes, *Hymns on Faith*, 72). Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 38. Frédéric Rilliet refers to Ephrem’s occasional ambiguity as resulting from his rejection of “Scriptural ‘fundamentalism,’” his “semantic openness,” and his “polysemy of symbols” which he draws from Scripture and ancient Mesopotamia as well as from nature. “Ephrem of Syria,” in *The Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, ed. Angelo di Berardino (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 276 of 276–277.

<sup>25</sup>Wickes, *Hymns on Faith*, 122–123.

font, or “cup of life,” the handmaids receive a “drop of life,” another reference to Eucharistic communion. Reminiscent of the Spirit’s hovering over the waters at creation (Gen. 1:1), the overshadowing of the Spirit on Mary at the incarnation effects a “new creation,” making mortals like angels, within whom “both fire and spirit mingle” (10.9).<sup>26</sup> Mary herself is such a new creation since both fire and Spirit indwell her.<sup>27</sup>

### *Summary*

More could be said about Ephrem’s Mary in relation to the Spirit, but I stop here since, despite the ambiguity of the meaning of fire in his writing, it is clear that Ephrem envisions Mary as indwelt by the Spirit as well as by the Son. Since he did not know of Basil’s defense of the divinity of the Spirit in *On the Holy Spirit* (ca. 375) or the declarations of the Council of Constantinople (381), his ambiguity is certainly understandable. In any case, since Ephrem typically uses

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<sup>26</sup>Wickes, *Hymns on Faith*, 123. Since Ephrem writes prior to the Council of Chalcedon (451), his use of the words *mingled* or *mixed* to describe the dual natures of Christ must not be held to the same standard as post-Chalcedonian writings.

<sup>27</sup>According to Beggiani, the consequence of the indwelling of the Spirit in Mary, as in any baptized human being, is divinization, the technical term used in the East for sanctification, or participation in the divine nature. Seely Beggiani, *Early Syriac Theology: With Special Reference to the Maronite Tradition*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2014), 77, 93.

fire as a symbol of divinity,<sup>28</sup> his approach might well be considered an inchoate form of Spirit Christology, though he would not have understood it that way.

## Mary and the Spirit According to Jacob of Serugh

### *History and Hermeneutic*

Jacob of Serugh (451–521), a Syriac hymnist, has been called the flute of the Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup> Although he is generally considered a Monophysite,<sup>30</sup> he did not actively seek to promote that teaching, or at least, it is not readily observable in his work; he largely follows or develops the thought of Ephrem. In a panegyric written perhaps as early as the sixth or seventh century, an anonymous eulogist praises Jacob as one inspired by the Spirit to expound the divine mysteries.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 38–39.

<sup>29</sup>Roberta Bondi, *Three Monophysite Christologies: Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbug and Jacob of Sarug* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 1, 7.

<sup>30</sup>Bondi, *Three Monophysite Christologies*. Taeke Jansma, “Encore le Credo de Jacques de Saroug: Nouvelles Recherches sur l'Argument concernant son Orthodoxie,” *L'Orient syrien* 10 (1965): 75–88. This controversy has no relevance to this thesis.

<sup>31</sup>“The Holy Spirit revealed (*glo*) and explained to him all the secrets of the Holy Scriptures; this doctor became the receptacle (*nawso*) of the Spirit and filled Holy Church with wisdom by commenting on the Holy Scriptures.” “Homélie sur la Vie de l'Oeuvre de Jacques de Saroug” (anon.), Paris, BnF, Syr., MS 177, fols. 147a–148b of fols. 146b–162b. My ET is based on the French in Behnam

Jacob typically opens his homilies with a prayer,<sup>32</sup> such as this request for inspiration of the Spirit:

I am giving the harp of my words to you and let me borrow your finger;  
and in your hymns let the sound whisper to your glory. By the impulse of  
the Spirit let my mind bring forth the homily of your praise,  
for I am not competent for your homily: please speak through me.  
I am the flute, when your word is breath and your story is the voice.  
Please take control of it, and by your means may we sing to you using  
what is your own.<sup>33</sup>

Like Ephrem, his predecessor, Jacob approaches the subject of Mary as a mystery that solicits wonder, love, and silence rather than human scrutiny, debate, or speculation.<sup>34</sup> Given the miraculous nature of Jesus' conception and nativity, they are "uninvestigable."<sup>35</sup> The mysteries of the incarnation having

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Boulos Sony, "La Méthode Exégétique de Jacques de Saroug," *Parole de l'Orient* 9 (1979–1980): 67 of 67–103.

<sup>32</sup>"Homily on the Perpetual Virginity of Mary" [Appendix], i–xxi, of James Puthuparampil, *Mariological Thought of Mar Jacob of Serugh (451–521)* (Kerala: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 2005), lines 1–2, i; Paul Bedjan, *Martyrii, qui et Sahdona quae supersunt omnia* (Paris: Leipzig, 1902), §§685–708.

<sup>33</sup>Jacob of Serugh, "On the Nativity of Our Redeemer," in *Select Festal Homilies*, trans. Thomas Kollampampil (Rome: Centre for Indian and Inter-Religious Studies, 1997), 44, quoted in Puthuparampil, *Mariological Thought*, 30.

<sup>34</sup>Jacob of Serugh, *On the Mother of God*, trans. Mary Hansbury, intro. Sebastian Brock (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 18n1. The parenthetical notations in this section that have sections (§) and page numbers are to *On the Mother of God*. Jacob, "Perpetual Virginity," ii, 30–32.

<sup>35</sup>Jacob of Serugh, "Homily on the Perpetual Virginity of Mary," line 79, iv.

been hidden in the signs and types in the Scriptures, Jacob finds Mary's virginity preserved in parturition hidden in Ezekiel's prophecy of the "closed door" (44:2), the door through which God entered the world—Mary's womb—being opened neither when he entered it nor when he left it (lines 205–258, ix–xi).<sup>36</sup>

### *Theology*

I have chosen Jacob's homily, "Concerning the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, Mary,"<sup>37</sup> to examine his understanding of Mary and the Spirit. He begins by praying for the privilege of seeing God's beauty, but then immediately restates the request in mariological terms, asking the Son of the Virgin for permission to speak of his mother, despite his own inadequacy to do justice to her exalted status (§615, 18). For Jacob, contemplation of the mother's beauty does not detract from contemplation of the Son's, for to extol one is to extol the other.

Jacob explains that despite Mary's incomprehensibility (§618, 21), he is moved to Marian discourse both by his love for her (§618, 23) and by her call (§615, 18). Inviting the discerning to "lovingly incline the ear of the soul," he cautions prospective listeners to prepare their minds and purge their hearing lest

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<sup>36</sup>Jacob of Serugh, "Homily on the Perpetual Virginity of Mary," lines 205–258, ix–xi.

<sup>37</sup>Jacob of Serugh, *On the Mother of God*, 17–42.



any impurity dishonor Mary's "luminous tale" (§615, 18). Then he intones a litany of Mary's titles and virtues (§§615–617, 18–20), including "blessed among women, by whom the curse of the land was eradicated" (§616, 18).

Like Ephrem, Jacob emphasizes Mary's role as the "Second Eve who generated Life among mortals and paid and rent asunder that bill of Eve her mother" (§616, 19). In the same capacity, she helps "the old woman [Eve] who was prostrate," raising "her from the Fall where the serpent had thrust her." Mary is the "daughter . . . [who] wove a garment of glory . . . [for] her father [Adam] . . . because he was stripped naked among the trees" (§616).

The image Jacob has in mind is far "more glorious and exalted" than his composition, the colors of his palette too pale to depict her beauty, his words inadequate to convey the full story (§617, 20).<sup>38</sup> This is because Mary is unclassifiable since, as both virgin and mother, maiden and married woman, no single category circumscribes her (§618, 21).

Awed by the high rank to which the lowly maiden has ascended (§618, 21), Jacob acknowledges that the reason for her exaltation is her lowliness:

But no one on earth was brought low like Mary,  
and from this it is manifest that no one was exalted like her (§619, 22).

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<sup>38</sup>Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns of Paradise*, trans. Sebastian Brock, (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), 11.

For Jacob, humility is “total perfection,” for by it, “the heroic in every generation have been pleasing” to God. Ironically, the lowly way is “the great way by which one draws near to God.” Mary’s humility is like that of Moses, Abraham, and John the Baptist, but she is the lowliest and, therefore, the one God most exalts (§619, 22).

Jacob repeatedly describes Mary in superlative terms. The reason God chooses her is that of all women she is the most pleasing:

If there were another, purer and gentler than she . . .  
 And if there were a soul [more] splendid and holy,  
 Rather than hers, He would choose this one and forsake that one (§620,  
 22–23).

[God] descended . . . and dwelt within the glorious one among women,  
 because for her there was not a companion comparable to her in the world  
 (§620, 23).

When the Great King desired to come to our place,  
 He dwelt in the purest shrine of all the earth because it pleased Him (§621,  
 24).

Because she became the Mother of the Son of God, I saw and firmly  
 believed  
 that she is the only woman in the world who is entirely pure (§621, 24).

A daughter of men was sought among women;  
 she was chosen who was the fairest of all (§622, 25).

If another had pleased more than her, He would have chosen that one,  
 for the Lord does not respect persons since He is just and right.  
 If there had been a spot in her soul or a defect,  
 He would have sought for Himself another mother in whom there is no  
 blemish (§623, 26).

The beauty of Mary is beyond measure,  
Because another who is greater than she has not arisen in all the world  
(§624, 26).<sup>39</sup>

Why is Mary so beautiful and virtuous? Jacob asks. Did grace bend down,  
or did her beauty draw God to her? The answer is both:

That God descended on earth by grace is manifest;  
And since Mary was very pure she received Him (§618, 21).

For Jacob, purity and receptivity are Mary's by grace, yet she also freely exercises  
her will to remain pure and receptive to God.

Jacob elaborates on the characteristics that make Mary pleasing,  
particularly her humility, holiness, and purity:

[God] looked on her humility and her gentleness and her purity,  
and dwelt in her because it is easy for Him to dwell with the humble  
(§619, 21).

Because He saw how pure she was and limpid her soul,  
He wanted to dwell in her since she was free from evils (§622, 25).

Mary's very impulses—her natural inclinations—are pure and limpid,<sup>40</sup> her  
purity comparable to that of John, Elisha, Elias (Elijah), and Melchizedek (§624,

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<sup>39</sup>Clearly Jacob is not saying that the mother is greater than the Son: "Since His grace is greater than that of all who are born, the beauty of Mary shall be much extolled because she was his mother" (§623, 26).

<sup>40</sup>Limpidity, *shafyuta*, is a word used by early Syriac writers to describe both Christ and Mary. According to Sebastian Brock, it indicates the purity of heart that allows the eye of faith to receive divine revelation. A polished mirror is said to be limpid or luminous because it clearly reflects the one who looks in it.

27). With a “soul desirous of divinity” and “a pure heart and every reckoning of perfection,” she has no “impulse inclined to lust,” no “thought for luxury,” no “desire for worldly vanity.” No “displeasing desires” sully her thoughts. Even her body reflects her inner purity, her womb being “adorned with virginity” (§§620–621, 23–24).

Moreover, Mary is actively virtuous. She delights in God, setting him continually before her eyes, gazing on him “so that she might be enlightened by Him” (§622, 24–25). She is “a person of discernment, full of the love of God . . . most fair in her nature and in her will” (§621, 24).

Jacob speaks of Mary’s goodness as her original nature, manifest from childhood:

Her original nature was preserved with a will for good things. . . .  
 From when she knew to distinguish good from evil, she stood firm in  
 purity of heart and in integrity of thoughts. . . .  
 From childhood, impulses of holiness stirred within her,  
 and in her excellence, she increased them with great care (622, 24).

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Brock, “The Prayer of the Heart in Syriac Tradition,” *Sobornost* 4, no. 2 (1982): 131–142. *The Luminous Eye*, 73–74. According to Bunge, limpidity is not the exercise of the virtues, but rather a place of rest, freedom from the passions. Gabriel Bunge, “Le Lieu de Limpidité,” *Irénikon* 55 (1982): 9.

For modern readers, such a description brings to mind the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and some even consider it to be a nascent form of it.<sup>41</sup>

Jacob then pursues the idea of Mary exercising her free will to grow in virtue:

This is beauty, when one is beautiful of one's own accord;  
glorious graces of perfection are in her will.  
However great be the beauty of something from God,  
it is not acclaimed if freedom is not present. . . .  
Even God loves beauty which is from the will (§622–623, 25).

She drew near to the limit of virtue by her soul;  
so, that grace which is without limit dwelt in her (§624, 27).

Even though Mary is “pleasing as much as it is given nature,” Jacob denies that she attains sanctity solely “by her will” or “her own doing.” Rather, “she rose up to this measure on her own, until the Spirit, that perfecter of all, came to her” (§636, 38), shedding his grace on her “without measure” (§§623–624, 26–27). So, while Mary does rise to a limited degree by her own efforts, it is the Spirit who brings God’s work to completion in her, by grace making her “full of the beauty of holiness” (§624, 27):

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<sup>41</sup>Hilda Graef, and Thomas A. Thompson, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, rev. ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 2009), 95. However, others disparage such an idea, since during Jacob’s time the concept had not yet been entertained. Albert van Roey, “La Sainteté de Marie d’après Jacques de Saroug,” *Ephemerides Théologicae Lovanienses* 31, no. 1 (1955): 58.

Since a woman like her had never been seen,  
*an amazing work was done in her* which is the greatest of all (§622, 25).<sup>42</sup>

Hitherto she strove with human virtue,  
 but that God should shine forth from her, was not of her own doing. . . .  
 But that the Lord shone from her bodily,  
 His grace it is" (§624, 26).

Jacob attempts to balance the scales of divine choice and grace and human will and effort. Though graced by the Spirit beyond measure, Mary is not a passive recipient of the grace of motherhood: "The holy Father wanted to make a mother for his Son, but he did not allow that she be his mother because of his choice [alone]" (§622, 25).

According to Jacob, the activity with which Mary pursues holiness at the Annunciation is prayer: "With prayers and in limpidity and in simplicity, Mary received that spiritual revelation." Though the Scriptures do not say that Mary is in prayer at that moment, Jacob argues for it since both Daniel<sup>43</sup> and Zechariah were standing in prayer when Gabriel visited them (§625, 28):

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<sup>42</sup>Emphasis added.

<sup>43</sup>Jacob interprets the gospels in light of scriptural types. Another parallel between Gabriel's appearance to Daniel with the Annunciation is the angel's affirmation that Daniel is "greatly loved." In similarly affirming Mary as graced and favored, Gabriel is essentially assuring her of God's love for her. The deeper parallel, though, is that Mary's Son is the one who fulfills the prophecy Gabriel gives to Daniel: "to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place" (Dan. 9:24).

She being holy and standing in wonder in God's presence,  
her heart was poured forth with love in prayer before Him (§625, 27).

Jacob contemplates the Annunciation as a critical moment in salvific history in which the negotiations between "a pure virgin and a fiery Watcher," a "humble daughter of poor folk" and "the prince of all the hosts," culminate in "the reconciliation of the whole world," the abolishment of "the conflict between the Lord and Adam" (§§626–627, 29). It is a divine-human conspiracy (625, 28), in which Mary is a key collaborator.

Jacob contrasts Eve's encounter with the serpent and Mary's with Gabriel, emphasizing how the second reverses the effects of the first, by breaking the bonds of sin and death and restoring peace and life.<sup>44</sup> Whereas the serpent does not bother to salute Eve, Gabriel greets Mary and proclaims peace to her (§§628–629, 31). Whereas Eve's "ear inclines and hearkens to the voice of the deceiver when he hisses deceit to her," Mary prudently reflects on the truth that "was spoken to her in her ear by the Most High" (§§626–628, 28–31). Whereas Eve, in her eagerness to "ascend to the divine rank," does "not doubt the liar" (§630, 32), Mary, when told she would bear God's Son, questions, seeks an explanation,

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<sup>44</sup>Jacob does not claim that Mary alone produces this effect, only that she has a part. He attributes the feat primarily to her Son: "The wall of iniquity which the serpent had built then, by his descent the Son of God broke it down" (629, 31).

inquires, investigates (§630, 32–33) before she consents (§627, 29) Whereas Eve foolishly, impulsively accepts the serpent’s “evil counsels” as an excuse to disbelieve and disobey God, Mary wisely, discerningly seeks to understand so that she may responsibly believe and obey.

For Jacob, the angel’s response to Mary’s question, “How will what you tell me take place?” suggests a specific order of descent: the Holy Spirit first, then the Power (Luke 1:35).<sup>45</sup> After pausing to note that the only appropriate response to this mystery is the wonder of faith since “this matter requires powers of the mind more sublime than usual” (§631, 33–34), he explains that the reason the Spirit comes first is to prepare Mary for the Son’s coming. The Spirit sanctifies her, releasing her from “that curse of sufferings on account of Eve, her mother” and “the former sentence of Eve and Adam,” so that “that first grace which her mother had” and “that adoption of sons which our father Adam had” might be restored (§§632–633, 34–37). As is his usual style, Jacob makes the point repeatedly, rephrasing slightly each time, to highlight the many facets of his meaning. When he says, for example, that “the Spirit freed her from that debt that she might be beyond transgression” (§632, 34), his point is that Mary has

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<sup>45</sup>For Jacob, the *power* is not synonymous with the Spirit, as modern interpreters typically hold, but rather, in conformity to Syriac tradition, a reference to the Son (§631, 34). Sebastian Brock, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition* (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2008), 6.



reached a state of sinlessness, the grace of God disinclining her to sin though, as Jacob indicates elsewhere, not eradicating her human freedom. The Spirit sanctifies Mary in advance to ensure that at the Son's coming he "might take from her a pure body without sin" (§632, 35).

Jacob does not specify the timing of Mary's sanctification except that it precedes Christ's conception. Since elsewhere he indicates her holiness from childhood and even conception,<sup>46</sup> Jacob sees the Spirit as influencing Mary from an early age. He also considers her sanctification to be progressive rather than instantaneous, since he calls attention to her efforts to attain the "beauties of holiness." However, the impression he gives is that there is never a time when Mary's impulses are not pure. Nevertheless, the Spirit comes in advance to prepare Mary for Christ's conception.<sup>47</sup> Once her sanctification is fully accomplished, Jacob says, the Holy Spirit blows on her, causing her to conceive

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<sup>46</sup>Roey, "La Sainteté de Marie," 46–62.

<sup>47</sup>To suggest that Jacob argues here for or against the Immaculate Conception would be anachronistic. Nevertheless, Jacob's repeated praise of Mary's unparalleled purity prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit suggests that at some earlier point in her life she had already been granted an exceptional measure of grace. Jacob apparently understands the coming of the Holy Spirit immediately prior to the conception to be a superadded grace, one that prepares Mary specifically for the imminent indwelling of the Son, something like the final touches a housekeeper gives to a house, such as lighting a candle or adding a vase of flowers, immediately prior to the arrival of a special guest.

the Son, even as the wind of the Spirit blew on Adam, first to enliven him and then to generate Eve from his side at creation:

The Holy Spirit, which had blown on Adam's face and generated Eve, she [Mary] also received and gave birth to a Son (§634, 36).<sup>48</sup>

Since Adam speaks prophetically when he calls Eve the "mother of life," Mary the new Eve fulfills that prophecy by also becoming the mother of life, bringing life into the world by birthing her Son, "the One who indeed is the fountain of life, our Lord" (§634, 36–37). By the Spirit, Mary gives her Son his "second birth," his first being the eternal generation of the Only-begotten of the Father (§634, 36–37).<sup>49</sup> When the Son is born from Mary, "life shines forth to the world." In speaking of second birth, Jacob recalls Ephrem's understanding of Christ's birth as both his and his mother's second birth as well as her baptism.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>The Spirit's blowing, or breathing, on Mary here is reminiscent both of the wind of the Spirit blowing the breath of life into Adam at creation and the post-resurrection Christ's breathing on the apostles (John 20:22). In the latter case, however, there is an anointing, or ordaining, effect as well as a creative one, for in breathing on his apostles Christ bestows on them not only his resurrected life but also his authority to forgive sins.

<sup>49</sup>"The Father begot you beyond time, without a beginning and again the Virgin Mother bore you without explanation." Jacob of Serugh, "Concerning the Annunciation of the Mother of God," *On the Mother of God*, 640, 43.

<sup>50</sup>Ephrem, "Hymn on the Nativity" 16.9, 11, in McVey, *Hymns*, 150. Sebastian Brock, "St. Ephrem on Christ as Light in Mary and in the Jordan: *Hymni De Ecclesia* 36," *Eastern Churches Review* 7 (1975): 141.

For Jacob, Mary is God's "sealed letter" for humanity in general and womankind in particular:

Mary appeared to us as a sealed letter,  
in which were hidden the mysteries of the Son. . . .  
The Son is the Word and she is the letter. . . .  
the Father revealed in her, mysteries more sublime than usual.

The Word God delivers via Mary brings the good news ("tidings full of good things") of forgiveness and emancipation for all, the removal of the sword that guarded Eden's gate,<sup>51</sup> and a clear path to the Tree of Life, which gives life to all who partake of it (§636, 39). The good news for women is that the new Eve has removed the reproach to women brought by the first by giving humanity the fruit of her womb, "a sweet fruit, full of life, that we might eat from it and live forever with God" (§637, 39–40).

For Jacob, the only appropriate response to God's having blessed Mary so richly is to call her blessed: "Say 'blessed' to the blessed one, whose blessing is truly more sublime than the [praises] of the whole world." Jacob follows his own counsel by closing the homily with a litany of Marian beatitudes: "Blessed is she, for by means of her, joy came to Adam's race; through her the fallen arose who

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<sup>51</sup>Gen. 3:24. The sword that "was protecting Paradise because of Eve was removed by Mary." Ephrem the Syrian, *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*, trans. Carmel McCarthy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 2.17 (68); cf. 21.10 (322).

had been cast down from the house of the Father;" and "Blessed is she who placed her pure mouth on the lips of that One, from whose fire, the Seraphim of fire hide themselves."<sup>52</sup> The last beatitude Jacob awards to Mary's Son, "that One who solemnly appeared to us from your [Mary's] purity!" Of particular import here, is his first beatitude, "Blessed is she who has received the Holy Spirit." Blessed the woman whom the Spirit purified, polished,<sup>53</sup> and made a temple, and in whose abode God dwelt (§§638–639, 41–42).

### *Summary*

Jacob presents Mary in relation to Holy Spirit then, first and foremost, as one whom the Spirit sanctifies in an unsurpassed way, giving her a purity and blessedness like that of Eve before the Fall, making her a fitting abode for divinity. How this sanctification was accomplished Jacob does not specify except with such phrases as the "Spirit came within her," "sanctified her and so dwelt within her," and "purified . . . while dwelling in her" (§632, 34–35). Which came first, the Spirit's indwelling or the sanctification, Jacob leaves unspecified.

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<sup>52</sup>In "Concerning the Holy Mother of God, Mary, When She Went to Elizabeth," *On the Mother of God*, Jacob speaks of the flame that kindles the world and dwells in Mary's womb by which "even the Seraphim are shaken if they look at it" (§676, 79).

<sup>53</sup>The term *polished* recalls the concept of limpidity.

Considering it a mystery, Jacob sees fit not to probe the question any further. However, he is careful to indicate that Mary has more than a passive role in attaining holiness.

Since, like Ephrem before him, Jacob is a poet more than a systematician, his homily cannot be expected to hold up to modern theological scrutiny. He simply, faithfully follows what the Scriptures and the tradition teach. Since Jacob considers Mary to be totally sinless and flawless in every respect, he thinks of the Spirit as influencing, if not indwelling, Mary from the beginning of her life, sanctifying her every impulse, inclining her will to the good from infancy. Since he also sees Mary's sanctification as a growth process, he sees the coming of the Holy Spirit on Mary at the Annunciation as a final preparation for Christ's coming. As Christ underwent baptism although he had no sin, so the coming of the Holy Spirit on Mary immediately prior to Christ's conception can be seen as an anointing, a mark of God's election, a consecration to her own unique calling, much as an ordination sets a priest apart for sacred ministry. Having come upon Mary, anointing her for her holy calling, the Spirit then proceeds to perform that creative act whereby the conception is accomplished and Mary becomes the Mother of God. In other words, the Spirit precedes the Word. Jacob also emphasizes that though the Holy Spirit is the primary act-or, Mary is active in the process of attaining holiness. The Holy Spirit empowers her by grace to

exercise her free will. For Jacob, Mary the Virgin-Mother of God is the Spirit-sanctified woman *par excellence*, the most blessed of all women, matchless exemplar of beautiful, pure, holy, limpid, wise, life-giving womanhood (§§636–637, 38–40).

### Mary and the Spirit According to Ildefonsus of Toledo

#### *History*

Ildefonsus<sup>54</sup> of Toledo (*ca.* 610–667) was a Visigothic monk, who became the abbot of the Aligi monastery near Toledo and later archbishop of Toledo during the final decade of his life. He wrote a few treatises as well as letters and sermons, of which only a handful of texts are extant. He had a florid style, amplifying his writing with “synonyms,” expressing the same thought repeatedly in different ways. Following Isidore of Seville (and Jerome), he also wrote Christian biography, but is best known for his Marian piety.

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<sup>54</sup>Ildefonsus is also spelled Ildephonsus, the Gothic form of the name being Hildefunus.

*Theology*

Here I look only at Ildefonsus' *De virginitate perpetua Sanctae Mariae*,<sup>55</sup> not so much because of what he says about Mary's virginity, since that is not original, but because of the way he sees Mary in relation to the Spirit. He demonstrates that devotion to Mary is ideally an outgrowth of devotion to Jesus and a constant yearning for the intimacy that characterized Mary's relation to the Spirit.

Though the treatise begins and ends devotionally, much of the text is written in the style of a polemical disputation against three historic antagonists, Jovinian, Helvidius, and an anonymous Jew. According to Yarza Urkiola, Jerome's *Contra Jovinianum* and Augustine's *Contra Helvidium* influence Ildefonsus' argumentation addressed to adherents of Helvidius and Jovian, while Isidore of Seville influences the more lengthy part addressed to Jews.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Ildefonsus, *Liber de virginitate perpetua Sancte Mariae adversus tres infideles*, PL 96.53–110; ET Malcolm Donalson, *A Translation from Latin into English of De virginitate perpetua Sanctae Mariae = The Perpetual Virginity of Holy Mary* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011); ST Valeriano Yarza Urkiola in Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De virginitate sanctae Mariae; De cognitione baptismi; De itinere deserti*, eds. Valeriano Yarza Urkiola and Carmen Codoñer Merino, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, 114A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).

<sup>56</sup>Yarza Urkiola, introduction to *De virginitate sanctae Mariae*, 51. Here I rely on Florence Close's review of that work in *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 86, no. 2 (2008): 542 of 541–543.

Observing what he considers a two-part structure, Urkiola hypothesizes that *De Virginitate* combines two texts. The first, including the prologue and chapters addressed to the Jews, is written in defense of Christ's dual nature, while the second, including the first two chapters and the last three, is a defense of Mary's maternal virginity. In my reading of the text, however, I do not see such a clear-cut demarcation since Ildefonsus sustains a clear line of argumentation from chapter 3 to 11. While the polemic certainly detracts from the beauty of the text, Ildefonsus softens it by interspersing spiritual appeals (18) and admissions of his own lowliness (77).

Ildefonsus opens the first chapter with a prologue composed of a prayer, a confession of faith, and a statement of his commitment to truth. Addressing God as "the true light," he asks for light to see God and wisdom to understand him. Confessing faith in Christ, he professes to believe what Moses and the prophets, evangelists, and doctors of the church have declared, and alludes to his own inner compulsion to speak the truth, since God judges those who attempt to "extinguish the truth," but blesses those who "speak the truth about Him." The prologue ends with a final declaration of his total commitment to the truth: "From all of my heart . . . I seek nothing than to find . . . [and] love the divine



truth . . . [and] to resist the adversaries of God . . . who profane . . . the truth“

(4).<sup>57</sup>

Following the prologue, Ildefonsus explains that his purpose in writing is to defend the Mary's virginity against doubters. He then addresses Mary as “my Mistress, my Empress . . . the Mother of my Lord, servant of your son, Mother of the world's maker.” The first-person possessive pronoun suggests a subjective expression of piety, not just an objective statement of faith. Of the titles, “Mother of my Lord” and “servant of your son” are explicitly biblical (Luke 1:38, 43, 48), while the title “Mother of the world's maker,” though not biblical as such, is the virtual equivalent of “Mother of God,” since it acknowledges Mary's Son to be not only her human offspring but the Word of God made flesh. Undoubtedly, the titles Mistress and Empress sound excessive to evangelical ears, but such terminology is part of the tradition to which Ildefonsus is heir. From his viewpoint, to deny Mary the honor due her as mother of God's Son is *de facto* to dishonor the Son.

Of particular relevance here is Ildefonsus' request to Mary that he “may possess the spirit of your Lord, that I may have the spirit of your son” that he

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<sup>57</sup>The many ellipses are required due to the numerous synonyms that Ildefonsus uses. The parenthetical notations in this section refer to Donalson's translation.

may learn and love whatever is “true and worthy” about her (5). In asking for her prayers to receive the Holy Spirit and the wisdom the Spirit gives, Ildefonsus associates Mary with the giving of the Spirit in recognition that she already possesses what he seeks: the Spirit of her Son. How can Evangelicals comprehend such a request of Mary? It may help to think in terms of the Pentecostal tradition in which those who seek Spirit-baptism ask those already so baptized to pray for them to receive the same. Ildefonus considers it fitting to ask for Mary’s intercession for Spirit reception since she herself has been overshadowed by the Spirit.

Ildefonsus sees Mary as being who she is as a result of what God has done for her. Chosen of God, she is “nearest to God, clinging to God, joined to God” (5). He associates her purity with the holiness of her offspring (Luke 1:35). At the Annunciation, in response to her query, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” (Luke 1:34), she receives “an oracle never heard before,” that the conception will be brought about by “the whole Trinity [not by the Holy Spirit alone] . . . [although] the person of the Son of God alone . . . will take his flesh from you” (5). Accordingly, Ildefonsus calls Mary “blessed among women . . . whole [i.e., intact, retaining her virginal integrity] among women who are in labor” (6). All peoples, prophets, nations, the very heavenly powers acknowledge her as blessed, cleansed, “filled with man and God” (6).

Following this panegyric prayer, Ildefonsus addresses Jovinian, one of three against whose views he contends in concert with his predecessors Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine.<sup>58</sup> For Ildefonsus, to confuse part of the truth is to confuse the whole, to be “deprived of the harmony of the truth.” Accordingly, to deny Mary’s virginity in childbirth is to deny God’s ability to “preserve her incorrupt” (7). Having confessed that “the Virgin was able to conceive without corruption,” he cannot deny that God saved her from corruption during childbirth. In agreement with the many of the traditional voices that preceded him, Mary was and remained a virgin before (*ante partum*), during (*in partu*), and after (*post partum*) the conception and birth of her Son.

Although earlier Ildefonsus explicitly associated Mary with the Spirit, here he attributes her fertility to the Word rather than to the Spirit. Further, without alluding to the Spirit’s sanctifying activity, he speaks of Mary, after giving birth, progressing in holiness, nobility, integrity, and majesty. No longer merely holy, blessed, glorious, and honorable, she is now most holy, most blessed, most glorious, most honorable.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>To which groups or individuals contemporaneous to Ildefonsus he may have been directing his polemical remarks here has been debated, but this is not of direct concern here.

<sup>59</sup>Athanasius Braegelmann, *The Life and Writings of Saint Ildefonsus of Toledo* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1942), 141.

In chapter 2, Ildefonsus addresses Helvidius, the second of the historic antagonists, whose denial of Mary's perpetual virginity he deems irreverent. To suggest that she gave birth to other children after Jesus is to "dishonor the virginal beginnings with an ending of the act of carnal procreation." Since God is Mary's architect, Ildefonsus argues, "he alone is the one who goes out and he is the guardian of this gate. . . . No one has entered with Him, no one else has gone out" (9).

Since the Spirit has taught through the prophets and others that Mary is a mansion "suitable only for one arrival," to teach otherwise is to defame her and to contradict the Spirit. God would not sanctify the virginal womb for the generation of her holy and divine Son only to permit it to be used later to produce sinful mortals. Motherhood and virginity honor each other: "that virginity would pursue the Mother's honor; that the Virgin's honor would be served by the fecundity of the Mother" (12). Ildefonsus ends the chapter with praise to the "God of all miracles" for opening heaven wide through this miraculous conception (13).

In chapters 3–9, Ildefonsus addresses the last of his three historic antagonists, an anonymous Jew, who apparently represents anyone of the Jewish faith who disbelieves the Virgin Birth and, accordingly, the incarnation. In the third chapter, Ildefonsus argues for Mary's virginity and then in chapters 4–9 for

the incarnation, appealing to Scripture, witnesses living and dead, and the angels. On occasion he returns to the defense of Mary's virginity, but for the most part these chapters are focused on the incarnation.

Ildefonsus begins his disputation by asking why the Jew objects to the Virgin Birth. Though Mary belongs to the Jews according to the flesh, Ildefonsus argues, she belongs to Christians according to faith. Like Jerome and Isidore before him, Ildefonsus sometimes resorts to harsh rhetoric, accusing the Jew of rejecting the prophets. In contrast to this rejection, Ildefonsus claims to believe, honor, and embrace Mary "because grace has urged me on," recalling that she too believed because "grace urged [her] on" (15).

Ildephonsus debates the position traditionally held by Jews that the sign of Isaiah 7:14 was not that of a virgin *per se* but merely a young girl of marriageable age, by arguing that the sign would not function as a sign unless it were miraculous. For a girl of marriageable age to conceive would be no cause for wonder, whereas for a virgin to conceive while remaining inviolate would be "worthy of wonder" (16). In an attempt to overcome the Jew's doubt, Ildefonsus pleads with him to "listen to the words of the Holy Spirit . . . crying out of the truth . . . 'A child is born to us, a son is given to us'" (18).

He presents several passages in the prophets where he sees Mary. In Isaiah, she is the rod that has sprung "from the root of Jesse," and from which

has bloomed the “flower, Christ, only by a spiritual infusion, and without the approach of a man’s corruption” (18). In Ezekiel, she is “the house of God, whose wholly intact enclosure of modesty stands toward the East, whose gate is always closed.” In the Psalms, she is “the chamber of God” and “the earth from which the truth arises” (19).

Ildefonsus then asks the Jew to rejoice in the honor of having “so great a Virgin among your relations” (21). Those “not able to find [God] through the observance of the law” can find him through the Virgin, in whose Son’s name “it has been ordered by the holy apostles that we all be baptized . . . and be filled by the Holy Spirit” (22). After haranguing the Jew at length, Ildefonsus then pleads with him to recognize that Mary’s Son is “God from God, in the truth of His own nature, who was made a man from a Virgin.”<sup>60</sup> The chapter concludes with Ildefonsus promising to follow the Virgin’s Son on behalf of the Jew so as to bring him to faith in Christ (26).

In chapters 5–6, Ildefonsus explains Christ in terms of the Hebrew Scriptures. He poses and answers who, where, when, why, and how questions regarding Christ. *Who* is Christ? He is none other than “God and the all-powerful Lord,” “maker of all things,” “coeternal and coequal” with God. *Where* did Christ

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<sup>60</sup>Here Ildefonsus argues for the two natures—human and divine—of Christ. Braegelmann, 144.

come from? “Truly, He came not otherwise than from God.” As to his earthly origin, he came from Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2). *Where* did Christ go? He went “to the nations which he possessed with the Father.” *When* did he come? He came as “prince of Israel” (Gen. 49:10), “when through ambition Herod the outsider was succeeding to the throne, and a prince of Judah was lacking in Israel.” *Why* did he come? He came “to preach to the poor, to announce redemption to the captives and sight to the blind” (Isa. 61:1). *How* did Christ come? He came “in the form of a servant” while remaining “equal to his Father’s divinity” (27–29).

The sixth chapter begins with a prayer that God will open Ildefonsus’ mouth and “fill it with the confession of your mercy” and to open the ear of his heart to “hear what I shall speak through your Holy Spirit” (33). He then returns to his theme of God coming “into the world through the Virgin,” again referencing Isaiah 7, to allude to Jesus’ Davidic roots and to the accomplishment of his generation “only by the inpouring of the Holy Spirit” (34). As in chapter 5, the Hebrew Scriptures form the basis on his argument for Jesus’ conception and birth “from this house of a Mother’s womb by the gate of a Virgin’s modesty.” He asserts the Word is made flesh “from the Holy Spirit and Mary always a Virgin,” in which there is no “lessening of divinity . . . but [rather] an assumption of flesh.”

Continuing to address the Jew, Ildefonsus accuses him of setting up the disputation as a case of the old against the new, arguing that the new completes the old by making “manifest . . . the hidden mysteries.” He also accuses the Jew of being “unwilling to accept the new things, because [he, the Jew, has] rejected the old” by impugning the law (38). Again appealing to truth, he claims that “the Spirit of God . . . has granted to me to hear” the words spoken by the prophets of old and pleads with the Jew to believe Christ’s claims (41).

In chapters 7–8, Ildefonsus continues his appeal by asking the Jew to listen to the voice of the Spirit speaking through the evangelists, apostles, and prophets, and the Virgin herself (56). God has become in Mary “the Son of a Mother whom he himself had formed.” In this process, “while the divine was humbled for man, the human was lifted-up in the divine” (56). Mary conceives Christ “in the womb of her mind” as well as “in the womb of her flesh” because “by the same spirit she was found suitable both for her faith and for her offspring” (57).

To establish the truth of the incarnation, Ildefonsus recalls the witnesses of Jesus’ conception, birth, and infancy as recorded by Luke: Elizabeth, John, Simeon, and Anna. Other witnesses Ildefonsus mentions include the blind man whom Jesus healed and Martha who “doubted concerning the resurrection of her brother” but “could not doubt concerning the Son of God” (58).



After listing individual witnesses, Ildefonsus turns to “the general testimony of the people,” or what he also calls, “the universal consensus of your [Jewish] race,” quoting John 11:48: “Therefore many of the Jews who had come to Mary and had seen that which Jesus had done [the raising of Lazarus] believed in him.” Similarly at Jesus’ triumphal entry, the crowds rejoiced together, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” (59).

In addition to “the testimonies of the living,” Ildefonsus appeals to the testimony of the dead, recalling that after Jesus’ Resurrection, “the tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had slept rose up from the tombs . . . and appeared to many people” (Matt. 27:52). Ildefonsus even recalls the “witness” of the demons who were compelled to admit that Jesus is the “Son of the highest God” (60–61).

In chapter 9, Ildefonsus continues to build his case by recalling the angels’ testimony to the truth of the incarnation: Gabriel, the annunciation to the shepherds, the angels who ministered to Jesus after the Temptation, and finally those who accompanied Jesus’ Ascension and who will one day witness his return. Heaven and earth are “full of the testimonies of my argument,” Ildefonsus says (66). He also appeals to the testimony of “the continual obedience of insensible and irrational elements . . . [which] shout my confession by their own movements as if with voices” (66). He points first to the star of Bethlehem

and then to Jesus' miracles and healings, finishing by recounting the miracles that occurred at Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection.

In chapter 10 Ildefonsus appeals to the witness of the angel Gabriel, since his own inadequacy and impurity hinder his ability to "write a treatise concerning the praise of incorruption." "May corruption sow its seed concerning the glory of virginity?" he asks (72). Nevertheless, he claims that such weakness has been overcome because he has been cleansed by the divine mercy.

Turning to the question of the relation between "virginal fecundity and angelic formation" by which he associates Mary's purity with that of angels, he asks, "was the virginity that became fecund not marred, or did part of this angelic loftiness fall into ruin?" (73). Ildefonsus answers his own question. No, "the offspring born of my Lady did not wound the virginity, either going in or going out" (74).

Recalling that some angels fell, Ildefonsus speaks analogically of "the form of angelic nature [that] is fragile before confirmation, faltering and tottering before becoming robust" (74). The implication is that Mary's sanctity, like that of the angels, was initially fragile but was strengthened through hardship and testing. "This woman," he says, "is the vessel of sanctification, she is the eternity of virginity, she is the Mother of God, the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, she is the singularly unique temple of her own creator" (74). Confirmed in her faith,

Mary's condition is now like "the blessed condition" of the angels, "firm in the good after its stability" (74).

At this point Ildefonsus balances his strong diatribe against the Jew with an acknowledgement of his own unworthiness: "For I am ashes, I am earth, I am corruption, I am decay, I am food for worms" (77). His difference from the Jew, he claims, is his knowledge of the truth, the Holy Spirit having taught him. Still addressing the angel, he says, "I have understood these things in the truth of the faith which you learned in the fullness of your vision" (77).

In chapter 11, Ildefonsus, noting that the Son is greater than the angels, joins them in offering praise to the virginity of "my Lady," but then quickly turns to praise of the Son, who is God the light "born from God the light, the Word of God . . . born from the mouth of God, the wisdom of God . . . born from the heart of God, the power of God . . . born from the substance of God" (83). The nativity, which the angel "proclaimed so wonderfully as inexplicable," is the generation of the Son of God in "a Mother [who] kept herself a Virgin, and a Virgin [who] kept herself a Mother." Ildefonsus's point is that the incarnation cannot be understood apart from Mary's virginity, which is not limited to the conception since she remains a virgin even after becoming a mother. For Ildefonsus, the honor of Christ's divinity demands not only a virginal conception but a virginal birth and an ever virgin mother.

Ildefonsus holds that human nature was glorified when Mary's "Son carried it to the throne of His Father." The angels do not despise it "because they contemplate it above themselves on the seat of glory" and recognize it as "united to the divine person [Christ]." For the same reason, that is, because "they behold her fruit above them," they consider the maternal Virgin to be incorrupt, "surpass[ing] the nobility of angels" (87). In concluding the chapter, Ildefonsus asks the angel to grant him to "know just as much of the Virgin Mother of my Lord as you know, to believe that which you know, to love that which you yourself love" (91).<sup>61</sup> This prayer to the angel is similar to Ildefonsus' prayers to Mary in that in both cases he requests something the other already has.

In the twelfth and final chapter, Ildefonsus addresses Mary as "the unique Virgin and the Mother of God, "the only . . . Mother of my Lord," to ask for her intercession. This may well be the most controversial part of the treatise because he asks Mary as the "maidservant of my Lord" to blot out his sins, teach him to "love the glory of [her] virginity," and reveal to him "the abundance of [her] Son's sweetness." He further requests the ability to defend faith in her Son, to cling to God and to her, and to be of service to God and to her. To him, it is

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<sup>61</sup>While prayers to angels are as problematic for some Protestants as prayers to Mary, in the Scriptures communication with the angels, though exceptional, does occur; and since they stand in the presence of God, they are prayer warriors *par excellence*. E.g. Dan. 9:20–23; Luke 1:19; 22:43.

appropriate to ask Mary for such things because it was from her that the Redeemer received the mortal body “in which He blotted out my sins” (93).

To an Evangelical’s ears, this sounds as though Ildefonsus is eclipsing the Son by making his requests of the mother; but, for Ildefonsus as for Ephrem and Jacob before him, prayer and service to Mary are a form of prayer and service to her Son.<sup>62</sup> Ildefonsus does not claim that Mary is the Redeemer, only that she is the mother of the Redeemer and therefore his prayers, though sometimes addressed to her, are answered through the power of her Son’s redemptive work, not hers. This in itself is still problematic for some, I realize, but it should mitigate it. Note also that in Ildefonsus’ prayers to both the angel and to Mary, his primary concern is to have his sins removed and to offer the worship and service due to her Son, and only secondarily to offer the appreciation and service due to Mary because of her Son. For Ildefonsus, he does not render satisfactory service to the Son if he neglects the mother.

Most relevant to the present thesis is the petition Ildefonsus makes to Mary that the Spirit will enable him to possess, receive, know, love, and speak

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<sup>62</sup>“What is given to the handmaid is referred to the Lord; thus what is given to the Mother redounds to the Son; . . . and thus what is given as humble tribute to the Queen becomes honor rendered to the King.” ET Paul VI, *Marialis cultus* §25.

properly of Jesus. It is appropriate to ask Mary because she already fully possesses, receives, knows, loves, and speaks of Jesus by the Spirit:

I pray you, holy Virgin, that *I might possess Jesus from that [S]pirit*, from whom you have given birth to Jesus. *May my soul receive Jesus from that Spirit* by whom your flesh conceived Jesus. *May I know Jesus by that Spirit* by whom it was possible for you to know, have, and give birth to Jesus. *May I speak in that Spirit humble and lofty things about Jesus*, in whom you confess that you are the maidservant of the Lord, willing that it may be done unto you according to the word of the angel. *In that Spirit may I love Jesus . . . [whom you] behold . . . as your Son* (94, emphasis added).<sup>63</sup>

Ildefonsus's appeal to Mary to receive Jesus from the Spirit implies an integral relation between Mary and the Spirit. The Spirit is the link in the relationship between Christ and the human person, with Mary, having already entered fully into that relationship by the Spirit, now acting in cooperation with the Spirit through her intercession to bring others into a deeper knowledge and love of her Son.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Paul VI quotes this prayer in *Marialis cultus*, §26. The ET there, though incomplete and less literal, is somewhat smoother: "I beg you, holy Virgin, that I may have Jesus from the Holy Spirit, by whom you brought Jesus forth. May my soul receive Jesus through the Holy Spirit by whom your flesh conceived Jesus. . . . May I love Jesus in the Holy Spirit in whom you adore Jesus as Lord and gaze upon Him as your Son."

<sup>64</sup>Mary's "giving birth to Christ in the flesh remains the exemplary realization of our collaboration with the Sanctifying Spirit in bringing the Christ-child to birth in our own hearts and in bringing about the conception and birth of the Christ-child in the hearts of those to whom we minister." Patrick O'carm, "The Holy Spirit and the Marian Typology of St. Ambrose at Vatican II," in *The Holy Spirit in the Fathers of the Church: The Proceedings of the Seventh International*

Following his prayer to Mary, Ildefonsus then turns to Jesus in prayer, asking that he may believe “concerning the conception of the Virgin, that which may complete my faith concerning your incarnation.” For Ildefonsus, to speak with truth of Mary’s maternal virginity is to express faith and love for Jesus. He believes that what Jesus has done for his mother is what Jesus in turn will do for him: “May I love that about your Mother which you complete in me with your love” (95).

Ildefonsus concludes rejoicing that through Mary, God has joined divine nature to human nature. Here he refers primarily to the incarnation, but by use of the first person, he intimates that through the incarnation his own nature is joined in Christ by the Spirit to God’s: “the nature of my God joined itself to my nature; from her my nature passed over in my God” (97). This is, in fact, how the East defines deification. Though Ildefonsus does not call it that, the seed of the idea is there. In assuming human nature, the all-powerful Son self-empties, becomes weak, is wounded, subjects himself to death, and in so doing saves, makes whole, liberates, gives life (97). This is, for Ildefonsus, not speculative

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*Patristic Conference, Maynooth, 2008*, eds. D. Vincent Twomey and Janet Rutherford, 185–200 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 200. Ocarum is speaking of Ambrose’s Mary here, but the principle is the same.

theology but a personal statement of faith. Because of Mary's Son, his sins are covered, and now there is "glory for God in me" (98).

### *Summary*

Ildefonsus' theological argument then boils down to his insistence on Mary's perpetual virginity as essential to a full acknowledgement of Christ's divinity. For him, for Mary to have had other children would be to deny it. But underlying that is his theme regarding Mary in relation to the Spirit. In cooperating with the Spirit to bring about the incarnation, she experiences the fullness of the Spirit, becoming, as Ildefonsus says, "the vessel of sanctification" and "the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit" (74), and is thus privileged to participate in bringing others into relation to her Son through the Spirit. It is on the basis of Mary's fullness that Ildefonsus asks for her prayers that he might receive the same.

### Conclusions

Ephrem, Jacob, and Ildefonsus together demonstrate that even prior to the High Middle Ages, theologians had already begun to see Mary in pneumatological as well as christological terms. While they saw the Holy Spirit as coming upon her to prepare her to be the holy mother of her holy Son, they



also recognized that the Holy Spirit came upon her not only to effect the incarnation but to indwell her.

Of particular import for this thesis is Ephrem's association of water baptism with Spirit-baptism. As the physical water flows over the body, Ephrem says, the water of the Spirit flows over the inside of the person, the soul, cleansing it. The image brings to mind the one Jesus used, the rivers of living water that flow out of a person's innermost being (John 7:38).

Jacob's primary contribution is in associating Mary's purity with the Spirit. The reason the coming of the Spirit precedes that of the Power (which, for Jacob, is the divinity of the Logos) is to sanctify the mother so that she can become the house or chamber for God. In the process, she becomes the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit as well. However, Jacob does not see Mary as being passive in the sanctification process. By grace she is empowered to freely exercise her will to grow in the virtues.

Ildefonsus adds to this by pointing out that Mary is not a passive reservoir of virtues, but rather an active intercessor who prays that by the Spirit others will know and love Jesus and that the Spirit will accomplish in them what the Spirit has accomplished in her. This is important to this thesis because it indicates the importance of *epiclesis*, prayer for the coming of the Spirit. Ildefonsus also reminds us that the humanity Mary shared with her Son was joined to his

divinity in the incarnation, thereby opening up the possibility of *theosis*—  
participation in the divine nature—for all humankind.

## Chapter 6

## Mary and the Spirit in the Twelfth Century

The number of theologians who linked Mary to the Holy Spirit in the Middle Ages is superabundant,<sup>1</sup> so, as in the previous chapter, the focus can be only on a select few. From among the many I have selected Hugh of Saint-Victor, Amadeus of Lausanne, and Hildegard of Bingen. I chose Hugh because as the twelfth century's "great synthesizer" <sup>2</sup> of Catholic theology, his work is representative of Marian reflection as developed to this point, and Amadeus because of the richness of his pneumatology and its relevance to our own quest for an ecumenical and evangelical Mary. I was drawn particularly to Hildegard of Bingen's Marian poetry because it is pervaded with Spirit imagery.

Together these theologians' reflections on Mary indicate that though their primary emphasis is christological, they recognize the essential role of the Spirit in Mary's life not only in effecting the conception of Christ but in affecting the

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<sup>1</sup>The most comprehensive overview of the Holy Spirit and Mary in the Middle Ages to date is Juan Bastero's summary in ch. 3 of *El Espíritu Santo y María: Reflexión Histórico-Teológica* (Barañáin: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2010), 97–194. Michael O'Carroll's bibliography, whose scope extends beyond medieval times, is in "Spirit, The Holy," in *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1990), 332–333 of 329–333.

<sup>2</sup>Dale Coulter, *Per Visibilia Ad Invisibilia: Theological Method in Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 20.

person of Mary herself, making her holy, consecrating her virginity, bathing, i.e., baptizing, her in the fire of the Spirit. Hildegard of Bingen's contribution lies not only in the panoply of metaphors she uses in theologizing about Mary and the Spirit but also in her own experience of the Spirit. After Hildegard's death, among the many witnesses who testified to her spirituality was the nun Hedwig of Alzey who testified to seeing her glowing with light (*perlustra*) as she lay in her sickbed and as she walked through the convent singing of Mary.<sup>3</sup>

#### Mary and the Spirit According to Hugh of Saint-Victor

##### *History and Hermeneutic*

Lesser known today than his contemporary Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh of Saint-Victor (*ca.* 1096–1141) was an important twelfth-century theologian.<sup>4</sup> A canon regular in an Augustinian monastery in Saxony, Hugh moved to Paris *ca.* 1115 to enter the monastery at Saint Victor, where he prayed, studied, taught, and wrote the rest of his life. Beginning in 1133, he also served as master of the

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<sup>3</sup>Hedwig, in fact, identified the song as *O virga ac diadema*, Hildegard's own composition. Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia: A Critical Edition of the Symphonia armonie celestium revelationus* [Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations], trans. and ed. Barbara Newman (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), *Symphonia* 20, pp. 128–131. Barbara Newman, "Poet: 'Where the Living Majesty Utters Mysteries,'" in *Voice of the Living Light, Hildegard of Bingen and Her World*, ed. Barbara Newman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 176 of 176–192.

school associated with the Victorine abbey. Author of the first summa,<sup>5</sup> Hugh is considered one of the earliest scholastics. He also wrote an influential guide to the study of philosophy and the reading of Scripture,<sup>6</sup> as well as commentaries and spiritual writings,<sup>7</sup> including a few, short Marian works.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>In the thirteenth century, the author of *De reductione artis*, presumably Bonaventure, gave high praise to Hugh for his scholastic acumen. Dale Coulter, "The Victorine Sub-Structure of Bonaventure's Thought," *Franciscan Studies* 70 (2012): 399. Boyd Coolman, "Hugh of St. Victor's Influence on the Halensian Definition of Theology," *Franciscan Studies* 70 (2012): 367. Paul Rorem, "Bonaventure's Ideal and Hugh of St. Victor's Comprehensive Biblical Theology," *Franciscan Studies* 70 (2012): 385.

<sup>5</sup>Hugh of Saint-Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith (De sacramentis)*, trans. Roy Defarrari (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951), 93–154; PL 176:173–618; hereafter *De sacramentis*.

<sup>6</sup>*Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts (Didascalicon: De Studio Legendi)*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); PL 176:741–812

<sup>7</sup>*De arrha animae=Les arrhes de l'âme=The Soul's Betrothal-Gift=Soliloquy on the Betrothal-Gift of the Soul*: PL 176:951B–970D; FT by Dominique Poiriel, Henri Rochais and P. Sicard, 227–283 in *L'Œuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997); ET F. Sherwood Taylor, *The Soul's Betrothal-Gift* (Westminster: Dacre, 1945); ET Hugh Feiss, 183–232, in *On Love: A Selection of Works of Hugh, Adam, Achard, Richard, and Godfrey of St. Victor* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012); hereafter either *Arrha* or *Soliloquy*. In *Salomonis Ecclesiasten homiliae*: PL 175.113–256; ET "The Soul's Three Ways of Seeing" (PL 175.116–118 only), Community of St. Mary the Virgin, 183–186, in *Hugh of Saint-Victor: Selected Spiritual Writings* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); hereafter "Three Ways." *De quinque septenis=Les Cinq Septénaires=The Five Sevens*: PL 175:405B–410C; FT Roger Baron, 101–119, in *Six Opuscles Spirituels*, Sources Chrétiennes, 155 (Paris: Cerf, 1969); ET Joshua Benson, 372–389, *Writings on the Spiritual Life: A Selection of Works of Hugh, Adam, Achard, Richard, Walter, and Godfrey of St. Victor*, Victorine Texts in

In response to Abelard, Hugh embraces reason as a valid tool with which to conduct the theological task but continues to practice and advocate contemplation as the ultimate goal of theology.<sup>9</sup> Somewhat innovatively, he advocates identifying the literal, historical meaning of a biblical text before exploring its allegorical (spiritual) and tropological (moral) implications.

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Translation, 4 (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2014); hereafter *Septenis*. *De septem donis Spiritus sancti*=*Les Sept Dons de l'Esprit-Saint*=*On the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*: PL 175:410C–414A; FT Baron, 121–133, in *Six Opuscles*; ET Joshua Benson, 390–400, in *Writings on the Spiritual Life*; hereafter *Donis*. *De amore sponsi ad sponsam*=*On the Love of the Bridegroom Toward the Bride*: PL 176:987B–994A; ET Richard Norris, 167–172, in *The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); hereafter *De amore*.

<sup>8</sup>*Super Canticum Mariae*=*Le Cantique de Marie*=*Exposition on the Cantic of Mary*: FT Bernadette Jollès, 17–99 in *L'Œuvre de Hugues de Saint-Victor*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000); ET Franklin Harkins, 429–465 in *Writings on the Spiritual Life*; PL 175:413D–432B; hereafter *Super Canticum*. *Pro assumptione Virginis*=*Pour l'Assomption de la Vierge*, FT Jollès, *Œuvre* 2:103–167; PL 177: 1209–1222; hereafter *Pro assumptione*. *De beatae Mariae virginitate*=*La Virginité de Marie*, FT Jollès, *Œuvre* 2:171–259; PL 178: 857–876; hereafter *Virginitate*. *Egredietur virga*=*Un Rameau Sortira*; *Maria Porta*=*Marie Est la Porte*: FT Jollès, *Œuvre* 2:263–286.

<sup>9</sup>Benedict XVI, “Hugh and Richard of Saint-Victor,” General Audience, Wednesday, 25 November 2009. Internet (November 29, 2015): [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2009/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_aud\\_20091125.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20091125.html).

## Theology

The foundational precept of Hugh's theology is that of re-formation, or re-beautification.<sup>10</sup> Throughout his corpus he repeatedly refers to God's two-fold plan of restoration by which humanity is (1) returned to its prelapsarian state (i.e., the re-formation of nature) and (2) then elevated beyond nature to a state worthy of the ultimate felicity for which God had originally designed it. God's full intent in creating the rational spirit was not only to grace it but to give it the dignity of cooperating with him and making it "a sharer in the good which [God] Himself was, and by which He Himself was happy."<sup>11</sup>

In *Pro assumptione*, a treatise based on the liturgical texts read on the feast of the assumption,<sup>12</sup> Hugh elaborates on the beautification of the soul using Mary as his model. He relates Mary's beauty to passages in Song of Songs including "You are all beautiful" (4:7) and "Let me see your face" (2:14). For Hugh, Mary is

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<sup>10</sup>Boyd Coolman refers to the re-formation process, as Hugh himself saw it, as "re-beautification," a restoration of not only *esse* (being) but of *pulchrum esse* (beautiful being). *The Theology of Hugh of St. Victor: An Interpretation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 101. *De arrha anime*, Feiss, *Arrha*, 216. See also Coolman, "Pulchrum esse: The Beauty of Scripture, the Beauty of the Soul, and the Art of Exegesis in Hugh of St. Victor," *Traditio* 58 (2003): 175–200.

<sup>11</sup>Hugh of Saint-Victor, *De sacramentis*, 94.

<sup>12</sup>Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 311.

the model *par excellence* of one who has been beautified body and spirit by grace, integrity and virtue being essential aspects of that beauty.<sup>13</sup>

According to Hugh, Christ is the all-beautiful one, but he, the groom in the Canticle, proclaims Mary the all-beautiful bride, “You are all beautiful, my beloved; you are without flaw.”<sup>14</sup> Although eager to see her beloved face-to-face, the bride is timorous, unsure of her ability to please her groom. But he calls to her tenderly, asking to see her face, reassuring her:

You are totally beautiful: beautiful of body, beautiful of spirit. Your body is beautified by the integrity of your virginity; your spirit, by the virtue of your humility. You are therefore all beautiful, your body pure as snow, your spirit undeviating. You are all beautiful, for you lack nothing that pertains to beauty: your charm (*decor*) captivates all; your formliness (*formositas*) comprehends all, your honor (*honestas*) rules all.<sup>15</sup>

In considering Mary’s incomparable beauty, which he attributes to the Holy Spirit filling her with grace and endowing her with virtue, Hugh reflects on the comparisons made in two verses in the Song of Songs: “The fragrance of your oils is better than any spice” (4:10), and “My spirit is sweeter than honey” (24:27).

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<sup>13</sup>Hugh justifies interpreting the Song of Songs in Marian terms by classifying it as a contemplative work, not history. “Three Ways,” 183. Rachel Fulton, “The Virgin Mary and the Song of Songs in the High Middle Ages” (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1994), 244.

<sup>14</sup>Jollès, *Pro Assumptione*, *Œuvres* 2.117.

<sup>15</sup>Translated from Latin text in Jollès, *Œuvre* 2:118. The translation is my own, but Jollès’ FT (119) and Coolman’s ET helped (*Theology of Hugh*, 218).



For Hugh, the Spirit comes upon Mary in an unparalleled way: “It is he [the Spirit] who reposed on you [Mary] in a unique way, in you who, filled with grace more than all the others, became mother of the Son and temple of the Holy Spirit.” Hugh then rhapsodizes over the exaltation of Mary’s lowliness:

Your loftiness triumphs over all grace; your dignity transcends all perfection. You who were uniquely elected, ineffably exalted, to no other can your grace be compared, you through whom grace comes to all the sons of men. . . . Your grace surpasses all other grace, your excellence all other merit; you are higher and holier than all. No one has been filled with grace like you who, unique and without parallel, virgin mother, have birthed and guarded the lily of chastity with the fruit of fecundity. The Holy Spirit therefore reposes in your humility in a unique manner, he who realized in your virginity a miracle without compare.<sup>16</sup>

The grace that God bestows on Mary exceeds that of others because of her unique vocation.

In *Arrha*, one of Hugh’s later works,<sup>17</sup> he explains that since God knows “for what work he created” souls, he adorns them accordingly (§39). This is especially true of Mary. In *Arrha*, which Hugh calls a soliloquy but writes as an interior dialogue between a man and his own soul, he does not name Mary since his primary concern is the spiritual formation of a soul (his own and those of his readers). Nevertheless, certain inferences about Mary can be made from the text.

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<sup>16</sup>My translation. *Pro assumptione*, Jollès, *Œuvre* 2:126–127.

<sup>17</sup>Feiss, “Introduction,” *Soliloquy*, 187.

For example, Mary is the logical exemplar when Hugh speaks of the soul as God's one and only: "In preference to all of them you alone were taken up; and you can find no reason why this happened to you except the freely given charity of your Savior. Your Spouse, your Lover, your Redeemer, your God, chose and preferred you. He chose you among all and took you up from all and loved you in preference to all" (§50). The difference between Mary and other souls, as Hugh points out throughout his Marian corpus, is that her humility and virginity are marks of her incomparable holiness. Similarly, in speaking of the soul as being anointed with the same anointing as the Anointed One (Christ), that is, the unction of the Holy Spirit, Hugh would naturally recall that Mary herself was so anointed (§50). Since in his earlier works he described Mary as more beautiful than all the others, she would be the implicit exemplar for his description of the surpassing beauty of any soul chosen by God (§§36–37). Hugh even has the soul soliloquize with wonder at its own beauty: "How sublime and how beautiful have you been made, my soul! . . . Look how your adornment exceeds the beauty of all jewels; see how your face surpasses the beauty of all forms. It was fitting that she who was to be led into the bedchamber of the Heavenly King be so adorned" (§39, 216).

Strangely, Hugh does not explicitly identify the bestowal gift (*arrha*) with the Holy Spirit although he does mention that the chrism with which the

baptized are anointed is the Holy Spirit (§58, 222–223).<sup>18</sup> He also associates *arrha* with God's gifts, both the natural and supernatural, particularly love. Near the end of the treatise, however, he describes the *arrha* in terms of ecstatic moments in which the soul experiences the sweetness of the Beloved's presence (§§69–70), moments that have been called the consolations of the Spirit. Hugh explains these experiences of God's presence as a foretaste of what the soul will have in fullness in heaven. Since the Scriptures identify the Spirit as the earnest, or deposit, given to believers (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14), and since Hugh holds to the importance of the historical meaning of the text, it is only reasonable to assume that he has the Spirit in mind in speaking of the betrothal gift. Also, since Hugh's theology is essentially Augustinian, with Augustine having spoken of the Spirit primarily in terms of love, it is only natural that Hugh would speak of the Spirit in the same way.<sup>19</sup> In any case, Hugh states explicitly in *Super Canticum* (442) as well as in *De quinque septenis* and *Donis* that the Spirit is the giver of the gifts.

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<sup>18</sup>LT *arrha*; cf. Vulgate *pignus*; GK *arrabōn*. On the distinction between *arrha* (betrothal gift) and *pignus* (earnest money), see Feiss, "Introduction," *Soliloquy*, 192–193nn21–22.

<sup>19</sup>Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 6.5.7; PL 43.928; ET *The Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna, FC, 45 (Baltimore: CUA Press, 1963), 206.

In *Super Canticum*, Hugh's commentary on Mary's *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46–55),<sup>20</sup> as in most of his work, he is primarily interested in its implications for individual souls, and therefore at times focuses more on the tropological meaning than the text's theological import for Mary.<sup>21</sup> Despite this, the work contains significant implications for Mary. Most importantly, Hugh sees Mary as one filled with the "fullness and grace of the Holy Spirit." Because she is so filled, it is only fitting that she make "some small reply in praise of her Savior." Indeed, the *Magnificat* is an eruption of such a praise-filled response at the news of "the imminent advent of the eternal God" (440).<sup>22</sup>

Before beginning his detailed analysis of the *Magnificat*, Hugh provides the historical context for Mary's song by recalling the events of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26–38) and the Visitation (vv. 39–45). Significantly, Hugh refers to Gabriel's greeting to Mary as a veneration in respect to her position as the one divinely chosen to participate in the "ineffable mystery" (*ineffabilis sacramenti*) of

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<sup>20</sup>Hugh wrote *Super Canticum Mariae* between 1130/31–1137 in response to a request, perhaps by one of the monastics at Saint-Victor's, whose daily Vespers included the *Magnificat* (429, 440).

<sup>21</sup>According to Jollès, Hugh's Marian expositions portray her primarily as an exemplar of the Christian life (12). Cf. Paul Rorem, *Hugh of Saint Victor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 122–123.

<sup>22</sup>The parenthetical notations in this section refer to Harkins' introduction and translation in *Writings on the Spiritual Life*, 429–465.

the incarnation (441). When Mary responds faithfully and joyfully, the Spirit immediately fills “her most holy home with the grace of every virtue” (441–442).

Hugh describes Mary’s reception of the Spirit in terms of a spiritual ecstasy:

There is no doubt that the Virgin herself received the extraordinary and indescribable pleasure of supernatural delights and everlasting sweetness when that eternal light, with all the splendor of its majesty, descended upon her and when what the whole world cannot contain established itself in her womb. Who can say what she, being filled with such a plentiful and excellent manifestation of the divine presence, saw or what she experienced? I boldly proclaim that she herself was not able to explain fully what she experienced (442).

Marveling that after such an experience Mary remains silent, Hugh reasons that the same Spirit who filled her restrains her “by means of the sweetest embrace” (442), keeping her from telling anyone (442). Since the initiative is God’s, Hugh explains, it is not Mary’s place to tell until the Spirit reveals it. The Spirit having “flowed into [Mary] and bestowed itself freely” to her, without her seeking, anticipating, or understanding, Mary wisely remains silent, “guard[ing] what has been entrusted” to her, leaving the revelation to God (442–443).

Remembering what the angel has told her about Elizabeth’s miraculous pregnancy, Mary hurries to “feast at a banquet of lesser grace,” only to have her own feted (443). As Mary enters Elizabeth’s house, calling out her greeting, the Holy Spirit makes the revelation to Elizabeth who, “full of the Holy Spirit,”

proclaims what God had done for Mary by calling her “the mother of my Lord.”

Once the Spirit has revealed the news, Mary no longer restrains herself:

The Spirit, whom she felt to be abundantly overflowing among such great secrets in her heart, became determined to burst through the gate of Mary’s mouth. At that time, therefore, her mouth opened in order to reveal the Spirit and, bringing forth the good word which she had conceived, exclaimed in praise of the Savior: *My soul magnifies the Lord* (443).

In response to this overflow of the Spirit in Mary, a spontaneous prayer for his fellow seekers flows from Hugh’s pen: “Oh how I hope that we, who seek the hidden truths of these words, might advance under the guidance of that Spirit by which Mary was filled to conceive the Word of the Father and deserved to magnify the Father of the Word with a word of exultation!” (443).

Then Hugh addresses Mary as the beloved spouse of God whom the Spirit has filled not only with the “grace of every virtue” but with the very presence of God. This infilling Hugh describes as an intoxication:

Truly beloved and unique one, having been introduced by the King to your spouse in a wine cellar<sup>23</sup>—intoxicated by the abundance of His house and having drunk heavily from the fountain of life that was in His presence—you have loudly proclaimed the memory of His sweet abundance and you have exulted in His justice. You have seen and you have tasted: you have seen His majesty; you have tasted His sweetness. For that reason what you drank inwardly you have outwardly offered to others to drink (443–444).

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<sup>23</sup> Song 2:4 LXX (“house of wine”).

Having experienced God—seen his majesty, tasted his sweetness, and drunk deeply of his life— Mary, in turn, offers this sweet, life-giving drink to others.

Throughout the rest of the work, Hugh points out several distinctions and addresses some of the theological issues of his time. Here I can only address those with mariological implications. The first is the distinction between Lord and Savior (Luke 1:46–47). To the first (Lord) is due reverence or awe (*admirantes*), while to the second (Savior) is owed love. The Lord is Creator of *all* while the Savior is the God of mercy who saves only *some* (the elect) (445–450). Mary calls God “my Savior” because she is among the elect, having “received grace in a unique way” (450).

The second distinction Hugh makes is between the soul and the spirit. The spirit is “according to substance” while the soul is “according to vivification” (445–446). The human soul, because it has being both inside and outside the body, is properly called both *soul* and *spirit*. It is *soul* inasmuch as it is the life of the body; it is *spirit* inasmuch as it is a spiritual substance endowed with reason (448). When Mary says her soul and spirit magnifies and rejoices in God, she is saying that her entire being worships God. She worships “not with the terror of a slave but with the love of a daughter” (449).

Hugh also differentiates between thinking and contemplating.<sup>24</sup> In magnifying the Lord, Mary does so not from thinking (*mediatando*) but from experiencing (*gustando*). Her song erupts not from discursive thought but from contemplation (“by a devoted mind clinging to the sole font of Wisdom”). Mary, like the angels, acquires the pious fear and love needed to appropriately worship God through the contemplation of his majesty and goodness (444). Although the angels see God perfectly, they remain incapable of fully understanding him: “the more penetratingly they gaze upon Him, the more ardently they love Him because to see God Himself is to taste Him, and what is seen is sweetness. But the more perfectly true sweetness is experienced, the more longingly it is desired” (445). Like the angels, despite the fullness of grace she has received, Mary does not fully understand although “by inner vision,” she “clearly beheld that the majesty of the eternal divinity should be venerated and revered by all” (445).

Another distinction Hugh makes concerns the various reasons for rejoicing. Some, rather than rejoicing in God, take delight either in bodily pleasure or evildoing. Others rejoice in God’s gifts but for the wrong reasons: “not so that they might be aided by these gifts to attain to God, but so that they

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<sup>24</sup>In “Three Ways,” Hugh suggests three ways of seeing: thinking, meditating, and contemplating.



might be shown to surpass others in the acquisition of grace,” that is, for “carnal use and worldly glory” (450). Finally, there are those who rejoice in God and in God’s gifts for God’s sake. Mary is among these who take joy primarily in the love of God, rejoicing in the gifts because they come from God (450–451).<sup>25</sup>

Hugh differentiates between the three kinds of consideration God grants: according to knowledge, grace, and judgment (451). The distinction relates to the phrase in the *Magnificat*, “he has looked on” [“has had regard for,” NASV] the humble estate of his servant” (Luke 1:48). God considers, or regards, *according to knowledge* by being ignorant of nothing (i.e., knowing everything), *according to grace* by distributing gifts of mercy as he wills, and *according to judgment* by awarding punishment or glory depending on each person’s works. God can withdraw gifts of grace “through the severity of His judgment,” but “when, being kindly disposed, He restores through His mercy what was taken away” (451). In Mary’s case, because of her humility, God restores to her what was taken away from the first parents because of their pride (451–452)

To explain the significance of Mary calling herself a servant, or handmaid, Hugh distinguishes between four types of servitude (452). Servitude *according to creation* is owed by all created beings to their Creator. Servitude *according to*

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<sup>25</sup>In *Arrha*, the just soul loves God not for the sake of the gifts so much as for the sake of God himself. “Soliloquy,” §§17–19, 209–210.

*necessity* is the involuntary service rendered by those of perverse wills despite their deliberate efforts to oppose God. Servitude *according to fear* is rendered by those who obey God out of fear rather than love. Servitude *according to love* is rendered by those who obey God's commands out of love, seeking no other reward than "that, walking according to His ways, [they] might be strong enough to finally arrive at Him" (452). In contrast to the first parents who subverted their God-given gifts by perversely desiring equality with God, Mary served God out of love, assuming her rightful place under God and acknowledging herself to be his handmaid (453). Because God "considered" (had high regard for) Mary's humility," he chose her to become the mother of the Savior (452).

Hugh also differentiates between humility and humiliation, humility being inward acceptance of one's lowly position before God, and humiliation being outward subjugation to the rejection of others. Because Mary is both "humble in the eyes of God and abject in the eyes of humans on account of God . . . her humility was made acceptable in the eyes of God and her humiliation was transformed into glory in the eyes of humans" (453).

Finally, Hugh distinguishes four kinds of fear. *Servile fear* is to refrain from doing evil only to avoid punishment. *Worldly fear* is to refrain from doing good to avoid punishment. *Initial fear* is to eliminate evil thoughts as well as evil deeds to

avoid punishment. *Filial fear* is “to cling steadfastly to the good because you do not want to lose it” (458). The last kind is the best because it is “born from charity.” Such is the case for Mary who obeys God “not with any hint of servile fear, but rather with the feeling of love” (449).

In the last of Hugh’s works to be considered here, *De beatae Mariae virginitate*, in defense of the doctrine of the perpetual virginity, he responds to a dissident’s allegation that Joseph’s and Mary’s marriage cannot be a true one if there was no physical consummation. Hugh argues that the basis of marriage is not sexual relations, but mutual consent, reproduction being a function of marriage, not its essential feature. For Hugh, what makes marriage valid is love. Here Hugh enters into a beautiful description of marriage in which each spouse cares for the well-being of the other as carefully and lovingly as they each care for their own.<sup>26</sup>

The essential role of love in marriage sheds light on Hugh’s explanation of the role of the Holy Spirit in the conception of Christ. Following the Old Roman Creed that declares that Christ is born “of [Lat. *de*; Gk. *ek*] the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,” Hugh explains that Mary does not conceive by the Spirit in the

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<sup>26</sup>Dominique Poirel, “Love of God, Human Love: Hugh of St. Victor and the Sacrament of Marriage,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 24, no. 1 (1997): 101–104 of 99–109.

way that a woman conceives by a man (via *semen partus*)<sup>27</sup> because the Spirit contributes nothing substantial to the conception, the divine substance being spiritual, not physical. Hugh makes the point to indicate that the Spirit cannot be considered in any sense the father of Christ. The only physical substance of which Christ is conceived comes from Mary herself.<sup>28</sup> The Holy Spirit's part is one of love and operation, the word *operation* suggesting the mystery of divine activity, or work, in time and space. Hugh describes this operation as one of love: "In effect, it is because *in her heart* the love of the Holy Spirit burned in an unparalleled way, that *in her flesh* the power of the Holy Spirit worked wonders. The one to whom the love in Mary's heart was solely directed realized in her flesh an unprecedented work" (237).<sup>29</sup> Instead of burning with concupiscence, Mary's heart burns with the pure flame of love for God. It is the shared love of the Spirit for Mary and Mary for the Spirit that justifies, in Hugh's mind, conceptualizing their relationship as marriage. It is in the furnace of the all-consuming fire of love in Mary's heart that the Holy Spirit works the miracle of

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<sup>27</sup>*De sacramentis*, 2.1, Deferrari, 228–230; *Virginitate*, PL176.392A–393B, 871–872; FT

<sup>28</sup>Though the twelfth-century understanding of conception was incomplete, it was understood that both parents contributed substantively to the conception.

<sup>29</sup>My translation and emphasis.

the incarnation. Hugh, in effect, suggests that Mary conceives Christ in her heart before conceiving him in her womb, much as Augustine suggested that she conceived in her mind by faith before conceiving Christ in her womb.<sup>30</sup>

Lollès points out that the Hugh's emphasis is more on Mary's love for the Holy Spirit than the Spirit's love for her since, in speaking of married love, his emphasis is more on the wife's love for her husband than the husband's for the wife, although both are necessary to produce a child.<sup>31</sup> The apparent reason for this emphasis is Hugh's desire to distance Mary from any association with carnal desire. In harmony with what until the Reformation had been an increasingly stronger theme in the church since the Council of Ephesus (431),<sup>32</sup> Hugh insists not only on Mary's freedom from sin but also on the total absence of any

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<sup>30</sup>"*Fides in mente, Christus in ventre*," sermon 196.1; ET Mary Muldowney, *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, FC, 38 (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1984), 44–45. See also sermon 215.4; Muldowney, *Sermons*, 145.

<sup>31</sup>Lollès, *Œuvre* 2:257–258n51.

<sup>32</sup>Some early theologians suggested that Mary was less than perfect including Origen (third century), who thought in terms of Mary progressing in holiness rather than being statically holy. Nevertheless, he held to Mary's perpetual virginity and saw her as essentially holy and virtuous. *Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, in ANF, 9, trans. John Patrick, 409–512 (New York: Scribner, 1981), 424; PG 13, 986–987. See also *Commentary on John* 1.23, in *Origen* by Joseph Trigg (London: Routledge, 1998), 109. Homily on Luke 17.6–7; PG 13.1845; Gambero, 77–78.

tendency toward sin in her. For Hugh, this purity was the consequence of the love and operation of the Spirit within her as were her other virtues.

### *Summary*

In summary, then, even though Hugh speaks of Mary in superlative terms, his interest in her is tropological, as he intends that what he says of Mary to be understood as exemplary, a model to be emulated by him and others. He portrays Mary as one elevated above nature by the Holy Spirit who reposes upon her and fills her with every grace and virtue. By the operation of the love of the Spirit within her she is rendered free of sin and any inclination toward sin, making her totally beautiful. Hugh describes the Holy Spirit's coming upon her as an intoxication, an ecstatic experience of the presence of God, by which she not only conceives but is made the temple of the Holy Spirit. The love of the Holy Spirit is the cause of the conception: "it is because *in her heart* the love of the Holy Spirit burned in an unparalleled way, that *in her flesh* the power of the Holy Spirit worked wonders."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>*De beatae Mariae virginitate*, 237, in Jollès, *Œuvre* 2:171–259 (my translation and emphases).

## Mary and the Spirit According to Amadeus of Lausanne

### *History*

Amadeus of Lausanne (1110–1159), following in the footsteps of his father Amadeus of Hauterive, became a Cistercian monk, entering the novitiate in 1125 and coming under the tutelage of Bernard of Clairvaux. Appointed abbot of Hautecombe in 1139, he proved himself to be a “saintly pastor of souls” and effective administrator, and was then consecrated bishop of Lausanne in 1144 or 1145. He is remembered primarily for his eight Marian homilies, which reveal his profound love for Mary, whom he declares “first after the Redeemer” (1).<sup>34</sup>

### *Theology*

What makes these eight homilies distinctive is their emphasis on the growth of Mary’s holiness, which he attributes to the gifts of the Spirit. Amadeus portrays Mary as the recipient *par excellence* both of the gifts of the Spirit and of the Gift of the Spirit himself, describing the Spirit as Mary’s bridegroom and

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<sup>34</sup>Amadeus of Lausanne, *Eight Homilies on the Praises of Blessed Mary*, trans. Grace Perigo, intro. Chrysogonus Waddell (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1979). Originally pub. in *Magnificat: Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (1979), based on the FT of *De Maria Virginea Matre homiliae octo*, PL 188.1301–1346; trans. Antoine Dumas, ed. Georges Bavaud, Latin text ed. Jean Deshusses, *Huit Homélie Mariales*, Sources Chrétiennes, 72 (Paris: Cerf, 1960). Parenthetical citations in this section refer to *Eight Homilies*.

spouse.<sup>35</sup> The task undertaken here is to analyze these homilies for the purpose of understanding Amadeus' Mary and uncovering their pneumatological implications.

With the first homily of the eight homilies serving as an introduction to their general theme—Mary's integral role in the "mystery of Christ"—the last seven treat the major stages in Mary's life. At each stage, the Holy Spirit is actively present to Mary, bestowing on her one of the seven spiritual gifts (Isa. 11:2–3),<sup>36</sup> thus enabling her to meet the challenge of each.<sup>37</sup> These stages, or phases, in her growth in holiness and love form the outline of the last seven homilies:

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<sup>35</sup>Amadeus refers to Mary's marriage to the Holy Spirit in chs. 1–3: "Being wedded she [Mary] rejoices in the love of the Spirit and, [is] made fruitful by the drops of his dew (*Eight Homilies*, 2). "She was united to the Holy Spirit in a bond of wedlock" (9). Amadeus also speaks of "that ineffable union by which the womb of Blessed Mary bore fruit of the Holy Spirit" (17). "Rejoice therefore and be glad, Mary, for you will conceive by a breath. Rejoice, for you will be found pregnant by the Holy Spirit. You have indeed been betrothed to Joseph, but you were forestalled by the Holy Spirit. He who created you . . . became your spouse. . . . The bridegroom comes to you, the Holy Spirit comes. . . . You are made fruitful by such a bridegroom" (24–25). However, elsewhere he calls the Son the bridegroom and spouse (4, 63), and refers to the entire Trinity as having accomplished the conception (19–20). He also calls attention to the reversal of the eternal procession in the temporal conception in Mary by the Spirit (20–21).

<sup>36</sup>Amadeus reverses the order of the gifts in Isaiah.

<sup>37</sup>In the homilies, Amadeus draws only a loose connection between the gifts and the various stages in Mary's life.



1. Justification, including adornment with all virtues (fear of the Lord),
2. Virginal conception of Christ by union with the Holy Spirit (piety),<sup>38</sup>
3. Virgin Birth (knowledge),
4. Suffering at the Crucifixion (fortitude),
5. Resurrection and ascension joy (counsel),
6. The glory of the assumption (understanding),
7. Fullness of perfection at the final consummation (wisdom).<sup>39</sup>

In the first homily,<sup>40</sup> Amadeus introduces Mary using such superlative terms as “more brilliant than every light, more pleasing than every sweetness, more eminent than every dominion” and sensory terms like “the pouring forth of her precious ointment,” “the odor of her perfumes,” and “the breath of her graces” (1). As in all his homilies, he uses extensive symbolism, the most prominent images in the first being the tree of life and the two golden baskets.

Mary is the tree of life in the midst of the paradisiacal garden from whose blossoms come the apples (Song 2:5),<sup>41</sup> which are the “fruits of the spirit,” the

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<sup>38</sup>The LXX has *eusebeias* (piety or godliness) in v. 2 and *phobou théo* (fear of God) in v. 3, and, similarly, the Vulgate has *pietas* in v. 2 and *timor Domini* in v. 3, whereas most modern versions have “fear of the Lord” in both verses.

<sup>39</sup>Waddell, xviii–xix; Amadeus, *Eight Homilies*, 9–10, 37.

<sup>40</sup>Amadeus, *Homilia I: De fructibus et floribus sanctissimae Virginis Mariae*, PL 188.1303b–1307c; Perigo, 1–7.

<sup>41</sup>Saturating his text with scriptural allusions, Amadeus frequently uses images from the Song of Songs. Fulton, “The Virgin Mary and the Song of

fruit of the Spirit *par excellence* being the Spirit-conceived Son. In Amadeus' words, "Conceiving by the heavenly dew [the Spirit]," Mary bears "the fruit of salvation" (2).<sup>42</sup> With Mary as the tree, the garden is the church, the new Eden. Mary flourishes as "she whom the Saviour's springs water, the streams of his gifts inebriate, so that being wedded she rejoices in the love of the Spirit and, made fruitful by the drops of his dew," she brings forth not only Christ but "many sons" (2).

Lest he appear to be unduly praising Mary, Amadeus points out that a tree is judged by its fruit and that any praise a tree receives reflects the praise due to its fruit. So, for Amadeus, to praise Mary is to praise her Son. In extolling Mary, "blessed among women," he asserts, "we are praising the blessed fruit of her womb, and while we seek to commend the beauty of the tree, we [recall] the surpassing beauty of the fruit" (5–7).

The two golden baskets symbolize the two Testaments, with Mary between them as the link between the promises made to Abraham and their fulfillment in Christ (1). The baskets are full of "fruits new and old," i.e., "the words of the two Testaments" as well as "the Fathers new and old" (3). Christ

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Songs," 268–281. Mark Infusino, "The Virgin Mary and the Song of Songs in Medieval English Literature" (PhD diss., University of California, 1988), 133–140.

<sup>42</sup>Later, Amadeus calls Christ the "tree of salvation" (3).

and Mary are “the end of the Testaments” (3).<sup>43</sup> Mary’s integral role in the fulfillment of the promises is to conceive by the Spirit and to birth the Savior, while Christ is the embodiment of their fulfillment through his life, death, Resurrection, and Ascension, completing the task by bestowing spiritual gifts and pouring out the gift of the Spirit on believers on his resumption of glory in heaven (4).

The first homily culminates with an excursus on the Holy of Holies, with focus on the mercy seat, the golden urn, and Aaron’s rod. While the mercy seat is Christ, the two cherubim wings that overshadow it are the two Testaments that “conceal under figures and riddles the Christ whom [they] agree in proclaiming” (6). Contained within the Ark are the golden urn and Aaron’s rod (as well as the two stone tablets of the Decalogue). For Amadeus, Mary is the urn, “golden through her integrity and purity” and “fulness of grace,” while the manna is Christ, the “bread of angels which . . . gives life to the world” (6). Also symbolizing Mary, Aaron’s rod buds “by the power of the Holy Spirit” and bears “the fruit of the almond,” of which the shell or peel is Christ’s humanity and the kernel his divinity (7).

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<sup>43</sup>Amadeus does not hesitate to speak of Mary as an integral part of the fulfillment of the promises because Christ came into the world through Mary by the Spirit.

Amadeus begins his second homily<sup>44</sup> by describing Mary's life as a progression along a path of ever increasing glory (Prov. 4:18). "She advanced according to the fairest order of charity and, going forward from virtue to virtue, she saw the God of gods in Sion, being changed from glory to glory as *by the Spirit of the Lord*" (Psa. 84:7; 2 Cor. 3:18; my emphasis)

Returning to the portrait he began to paint of Mary in the first homily, he goes into intricate detail allegorizing her clothing, jewelry, and even body parts (Waddell, xxxii–xxiii). To each garment and precious stone, as well as to each color or other variable, Amadeus attaches a spiritual significance. The details are not important here, but the overall portrait that he paints is that of a bride "who goes forth as the rising dawn, beautiful as the moon, excellent [brilliant] as the sun" (Song 6:10), arrayed in the "pure whiteness" of the garments of "perpetual virginity and perfect purity," perfumed with the fragrance of humility and prayer, and adorned with the precious stones of all the virtues (10–13).

Interrupting his allegory briefly, Amadeus makes an aside regarding Mary's role in the renewal that Jeremiah had foretold, the "new thing" that God would do in which "a woman alone shall enclose a man," by which he refers to

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<sup>44</sup>Amadeus, *Homilia II: De justificatione vel ornate Mariae Virginis*, PL 188.1308d–1313a; Perigo, 9–16.

the virginal conception (Jer. 31:22).<sup>45</sup> She who is “enclosed by the Spirit,” in turn, encloses “the flesh . . . [of] the new man” (14). Amadeus interprets “enclosed” here as “generated.” Mary generates her Son “in the shape of humanity,” while the Spirit regenerates her humanity “in the shape of renewal” (14–15).

Amadeus then completes his allegorical portrait of Mary. Every part of her body is adorned, her fingers with rings of “faith and pure love,” her hands filled with hyacinths of “pure and fervent intention,” her arms affixed with the seal of the bridegroom (Song 8:6), her right hand adorned with the law and her left with “the purple of the Lord’s passion,” her ears with “earrings of obedience,” her hair with the “fillet [ribbon] of discipline,” her breast with “chains of purest and clearest thought,” her throat with a golden necklace, her head with a jeweled diadem such as “those in second place in kingdoms” wear. Reflected in her crown are “shining jewels,” which represent the “assembly of saints,” the prophets, martyrs, confessors, and virgins (15). As surpassingly beautiful as is the portrait, however, Amadeus makes the disclaimer that it is only preparatory for the teachings in the later homilies that will “treat of deeper matters and more secret mysteries leading us to the vision of God” (16).

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<sup>45</sup>Cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, *De Laudibus Virginis Matris (Super “Missus est”)*, PL 183, 55–88A (Homily 2, 8) 64D–65A.

The author begins the third homily<sup>46</sup> by marveling that God, no longer able to “contain the multitude of [his] mercies,” poured out “the tenderness of [his] love upon us.”<sup>47</sup> He sends the Son to deliver the besieged at the very moment “they are about to rush out into battle with death before their eyes.”

Amadeus’ focus in this homily is to explain how Christ’s coming occurs. Immediately stating that the conception takes place through the “ineffable union by which the womb of Blessed Mary bore fruit of the Holy Spirit” (17–18), he develops that theme throughout the rest of the homily, beginning with a reflection on Psalm 19:6. By the coming of the one from the highest heaven, “who is the supreme being, highest good, the utmost blessedness,” fallen creation is allowed to participate in the divine blessedness through which “eternal life is gained, perfect wisdom is granted, the fulness of love is possessed” (18).

The reference to the highest heaven suggests to Amadeus the trinitarian origin of the incarnation. This is a mystery that human beings cannot

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<sup>46</sup>Amadeus, *Homilia III: De incarnatione Christi et virginis conceptione de Spiritu sancto*, PL 188.1313b–1319b; Perigo, 17–26.

<sup>47</sup>Is Amadeus speaking hyperbolically here? It is hard for me to imagine that he literally means that God’s mercy overwhelms divine omnipotence. In any case, this is an important point to bear in mind when Amadeus later contrasts Mary’s mercy with God’s justice (Hom. V, 44). Such a contrast must be more a rhetorical than a literal denial of God’s mercy, since Amadeus extols it so much here. His later point is to spotlight Mary’s loving intercession rather than to assert God unmercifulness.

understand; they can only trust God to enable them to transcend their limitations so that they may “behold with unveiled face that which [they] seek” (19).

Though human beings may be “willing to approach the *darkness* in which he [God] himself is,” since, paradoxically, “God dwells in *light* inaccessible” (my emphasis), they cannot stand in the divine presence. They can do only what the disciples at the Transfiguration did: fall on their faces to “adore from afar the traces of the Trinity” (19).

While Amadeus asserts that the Word comes from the First Person of the Trinity, he also probes the mystery of the incarnation in terms of the Second and Third Persons. Although “begotten of the Father eternally,” the Son is “begotten in time . . . from his mother.” Though coming from the Father, he remains with the Father, “so that without intermission he was wholly in eternity, wholly in time; wholly . . . in the Father when wholly in the virgin.” Amadeus aptly uses the spoken word to illustrate the point. When a word that originates in the mind (“heart”) is spoken, it is communicated fully to the hearer while remaining “wholly in the heart” of the speaker (20). The point is that Word comes in such a way, that in assuming humanity, “he [does] not lose himself” nor “cease to be the Word.”

Amadeus interprets the role of the Third Person of the Trinity in the incarnation as one who is heir to the *filioque*. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the

Son by an eternal procession, yet the Son, born of the Virgin Mary, comes from the Holy Spirit by a temporal conception (20). Because it is a mystery, Amadeus resorts to metaphorical language to explain. The Spirit is a “south wind” whose “life-giving warmth and generative power . . . brings [sic] newness of life, making the seeds of virtue come forth.”

Amadeus also associates the Spirit with Mount Paran, which the Scriptures juxtapose with Sinai and Seir (Deut. 33:2) and with the densely overshadowing (*kataskiou daseos*) glory of the heavens (Hab. 3:3 LXX).<sup>48</sup> From the “ineffable loftiness” of El-Paran the Spirit distributes the gifts, pouring forth “the division of the charisms.” Christ is the stone “hewn without hands” (Dan. 2:34) from the mountain even as he is conceived “not from a man nor by means of man, but by the Holy Spirit” (21).

In explaining the role of the Holy Spirit in effecting the incarnation, Amadeus pictures the Spirit falling like rain on a fleece and on the earth (Psa. 72:6). The fleece “betokens the glorious Virgin, who dwelling in flesh, raised

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<sup>48</sup>Jerome, Letter XCVII: To Pammachius and Marcella, §1: “Once more with the return of spring I enrich you with the wares of the east and send the treasures of Alexandria to Rome: as it is written, ‘God shall come from the south and the Holy One from Mount Paran, even a thick shadow.’ (Hence in the Song of Songs the joyous cry of the bride: ‘I sat down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste’ [Song 2:3]).” In *Letters and Select Works* by Jerome, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. William Fremantle, NCNCF, 2<sup>d</sup> series, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).



herself beyond the flesh . . . by the power of the Spirit" (22). As fleece is known for its softness and pliancy, so Mary is known for her "gentleness and humility," "simplicity and innocence," and charity (22). The new earth also refers to Mary, for "just as the old Adam was formed from an earth uncorrupt . . . so the virgin soil brought forth from the earth a new Adam" (22). The heavens "drop down," and the "clouds rain upon the just," causing the earth to bring forth the Savior (Isa. 45:8).

The coming of the Spirit at the conception is a gently falling, soaking rain, the drops dispersing so gradually into the earth, their coming is "scarcely perceived." It occurs "without human act," so that Mary's integrity remains "unimpaired." The seed of the Word slips imperceptibly into the new earth of the Virgin's womb, "hallowed by the touch of divine unction [Spirit]" (23). The descent of the Word and the Spirit's overshadowing of Mary in connection with that descent are so closely related that Amadeus applies the rain analogy to both (23–24).

Amadeus further describes the conception as a breath, though a breath of a wedding night, with the Holy Spirit as bridegroom and Mary as bride:

Rejoice therefore and be glad, Mary, for you will conceive by a breath. Rejoice, for you will be found pregnant by the Holy Spirit. You had indeed been betrothed to Joseph, but you were forestalled by the Holy Spirit. He who created you marked you and claimed you for himself. He who fashioned you himself became your spouse; he became the lover of your beauty, he who fashioned it. He calls you, saying "Come, my friend,

my fair one, my dove. For now the winter is past and departed. Come.” He desired your beauty and longed to join you to himself. Impatient of delay, he hastens to come to you (24).

Apostrophizing the bride, Amadeus urges her to hasten to array herself with the garments of glory and precious stones (of Homily V) and to “run to meet him that you may be kissed with the kiss of God and be caught up in his embrace” (24). The breath the bridegroom gives his bride is described in the language of a conjugal embrace:

He will come not only upon you but into you, that he may see you more closely and breathe into you a grateful love, bringing into you with an intimate bedewing the good word . . . . At his touch your womb may tremble, your belly swell, your spirit rejoice, your stomach expand. “Be blest” . . . you who enjoy such sweetness, you are worthy of such a heavenly kiss, you are united to such a spouse, you are made fruitful by such a bridegroom (24–25).

Amadeus explains that though the Holy Spirit has come to others before her and will come to others after, the Spirit comes to Mary in a greater way because she is chosen “before and above all others” to “surpass [them] . . . in the fulness of grace” (25). Comparing Mary to the saints of old — Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, David — Amadeus explains that the grace given to her exceeds them all. Even her name is more glorious, her title “Mother of God” far surpassing such privileged designations as angel, prophet, and herald (25).

Expounding on Luke 1:35, “the Holy Spirit will come upon you,” Amadeus further develops the relation of the Spirit with Mary. The Spirit “will

come in fertility, in abundance, in fulness, in the outpouring of flesh and spirit.

And when he has filled you, he will still be over you and will be borne upon your waters to create in you a better and a greater wonder than when in the beginning he was borne upon the waters to bring creation to beauty and shape” (25–26). Amadeus attributes the second part of verse 35, “and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you,” not to the Spirit but to the Word, who takes his humanity from Mary while retaining his divinity (26).

Calling Mary “the most precious and holy vessel in which the Word of God was conceived,” Amadeus compares Mary’s experience of the conception to that of the burning bush (Exod. 3:2): “You were on fire like the bush which once was shown to Moses and were not burnt up” (86). In the final paragraph of the homily, Amadeus clearly makes the point that the Spirit is the fire that effects the coming of the seed of the Word into Mary’s womb.

Resuming the imagery of precipitation, although this time combining it with fire, Amadeus suggests a sort of chain reaction that effects the conception: the fire that burns without consuming reveals “a shining dew,” which, in turn, produces “an anointing,” which, at last, furnishes “the holy seed.” Amadeus explains Mary’s part in erotic, yet chaste terms, “You have clung, o beauteous virgin, in close embrace to the author of beauty and were made more a virgin,

indeed more than a virgin, because mother and virgin, you received by the inpouring of God this holy seed" (26).

The most powerful impression that Amadeus gives in this chapter is that of the spousal yet virginal relation of Mary to the Spirit. Though chaste, the conception of Christ is not impersonal; in modern terms, it is neither an artificial insemination, as it were, nor an *in vitro* fertilization. Rather it is a wedding breath, a kiss, an embrace, which bespeak the love with which the Holy Spirit overshadows Mary, in full tribute to her personal worth as a woman of ineffable beauty, virtue, and holiness. For Amadeus, Mary is the Spirit's Beloved, not a sterile instrument.

In the fourth homily,<sup>49</sup> Amadeus turns his focus to the Virgin Birth. The Son born of the virginal conception is the God-man: "God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the world; man of the substance of his mother, born in the world." For Amadeus, Christ is "the new Orpheus,"<sup>50</sup> who sings with "tuneful voice" and whose human body is the lyre from which issue "forth dulcet sounds to re-echo as it were with ineffable harmony." "By the sweetness of his song," he raises up from stones "sons of Abraham," moves the wooden

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<sup>49</sup>Amadeus, *Homilia IV: De partu virginis, seu Christi navitate*, PL 188.1319c–1325d; Perigo, 27–37.

<sup>50</sup>Waddell, xxiv.

“hearts of the Gentiles” to faith, tames the wild beasts of “fierce passions and savage barbarism,” and draws human beings “from among men” to set them “among the gods” (27).

Amadeus holds to Mary’s *virginitas in partu* and *ante partum*, her virginity being as “untouched” in birthing as in conceiving. He contrasts her experience of childbirth with that of Eve and the “daughters of Eve.” “What they conceived in delight they put forth in great bitterness of the flesh,” whereas Mary, having “conceived him without sin . . . gave birth to [him] without pain.” Moreover, in birthing the “only-begotten of the Father,” Mary’s virginity is not merely preserved but strengthened (28). For Amadeus, Christ is “the hand of God” that serves as mid-wife to his own mother. The hand that “bore our griefs and carried our sorrows” would not inflict a “wound upon the mother” (28–29).

For Amadeus, Mary’s virginity continues *post partum* since she is the door that remains shut, by which no one enters or exits except the prince (Ezek. 44:2–3), who “in entering . . . did not open it” and “in leaving . . . did not uncloset it” (29). In other words, he holds to the tradition that Mary did not have any other children after Jesus. The Virgin Birth is a miracle similar to Jesus’ emergence from the sepulcher despite its sealed entry and his appearance in the Cenacle despite locked doors (John 20:19).

To strengthen his point, Amadeus indulges in an excursus addressed to those who disbelieve the miraculous nature of Christ's conception and birth. He points out the unreliability of doubt itself by explaining the limitations of the human mind. If "reason collapses at the examination of an insect," such as a mosquito, how can it fathom the divine mysteries? If a human person cannot fathom the depth of her own soul, how can she "penetrate the deep things of God"? In contrasting its own finitude to the divine infinity, humanity is forced to recognize its nothingness (Isa. 40:17). Human beings can transcend their finite nature and "be established above nature by nature's Creator" only by basing their reasoning on the foundation of "All powerful Wisdom" and attaching "themselves perfectly to their Creator" (30–31).

Amadeus includes in the excursus a polemical apostrophe to the Jews, asking them how the Davidic promises were fulfilled if not in Christ and urging them to "come to the church of God" where they "will see the Son and Lord of David sitting on his throne with great power and majesty" and where they, as members of Christ, "may drink the blood of salvation which [their] fathers poured out to their destruction" (32).

Amadeus completes the excursus by addressing "gentiles," by whom he intends Muslims, who hold to the Virgin Birth and Jesus' sinlessness but not to his divinity. Amadeus argues that Muslims make "a dangerous mistake" (32) by

admitting that Christ “lived free of falsehood or any sin” while denying his divinity, since Christ, who according to Islam’s own prophet was the faultless son of Mary, proclaimed himself to be both “God and the Son of God” (33). To Muslims and Jews alike, Amadeus recommends the church as, like Noah’s ark, the only place of safety and refuge.

In the last part of the homily, Amadeus describes the joy that overwhelms the mother in the realization that in her has been “fulfilled the promise of the patriarchs, the oracles of the prophets and the longings of the fathers of old” (35). In order for her to contain such joy, Amadeus asserts, she receives the same assistance she received at the conception: the overshadowing of the Spirit. She also receives the reassurances of the Father: “See, I have entrusted to you my Son. . . . Fear not to suckle the one you have borne, to train up the one you brought forth. Know him not only as your Lord but as Your Son. He is my Son by his divinity, your son by the humanity he has taken [from you]” (35). In response, “turning to God with her whole heart,” Mary gives “voice to her thanks and praise on high” (34). Then, “with what feeling and eagerness, with what humility and reverence, with what love and devotion,” she cared for her child, loving him with her whole heart (“with complete affection”), mind (“with her whole understanding”), and strength (“with the whole purpose of her heart

and the carrying out of all his commandments”) (35–36). Amadeus then describes the tender caresses that the mother and child exchange:

The Wisdom of the Father clung round her neck and in her arms rested the Power that moves all things. The little Jesus stood on his mother’s lap and in her virgin bosom rested that rest of holy souls. Sometimes tilting his head while she held him with right hand or left, he bent his gentle gaze upon his mother, he whom angels longed to look upon, and called her mother with sweet murmur, he whom every spirit calls in time of need.

After childbirth, Mary continues to be “filled with the Holy Spirit,” clasping her Son to her breast, kissing him, and, “with a mother’s privilege,” receiving “sweet kisses from his sacred mouth.” In becoming Christ’s mother, though still not reaching her spiritual zenith, Mary progresses “further and further in love.” For love of her Son, she fears “neither toil nor grief nor dangers nor poverty nor want, neither terrors nor death nor the rage of the wicked king, the flight and return to Egypt.” In everything she undertakes, she is “full of joy . . . prompt in obedience, devoted in her service, humble in her submission,” for just as she surpassed all others in contemplation, “so also in the active life” (36–37).

In the fifth homily,<sup>51</sup> Amadeus distinguishes between visible and hidden martyrdom, “one in the flesh, the other in the spirit.” Mary’s suffering is greater

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<sup>51</sup>Amadeus, *Homilia V: De mentis robore seu martyrio beatissimae Virginis*, PL 188. 1325d–1331a; Perigo, 39–47.



than that of the apostles and martyrs, Amadeus claims, because “the martyrdom of the spirit goes beyond the torments of the flesh” (39–40). Mary’s suffering is compared to that of Abraham, Moses, and David, Abraham offering “the son whom he loved more than his own flesh,” Moses standing “in the breach before the face of God,” willing to “be anathema, far from Christ, on behalf of his brothers,” and David interceding on behalf of his people that “the sword might be turned” away from the innocent and against himself. Mary’s suffering exceeds theirs because she is closer to her Son’s sufferings, of which Amadeus exclaims, “O how marvellous are his wounds by which the wounds of the world were healed” (40–41).

Yet from this height of wonder Amadeus plunges to the depth of invective directed first against “the ancient foe” and then against “ungrateful Jews” (42). Yet despite such a diatribe Amadeus, suddenly reversing his rhetorical tactic, speaks movingly of the “unspeakable sorrow” that Mary feels “equally for the death of her son and the loss of the Jews,” a sorrow “more bitter than death itself” (43).

Just as Mary needed divine assistance to bear the joy of her Son’s birth, Amadeus asserts, so now she needs the gift of fortitude to enable her to bear the sorrow of his death (44). Rather than focusing on her grief for her Son, however, Amadeus dwells on the anguish Mary endures for her own race—the Jews—

even as Jesus mourned over Jerusalem and Paul later mourned over his Jewish brothers. Here Amadeus contrasts Mary's pity for the Jews to God's justice, suggesting that divine justice supersedes divine mercy and even that Mary's mercy is greater than God's.<sup>52</sup> However, he then backtracks when he notes that in interceding for the Jews Mary joins in Jesus' prayer for them on the cross (44; Luke 23:34).

For Amadeus, Mary's sufferings are worse than if she herself had suffered the torture, given that she loves her Son infinitely more than she loves herself. Mary's great love for her Son is first evident in her "loving choice" to become his mother (45). Not only does she have the same Son that God has, but her love for him is the same as she has for God.<sup>53</sup> Because she loves more, she suffers more (45). At one point, Amadeus even dares to say that Mary's pain was worse than Jesus' because "he suffered in the flesh, she in her heart."<sup>54</sup> Though unable to

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<sup>52</sup>See footnote 44.

<sup>53</sup>In the quotes, the capitalization matches Amadeus' Latin in which there are some inconsistencies.

<sup>54</sup>This is an instance of rhetorical hyperbole rather than theological assertion, since Amadeus has just exclaimed over the grievousness of Christ's sufferings. Amadeus is commiserating with the psychological sufferings of a compassionate mother to whom seeing her child suffer is more excruciating than to physically endure pain herself. In any case, it is clear that Christ's sufferings were more than physical.

doubt the Resurrection, having been “taught by the Spirit,” she was still obliged to suffer. Simeon’s prophecy must be fulfilled; the Son does not spare his mother’s soul from being pierced by a sword (46). In contradiction to his litany of the “groans, sobs, sighs” of Mary’s sufferings, Amadeus then quotes Ambrose to claim that while standing at the cross, Mary “held back her tears,” maintaining that such self-control befits her “loftiness of soul” and “valiant constancy.” The homily ends with an exhortation to “imitate the Lord’s mother so that in the midst of adversity we . . . fortify our soul with humble reserve and firm constancy” (47).

The sixth homily<sup>55</sup> begins with an invitation to a banquet in celebration of Christ’s resurrection, there to eat “the bread of life,” to drink “the wine of gladness, to be inebriated with the joy of the resurrection,” an inebriation that is “the height of sobriety” (109–110). The invitation is to rejoice with Mary in her joy at the Resurrection, for the time for “grief has departed, the time for joy has come, that true joy which proceeds from Christ’s resurrection.” Upon his Resurrection, Christ raises his mother’s soul that “lay as in a narrow tomb of grief while the Lord lay in the sepulcher.” Waking as if from sleep, Mary feasts

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<sup>55</sup>Amadeus, *Homilia VI: De gaudio et admiratione B. V. in resurrectione et ascensione Jesus filii sui ad Patris dexteram*, PL 188. 1331a–1336d; Perigo, 49–58.

“her eyes upon the glowing flesh of the risen Lord” and is lost in an ecstasy of joy (50).

Culling various images from the Song of Songs, Amadeus allegorizes them as Mary and the church as bride. The wheat is the harvest that grows from the seed that takes root in Mary’s womb, while the lilies represent her purity (7:2). The unguents represent, first, the healing power of the bridegroom’s words and, secondly, the surpassing fragrance of the bride (1:3; 4:10). The breasts are the two “Testaments by which she [the church] pours the milk of consolation on her little ones and on the full-grown the milk of exhortation” (4:5; 52).<sup>56</sup> The Testaments are enhanced when to them are “added the grace of spiritual discernment and the virtue of divine charity,” satisfying the soul of the one who reads them “with the inner sweetness of his word” (53). Crowned supremely by the crown of her resurrected Son, the Mother of the Redeemer also calls the saints her “joy and crown,” even as Paul once called the Philippians (4:1), since “you have all been gained by blood derived from my blood and by flesh taken from my flesh” (54).

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<sup>56</sup>Cf. William of Saint-Thierry, *The Works of William of St. Thierry*, vol. 2, *Exposition on the Song of Songs* [*Expositio super Cantica canticorum*], trans. Columba Hart (Spencer, Mass.: Cistercian Publications, 1971); Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* [*Sermones super Cantica canticorum*], trans. Kilian Walsh and Irene Edmonds, 4 vols. (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1979).

Apostrophizing Mary, Amadeus proclaims that her Son “rose from the dead on the third day and with your flesh ascended above all the heavens that he might fill all things.” For that reason, not only is Mary filled with joy, having received her heart’s desire, but she is “venerated in heaven, loved in the world, feared in hell” (55) As Mary rejoices in the Resurrection, the Spirit calls to her as to a bride, “Arise, hasten, my love, my dove, my fair one and come” (Song 2:10–12).

As Mary is caught up in a vision of her Son’s rising in resurrection glory and hearing “the voice of [her] beloved son,” his words become “like fire burning in [her] bones.” Totally aflame, Mary offers herself as “a sweet sacrifice to God . . . sending forth perfume more pleasing than cinnamon and balsam, sweeter than nard delighting the king by its presence,” filling “the heaven of heavens . . . with a wondrous sweet incense . . . [coming] forth from the censer of Mary’s heart and sweetly surpass[ing] every perfume” (58). Then, lifted by God’s hand, “the censer [of Mary’s heart] . . . mounts to the throne of God . . . attended by a train of angelic spirits . . . saying, ‘who is this who comes up through the desert like a column of smoke from the odor of myrrh and incense and . . . perfume?’” (Song 3:6)

Here Amadeus writes as though he himself were caught up in an ecstatic vision in which Christ’s Ascension elides with a proleptic spiritual lifting of

Mary's heart into heaven, in anticipation of her eventual bodily assumption. Then returning to himself, as it were, Amadeus discontinues his discourse, expressing his expectation that someone else will "with God's help . . . more fully describe this [Christ's] ascension" (58).

In the seventh homily,<sup>57</sup> Amadeus ponders the question of "why, when the Lord ascended into heaven, did his mother who embraced him with such affection not follow him at once?" Since Enoch "walked with God, and was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24), and Elijah was "carried away by a chariot of fire,"<sup>58</sup> why not Mary since she surpasses Enoch "in purity of heart" and Elijah "through the privilege of her love"? Amadeus finds it hard to understand why she who was "full of grace and blessed among women," a virgin who bore God's Son and suffered with him, and "lived again in the Spirit of his resurrection," did not ascend with Christ since even Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven early (59).

For Amadeus, Mary's human nature is perpetually filled with the divine fullness that was first implanted in her by the Spirit and remained in her by the mediation of her Son (60). The implication is that Mary is, like Paul said of the

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<sup>57</sup>Amadeus, *Homilia VII: De B. Virginis obitu, assumptione in coelum, exaltatione ad Filii dexteram*, PL 188.1337a–1342c; Perigo, 59–68.

<sup>58</sup> Or a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11).

Colossians, “filled in him [Christ]” (Col. 2:9–10). At the conception Mary’s flesh is not temporarily filled by him in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” only to be depleted at his birth. Rather, in Christ and by the Spirit, Mary is permanently filled with the fullness of God. The Orthodox tradition calls such fullness deification. Amadeus is not asserting Mary’s divinity but her bodily and spiritual transformation by the indwelling God.<sup>59</sup>

After deliberation, Amadeus decides that the reason Mary did not accompany her Son at the Ascension was that he willed the delay so that his disciples could benefit from her “maternal comfort and teaching” (60). Although they could no longer see “God present in the flesh,” they still had the comfort of seeing his mother. If the sepulcher of the Redeemer “is so delightful in our sight,” Amadeus asks, why would not the same be true of the Mother of God? Mary stood in the midst of the primitive church like a tree producing “life-giving fruit” and granting “a share in all the gifts of grace within her.” Modeling virginity, chastity, humility, and truthfulness, she had an aura of brightness around her. “Her face a glowing fire,” Amadeus claims, she “inflamed the hearts of those near her, brought faith to the[ir] hearts . . . drawing them to righteousness”( 61).

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<sup>59</sup>This has application to the thesis that Mary is the Spirit-baptized mother, especially because of its implications of deification and indwelling.

While Mary was on earth after her Son's Ascension, she dwells in a citadel of virtues surrounded by an ocean of divine gifts from which she pours "in generous diffusion upon a believing and thirsting people an abyss of graces." Amadeus attributes to her the power to heal bodies as well as souls, asking, "Who ever went away from her sick or sad and no[t] knowing heavenly mysteries? Who did not return to his home glad and joyful, having obtained from the Mother of God his wish?" (62).<sup>60</sup>

Then, to add even more imagery, Amadeus returns to the symbol of the garden used in his first homily, to portray the richness of Mary's virtues and graces at this stage of her life. He speaks in terms of orchards and fruits, oils and perfumes, herbs and spices, all of which speak of the "sober intoxication of her senses and the sweet and fragrant esteem of her virtues." He then caps the image with Mary as "a spring in spiritual gardens and as a well of living and life-giving waters which flow swiftly from the divine Lebanon, distributed from Mount Sion to all the people round about rivers of peace and the overflowing of grace poured out from heaven" (63).

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<sup>60</sup>These questions are reminiscent of a Marian prayer popularized in the fifteenth century known as the *Memorare*, which reads in part, "Never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided." William Fitzgerald, *Spiritual Modalities: Prayer as Rhetoric and Performance* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 104–107.



To attribute such virtues and graces to Mary and to ask for her for help, for some this side of the Reformation, is excessive because the roles attributed to her belong first and foremost to the Holy Spirit; however, from Amadeus' perspective,<sup>61</sup> there is no conflict because he sees Mary as having been so superabundantly gifted by the Spirit that it is only fitting that she share those gifts with others.<sup>62</sup>

Another reason Amadeus proposes for Mary remaining on earth when her Son ascends is that "it was fitting that the Virgin Mother, for the honor of her Son . . . should tarry in the depths that she might enter the heights in the fulness of sanctity" (62). Like any human being, Mary needs time to advance through perseverance: "Perseverance, joined to love and work, creates fullness, brings forth perfection" (64). Although gifted with "surpassing merit and unique righteousness," she is like the palm and cedar trees that need time to blossom and bear fruit. Prior to Jesus' Ascension, Mary's gifts and beauty were hidden,

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<sup>61</sup>Since the Reformation had yet to occur, it would be anachronistic to ask Amadeus whether Mary was the original source of the graces. It is only reasonable, though, to surmise that if the question had been raised, Amadeus would have recognized God as the ultimate source, not Mary, since, after all, the gifts are identified in the Scriptures as the gifts of the Spirit, not as the gifts of Mary. Like any human being, Mary could only share what she had first received (Matt. 10:8).

<sup>62</sup>As Jesus taught, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

but during this delay her beauty becomes more evident, “brighter than light” and “surpassing every loveliness” (64). “Just as she was carried from virtue to virtue,” so it is fitting that she “by the Spirit of the Lord be borne from esteem to esteem” (62). Despite the unique privileges granted to Mary, and despite her service as a conduit of God’s graces by her love, care, and prayers for others, Amadeus is suggesting, Mary herself needs to continue to grow in grace until she reaches the fullness of “fruitful old age.”

The eighth homily<sup>63</sup> is a celebration of the final stage of Mary’s journey, her royal reception in heaven. Contrasting the humility of Mary with the pride of Lucifer, Amadeus describes God’s exaltation of the lowly handmaid to the place of honor that Lucifer had through pride forfeited long before. Standing “before the face of her Creator,” Mary enters into the intercession of her Son for those “who draw near to God through him” (Heb. 7:25). Even in heaven Mary continues to grow in grace, for “the more she beholds from on high the heart of the mighty king the more profoundly she knows, by the grace of divine pity, how to pity the unhappy and to help the afflicted” (71).

In her place next to the Son, Mary assumes a role indicated in the traditional interpretation of her name, “the star of the sea.” She is the rescuer of

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<sup>63</sup>Amadeus, *Homilia VIII: De Mariae virginis plenitudine, seu perfectione, gloria, et erga suos clients patrocinio*, PL 188.1342c –1346d; Perigo, 69–75.

those suffer spiritual shipwreck, the war maiden who “advances into the tyrant’s realms, attacks all the strongholds of demons, making hell tremble beneath her feet and the prince of death shrink back with dismay” (72). “At her bidding Behemoth spews forth [his] prey.” Constrained by her love for sinners, Mary liberates the enchained and imprisoned and gathers the wanderers. A lover of souls, she cares about both bodies and minds.<sup>64</sup> No one is beyond the reach of her love, as she cherishes the mentally ill, the possessed, the bitter, lonely, and sad, the financially indebted, even those “living in dishonor” (73). Nor does she neglect “those akin to her in purity of heart,” but rather embraces them with tender love and kindness (73). “Ardently fixed upon God to whom she clings and [with whom] she is one spirit,” she, as “a joyful, openhanded mother,” “gently comforts . . . the hearts of the elect and shares with them excellent gifts coming from the generosity of her Son,” (73–74).<sup>65</sup> Amadeus also attributes a variety of spiritual phenomena to Mary including miracles, visions, revelations,

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<sup>64</sup>“In the places dedicated to her holy memory she wins movement for the lame, sight for the blind, hearing for the deaf, speech for the dumb, curing every kind of weakness and affording countless gifts of healing” (73). Apparently Amadeus had at least heard of such sites in his day.

<sup>65</sup>Amadeus again specifies that the gifts Mary disperses do not originate in her but in her Son.

and consolations which, he says, “will constantly shine forth in the world until the world . . . finds its end, as dawns the Kingdom of which there is no end” (74).

That Amadeus attributes such charismatic activity to Mary may be offensive to Protestants for at least two reasons. First is the mere fact that it is Mary whom Amadeus credits for doing these mighty deeds, since, as some would argue, the Scriptures present Jesus as the one mighty in word and deed, not Mary (Luke 24:19; cf. Acts 7:22). Secondly, many heirs to the Reformation consider the “dead in Christ” as lame ducks, so to speak, safe in heaven, but powerless on earth (1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Cor. 5:8). Here, in contrast, Amadeus presents Mary upon entrance into heaven as wielding great spiritual power and influence on earth.

How can this gap in perception be bridged? First, let us deal with the issue of Mary versus Jesus. Does attributing certain works to Mary detract from Christ’s work? For Catholics, the answer is no because Mary only joins in the work of Christ. She only adds her prayers to Christ’s perfect mediation, just as her suffering at the Cross is a compassionate participation in, not a substitute for Christ’s passion. In short, the intent is not for Mary’s mediation to eclipse Christ’s. Admittedly, at times Catholics do, in zealous piety, overstate their case, some more so than others, and as Amadeus himself does on occasion, but his view at this point is representative of official Catholic doctrine: Christ the

incarnate Son is the Mediator, with Mary's role subordinate to and dependent on Christ's achievement.<sup>66</sup> Although this will not totally close the Protestant-Catholic divide on this issue, hopefully everyone can agree that the Catholic intent is not to substitute Mary for Christ, but rather to demonstrate the efficacy of participating in the sufferings of Christ.<sup>67</sup>

As to the second objection, the Protestant tendency to think that after death people cease to intercede on behalf of those still on earth, the answer may be found in the resurrected Christ himself. Because the One who sits on right hand of the Father "always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25), anyone who is "in Christ," whether on earth or in heaven, enters into that intercession. The martyrs crying aloud "how long?" from under the heavenly altar (Rev. 6:9–10) are a case in point. So it is for Mary. It is not unreasonable to think the mother of the Son should intercede on behalf of her "other offspring" on whom the dragon wages war (Rev. 12:17).

As to the spiritual works of mercy that Amadeus attributes to Mary, they vary little from those practiced by Pentecostals and Charismatics who are in the ministry of saving souls *and* healing bodies and minds, as well as delivering from

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<sup>66</sup>*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., §970.

<sup>67</sup>Matt. 10:22; 24:9; Acts 5:41; 9:16; 21:13; 2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24; 1 Pet. 4:13, 14, 16; Rev. 2:3.

evil forces. Like Amadeus' Mary, Pentecostals exercise charismatic gifts such as healing and expect signs and wonders to accompany their ministries (Acts 5:12), although they typically do not claim the level of sanctification that Amadeus attributes to Mary. In other words, there is little difference between what Amadeus claims for Mary and what present-day Charismatics and Pentecostals claim for themselves, except that Mary is in heaven and they are not. This indicates that Catholics and Pentecostals (and other Protestants) have essentially the same values when it comes to love for souls and the desire to help the sick and the needy. The point of difference has to do with influence, if any, those in heaven have on those on earth. Could it be that Protestants could learn something from Amadeus' eschatological Mary? Is it possible that the saints in heaven have more spiritual influence than Protestants generally acknowledge? Would it not be likely that those in the great cloud of witnesses who observe the spiritual battle being waged on earth are interceding accordingly (Heb. 12:1; Rev. 12, esp. v. 17)? In any case, it seems only logical that being in heaven would improve one's prayer life, not hinder it.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>While the discussion in the last four paragraphs may appear beside the point here, since I am attempting an ecumenical treatment of the subject, I feel some compulsion to attempt some apologetic for what may well be a barrier for some.

Having described Mary's ministry from heaven, Amadeus alludes to the last judgment at which the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs will witness to Mary's virtues. On that day Mary the bride, along with the virgins who hasten "to enter with her into the wedding," will be joined forever in "heavenly marriage to their true spouse" (74–75). Amadeus concludes with the prayer that he and his listeners will also "be deemed worthy" of the place that Christ has prepared for them "in the lovely country of heaven, in the bright resting places of paradise" (75).

### *Summary*

Amadeus' ostensible purpose in writing *Eight Homilies* is to describe how the Holy Spirit enabled Mary to grow in faith and holiness by bestowing on her one of the seven gifts of the Spirit (Isa. 11:2–3) at each stage of her life. However, the point he makes that is most relevant to this thesis is the intimate relationship between Mary and the Spirit. For Amadeus, the Holy Spirit is the spouse by whom Mary conceives. The Spirit's conjugal embrace is alternately in terms of dew, breath, kiss, and fire. While at least twice, Amadeus speaks of the Son as the bridegroom, and on another occasion, makes the point that each person of the Trinity is involved in the conception and incarnation, for him, the Spirit is the most prominent act-or not only by bringing about the conception but by

adorning Mary with the virtues and gifting her with the gifts. Perhaps the two most memorable of the images by which Amadeus depicts of the effect of the Spirit on Mary is the fire by which she burns and melts without being burnt (86) and the wine by which she is inebriated with the sober intoxication of resurrection joy (109–110).

## Mary and the Spirit According to Hildegard of Bingen

### *History*

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), often called the “sybil of the Rhine,”<sup>69</sup> is perhaps the prime example of a woman visionary mystic in the medieval era who, unlike the more systematic theologians of her time, does anything but neglect the Spirit,<sup>70</sup> and who, moreover, presents Mary in pneumatological as well as christological terms. Today she is perhaps best known for her music,<sup>71</sup> but her study of the medicinal value of plants also continues to be of interest. In acknowledgement of her ministry as a visionary, Benedictine abbess, composer,

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<sup>69</sup>On the origin of the title, “sibyl of the Rhine,” see Barbara Newman, “‘Sibyl of the Rhine’: Hildegard's Life and Times,” 1–29 in *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and Her World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 194n1.

<sup>70</sup>Elizabeth Dreyer, *Holy Presence, Holy Power: Rediscovering Medieval Metaphors for the Holy Spirit* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2007), 13.

<sup>71</sup>Hildegard of Bingen, *Symphonia*.



poet, preacher, and spiritual counselor, Benedict XVI proclaimed Hildegard a Doctor of the Church in 2012.

Having seen visions from a tender age, Hildegard had kept them secret, confiding only in one or two friends, until her early forties when in a vision she was instructed to “speak and write” of what she had seen and heard.<sup>72</sup> Though initially reluctant to do so, she began to dictate her visions to Volmar, a monk amanuensis.<sup>73</sup> After she wrote to Bernard of Clairvaux, seeking his approval, he endorsed her visions and influenced Pope Eugenius III to do the same, giving her a platform she would not have otherwise had as a woman of that time.

Acutely aware of the extraordinary nature of her status as a woman in leadership in the twelfth century, Hildegard spoke deprecatingly of the

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<sup>72</sup>Hildegard of Bingen, *The Book of the Rewards of Life = Liber vitae meritorum*, trans. Bruce Hozeski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 9–10.

<sup>73</sup>The English translation of the title of her first work, *Scito via domine*, generally shortened to *Scivias*, is *Know the Ways of the Lord* (1141–1151). *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias*, trans. Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop, intro. Barbara Newman, pref. Carolyn Bynum, Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1990). Other works besides *Scivias* and *Symphonia* (1158) are: *Liber vitae meritorum* = *Book of the Rewards [Merits] of Life* (1163) and *De operatione Dei* = *Book of Divine Works* (1173 or 1174). Her medicinal works include *Physica* = *Natural History*, or *Book of Simple Medicine*, and *Causae et curae* = *Causes and Cures*, or *Book of Compound Medicine* (1151–1158). She also engaged in voluminous correspondence. *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen*, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, 2004).

weakness<sup>74</sup> of her own gender, calling attention to her personal lack of formal education and ill health. Yet she also boldly decried her time as an “effeminate age,” since she saw easy living as having weakened the virility, i.e., moral courage, of the clergy of her time.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, since “God’s power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9), Hildegard saw weakness as a potential “sign and prelude of divine empowerment,” which she believed was true in her own case.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>“To my own inner soul I seem as filthy ashes of ashes and transitory dust, trembling like a feather in the dark.” *Scivias* 3.2, p. 310.

<sup>75</sup>Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard’s Theology of the Feminine* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998), 27–29, 34–36. “O you who are wretched earth and, as a woman, untaught in all learning of earthly teachers and unable to read literature with philosophical understanding, you are nonetheless touched by My light, which kindles in you an inner fire like a burning sun; cry out and relate and write these My mysteries that you see and hear in mystical visions. So do not be timid, but say those things you understand in the Spirit as I speak them through you; so that those who . . . in their perversity refuse to speak openly of the justice they know, unwilling to abstain from the evil desires that cling to them like their masters and make them . . . blush to speak the truth, may be ashamed. Therefore, O diffident mind, who are taught inwardly by mystical inspiration, though because of Eve’s transgression you are trodden on by the masculine sex, speak of that fiery work this sure vision has shown you.” *Scivias* 2.1, p. 150.

<sup>76</sup>Newman, *Sister of Wisdom*, 36; cf. Newman, “Divine Power Made Perfect in Weakness: St Hildegard on the Frail Sex,” in *Medieval Religious Women*, vol. 2, *Peaceweavers*, ed. L. Thomas Shank, 103–122 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1987).

Hildegard considered her visions and *symphonia* to be inspired of the Spirit as did her associates.<sup>77</sup> In the illuminated manuscripts of her writings are two images, both strikingly reminiscent of Pentecost, which depict Hildegard receiving divine inspiration as streams of fire flowing from heaven to the top of her head.<sup>78</sup> Hildegard clearly understood Pentecost as the basis of her inspiration, seeing herself as bathed in the fire of the Holy Spirit as were the first apostles:<sup>79</sup>

But after the Son of God had ascended to the Father, through the Son and according to His promise the Holy Spirit descended. *For now the whole earth was full of heavenly dew* because the Bread of Heaven had been in it. . . . Because the true Word had become incarnate, the Holy Spirit came openly in tongues of fire; for the Son, Who converted the world to the truth by His preaching, was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And, because the apostles had been taught by the Son, *the Holy Spirit bathed them in Its fire*, so that with their souls and bodies, they spoke in many tongues. . . .

And the Holy Spirit took their human fear from them . . . so ardently and so quickly that they became firm and not soft, and dead to all adversity that could befall them. And then they remembered with perfect understanding all the things they had heard and received from Christ . . . as if they had learned them from Him in that very hour.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Dreyer, *Holy Presence*, 82–83.

<sup>78</sup>Dreyer describes these images in detail in *Holy Presence*, 83–84.

<sup>79</sup>Bynum, "Preface," *Scivias*, 6.

<sup>80</sup>*Scivias* 3.7.7, p. 415 (my emphasis).

*Theology*

Since Hildegard frequently refers to the Holy Spirit in metaphorical terms rather than by name, it is important to know what these metaphors are, in order to understand what she is saying about the Spirit in relation to Mary. Elizabeth Dreyer is helpful here as she has identified several of these metaphors, including greening, fire and warmth, timbrel player, understanding, and prophetic power.<sup>81</sup> The metaphors for the Spirit that Hildegard uses most in speaking of Mary are greening, warmth, and dew.

Hildegard's sequence on the Holy Spirit, *O ignis Spiritus Paracliti*, contains several of the metaphors that Dreyer mentions and more, and associates them with the operations of the Spirit.<sup>82</sup> The first two strophes of the sequence begin by an apostrophe to the Spirit using the metaphors of fire and life. These are followed by three functions of the Spirit: giving life, anointing (healing) those mortally wounded, and cleansing their wounds. Hildegard's three iterations of

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<sup>81</sup>Dreyer, *Holy Presence*, 80–98.

<sup>82</sup>Trans. by Barbara Newman in "Poet: 'Where the Living Majesty Utters Mysteries,'" in *Voice of the Living Light*, 186–188. See also *Symphonia* 28, pp. 148–151.

“Holy are you,” are reminiscent of the “Holy, holy, holy” of the *Sanctus*, which immediately precedes the epiclesis in the Roman rite:<sup>83</sup>

O fire of the Spirit, the Comforter,  
life of the life of all creation,  
Holy are You, giving life to the forms.

Holy are You, anointing  
the mortally broken;  
Holy are You, cleansing  
the fetid wounds.<sup>84</sup>

In the next three strophes, Hildegard again apostrophizes the Spirit several times, each time using a different metaphor or set of metaphors and associating each with a characteristic or function of the Spirit. Breath is associated with the Spirit’s holiness; fire with love; savor, balm, and fragrance with virtue. The clear fountain is associated with God who, shepherd-like, seeks and gathers the lost; the breastplate, or robe, of life with the hope of communal unity; the belt of truth with salvation of the blessed, protection of the imprisoned, and liberation of the fettered.

O breath of sanctity,  
O fire of charity,  
O sweet savor in the breast

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<sup>83</sup>“Liturgy of the Eucharist,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Web site. Online: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/index.cfm>. Accessed January 27, 2016. Rev. 4:8.

<sup>84</sup>The metaphor of the Spirit as salve or ointment poured into broken and fetid wounds is repeated in *O ignee Spiritus*, *Symphonia* 27, p. 147. Cf. *Spiritus sanctus vivificans vita*, *Symphonia* 24, p. 141.

and balm flooding hearts  
with the fragrance of virtues:

O limpid fountain,  
in which we can see  
how God gathers the strays  
and seeks out the lost:  
O breastplate of life  
and hope of the integral body,

O sword-belt of honor:  
save the blessed!  
Guard those the foe holds  
Imprisoned,  
Free those in fetters  
Whom divine forces wishes to save.

Next, Hildegard refers to the Spirit as a current of power.<sup>85</sup> She sees the Spirit as relating to the entire cosmos as baptizer, unifier, sustainer, and creator/life-giver. In permeating everything, the Spirit is baptizer; in binding people together, the Spirit is unifier; in orchestrating the cycle of nature, causing the watering and greening of everything, the Spirit is sustainer; as the one who brooded over the waters to make them fruitful and who breathed into Adam and Eve to make them living spirits, the Spirit is creator/life-giver.

O current of power permeating all—in the heights,  
upon the earth,  
and in all deep:  
you bind and gather all people together.  
From you clouds overflow, winds

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<sup>85</sup>Barbara Newman interprets this current of power as the *anima mundi*, i.e. World Soul. "Living Majesty," 187.

take wing, stones store up moisture,  
waters well forth in streams—and  
earth swells with living green.

When by his Word God  
fashioned the cosmos—  
founded sky and earth and sea—  
You, Spirit,  
Brooded over the waters,  
Unfolded your deity.  
You make waters  
fruitful to give  
life to creatures:  
You breathe on men  
to make mortals  
living spirits.

In the final strophe, Hildegard presents the Spirit as Wisdom and Song. The learned, i.e., those receptive to the Spirit, are rendered joyful by the Spirit's breathing into them ceaseless teaching. The result is praise to the Song whose presence brings delight, hope, honor, and enlightenment.

You are ever teaching the learned,  
made joyful by the breath  
of Wisdom.  
Praise then be yours!  
You are the song of praise,<sup>86</sup>  
the delight of life,

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<sup>86</sup>Hildegard refers to music as a metaphor for the Spirit in her hymn *O ignee Spiritus*: "You who sound the timbrel and the lyre. Your music sets our minds ablaze!" *Symphonia* 27, p. 143.

a hope and a potent honor  
granting *garlands of light*.

Fire is particularly prominent as a metaphor for the Spirit in Hildegard's descriptions of the Trinity and in her explanation of the relation of the Spirit to the humanity of the incarnate Son and to humanity in general. Hildegard envisions the Trinity in several ways. In one vision, the Father is a bright light, the Son a sapphire-colored human figure, and the Spirit fire.<sup>87</sup> When the Son becomes incarnate in time, his humanity is "all blazing with a gentle glowing fire," an image reminiscent of the burning bush. This fire is different than natural fire as it is "without any flaw of aridity, mortality or darkness." That is, it brings the freshness of moisture, life, and light rather than desiccation, death, and darkness.

Hildegard gives a vivid picture of the unity of the Trinity in terms of a bath of glowing fire. When the Son is incarnated, he fills the world with a bright light which "bathes the whole of the glowing fire, and the glowing fire bathes the bright light; and the bright light and the glowing fire pour over the whole human figure, so that the three are one light in one power of potential."<sup>88</sup> In this way, Hildegard visualizes the inseparability of the trinitarian Persons; none exists

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<sup>87</sup>*Scivias* 2.2.2, p. 161.

<sup>88</sup>*Scivias* 2.2.2, p. 161.



apart from the other. She speaks of the way the Spirit relates to all human persons in the same way that she speaks of the Spirit's relation to the humanity of the Son: by bathing or kindling their hearts with fire. From this, we can infer that she envisioned the same of Mary.

Hildegard also describes the Trinity as light (the Father), power (the Son), and heat (the Holy Spirit). In saying that the Holy Spirit "burns ardently in the minds of the faithful,"<sup>89</sup> Hildegard alludes to the illumination of the mind that she herself experienced by the Spirit. Elsewhere, she describes the Trinity as the oneness of brightness (the Father) with its radiance (the Son) and with the fire of that radiance (the Spirit).<sup>90</sup> The Holy Spirit is the inextinguishable fire that unites and gives life. Hildegard also explains the Trinity as sound, word, and breath: "The Son is in the Father the same way that a word is in a sound, and the Holy Spirit is in each, just as breath is found both in sound and in word."<sup>91</sup>

In considering how Hildegard understands Mary in relation to the Spirit, it should be borne in mind that although she thinks of Mary pneumatologically,

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<sup>89</sup>*Scivias* 2.2.6, p. 163.

<sup>90</sup>Letter 31r (response to Eberhard, bishop of Bamberg), *Letters of Hildegard* 1:97.

<sup>91</sup>*Letters*, letter 31r, p. 97.

her emphasis is still christological.<sup>92</sup> She sees Mary in relation to her Son primarily in terms of the incarnation, which she calls “the mystery of the shining dawn.”<sup>93</sup> For her, the mystery of the incarnate Son is inseparable from that of his mother. In Hildegard’s vision of Christ’s humanity as the “shadowed pillar” and the radiance of God, she envisions as well “*another radiance [that] shines forth like dawn, with a deep purple light glowing in it, which is a mystical manifestation of the mystery of the incarnate Son of God.*”<sup>94</sup> The “beautiful dawn” is none other than Mary whose “Son shed His purple blood, which glowed with the light of salvation.”<sup>95</sup> Mary is the dawn of the Sun of which her Son is the full orb. “On her breast shines a red glow like the dawn . . . And you hear a sound of all kinds of music singing about her, ‘Like the dawn, greatly sparkling.’”<sup>96</sup> The dawn is Hildegard’s chosen imagery for Mary’s virginity, which “with the most ardent devotion in the hearts of the faithful . . . all believers should join with their whole wills in celebrating.”<sup>97</sup> In considering this vision of Mary as the dawn and her

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<sup>92</sup>Dreyer, *Divine Presence*, 80.

<sup>93</sup>*Scivias* 2.6.11, p. 243.

<sup>94</sup>*Scivias* 3.8.10–12, pp. 434–435 (original emphasis).

<sup>95</sup>*Scivias* 3.8.12, pp. 435, 469.

<sup>96</sup>*Scivias* 2.3, p. 169.

<sup>97</sup>*Scivias* 2.3.9, p. 172.

Son as the sun, bearing in mind that Hildegard considers music a metaphor for the Spirit, the pneumatological implication is apparent. Music accompanies the dawn because Mary conceives by the Spirit.

Another image Hildegard has of Mary is that of a branch or shoot emerging from the fallen earth, “not thorny . . . or knotted with worldly desires, but straight, unconnected with carnal lusts,” arising “from the root of Jesse, who was the foundation of the royal race from which the stainless mother had her origin.”<sup>98</sup> When “from the root of that branch arose the sweet fragrance of the Virgin’s intact fecundity . . . the Holy Spirit inundated it so that the tender flower was born from her.” The flower born of Mary the branch is the Son of God, who arises, “untouched by unworthy sin,” God’s Spirit resting upon him, to ascend on high, lifting up with him the human race.<sup>99</sup> In the midst of this image of the incarnation as the branch (Mary) and the flower (Christ), the Holy Spirit can be discerned as the source of the life of the branch that erupts from a fallen earth and a dry root. It is by the operation of the Spirit that the branch is pure and fecund, resulting in the blossoming of the flower.

In her *symphonia* that specifically honor Mary, Hildegard continues to describe the association between the Spirit and Mary metaphorically. In *Ave*

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<sup>98</sup>*Scivias* 3.8.15, p. 437.

<sup>99</sup>*Scivias* 3.8.15, p. 437.

*Maria*, Mary rebuilds the house of life destroyed by Eve by conceiving the Son of heaven by the breath of the Spirit.<sup>100</sup> In *O clarissima mater*, Mary as “O most radiant mother / of sacred healing,” is associated with the healing anointing of the Spirit. “You poured / ointment / through your holy Son / on the sobbing wounds that Eve built.”<sup>101</sup> In *O frondens virga*, Mary is the leafy branch who rejoices at dawn, lifting up the weak and sinful.<sup>102</sup> The leafy branch evokes the green, life-giving freshness of the Spirit; the rejoicing at dawn evokes Mary’s joy at the incarnation; the lifting up of the frail and those bound by sin evokes the Spirit who is released after the Ascension to strengthen the weak and free the captive.

In *O quam magnum miraculum*, Hildegard marvels at the great wonder of humility ascending above all when the king condescends to enter into a submissive feminine form (a woman), such that the same form from which malice flowed (Eve) now exudes the sweetest fragrance of virtue (Mary),

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<sup>100</sup>*Symphonia* 8, pp. 110–111.

<sup>101</sup>*Symphonia* 9, pp. 112–113.

<sup>102</sup>*Symphonia* 15, pp. 120–121.

beautifying heaven more than having disordered earth.<sup>103</sup> The Spirit is the distiller of the sweet fragrance of Mary's virtue and humility.

In *Ave generosa*, the high-born maid, the matrix of sanctity, is flooded by a heavenly infusion, bringing about the incarnation.<sup>104</sup> She is the glistening white lily whose beauty and radiant chastity so delights God that "he set[s] the embrace of his warmth" in her until she becomes the mother of his Son. As she carries God's Son within her, the celestial harmony (*symphonia*) resounds in her. Hildegard envisions the heavenly infusion as dew (the Spirit) flooding the grass (Mary) with green (life), making her the God-bearer. In this hymn, the operation of the Spirit in Mary is the source of her sanctity and beauty and the heavenly infusion—embrace of warmth—that brings about the incarnation.

In *O viridissima virga*, Hildegard hails Mary as the greenest branch.<sup>105</sup> By the warmth of the sun, the branch blossoms, bringing forth a beautiful flower (Christ), distilling fragrance from the dry spices and bringing them to full verdure. The heavens drop dew on the grass making the whole earth glad because Mary's womb (the dew-saturated grass) brings forth wheat (Christ) in which the birds nest and from which a joyful banquet (the Eucharist) is prepared

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<sup>103</sup>*Symphonia* 16, pp. 120–121.

<sup>104</sup>*Symphonia* 17, pp. 122–123, 125.

<sup>105</sup>*Symphonia* 19, pp. 126–127, 129.

for humanity. Here the Spirit is evoked in the greenness of the branch, the warmth of the sun, the distilled fragrance, the verdure of the dried spices, the moisture of the dew, and the joy that fills both the mother and the whole earth.

The metaphors of the Spirit appear in other Marian *symphonia* as well. In *O splendidissima gemma*, Mary is the translucent jewel to whom the Father speaks his Word a second time (the first time being the original creation), only this time the Word becoming incarnate in Mary, making her the matrix of light, through whom “he breathed forth all that is good.”<sup>106</sup> Pneumatologically speaking, Hildegard is saying that by breathing into Mary, thus causing the Word to become incarnate in her, the Spirit breathes spiritual life into the new creation.

In both *O virga ac diadema*<sup>107</sup> and *O tu suavissima virga*<sup>108</sup> Hildegard returns to her recurrent theme of Mary as a branch from which blooms a flower. In *O tu suavissima virga*, she evokes the Spirit not only in the leafing of the branch but also in the illumination of the Virgin’s mind by which the incarnation takes place. In *O quam preciosa*, Mary’s womb is suffused with the warmth (of the Spirit).<sup>109</sup> In *O tu illustra*, Mary is suffused by the Word, whom the Spirit breathes

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<sup>106</sup>*Symphonia* 10, pp. 114–115. *Scivias* 3.13.1.

<sup>107</sup>*Symphonia* 19, pp. 128–131.

<sup>108</sup>*Symphonia* 19, pp. 132–133. *Scivias* 3.13. 1.

<sup>109</sup>*Symphonia* 22, pp. 134–135.

into her.<sup>110</sup> By the same breath Mary is preserved from Eve's contagion, thereby allowing the Son of God to blossom within her. As the Word is brought to birth from her, her integrity (virginity) is bound by the Spirit to the heart of divinity.

### *Summary*

Hildegard's most repeated pneumatological-Marian metaphor is the branch (*virga*) whose greenness blossoms by the Spirit into the flower of God's Son. But beyond that, Hildegard associates Mary with virtually all of her metaphors of the Spirit: fire and warmth, dew/moisture,<sup>111</sup> salve or ointment, greenness (*viriditas*),<sup>112</sup> fragrance, and music. With these images are the operations by which the Spirit works in and through Mary: life-giving, rejoicing, healing, cleansing, liberating, sanctifying, freshening, and illuminating, as well as producing such virtues<sup>113</sup> as humility and holiness.

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<sup>110</sup>*Symphonia* 23, pp. 136–137.

<sup>111</sup>"The Holy Spirit, Who is a living fountain, suffused her [Mary] with all His sweet moisture, just as dew falls upon the grass." "A Sermon on the Perverse Doctrine of the Heretics," letter 381, *Letters of Hildegard* 3:172.

<sup>112</sup>Dryer, *Holy Presence*, 85–86.

<sup>113</sup>"The sweetness of the Holy Spirit is boundless and swift to encompass all creatures in grace, and no corruption can take away the fullness of its just integrity. Its path is a torrent, and *streams of sanctity flow* from it in its bright power, with never a stain of dirt in them; for the Holy Spirit Itself is *a burning and shining serenity*, which cannot be nullified, and which *enkindles ardent virtue* so as

## Conclusions

The writings of Hugh, Amadeus, and Hildegard in the twelfth century illustrate that in the High Middle Ages as in earlier centuries, Mary is understood pneumatologically as well as christologically. While again the primary emphasis remains christological, these theologians do not forget the crucial role of the Spirit in the incarnation and in the sanctification and beautification of Mary's life. Hugh's portrays Mary as a model of a virginal life, i.e., one consecrated to God. Though her virginity is the sign of this consecration, it is the Spirit who consecrates her by reposing on her, filling her with grace, and beautifying her with the virtues.

Amadeus focuses on Mary as God's exquisitely prepared sanctuary for the indwelling of her Son. Even after Christ's birth, Mary continues to grow in holiness through each stage of her life through the Spirit's gifts. Amadeus envisions Mary's conception of Christ as the result of a chain reaction, so to speak, of the Spirit's fire, dew, and anointing that makes her fruitful; the Spirit's conjugal embrace is a breath and a kiss.

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to put all darkness to flight." *Scivias* 2.4.2, p. 190 (my emphasis). The Spirit here is both a flowing torrent and a glowing fire that enkindles serenity and ardent virtue. Though not speaking directly of the Spirit in relation to Mary, Hildegard explains how the Spirit operates in all humanity, which includes Mary.



Hildegard's metaphors for the Spirit, which she associates with the various operations of the Spirit in Mary's life, are even more pluriform than those of Amadeus. For Hildegard, Mary cooperates in the life-giving work of the Spirit by giving birth to her Son, but, like Hugh, she also sees Mary as an exemplar of life in the Spirit, or, as she would put it, "greening" life, the kind of life that she herself lived.

## Chapter 7

## Mary and the Spirit in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

For modern theologians on Mary and the Spirit, I have chosen Matthias Scheeben, Sergius Bulgakov, and Heribert Mühlen. Their Mariologies all place strong emphasis on the Spirit. I chose them both for their spirituality, particularly their integration of faith into the theological task, and for their importance.

Scheeben's reputation as a neo-Scholastic theologian is unparalleled in the nineteenth century; and the pneumatological aspects of his Mariology have been the catalyst of considerable study in the twentieth century and beyond. Scheeben is known especially for his synthesis of the Marian titles Spouse of the Holy Spirit and Mother of God to formulate the concept of bridal motherhood as Mary's distinguishing characteristic. In so doing he suggests both a substantial union of Mary with the Son and a moral union with the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> The full significance of Scheeben's proposal is beyond the scope of the present thesis to explore, but, suffice it to say, it goes beyond what some consider the impersonal concept of sanctifying grace to a more personal relation to the Spirit. This has opened the door to a more personal way for Catholics to understand the Spirit and how the Spirit relates to humanity in general and Mary in particular.

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<sup>1</sup>R. Jared Staudt, "Substantial Union with God in Matthias Scheeben," *Nova et Vetera* (Eng. ed.), 11, no. 2 (2013): 524–531.

Mühlen's overall significance has less to do with his Mariology than his pneumatology, but his critique of Scheeben, his contribution to pneumatology, and the influence he exercised at the Second Vatican Council make him an important part of the conversation of how to present Mary in an ecumenically acceptable way. Bulgakov also fits into the discussion well since he chose Scheeben as his primary conversation partner in his part of his Marian work. Together these theologians illustrate the on-going effort of theologians over the centuries to understand Mary pneumatologically as well as christologically.

In this chapter we look at the pneumatological aspects of Scheeben's Mariology, and then at how Bulgakov attempts to correct Scheeben from an Orthodox perspective. Finally, we look briefly at Mühlen's critique of Scheeben and his own endeavor to retrieve pneumatology in anticipation of a pneumatological Mary.

## The Spirit and Mary according to Scheeben

### *History and Hermeneutic*

Matthias Scheeben (1835–1888), often fêted as the nineteenth century's premier Catholic theologian,<sup>2</sup> is known for his reflections on Mary, found

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<sup>2</sup>Cyril Vollert, "Matthias Joseph Scheeben and the Revival of Theology," *Theological Studies* 6, no. 4 (1945): 453–488. Yves Congar called him "*par excellence*

primarily in his *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*.<sup>3</sup> Like the theologians of the following century's *ressourcement* movement, he immersed himself in biblical and patristic studies in the endeavor to bridge the gap between theological speculation and faith. For Scheeben, reason is the handmaid of faith: the "disposing of reason in favor of a truth rests not so much upon the intelligibility of the truth as upon the goodness and beauty of its content."<sup>4</sup>

His attempt to marry reason and faith is particularly evident in his Marian reflections.<sup>5</sup> For him, "the yoking of reason with faith in the theological sphere has its fairest and most sublime ideal in the espousals of the . . . Virgin of virgins,

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the theologian of grace." *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith, 3 vols. (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 2.87.

<sup>3</sup>Matthias Scheeben, *Handbuch der Katholischen Dogmatik*, 4 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1873–1903). I am using the English translation of the section on Mary, *Mariology*, trans. Theodore Geukers, 2 vols. (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1946), which is based on the Flemish translation, *Systematische Mariologie*, trans. H. van Waes (Brussel: Standaard-Boekhandel, 1938). The parenthetical citations in this section refer to *Mariology*.

<sup>4</sup>Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, trans. Cyril Vollert (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1946), 764. Original German ed. (1865), posthumous 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1898).

<sup>5</sup>John Murray, "The Root of Faith: The Doctrine of M. J. Scheeben," *Theological Studies* 9, no. 1 (1948): 20–46.

with the Holy Spirit, whereby she became the mother of Him who is personal Wisdom incarnate.”<sup>6</sup>

### *Theology*

In *Mariology*, the English translation of the Marian portion of his *Handbuch*, Scheeben reflects on Mary primarily in terms of the supernatural,<sup>7</sup> deliberately contrasting his approach to that of Protestants who, he says, tend to look at her only in natural terms rather than “as a person who has the closest, mutually spiritual relations with Christ” (I.5). He sees Mary’s relation to her Son and to the Holy Spirit as elevating her above nature, i.e., supernatural. As the first Eve was created to be Adam’s helper in the natural order, so Mary, the New Eve, is created to be the Second Adam’s helper in the supernatural realm (I.13).

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<sup>6</sup>*The Mysteries of Christianity*, 785. “As the summons to become the Mother of the God-man involved the highest dignity for Mary, and raised her from a humble maid to be the Queen of all creation, thus also there is no greater distinction for reason than its vocation to cooperation with faith in the generation of theological knowledge, whereby it is elevated from its native lowliness to the highest nobility” (786).

<sup>7</sup>“My cherished aim is to bring out the supernatural character of the Christian economy of salvation in its full sublimity, beauty, and riches. The main task of our time, it seems to me, consists in propounding and emphasizing the supernatural quality of Christianity.” *Nature and Grace* (St. Louis: Herder, 1954), xvii. Richard Parry, “A Chaste Marriage: Matthias Scheeben’s (Western) Doctrine of Deification” in *A Man of the Church: Honoring the Theology, Life, and Witness of Ralph Del Colle*, ed. Michel Barnes (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2012), 186 of 185–205.

Scheeben builds his Marian thought on a phrase from an early form of the Apostles' Creed, "born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary" (I.8), which he interprets as the two forming the "one principle of the human birth of Christ" (I.110). As Mühlen explains, Scheeben does not intend to suggest a parity of roles here since, although "the Spirit's divine action and Mary's motherly action appear next to and within each other," Mary as the "acting principle of Christ's humanity" is "subordinate to the Holy Spirit and influenced by him."<sup>8</sup>

Scheeben's signature mariological principle is "bridal motherhood," by which he synthesizes Mary's virginal espousal to Christ and her motherhood.<sup>9</sup> Her distinctive personal characteristic (*Personalcharakter*), translated by Geukers as Mary's distinguishing mark (I.187), is this bridal motherhood, which God initiates unilaterally. Rather than the mother assuming the Logos as her Son, the Logos assumes Mary as his mother, uniting her to himself. Jesus' relationship to Mary was different than that of other sons to their mothers in that it was a *filiatio dignativa*, "a benevolent condescension of the Son of God to His human mother

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<sup>8</sup>Mühlen, "Der 'Personalcharakter' Mariens nach M. J. Scheeben: Zur Frage nach dem Grundprinzip der Mariologie" [Mary's "Distinguishing Mark" According to M. J. Scheeben: On the Question of the Fundamental Principle of Mary], *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 17 (1954): 191–214.

<sup>9</sup>See ch. 6, 271n66.

... an elevation, full of grace, of the mother to the connection with the Son of God" (I:156). If Scheeben is right here, the difference between Mary and anyone else with a supernatural relation with God is that Mary is born with this relation intact; it is not something she later acquires but rather a part of who she is.<sup>10</sup>

Prenatal adoption of the mother by the Child is a way to conceptualize the Son's assuming Mary as his mother. The Logos adopts her before she is born, so that from the first moment of her existence she lives in relation to him by the Spirit.

Though Scheeben presents his concept of bridal motherhood first in christological terms, he also does so in pneumatological terms, since, as one who holds to the *filioque*, Scheeben sees the Spirit as proceeding from the Logos even in Mary's womb. "Taken possession of" by the Logos at the conception, Mary is "imbued with a divine principle," namely the Holy Spirit. She "forms one person with the Holy Ghost who informs and animates her, just as the human nature of Christ forms one person with the Logos" (I.212).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Mühlen describes Scheeben's "distinguishing mark of Mary" in terms of a substantial (transcendental) relation: "The person of Mary is characterized by a substantial relation to the person of the Logos, which is inseparably united to her concrete existence. Through this she becomes a supernatural kind of person." "Der 'Personalcharakter' Mariens," 197.

<sup>11</sup>Yves Congar points out that one of the drawbacks of Scheeben's theology is his tendency to take it to "extreme conclusions or at least extreme formulations." *I Believe*, 1:155. Scheeben typically qualifies such statements although not always in the immediate context in which he makes them. That

For Scheeben, "Mary is as much anointed and made the Mother of God as the flesh, taken from her, is made the flesh of God, for the Logos is so taken up in her that she herself is taken up in Him in an analogous way" (I.162). In other words, Mary is not left personally untouched by the incarnation; not only does the event produce the Child but Mary herself is forever changed, even as any woman is permanently changed by natural motherhood, only in an unfathomably greater way.<sup>12</sup> Although Scheeben does not use deification language per se here, his statement recalls Athanasius' "happy exchange": "God became man so that we might become God."<sup>13</sup> A human-divine exchange occurs affecting both. In partaking of his mother's humanity, the Logos becomes the God-man, while Mary becomes the Spirit-anointed Mother of God.

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"Mary forms one person with the Holy Spirit" is an instance of this tendency, which he later mitigates by speaking of Mary being "one moral person" with the Spirit (1:181).

<sup>12</sup>"Since natural motherhood in itself works such a wonderful change in a mother, that all her thoughts and desires are given a new direction and her the [sic] life is, so to say, bound up in that of the child, this divine motherhood, in which nature and grace unite, in which the Son is at the same time Bridegroom, Father, and Creator of His Mother, in which, therefore, all ties of the strongest love, natural and divine, bind Mary to God, this divine motherhood, we repeat, should all the more change Mary's whole interior life, so that she, in a still higher sense than the Apostle, can say: 'I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me'" (2:137).

<sup>13</sup>*De incarnatione* 54; PG 25, 192B. Later Scheeben ties the endowment of grace and sanctification with deification (*Mariology*, 1:248).



In discussing the idea of Mary's anointing, Scheeben speaks in terms of grace rather than Spirit: "the grace of the motherhood makes Mary a person of supernatural nature or order, in the same way as Christ is constituted a truly divine person through the grace of the union" (I.204). He differentiates the grace given to Mary from that given to other creatures. Hers is "not purely an accidental relation or a *relation rationis*," but rather a "substantial grace" due to her being "assumed into the person of the Logos as His bride in such a way that she exists only in and through her relation to the divine person of her Son" (I.204–205). Through the grace of this association with a divine person, she is made "heavenly and spiritual" (I.205–206).

In addition, the Spirit, who is the principle of Mary's indwelling, is also the principle of her sanctification: "Since this principle is the divine Spirit . . . the subject also in which He dwells becomes a completely holy being, an *ens sacrum et sanctum* [sacred and holy being]" (I.206). Since the distinguishing mark of Mary's person is her union with the Spirit, "He must be thought of as the principle of her sanctity in an analogous way as He is the principle of the sanctity of the Church" (I. 211).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Although Scheeben refrains from calling Mary an *actual* incarnation of the Holy Spirit, he does say that she "is as a *kind* of incarnation of the Holy Ghost," because the Spirit "forms with her one undivided whole and is embraced in her composition as her soul" (1:525–526, emphasis added). He suggests as

Scheeben ties the anointing of Christ with the Logos to the indwelling of Mary by the Logos via the Spirit by referring to intra-trinitarian procession: “Christ is really and immediately anointed in the Logos—the source of the Holy Ghost—and hence is Himself the principle of the Holy Ghost,” while Mary, like “other created persons endowed with grace,” has “only a substantial principle of holiness which proceeds from the Logos and dwells in her through grace” (I.213).<sup>15</sup> The “essential difference” in Scheeben’s comparison of Christ’s anointing and Mary’s is that Christ, the “Anointed of God,” is divinity and anointed humanity in one person, while Mary, the one “endowed with the highest fullness of grace,” is a creature in moral union with the Spirit. The Logos is the fullness—the anointing itself, the oil, the light—while Mary is the one filled—the dwelling, sanctuary, spiritual vessel (*vas spirituale*). She is who she is only “by the grace of God, and not of herself” (I.207). “By virtue of His constitutive anointing with the Logos,” Christ is “the Son of God, brought forth

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sealed by the Spirit, her personality mirrors that of the Spirit: “Just as the Holy Ghost, owing to His origin from the divine love is also the specific bearer and representative of the sweetness and vivifying heart of that divine love, the Mother of God likewise bears this characteristic in her own degree” (1:180).

<sup>15</sup>Scheeben, *A Manual of Catholic Theology Based on Scheeben’s “Dogmatik,”* trans. Joseph Wilhelm and Thomas Scannell, 2 vols. (London: Kehan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1901), §213, 2:209. Abridged ET of *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*. 4 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1873–1887).

from all eternity in the bosom of God as fruit of His being, born into the world in time,” whereas she who is full of grace is “brought forth by God only as a child of eternal election, as fruit of His love and as bride of His Son” (I.208).

Although the Holy Spirit so fills Mary’s life that her person is defined by that filling (*kecharitōmenē*), her humanity is not annihilated.<sup>16</sup> Human paternity is excluded from the incarnation, but human maternity is not, indicating that Mary’s motherhood is not merely an incidental (or accidental, to use the Scholastic term) component but rather an integral feature of God’s eternal plan (I.61). For Scheeben, “Mary is a principle of Christ’s humanity, or of Christ Himself according to His humanity—a principle subservient to the Holy Ghost, influenced by Him, and working in union with Him” (I.62). “Significantly,” Scheeben continues, “the Holy Ghost appears here not simply as exercising an influence upon the virgin. He Himself is infused into her as the substantial bearer or vehicle of the forming power radiating from the heavenly Father” (I.72–73).<sup>17</sup> The supernatural influence of the Spirit on Mary not only effects Christ’s conception but affects every stage of her motherhood:

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<sup>16</sup>“The entire being of the soul is altered in its deepest recesses and in all its ramifications to the very last, not by annihilation but by exaltation and transfiguration . . . [and] a participation in the essence of Him to whom the higher nature properly belongs.” Scheeben, *Nature and Grace*, 30.

<sup>17</sup>Scheeben also calls Mary the bearer of the Spirit (1:217; 2:185, 188).

Since the foundation and completion of the birth of Christ was effected under the supernatural influence of the Holy Ghost, so also we must take for granted that the virginal mother came under the special influence of the Holy Ghost during the time of *gestatio prolis in utero* [gestation of the child in the womb]. For she was active as His special instrument in the very care and development of the fruit formed by her. In the whole period of her maternal activity, which was originally started by the Holy Ghost, Mary was also continually guided and supported by Him (I.109).

By the influence of the Spirit, the birth itself, though natural in one sense, was supernatural in another, for during it Mary was miraculously spared “the *dolores* or *sordes* [pain or uncleanness] of natural motherhood” (I.109).<sup>18</sup> Following the birth, Christ remains in Mary, his relationship with her retaining “the same reality and closeness as before the birth” (I.166), the implication being that Christ remains in her by the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:16–17). Mary’s “maternal services” beginning with her “initial consent” at the Annunciation, her “fervent prayers” before and after the conception, her “offering of Jesus in the Temple and on the Cross, the complete union of her will with His in the work of Redemption, place Mary by the side of her Son as a deaconess by the side of the sacrificing priest.”<sup>19</sup> Although insisting that Mary has a substantial part in redemption, Scheeben also insists that her role is a subordinate, secondary one (I.227): “Mary, by virtue of

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<sup>18</sup>Traditionally Catholics have held that since Mary was graciously preserved from incurring any stain of original sin, she would also have been spared the pain of childbirth, which was its consequence. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books, 1974), 205–206.

<sup>19</sup>*Manual*, §216, 2:223.

the divine motherhood through which she brought forth Christ, in Him gives the principle of grace to the world" (I.230). Further, anything she does is not by her own power but by "the peculiar dignity and power . . . derived from the Holy Ghost, Who acts in and through her in a union by grace."<sup>20</sup> Despite this secondary role, Scheeben declares that Mary's "diaconate contains a higher dignity and a closer union with [Christ] than does the representative priesthood" (II.235). In fact, for him, "the maternity of Mary is the highest ministry to which a creature can be elevated by God."<sup>21</sup>

This infusion of the Holy Spirit into Mary, Scheeben asserts, is best understood as occurring prior to Christ's conception, at her own creation, when she is formed "*costa Verbi*" [from Christ's side], as it were, like Eve was formed from Adam's rib (I.213–214). This means her union with the Spirit was "present from the beginning of her existence before the conception of Christ, and later also, after the birth of Christ, and which actually continued during the entire duration of her existence" (I.214).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>*Manual*, §216, 2:221.

<sup>21</sup>*Manual*, §185, 2:126.

<sup>22</sup>Here Scheeben refers to the Immaculate Conception, which Bulgakov will debate. Associating it with the idea of "pure nature," Bulgakov argues that pure nature does not exist since created beings cannot exist apart from God. *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, trans. Thomas Allan

Scheeben interprets the tradition regarding Mary's perpetual virginity in light of the Holy Spirit, beginning with the Spirit leading her to take a vow of virginity in preparation for her vocation (I.117). Virginity was a sign of Mary's total consecration as a chosen vessel and spiritual bride of God: "As bearer of God and instrument of the Holy Ghost she is taken possession of by God in the most sublime sense of the word and, as a chosen 'spiritual vessel' and spiritual bride of God united to Him by marriage, she belongs to Him alone and without reserve" (I.110).<sup>23</sup> For Scheeben, Mary's virginity is both physical and spiritual, the Spirit preserving her body and spirit "spotless and inviolate" (I.8). In his view, it would be sacrilege—a desecration of the Spirit's "exclusive temple"—for Joseph to have other children by Mary (I.113).<sup>24</sup> Not only does Christ's dignity

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Smith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 15. Bulgakov's critique is, however, faulty, first, because the dogma is not dependent on the notion of "pure nature," since Mary does not exist apart from God, and, second, because Catholics agree that no one has ever existed in such a state. They propose it only as a theoretical possibility. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace: Commentary on the "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q. 109–114* (St. Louis: Herder, 1952), 20–21.

<sup>23</sup>"The woman chosen to be the Mother of Christ through the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost was necessarily consecrated to God alone." Scheeben, *Manual*, §212, 2:208.

<sup>24</sup>Ephrem of Syria, *Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*, 2:6, p. 63: "Because there are those who dare to say that Mary [cohabited] with Joseph after she bore the Redeemer, [we reply], 'How would it have been possible for her who was the home of the indwelling Spirit, whom the divine power overshadowed, that she

require that he be the first and only born of his mother but also that Mary as a consecrated vessel be devoted to God alone, “holy to the Lord” (Exod. 28:36). For Scheeben, Mary’s only appropriate response to her call to bridal motherhood is perpetual self-giving to God, her virginity being the outward sign of that total consecration.<sup>25</sup>

Mary demonstrates her total consecration, i.e., her “spiritual virginity” (II.51) through “virginal obedience” (II.204), or, stated negatively, sinlessness (II.25–139). However, Mary does not achieve such purity by natural means alone, but by the Spirit: “as the bodily virginity of the mother is preserved immune in Christ’s conception by the action of the Holy Ghost, so also is her spiritual virginity effected by the same Holy Spirit” (II.51). The Spirit fills Mary with a

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be joined to a mortal being, and give birth filled with birthpangs, in the image of the primeval curse?”

<sup>25</sup>For Scheeben, to deny that Mary might have taken a vow of virginity suggests a rationalistic approach that overlooks the possibility of the Holy Spirit inspiring such a vow (1:111, 117). Perhaps those who traditionally deny Mary’s perpetual virginity can at least sympathize with its underlying premise, that the calling of God invites total consecration. Those from the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition, who highly value total consecration to God, may grasp this concept more easily than others. Phoebe Palmer, *Entire Devotion to God* (New York: [n.p.], 1853), 145–151. As Mary’s marriage to Joseph suggests, the point is not the deprecation of marriage which God instituted at creation and declared “very good” (Gen. 1:26–31), although historically and today that is often assumed, but rather the value of single-mindedness (Phil. 3:13b), undivided attention to holiness of body and spirit (1 Cor. 7:32–35), counting all as lost to follow Christ (Matt. 17:27, 29; Luke 9:23; Phil. 3:8).

supernatural “grace of perfect integrity and incorruption and especially of perfect purity and innocence” (II.27). Mary is so penetrated by the light of grace that “all evil, fault, stain, deformity, and corruption” are precluded from her person (II.25–26). The Holy Spirit preserves her both from original sin and from any actual or even venial sin (II.126). Even at her death, to which Scheeben says she submits in love in conformity to her Son’s death, God does not allow her body to see corruption (II.158).

While Scheeben speaks repeatedly of Mary as the bride of God and of the Logos, and even of the Father (I.174–179), he also calls her bride of the Holy Spirit (I.8, 113, 176–178, 181) and temple of the Holy Spirit (I.113, 179).<sup>26</sup> He is, however, reluctant to assign a role to the Spirit distinct from that of the Logos or the Trinity as a whole: “The Holy Ghost is so much the bridegroom of Mary that He is the achiever, seal, and guaranty of her marriage with the Logos” (I.181). Similarly, “the name of ‘bride of the Holy Ghost’ must not be understood in the sense of something innate to the Holy Ghost, but only as an attribute, that is, it is adduced in connection with the Holy Ghost as the representative of the entire

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<sup>26</sup>“In this temple He therefore dwells in a certain sense *corporaliter* and *naturaliter* [pertaining to the body and to nature]. Hence the expression ‘temple’ or ‘sanctuary of the Holy Ghost’ is as much in use for the relation of the Mother of God to the Holy Ghost, as is the name of *sponsa Spiritus Sancti* [spouse of the Holy Spirit]” (1:179).



divine Trinity in its marriage with Mary.” Nevertheless, despite Scheeben’s caution in this respect, he validates “the bringing into prominence of the person of the Holy Ghost in the principle and the term of the marriage” since it “causes the union of Mary with God to appear, not as specifically limited to the person of her Son, and still less to that of the Father, but as extending to the entire Trinity” (I.177). Scheeben acknowledges that Mary has as close a relationship with the Spirit as with the Father and the Son: “it redounds to the honor of the Holy Ghost, when He appears as in no way excluded from the glory, power, and benevolence which the other divine persons reveal in their relation to Mary and when, on the contrary, a special relation is attributed to Him which answers to His hypostatic character” (I.178). Further, giving greater prominence to the Spirit “precludes the appearance of a created person . . . taking precedence of the Holy Ghost, or at least of being placed on the same level with Him” (I.177–178). Here Scheeben acknowledges the danger of elevating Mary to the point of eclipsing the Spirit, but his solution is not to devalue Mary but rather to give greater prominence to the Spirit and the Spirit’s essential equality within the Trinity.

As an indication of Mary’s closeness to the Holy Spirit, Scheeben says she is one moral person with the Spirit (I.181).<sup>27</sup> Like the Spirit who “owing to His

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<sup>27</sup>Scheeben’s assertion that Mary is “one moral person” with the Spirit may, on the surface, appear to conflict with his later statement that Mary “exists

origin from the divine love is also the specific bearer and representative of the sweetness [*dulcedo*] and vivifying [*vita*] heart of that divine love," Mary "bears this characteristic in her own degree."<sup>28</sup> She is like the Spirit, too, in that she is a dove (I.180).

Although Scheeben does not speak of Mary as being baptized in the Holy Spirit as that was not a commonly used term in the tradition, his lyrical description of her fullness of grace suggests Spirit-baptism: "Under the form of an indwelling, enveloping, and penetrating light or spirit, the grace itself is given prominence as a higher principle which, with its substance, its force, and its influence, interiorly adorns, enriches, magnifies, and spiritualizes the subject connected with it and penetrated by it" (I.206). He also speaks of her whole being as pervaded and penetrated with "the stream of the grace of sanctification and

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only in and through her relation to the divine person of her Son" (1:204–205), but for Scheeben this poses no problem. His intention is to assert that Mary's person should be understood in relation to both the Logos and the Spirit, her relation to the Logos being ontological and substantial while her relation to the Spirit being moral and spiritual union. Scheeben also speaks of Mary in relation to the Father, as daughter, but does not identify her person with that of the Father. He does say, however, that "the motherhood of Mary is the most perfect image of the paternity of God the Father with regard to the Son of God in His humanity" (1:176).

<sup>28</sup>"Our life, our sweetness" is part of the second line of the *Salve Regina* (believed to have been composed in the eleventh century). R. J. Snow, "Salve Regina," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2<sup>d</sup> ed., 15 vols. (Detroit: Gale, 2003), 12:631–632.

enlight[en]ment" (II.136) and, following Bernard of Clairvaux, as "immersed in inaccessible light."<sup>29</sup>

Among Scheeben's critics is David Coffey who critiques him for not assigning the Spirit a "proper mission," as Scholastics call it, yet praises him for granting a greater role to the Spirit than mere appropriation.<sup>30</sup> Coffey's logic is that "if the Son alone takes possession of a created nature, why should not the Holy Spirit be able to take possession of a created being in a way proper to His own person, by means of a less perfect and purely moral possession?"<sup>31</sup> Coffey considers the role Scheeben assigns to the Spirit inadequate because he calls the

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<sup>29</sup>*In Dominica infra Octavam Assumptionis B. Mariæ Virginis Sermo*, PL 183.431B.

<sup>30</sup>David Coffey, "A Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," *Theological Studies* 47 (1986): 227–250. Coffey, "Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?" *Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2005), 16. Cf. Scheeben, *Mysteries*, 133. "The whole Trinity is the cause of grace in us, although it is usually attributed to the Holy Spirit." Walter Kasper credits Scheeben for having "spoken of a personal indwelling (not just by appropriation) of the Spirit." *Jesus the Christ* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1976), 258. Elizabeth Groppe explains Scheeben's endorsement of the Spirit's indwelling as "a nonappropriated relation of the just soul to the Holy Spirit" as one limited by his denial that "the Holy Spirit has a nonappropriated activity in the economy of salvation." *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2003), 164–165.

<sup>31</sup>Coffey, *Receive?* 16–17; cf. Scheeben, *Mysteries*, 166.

indwelling a “moral possession” rather than a substantial one.<sup>32</sup> Since the scope of the present work does not allow further analysis of this point, suffice it to say that, despite any deficiency in Scheeben’s pneumatological understanding of the indwelling, he advances the place of pneumatology in Christology and ecclesiology including Mariology.<sup>33</sup>

### *Summary*

One of the strengths of Scheeben’s Mariology is the beauty of his portrayal of Mary in relation to the Trinity. Mary is the daughter of the Father, bridal mother of the Son, spouse and temple of the Holy Spirit, the dwelling place of the Holy Trinity. Since temple is not a personal image as are daughter and mother, it is understandable why Scheeben personalizes the relation by

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<sup>32</sup>Coffey, *Receive?* 17: “If the union of the Holy Spirit with the just is not ontological it is not divine.” For Coffey, the union between the Spirit and the graced person is “an immediate union with the God the Father and Christ certainly, but, paradoxically, in the first place with the Holy Spirit, a union then mediated by him to the other two divine persons” (41).

<sup>33</sup>Denis Pétau (Dionysius Petavius) of the seventeenth century was perhaps the first to assert that “the conjunction of the Holy Spirit in particular with man is a proper and not merely an appropriated one.” Quoted in Coffey, *Receive?* 19. Karl Rahner, “Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace,” in *God, Christ, Mary and Grace*, vol. 1 of *Theological Investigations*, trans. Cornelius Ernst (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), 323–324 of 319–346.

supplementing temple with the image of spouse or bride for Mary in relation to the Spirit as well as the Son.<sup>34</sup> The ultimate inadequacy of all these analogies continually challenges theologians to go beyond them to re-imagine Mary in as truthful and beautiful a way as is humanly possible.

## Mary and the Spirit According to Sergius Bulgakov

### *History*

An important though controversial Russian theologian of the twentieth century,<sup>35</sup> Sergius Bulgakov (1871–1944) was raised in a devout Orthodox home

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<sup>34</sup>Bulgakov criticizes Scheeben's use of the title "spouse of the Holy Spirit" for Mary since it suggests that the Spirit is the father of Christ; however, this is a mistaken critique since Catholics hold to the eternal generation of the Son from the Father, which implicitly excludes the Spirit as father. The spousal title implies, for Scheeben, the closest possible relation between a human being and the Spirit, a relation which, without being sexual, is fruitful.

<sup>35</sup>Bulgakov postulated a panentheistic relation between God and creation. His opponents charged him with advancing Sophia as a fourth divine hypostasis, which led to his censure in the East in 1935. His response was that he held fully to the Orthodox faith, and had only presented his own interpretation. He later differentiated between created and uncreated Sophia. His theological importance is based primarily on his trilogy on Divine Humanity (*bogochelovechestvo*), which deals with Christ, the Spirit, and the church. He is important here because of his pneumatological approach to Mary and his willingness to engage the West, specifically Scheeben. Cf. Barbara Newman, "Sergius Bulgakov and the Theology of Divine Wisdom," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 22 (1978): 39–73. Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 2. Aidan Nichols, *Wisdom from Above: A Primer in the Theology of Father Sergei Bulgakov* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2005). A

with a priest as a father. While in seminary to become a priest himself, he lost his faith, turned to Marxism, and become an expert in political economics. In time, however, he became disillusioned with Marxism and returned to the faith and was ordained a priest, although for several years he was attracted to Catholicism. His journey from Orthodoxy to Marxism and back again profoundly affected his life and career. After exile from Russia for ideological non-conformity in 1922, he was appointed dean and professor at the Saint Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris, where he served from 1925 until his death.

Bulgakov is best known for his sophiology, developed under the influence of Russian philosophers Vladimir Soloviev and Pavel Florensky, in which he identifies Sophia (Wisdom) with the *ousia* of the Trinity.<sup>36</sup> Although differentiating between uncreated Sophia (Son and Spirit) with created Sophia

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*Bulgakov Anthology*, eds. James Pain and Nicholas Zernov (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 1–19. Rowan Williams, ed., “Introduction,” *Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 1–20. Winston Crum, “Sergius N. Bulgakov: From Marxism to Sophiology,” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1982): 3–25. Andrew Louth, “Father Sergii Bulgakov on the Mother of God,” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 49, no. 1/2 (2005): 45–64. Brian Daley, “Woman of Many Names: Mary in Orthodox and Catholic Theology,” *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 847–869.

<sup>36</sup>Sergius Bulgakov, *Sophia, the Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, (Hudson, N.Y.: Lindisfarne Press, 1993), 55, hereafter *Sophia*. Bulgakov argues for the appropriateness of using sophianic imagery for God’s essence or nature, i.e., trinitarian consubstantiality, rather than an impersonal logical abstraction, since the three hypostases themselves are Persons, not abstractions.

(creation and Mary), he also closely links them, in effect, proposing a panentheism in which the existence of the uncreated is so embedded in the created that neither exists apart from the other. Despite the condemnation of his sophiology in 1935 by Sergius, patriarch of Moscow, Bulgakov contributed significantly to Orthodox theology, not least his Marian reflections. Although his style is polemical, sometimes harshly critical of Western theology, both Catholic and Protestant, his theology, which is grounded in liturgy, iconography, Scripture, and patristics, is also constructive, exploratory, and imaginative. It emerges from a profound personal and experiential faith, including a Marian encounter that sparked his return to Orthodoxy.<sup>37</sup>

I have chosen Bulgakov as an example of a modern theologian who emphasizes Mary in relation to the Spirit in part because he is Orthodox (and the West has much to learn from Orthodoxy in this respect) and in part because he was acquainted with Scheeben's work and, though he only occasionally makes direct mention of him, interacts with his ideas.<sup>38</sup> Here I attempt a synopsis of

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<sup>37</sup>"And suddenly an unexpected, miraculous encounter: Sistine Madonna in Dresden, you yourself touched my heart and it began to tremble from your call." Bulgakov, *Unfading Light*, trans. Thomas Smith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 9.

<sup>38</sup>The translator refers to Bulgakov's "sustained literary debate" with Scheeben ("Introduction," xx) and calls him his "main sparring partner" (158n13). *Bush*. Cf. "The Burning Bush," in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, 90–96.

Bulgakov's understanding of Mary's relation to the Spirit as gleaned from his three-volume *On Divine Humanity* (1933, 1936, 1945),<sup>39</sup> as well as from one of his earlier theological works, *The Burning Bush* (1927), and a popular summary of his sophianic thought, *The Wisdom of God* (1937).<sup>40</sup> My intent is not to address Bulgakov's sophiology *per se* but rather his pneumatological approach to Mary.

### *Theology*

For Bulgakov, the incarnation occurs at the Annunciation via a "reverse *taxis*" of the trinitarian processions.<sup>41</sup> Only after God sends the Spirit does the Son come, or, stated from Mary's perspective, only after the Spirit comes upon her does she conceive. Since the Spirit and the Son are an inseparable dyad, the inevitable consequence of the coming of one is the coming of the other.

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<sup>39</sup>ET Boris Jakim: *The Lamb of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), *The Comforter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), and *The Bride of the Lamb* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), hereafter *Lamb*, *Comforter*, and *Bride*. For an overview of this trilogy, see Nadia Delicata, "The Comforter and Divine Humanity," *Theandros: The Online Journal of Orthodox Christian Theology and Philosophy* 5, no. 1 (2007): n.p. Theandros, archived, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110427171947/http://theandros.com/comforter.html>.

<sup>40</sup>Revised as *Sophia* (1993). See footnote 36.

<sup>41</sup>In his ascending Christology, David Coffey also inverts the order of Trinitarian procession. E.g., *Grace, the Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2011), 141.



The descent of the Spirit at the Annunciation is, in effect, the first Pentecost, albeit a limited, hidden one, since Mary is the only recipient, the global Pentecost not occurring until fifty days after Easter.<sup>42</sup> At Mary's personal Pentecost, she becomes not only Theotokos, God-bearer, but also Pneumatophor, Spirit-bearer.<sup>43</sup>

As Spirit-bearer, Mary is "the transparent human image of the revelation of the Holy Spirit" (*Bride* 411). "Not only was the fullness of His gifts revealed in her, but also His personal hypostasis shines in her most pure countenance" (*Bush* 70). Since the divine hypostasis of the Spirit cannot be incarnated, Bulgakov does not claim that Mary is an incarnation of the Spirit but only "almost" an incarnation (*Bush* 70; cf. Scheeben, *Mariology* I.215). She is "a human image of the Holy Spirit, not according to incarnation, which cannot be, but according to a

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<sup>42</sup>Bulgakov makes no allusion to the others in the Lukan nativity accounts whom Luke describes as Spirit-filled.

<sup>43</sup>*Bush*, 88. Bulgakov explains Mary's special dignity as that of "spirit-bearer" (*Sophia*, 118). The phrase *anthrōpos pneumatophoros* (spirit-bearing man) appears in Hos. 9:7 LXX. According to Athanasius, God became *sarkophoros* (a flesh-bearer) that humans might be *pneumatophoroi* (Spirit-bearers). *De Incarnatione Dei Verbi*, PG 26.996C. Bulgakov denies, however, that Mary's Spirit-bearing makes her theandric or that her relation to the Spirit constitutes "an incarnation of the Holy Ghost," since the Spirit "is not the subject but the principle of the Incarnation" (*Sophia*, 116).

perfect spiritual conformity with Him." For Bulgakov, "there is no, and can be no, greater and fuller manifestation of the Holy Spirit [than Mary]" (*Bride* 411).<sup>44</sup>

One of Bulgakov's principles underlying Mary's relation to the Spirit is that women in general ("all humankind in the female image"), and Mary in particular, hypostatically manifest the Spirit while men ("all humankind in the male image") manifest Christ. Conceding the unity of the male and female in Christ since "all find their hypostasis in Christ," Bulgakov sees Mary's motherly love for Christ as revelatory of the kenosis of the Holy Spirit: "She 'humbles' herself both empirically and ontologically, stops being for Herself, becomes transparent for the hypostasis of the Son, reveals this hypostasis, as is proper to the Third Hypostasis, the Holy Spirit, in the supra-eternal love in the Holy Trinity." Mary perfectly reflects the character of the Holy Spirit because she is transparent to the Son even as the Spirit is (*Bride*, 97–99; cf. *Bush* 82).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Cf. *Bush* 81: "A vessel of the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit, it completely surrenders its human hypostatic life . . . [and] becomes [the Spirit's] personal, animate receptacle, an absolutely spirit-born creature, the Pneumatophoric Human. . . . The creaturely hypostasis . . . completely surrenders itself and as it were dissolves in the Holy Spirit."

<sup>45</sup>In summarizing Bulgakov's Mariology, Valliere says that Bulgakov sees Mary's motherhood of God as reflecting the maternal role of the Holy Spirit both within the Trinity and in the cosmos. Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 326–327.

In statements similar to those of Scheeben regarding the Son's continued indwelling of Mary even after the birth, Bulgakov holds that the birth of Christ established "an eternally abiding bond between Mother and Son, so that an image of our Lady with her infant in her arms is in fact an image of Divine-humanity" (*Sophia* 116). Elsewhere he states it this way, "the human essence of the Mother of God in heaven and the GodMan Jesus together display the full image of humankind" (*Bush* 82; cf. *Lamb* 201). This assertion was particularly controversial since the implication was that without the Mother the Son would be an incomplete image of divine humanity.<sup>46</sup> Maximovitch denounced it as "a vain deceit and a seduction of philosophy [since] in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3:28)."<sup>47</sup> However, Bulgakov argues from Genesis 1:27 that the two sexual modes are spiritual principles, the male giving primacy to reason and will (Word) and the female giving primacy to feeling and experience (Spirit) (*Bush* 82). Though Bulgakov's description of gender difference (thinking versus feeling) appears to be culturally derived, the scriptural basis for gender

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<sup>46</sup>"The human essence of the Mother of God in heaven and the GodMan Jesus together display the full image inseparably with the female principle of the Mother of God, and the fullness of the Divine image in humankind, or to put it another way, of the human image in God, is expressed through these two, through 'the new Adam' and 'the new Eve.'" *Bush*, 82–83.

<sup>47</sup>John Maximovitch, *The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, trans. Seraphim Rose, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Platina, Calif.: St. Herman Press, 2012), 50.

differentiation is hard to deny. (Perhaps a more acceptable way of expressing the truth of what Bulgakov was trying to convey is that the fullness of the Son's humanity is made visible through his ontological relationship with his human mother.)

For Bulgakov, the purpose of grace is "the elevation of creatures to deification, the imprinting of the image of the divinity in the creaturely likeness" (*Bride* 296).<sup>48</sup> Despite his generally deprecatory stance toward Scholasticism (*Bush* 6), Bulgakov adapts its distinction between natural and supernatural grace, reconceptualizing it in sophiological terms, to explain how grace can divinize a created being without ontologically violating or coercing it (*Bride* 296). Natural grace is granted at creation through sophianization, conforming a created being to its Creator, imprinting on it the divine image and likeness, and thereby enabling it to receive divine grace. Divine, i.e., supernatural, grace is what actualizes a created being's natural capacity for conformity to divinity.

A difference between the scholastic approach to grace and Bulgakov's is his greater emphasis on synergy, the created being's freedom to cooperate with

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<sup>48</sup>In biblical terms, deification, or *theosis*, is participation in the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). God sends his Son to be born according to the flesh ("born of a woman") that humanity may be born according to the Spirit ("born of God"). Accordingly, deification (*theosis*) is the hope and final destiny of all believers (Gal. 4:4, 29; John 1:13; John 10:34; Psalms 82:6; 1 John 3:2).

God's gratuitous action, the level of divinization reached in a creature being determined by the degree of its receptivity. Mary as the created being most transparent to the Holy Spirit and therefore the most receptive to the Holy Spirit and to grace is the first to achieve *theosis* in its fullness (*Comforter* 247).

For Bulgakov, Mary's divinization is different from Christ's hypostatic union since she is creaturely while he is divine. From conception, Christ has a divine nature which is inseparably and unconfusedly united with his human nature in the person of the God-man. In Mary's case, the grace she receives from the Holy Spirit "accomplishes [her] union with Christ, makes [her] a bearer of the Spirit, transparent in [her] human selfhood . . . introduces [her] hypostasis into the tri-hypostatic love of the Holy Trinity, makes [her] a 'god according to grace.'" At her assumption—which Bulgakov describes as her resurrection and glorification—though she remains forever creaturely, she is raised to participation in the life of God (*Bride* 302).

Contra the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Bulgakov sees Mary's deification as occurring not at her conception, but at the coming of the Spirit upon her at the Annunciation: "In this complete penetration by Him [the Spirit], it [Mary's humanity] becomes a different nature for its own self, i.e., *divinized*, a creature thoroughly blessed by grace, 'a quickened ark of God,' a living 'consecrated temple'" (*Bush* 81). Despite his denial of the Immaculate

Conception, Bulgakov insists on Mary's sinlessness from her conception as a result of "her peculiar and exclusive sanctification by the grace of the Holy Ghost, shown in her conception, nativity, and presentation in the temple, and throughout her holy childhood and maidenhood" (*Sophia* 117). Hence, Bulgakov's attempt to correct the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception largely fails, since he agrees with Scheeben in many respects, most significantly, the sanctifying effect of the Spirit on Mary from the beginning of her life.

The answer that Bulgakov offers to the question he poses in *Burning Bush*, "Can personal sinlessness be united with the presence of original sin, or is there here a contradiction?" (10) then is, yes, it is possible because the Holy Spirit grants Mary sanctifying grace from her conception. Bulgakov also explains it in terms of the Holy Spirit providing what was lacking in Mary's humanity due to her being "burdened by the weight of original sin" (*Lamb* 200). One of the main differences between the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception and Bulgakov's proposal here then is his denial that Mary was preserved from the stain, or guilt, of original sin, which is the traditional Orthodox view. Though Catholics and Orthodox differ in regard to the inheritability of the guilt of original sin, they agree that it causes an "infirmity of nature," or mortality and

that Mary suffered from some of the consequences of original sin,<sup>49</sup> since neither deny that the Son himself endured “weakness and lassitude of the body” (*Bush* 10, 33). The claim Catholics make in the Immaculate Conception dogma that differs from Orthodox belief is that God kept her from inheriting its stain, or guilt, but in spite of that dissimilarity, Orthodox and Catholics essentially agree that Mary was sinless as a result of the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.

The question then is *how* is it that Mary while living in the shadow of the infirmity of original sin resisted temptation throughout her life while Eve living in the light of original justice did not?<sup>50</sup> Bulgakov accounts for Mary’s sinlessness in several ways. First, he points out that the force of original sin varies from person to person. While, on the one hand, it is capable of increasing “to the point of becoming satanic (Antichrist) or enfleshed (antediluvian humanity),” on the other, it can be “weaken[ed] to such a degree that it is capable of being exalted to

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<sup>49</sup>Catholics do hold to significant limitations to this infirmity, however, since they traditionally insist on Mary’s exemption from the pain of childbirth and bodily corruption (as do Orthodox). Catholics also hold to Mary’s exemption from concupiscence, which Bulgakov rarely mentions. He speaks rather of the inconceivability and even the profanity of imagining that at any time in her life Mary, who was “graced from the womb by the Holy Spirit,” could have sinned or even have been assaulted by sin (*Bush* 7–10).

<sup>50</sup>Gerard Sloyan asks a similar question, “How did God achieve the reversal of a once disobedient human being, Eva, to a never disobedient human being, one, *Ave*, who ‘successfully resisted any assault of sin upon her’?” Review of Bulgakov’s *Burning Bush, Worship* 84, no. 4 (2010): 373–375.

the highest sanctity, the summit of which is attained in the Virgin Mary" (*Bush* 34). In Mary, Bulgakov asserts, the force of original sin is "reduced to the point of a mere possibility, never to be actualized." This variability, however, would not pertain to prelapsarian Eve since obviously she would have been untouched by any such influence.

Secondly, Bulgakov suggests that Mary was heir to the corporate holiness of "the holy forebears of the Godman who had absorbed into themselves the whole of Old Testament holiness and blessedness" (*Bush* 34; *Lamb* 200). He calls it a "hereditary holiness" which, assisted by Holy Spirit, reached its peak in the Virgin. Because of this inherited holiness, "original sin *lost its power* as an obstacle to the Incarnation" even though Mary carried within her "the hereditary illness of man's nature" (*Lamb* 178, his emphasis). In other words, Bulgakov claims Mary to be heir of both hereditary holiness *and* the hereditary infirmity associated with original sin. My question here is, how can Bulgakov logically admit to hereditary holiness but not to hereditary guilt?

Thirdly, Bulgakov emphasizes the freedom given to creation, which includes "a real possibility" to fall (*Bush* 22, 24). In other words, humans, like angels, have a natural capacity for self-determination. This freedom explains how Eve could choose to sin even while in Eden and how Mary could live



sinlessly even while living in a fallen world.<sup>51</sup> So, the difference between Mary and Eve, according to Bulgakov, has to do, at least in part, with free choice, specifically the level of their receptivity to the Holy Spirit.

Bulgakov also claims that Mary was “manifestly sanctified by the Holy Ghost from the very moment of her conception,” thereby appealing to grace as being given to her beginning with her conception, the very point that the Immaculate Conception dogma itself implies.<sup>52</sup> The difference between Mary and Eve then is not solely due to human choice, since Mary did not have the power to choose prior to or at the moment of her own conception; therefore, her initial sanctity must be attributed to grace alone. However, Bulgakov also posits that Mary grew in grace (*Comforter* 246–247), the implication being that although initially sanctified by grace, she has the capacity to grow and mature to the point of being freely receptive to the Spirit. According to Bulgakov’s theory, as her receptivity increases, her holiness increases to the point that nothing obstructs the free flow of the Spirit in her, thus allowing the incarnation to take place.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Eve and Adam used their freedom to define themselves against God’s will, while Mary realized her freedom “not in willfulness but in the obedience of love and self-renunciation” (*Lamb* 179).

<sup>52</sup>*Sophia*, 115. Smith, “Introduction,” *Bush*, xxiii.

<sup>53</sup>“When She [Mary] had attained such spiritual strength that She could withstand the direct overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, not in the separate gifts of

When asserting Mary's deification, although Bulgakov repeatedly insists on her creaturehood, his rhetoric sometimes crosses the threshold between humanity and divinity, such as when he claims that she is "a creature and no longer a creature" (*Bush* 107). It is this kind of rhetoric that eventually led to his censure by Russian Orthodox authorities in Moscow and elsewhere.<sup>54</sup> However, clearly his intent was not to assert that Mary is or becomes divine by nature, but rather that while remaining a creature, she is deified, i.e., becomes God-like by transparently reflecting the Holy Spirit whose glory shines in her face:

The human hypostasis and human nature in this being are not abolished, but filled by divine life. This human being, by becoming spiritual, but not being a godman, is *divine*, as the perfect dwelling of the Holy Spirit. There cannot be imagined a more complete indwelling of the Holy Spirit in creation, in a human being or an angel, than was accomplished in the Mother of God. Mary is therefore the perfect appearance of the Third Hypostasis; in creation *her human countenance reflects on itself the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit, for it is transparent for Him* (*Bush* 99, emphasis added).

Bulgakov's idea of Mary's receptivity to the Holy Spirit and to fullness of grace cannot be understood apart from his strongly synergistic view of human freedom and divine gratuity. This is one of the main differences between

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grace with which She was abundantly adorned, but *in the reception of the Holy Spirit Himself in all the fullness of His divine nature*, it was then that the Incarnation took place" (*Lamb* 178–179, added emphasis). "The one full of grace received the *fullness* of the Holy Spirit" (*Comforter* 247, original emphasis).

<sup>54</sup>Maximovitch, *Veneration*.

Catholic and Orthodox Marian views. While they agree that the Spirit's application of sanctifying grace to Mary at conception is the primary cause of her sinlessness, the East gives greater weight to human freedom while the West emphasizes grace, with Reformed Protestants reticent to credit Mary with any active participation due to their inherited Augustinian aversion to any hint of Pelagianism.

Bulgakov charges that Protestants overlook Mary's spiritual participation in the incarnation, limiting it only to a natural birth. For him, to understand Mary as participating only by her flesh is to reduce her involvement to what "would be [only] a natural, instinctive, unfree, uncreative, and even blind act." Rather Bulgakov sees Mary as participating "spiritually, consciously, in an inspired and sacrificial manner," receiving "the strength for this work from the Holy Spirit" (*Bride* 201):

Christ did not bring His human nature down from heaven, and He did not create it anew from earth; rather, he took it from "the most pure flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary." Further, this "taking" is not an external and mechanical borrowing or coercion on the part of the Divine omnipotence; instead, it is a mutually hypostatic act: The Logos could *take* His flesh from the Virgin Mary only because She *gave* it (*Lamb* 200, emphasis original).

### *Pneumatological Titles*

I conclude this analysis of Bulgakov's understanding of Mary in relation to the Spirit with a study of two images that he proposes for Mary, the

Pneumatophor (Spirit-bearer) and the Burning Bush. By the explicit pneumatology of Spirit-bearer and the adaptability of the Burning Bush metaphor to Spirit-baptism, these two titles serve to supplement other more commonly known Marian titles such as New Eve, Ever Virgin, Theotokos, and Daughter Zion, which do not explicitly refer to the Spirit.

Bulgakov adopts the Burning Bush (in Russian, literally, Unburnt Bush) as the title of his book that focuses on Mary from the perspective of what he calls divine humanity. Although the original burning bush was the theophany that appeared to Moses (Exod. 3:2), Bulgakov uses the term in reference to a popular Russian icon of the Mother of God called the Unburnt Bush. Since the fourth century, the Orthodox have seen the Unburnt Bush as a symbol of Mary's perpetual virginity;<sup>55</sup> however, Bulgakov gives it a broader meaning. For him, the Burning Bush is an image of his concept of a human person whose humanity is aflame with the fire of divinity but not consumed (*Lamb* 207). He applies the

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<sup>55</sup>Gregory of Nyssa saw the burning bush as a prefiguration of the mystery of Mary. Luigi Gambero, *Mary and the Father of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 155. *De Nativitate Christi ex Virgine = On the Birth of Christ*, PG 46.1135A–1136B. "As the bush was burning without being consumed, so the Virgin gave birth and remained a Virgin" (*Bush* 177n7). The burning bush is mentioned in the "Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary," which is a part of the Catholic Liturgy of the Hours. The antiphon reads in part, "Your blessed and fruitful virginity is like the bush, flaming yet unburned, which Moses saw on Sinai." Online: <http://divineoffice.org/0101-ep1/> Accessed 30 January 2016.

term specifically to Mary as “the Mother of God, overshadowed by the Holy Spirit” (*Bush* 122).<sup>56</sup> Since the icon is of Mary and the Child, the focus is not solely or even primarily on Mary at the time the Child was physically enclosed in her womb but rather on the person of Mary who, while on earth and now in heaven, is aflame with the fire of divinity by union with her Son and the Father through the indwelling Spirit. This is clearly suggestive of a Spirit-baptized Mary, one whose entire being, whose every cell, as it were, is at every moment enlivened, engraced, purified, strengthened, re-consecrated, refreshed, renewed, supernaturalized by the living fire of the Spirit who descends on her and continually resides within her, bringing her into union with the Holy Trinity and into communion with the saints.

The second title *Pneumatophora* (the feminine form of *Pneumatophor*) has been proposed as a Marian title by both Bulgakov<sup>57</sup> and Petro Bilaniuk (1932–1998), a Ukrainian Catholic.<sup>58</sup> The church has used the word since the second

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<sup>56</sup>Bulgakov sees Mary as the answer to his question, “How can the fire of Divinity engulf, without consuming, the ‘burning bush’ of creaturely being, and how can this creaturely being ascend to a condition where it is harmonized with the life of the divine nature?” (*Lamb* 207).

<sup>57</sup>*Bush*, 81–82, 88–90, 100–101.

<sup>58</sup>Petro Bilaniuk, “The Theotokos as *Pneumatophora*,” *Journal of Dharma* 5, no. 2 (1980): 141–159. Bilaniuk, *Theology and Economy of the Holy Spirit: An Eastern Approach* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1980), 105–126.

century and perhaps before. The *Shepherd of Hermas* used it in reference to prophets (*pneumatophoron*, “Spirit-inspired”),<sup>59</sup> and Irenaeus used it in reference to those such as Enoch and Elijah who were translated (*pneumatophorois*, “borne by the Spirit”). Irenaeus even claimed that this was how “the elders, the disciples of the apostles,” used the term, suggesting its use in the first century.<sup>60</sup> In the third and fourth centuries the title was conferred upon Macarius of Egypt, Anthony of the Desert, Evagrius, and John Kolobos.<sup>61</sup> In the fourth century Athanasius used the plural form in his *On the Incarnation of the Word of God*, in his axiom that God became a flesh-bearer (*sarkophoros*) that humans might become Spirit-bearers (*pneumatophoroi*).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>*Shepherd of Hermas*, Commandment 11.16. *The Apostolic Fathers, Volume II*, ed. and trans. Bart Ehrman, Loeb Classical Library 25 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>60</sup>Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 5.5.1. PG 7B.1135B.

<sup>61</sup>*Saint Macarius the Spiritbearer: Coptic Texts Relating to Saint Macarius the Great*, trans. and intro. Tim Vivian (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004), 38n59. Macarius was considered a Spirit-bearer because his words, which were those of the Spirit who indwelt him, brought life and healing to his hearers’ souls. Like Elijah, he not only bore a prophetic spirit but was “clothed with humility like a cloak.” “The Virtues of Saint Macarius of Egypt,” §§82–83, in Vivian, 148. He also zealously emulated the apostles, and “became worthy to be their companions in word and deed,” being an exemplar of holiness and ascetic practice. “The Life of Saint Marcarius of Scetis,” §1, in Vivian, 152.

<sup>62</sup>Athanasius, *De incarnatione verbi dei*; PG 26.996C.

The term appears twice in the Septuagint where it is associated with a prophet.<sup>63</sup> It can be translated either as one who bears the spirit or one borne (carried) by the spirit (or perhaps both). The word with which it is most closely linked in the Christian Scriptures is *pneumatikos*, spiritual. Though an adjective, *pneumatikos* is sometimes used nominatively, in which case it refers to a spiritual person or thing, such as a gift or manifestation. In the third century Origen used *pneumatikos* to denote a spiritual director, specifically one whose life reflects what he teaches.<sup>64</sup> Gregory the Wonderworker attributed this title to his teacher, who was Origen himself.<sup>65</sup>

In the eighteenth century, John Lacy associated *pneumatophoros* with *theophorus* (or *theophoros*), a title Ignatius (d. 98–110) used in reference to himself in each of the seven letters he wrote on his way to Rome at the beginning of the

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<sup>63</sup>Hos. 9:7; Zeph. 3:4.

<sup>64</sup>Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 63–64.

<sup>65</sup>I follow Rapp here, who summarizes Gregory's description of Origen as *pneumatikos* as one who taught by both word and deed and whose prayers were sought (65–66). Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Address of Thanksgiving to Origen*, in *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus: Life and Works*, trans. Michael Slusser, 91–127 (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1998), 113, 121, 126.

second century.<sup>66</sup> When addressing Trajan immediately prior to his martyrdom, Ignatius calls himself Theophorus, explaining that the name was given to him as one who bears God within. When in answer to Trajan's query, Ignatius identifies the God in his heart with the man crucified by Pontius Pilate, the emperor immediately condemns him.<sup>67</sup>

Lacy also associates *pneumatophoros* with "moved (*pheromenoi*) by the Holy Spirit" in 2 Peter 1:21.<sup>68</sup> Since both words are related to the verb *pherō* (to bear or carry), he suggests that *pneumatophoros* refers not only to one who bears the Spirit but also one moved by the Spirit. Though, as a French prophet (Camisard), Lacy would hardly have suggested the title for Mary, the 2 Peter passage to which he refers ("because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God") brings Mary to mind since, like prophecy, her Son did not come by human will (John 1:13) but by the Spirit.

According to Bilaniuk, even though Basil the Great (fourth century) did not use the term *pneumatophoros* as such, he described monks as pneumatophoric in that they not only bear the Spirit within them but also serve as carriers of the

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<sup>66</sup>John Lacy, *The Spirit of Prophecy Defended*, ed. J. Ramsey Michaels (Boston: Brill, 2003).

<sup>67</sup>"The Martyrdom of Ignatius," §2. ANF 1:129–130.

<sup>68</sup>Lacy, *Prophecy*, 266–267.



Spirit to others.<sup>69</sup> For Bilaniuk, Christ and Mary are archetypes of pneumatophors since all who receive the Spirit and cooperate synergistically with the Spirit's activity are Spirit-bearers.<sup>70</sup>

I consider Bulgakov's application of these titles to Mary as perhaps his most important contribution to pneumatic Mariology. *Pneumatophora*, in particular, helps to balance the implicit Christology<sup>71</sup> of Theotokos, while the Burning Bush can be understood as an image of Spirit (fire) baptism.<sup>72</sup> Both are

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<sup>69</sup>Petro Bilaniuk, "The Monk as Pneumatophor in the Writings of St. Basil the Great." *Diakonia* 15, no. 1 (1980): 59. "The pneumatophoric monk is here and now a participator in the mystery of the presence and a[c]tivity of the Holy Spirit, for he, as the obedient spiritual son of his legitimate superiors is manifesting in his life the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. This is realized through charismata and sanctification which manifest themselves in poverty, unceasing prayer and obedience, as well as in striving for perfection through purity and virtue. Finally, the pneumatophoric monk, by his imitation of angels, apostles and saints in heaven, is involved in the process of eschatological fulfillment: which manifests itself in the life of the Spirit, i.e. in transfiguration, theosis and glorification here and now and in the spiritual life in the definitive, eschatological fulfillment with the Triadic God."

<sup>70</sup>Bilaniuk, *Theology*, 155ff. Except that, for anyone who holds to the early councils, Christ cannot be reduced to a pneumatophor anymore than his mother can be reduced to a *christotokos*, Bilaniuk's comments here are quite helpful.

<sup>71</sup>Kilian McDonnell, "Feminist Mariologies: Heteronomy/Subordination and the Scandal of Christology," *Theological Studies* 66, no. 3 (2005): 553 of 527–567.

<sup>72</sup>Yong relates fire imagery of the Spirit to the burning bush in his "'Tongues of Fire' in the Pentecostal Imagination: The Truth of Glossolalia in

applicable not only to Mary but to all human persons who bear and radiate the Spirit. I also see the Burning Bush as a potential image of the communion of the saints, whose hearts are fused together in the forge of God's love by the Spirit (Eph. 4:3; Rom. 5:5). Eschatologically, the Burning Bush can be seen as the image of restored creation whose creatureliness remains unconsumed even as it glows with the glory of God.<sup>73</sup>

## Mary and the Spirit According to Heribert Mühlen

### *History*

Heribert Mühlen (1927–2006) is known primarily for his monographs written on the Holy Spirit and the church in the 1960s,<sup>74</sup> his service as a

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Light of R. C. Neville's Theory of Religious Symbolism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 12 (1998): 46.

<sup>73</sup>"The glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and *the earth shone with his glory*" (Ezek. 43:2, my emphasis; cf. Num. 14:21; Psa. 72:19; Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14).

<sup>74</sup>Heribert Mühlen, *Der heilige Geist als Person: Beitrag zur Frage nach der dem heiligen Geiste eigentümlichen Funktion in der Trinität, bei der Inkarnation und im Gnadenbund* [The Holy Spirit as Person] (Münster: Aschendorff, 1963). Mühlen, *Una mystica persona; die Kirche als das Mysterium der heilsgeschichtlichen Identität des Heiligen Geistes in Christus und den Christen: eine Person in vielen Personen* [One Person in Many Persons] (München: Schöningh, 1968). The parenthetical notations refer to the FT of *Una mystica persona: L'Esprit dans l'Église*, trans. A. Liefoghe, M. Massart, and R. Virrion (Paris: Cerf, 1969). Wolfgang Vondey's *Heribert Mühlen: His Theology and Praxis: A New Profile of the Church* (Dallas, Tex.: University Press of America, 2004), unlocks Mühlen's work for the English

theologian at Vatican II, and his interest in the charismatic renewal. Educated at Bonn and Freiburg, he was ordained a Catholic priest in 1955. After further studies in Rome, Innsbruck, Munich, and Münster, he was appointed first a research assistant (1962), then professor of dogmatic and doctrinal history (1964) at Paderborn University, where he served until his retirement (1997).

Though primarily a pneumatologist, Mühlen began his theological work in the 1950s with an in-depth study of Scheeben's Mariology,<sup>75</sup> which led to his realization that the development of pneumatology should be given priority.<sup>76</sup> Although he never returned to a systematic treatment of Mariology, he did treat Marian issues in some of his writings including his *Una Mystica Persona*, in which he explains the mariological debates that occurred at Vatican II.

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reader. D. Thomas Hughson analyzes Mühlen's analogy and outlines its limitations. "I-Thou-We: A Critical Study of the Analogy Central to the Pneumatology of Heribert Mühlen" (PhD diss., University of St. Michael's College, 1981).

<sup>75</sup>Mühlen, "Der 'Personalcharakter' Mariens," 191–214. Mühlen, "Maria als 'Frucht und Glied' Adams" [Mary as "Fruit and Member" of Adam], *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 18 (1955): 95–107. Mühlen, "Maria 'Glieder Christi' und zugleich 'Glieder Adams'" [Mary as "Member of Christ" and simultaneously "Member of Adam"], *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 19 (1956): 17–42.

<sup>76</sup>Hughson, x.

### *Theology*

While traditionally the church has most often reflected on Mary in light of Christology, Mühlen proposes a pneumatological approach as a solution to the tendency toward hyperbolic expression in extolling Mary. He begins by asking whether Mary, as a simple human creature, even the one who, except for Christ, is the most fully graced, can, by herself alone, serve as a link to Christ. He then draws attention to Leo XIII's analogy in *Octobri mense*, a 1891 encyclical on the Rosary, in which the pope draws a comparison between the Son's function as the way to the Father and Mary's as the way to the Son. Mühlen asserts that such an analogy is not fully adequate since an analogous assertion regarding Mary cannot be made to Jesus' statement, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Mühlen explains that "one cannot say by analogy, 'He who has seen Mary has seen Christ;'" however, one can affirm, "Whoever has seen, heard, and recognized the Holy Spirit is, accordingly, and *by no other condition*, in personal relation to Christ." In other words, Mühlen denies that Mary is the direct mediatrix in relation to Christ in the same sense that Christ is the direct Mediator in relation to the Father, for she "in no way possesses the divine nature" whereas the Spirit of Christ and Christ himself share "the divine nature that is absolutely identical" (11.77.1).

Mühlen reinforces the point by answering his first question in reference to Vatican II, which plainly asserts that Mary in and of herself does not form a direct relation between believers and Christ. Rather, “all [her] salutary influence . . . rests on the mediation of Christ, depends on it entirely, and draws from it all its efficacy.” However, he does not deny that Mary “foster[s] the immediate union of the faithful with Christ” by being the exemplar of this relation as well as by her maternal intercession.<sup>77</sup> Mühlen’s presupposition is that “there exists an *immediate* relation of believers with Christ and that relation is not procured by Mary.” Mary’s life in Christ by the Spirit draws believers closer to her Son through her example and prayers, but her influence is only indirect, or secondary, rather than direct, or primary (11.77.2).

Mühlen suggests a way of looking at Mary and the church from a fuller, more balanced perspective, that is, in light of the Trinity, of pneumatology as well as Christology. His impetus for proposing a broader approach was the Council’s decision to set aside at least for a time the discussion of the controversial proposed Marian titles Coredemptrix and Mediatrix not only because of the ecumenical problems that they posed but because of the theological prematurity of such a discussion. As himself had realized, theology

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<sup>77</sup>*Lumen gentium* 53, 60, 62–63.

itself—specifically pneumatology—needed to be sufficiently developed first. The Holy Spirit's "cooperation with the redemptive work of Jesus" must first be understood before Mary's role can be (11.83). The placement of the study of Mary within ecclesiology was, for Mühlen, a crucial step taken by Vatican II to open the door to "the rediscovery of the mediatory function of the Spirit of Christ himself, that had been obscured, before the Council, by the discussions on Mary's mediation" (11.83). Mühlen, in effect, suggests a theology that respects the "hierarchy of truths"<sup>78</sup> in which Mariology would fall under the categories of Christology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, as Jelly points out, even though it is important to see truths in their proper context within this

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<sup>78</sup>*Unitatis redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism) 11. Cf. Kilian McDonnell, "The Pros and Cons of Dialogue with Roman Catholics," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2000): 92.

<sup>79</sup>"These truths may be grouped under four basic heads: the mystery of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Creator of all things; the mystery of Christ the incarnate Word, who was born of the Virgin Mary, and who suffered, died, and rose for our salvation; the mystery of the Holy Spirit, who is present in the Church, sanctifying it and guiding it until the glorious coming of Christ, our Savior and Judge; and the mystery of the Church, which is Christ's Mystical Body, in which the Virgin Mary holds the pre-eminent place." Catholic Church, Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, *General Catechetical Directory* (Washington, D.C.: Publications Office, United States Catholic Conference, 1971), 43.

hierarchy, this does not diminish the importance of studying the more peripheral truths since their study sheds light on the central truths.<sup>80</sup>

One way that Mühlen urges the priority of Christ over his mother is by pointing to gospel texts such as Mark 3:34, 35; Luke 2:50, 11:27; and John 2:4 which, he says, indicate an “insurmountable *distance*” between Jesus and Mary (§11.84, his emphasis). In giving her consent at the Annunciation, Mary was incapable of fully understanding the angel’s message, and the same continued to be true for her as Jesus grew and began his ministry. The words Jesus used to address his mother, as recorded in the gospels, often sound cryptic and at times detached, the message that he reiterates is that their flesh-and-blood relationship has far less importance than their spiritual relationship. Jesus challenges Mary’s faith to grow as his ministry progresses. Her life is, as Vatican II describes it, “a

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<sup>80</sup>Frederick Jelly, “Marian Dogmas within Vatican II’s Hierarchy of Truths,” *Marian Studies* 27 (1976): 17–40. Peripheral truths illuminate the central mysteries (29). E. J. Yarnold points out that “The onus is upon Roman Catholics to show how articles of faith about Mary cast light upon the essential Christian beliefs about Christ.” “Marian Dogmas and Reunion,” *The Month* 231 (1971): 177. I would add Catholics should also show how Mary casts light on the Spirit. Non-Catholics are also beginning to see their value. E.g. Jack Mulder, “Why More Christians Should Believe in Mary’s Immaculate Conception,” *Christian Scholars Review* 41 (Winter 2012): 117–134. Chris Green, “Let It Be: Predestination, Salvation, and Divine/Human Agency,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 23, no. 2 (2014): 171–190.

pilgrimage of faith," because since she still did not fully understand (and, indeed, who could have?), she had to walk by faith not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).

Mühlen compares Mary's faith to Abraham's, asserting that, like Abraham, Mary was justified by her faith (Rom. 4:17–21). As Abraham, hoping against hope, obtained the son of promise, even being willing to sacrifice him at God's command, so at the foot of the cross Mary stood fast, hoping against hope. As Abraham is the father of the faith in the Hebrew Scriptures, Mühlen says, so Mary is the mother of the faith in the Christian Scriptures (11.85).

Mühlen outlines the various stages of the discussion regarding Mary's mediation at Vatican II (11.89–11.91), the details of which are beyond the scope of this thesis. What is apropos is that the council fathers recognized the danger of the pre-conciliar emphasis on Mary's mediation, particularly the title *Mediatrix*, detracting both from Christ as unique Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5) and from the Spirit's participation in that one mediation. They concluded that, until the church has more fully determined the Spirit's intermediary role, it should not proceed with determining Mary's. The council fathers left to post-conciliar theologians the task of pursuing the pneumatological studies requisite to any further attempt to formulate what Mary's intercessory role might be. In any case, as Mühlen points out, any intercessory function that Mary has can only be conceptualized as one dependent on and subordinate to that of the Spirit (11.91).



Mühlen goes so far as to describe the pneumatological insufficiencies of the pre-Vatican magisterial texts on Mary's mediation (11.92–11.94). Since again the details are beyond the present scope, let one example illustrate his point, Bernadine of Siena's formulation about Mary's role in the distribution of grace: "Every grace granted to man has three degrees in order; for by God it is communicated to Christ, from Christ it passes to the Virgin, and from the Virgin it descends to us." Leo XIII quoted this in his "On the Rosary" of September 8, 1894 (11.92.1). Since, in his encyclical on the Holy Spirit, *Divinum illud munus* (1897), this pope clearly advances the reverence due to the Holy Spirit, the problem is that he does not integrate his Mariology into his pneumatology (11.92.2). Mühlen's response to this pneumatological deficiency is to point to the Holy Spirit who, as the one who proceeds from the Father and the Son,<sup>81</sup> is sent to be the mediation that unites humanity with God. Any other mediation would have no other grace to offer than what the Spirit of Christ already gives, and so would serve only as a supplemental intercession. Nevertheless, though Mary is not the dispenser of grace as such since Scripture assigns that role to the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4; Heb. 2:4), she has a ministry of intercession in which "she implores the descent of the Holy Spirit, as she has already done, in union with the Apostles,

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<sup>81</sup>As a Catholic, Mühlen naturally thinks in terms of the *filioque*.

before the first Pentecost" (11.94). Vatican II makes clear that it is only in this limited sense that Mary "is invoked in the church (not *by* the church) as Advocate, Help, Auxiliatrix, Mediatrix" (11.94).<sup>82</sup> For Mühlen, then, Mary's role in redemption is a subjective one, distinct from the objective redemptive work of Christ. The Council speaks of this as Mary's cooperation. Mühlen explains it as "a participation in the mediating function of the Holy Spirit" by which "she renders this function *visible* for us, although only in a fragmentary way" (11.94, my trans.).

Mary receives her function in the economy of salvation from the Spirit of Christ who gives himself to her (11.95–11.111). Mühlen identifies two aspects of Mary's function, the first from the viewpoint of her personal acts, which are free and conscious; and the second from that of her constitution as a person who is at God's disposal (Mühlen follows Scheeben here).<sup>83</sup> The second is related to Mary's predestined role as mother of Christ as well as her constitutive function in the church. Mühlen calls this aspect Mary's personological function since it is based

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<sup>82</sup>*Lumen gentium* 62. The parenthetical clarification that the invocation occurs *in* the church, not *by* the church, is Mühlen's commentary inserted into the quotation.

<sup>83</sup>Mühlen explains Scheeben's view of Mary's person as one characterized by "a substantial relation to the person of the Logos." "Der 'Personalcharakter' Mariens," 197.

on the particular character of her personal being, that is, on her transcendental relation to her Son. Mary exists in a transcendental state by which she can act consciously and freely, and, as such, she is the preeminent and most fully graced member of the church who is at the disposal of Christ's Spirit for the edification of Christ's body and who does so in a fully free manner.<sup>84</sup>

Mühlen emphasizes that Mary maintains her liberty even though her relation to the Logos is established at the moment she first becomes a person (when her human spirit is united with her body at conception), since her substantial relation to the Logos might appear to restrict her ability to act freely. However, as Christ's personal struggle in Gethsemane to submit his will to the Father's clearly demonstrated, his freedom was not canceled by the hypostatic union of his human nature to the divine nature (the Logos); similarly, neither does Mary's transcendental relation to the Logos restrict her freedom but rather frees it, allowing her to "[super]naturally" will to do God's will regardless of any personal cost it might entail.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Scheeben, *Mariology*, 181.

<sup>85</sup> Mary's relation to the Logos in Scheeben's proposal is not a hypostatic union, only analogous to one. Christ's human and divine natures are united in a single person; Mary is only one *moral* person with the Spirit. She does not exist in a hypostatic union with the Spirit.

Mühlen is best remembered for his pronominal (I-thou-we) analogy for the Trinity, by which he attempts to place greater emphasis on pneumatology.<sup>86</sup> In the analogy, the “I” is the Father, the “thou” is the Son, and the “we-in-person” is the Spirit who forms both the unity between the Father and the Son (*ad intra*) and the unity between Christ and the church (*ad extra*). Mühlen applies the analogy first to the Trinity and then to ecclesiology, in which the Spirit is the “We” of the many members of the church, among whom Mary is the first and preeminent member.

Mühlen refers to his I-thou-we analogy as personology, based on his understanding of person inherited from Duns Scotus.<sup>87</sup> In Scotus’ view, persons are defined in terms of their transcendental relations. A human being is a person by virtue of the transcendental relation of the person’s spirit to her body. Because of that relation, a human person has the capacity to act personally, that is, freely and consciously. A human person also has the potential for a transcendental

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<sup>86</sup>Although his model does not succeed any more than Augustine’s or Richard of St. Victor’s in providing a personal category for the Spirit, since *we* implies a plurality of persons rather than an individual person, Mühlen did formulate a new way of conceptualizing the Trinity which may yet yield fruit. Hughson, “I-Thou-We,” 238.

<sup>87</sup>Mühlen, *Sein und Person nach Johannes Duns Scotus: Beitrag zur Grundlegung einer Metaphysik der Person* (Werl: Dietrich-Coelde-Verlag, 1954). Here I rely on David Coffey in *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 77–78.

relation with God by the Spirit. When such a relation is established, the divine Spirit raises the person beyond her human nature—supernaturalizing her—such that her acts are expressions of her orientation to the *logos* (word) to which she is related. Mühlen describes the acts of a supernaturalized person as personological, not just personal. Though the term personology is somewhat misleading since it suggests a psychological study (-logy) of persons,<sup>88</sup> the distinction Mühlen makes between personal and personological is helpful because it provides a conceptual framework for distinguishing between the acts of a person who is related transcendentally to God from those of a person without that relation.

Although Mühlen does not draw out the mariological implications of his I-thou-we analogy as one might expect, it is easy to imagine how he might have done so. His “we” can be used to conceptualize how the Spirit unites Mary with the other members of the church and enlists them in doing the things the Spirit does such as interceding and comforting since in doing these things they act personologically, that is, in union with the Spirit.<sup>89</sup> They do not act under their

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<sup>88</sup>Vondey, *Heribert Mühlen*, 92n135.

<sup>89</sup>The problem has been that Mary’s cooperation with the Holy Spirit is quite often unacknowledged, giving the impression that the work is Mary’s, not the Spirit’s.

own initiative but as prompted and empowered by the Spirit. In union with the “we” of the Spirit, Mary’s orientation is turned toward the Spirit who invites, even urges her participation in the ministry of the Spirit (1 Pet. 4:10–11).

### *Summary*

Although the “we” analogy for the Spirit falls short of what Mühlen had intended, as Coffey and others demonstrate,<sup>90</sup> it is nevertheless a strong reminder that the Spirit’s personhood must be understood primarily in relational terms rather than in terms of individual and incommunicable subsistence (or existence), since one of the primary functions, if not the primary function, of the Spirit is to communicate the life of God. As the divine *Pneuma* breathed the life of God into Adam at creation and into Mary at her conception, so the Spirit breathes the life of God through the sacraments and the other means of grace of which persons of faith and good will avail themselves to express their longing to participate in the life of God by the Spirit. Mühlen himself explains why this “openness to grace” is so important:

One becomes a Christian not only through infant baptism and education, but just as much by means of a total, personal acceptance of Christ as Lord. Not just reason, nor will, nor emotion will do. The *whole person* must be involved. Today we must reach back to the experiences of the early

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<sup>90</sup>Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 134–139.

Church and their re-actualization to transform the present-day Church. The acceptance of the longed-for intervention of God in the history of the Church will, therefore, not be possible without a new devotion to Mary, who is in fact the historical beginning of the fundamental Christian charismatic experience.<sup>91</sup>

## Conclusions

Scheeben, Bulgakov, and Mühlen all contribute significantly to a pneumatological understanding of Mary. For Scheeben, Mary, is the bridal mother who forms one *moral* person with the Spirit. For Bulgakov, she is Theotokos and Pneumatophor, God-bearer and Spirit-bearer, the Burning Bush whose humanity is aflame with divinity of both the Son and the Spirit but is not consumed. For Mühlen, Mary, who is related transcendently to the Logos by the Spirit, has been supernaturalized, so that she acts in union with the Spirit and the other members of the church to minister charismatically to others. Scheeben's conceptualization of Mary's relation to the Spirit as a moral union, Mühlen's attempt to correct the excesses in Catholic Marian thought (to say nothing of his attempt to find a more personal way of conceptualizing the personhood of the Spirit), and Bulgakov's retrieval of Burning Bush and Pneumatophor as Marian titles all contribute to the overall thesis of a Spirit-baptized Mary.

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<sup>91</sup>"New Directions in Mariology," *Theology Digest* 24, no. 3 (1976): 292. Originally published in German as "Der Aufbruch einer neuen Verehrung Marias," *Catholica* 29, nos. 2/3 (1975): 145–163.

## Chapter 8:

### The Spirit-Baptized Mary: A Constructive Proposal

#### Introduction

To introduce this constructive proposal, let me express my appreciation for two ecumenists who profoundly influenced me as a fledgling Catholic and aspiring theologian, Br. Jeffrey Gros<sup>1</sup> and Ralph Del Colle. Both epitomized the best of Catholic scholarship and spirituality. Both have departed this life.<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Br. Gros for his ecumenical example and the kind, gracious friendship and encouragement he unfailingly extended to so many of us. I greatly admired Del Colle's adroitness and incisive precision with which he addressed theological issues, his facility in clarifying the subtleties of Scholastic thought, and his simple yet deeply profound spirituality. I consider both dear brothers in Christ.

These two devout Catholics rarely mentioned Mary, at least not at the Society for Pentecostal Studies where we became acquainted. As attuned as they were to the sensibilities of their non-Catholic brothers and sisters, they were reluctant to bring up controversial subjects except when they were germane to the topic at hand. However, I recently re-read a statement by Del Colle in which

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<sup>1</sup>Jeffrey Gros' CV: <https://lewisu.academia.edu/JeffreyGros>.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph left us in 2012, and Br. Jeff in 2013.



he expressed his intent to express his thoughts about Mary more: "At the appropriate time . . . I might make more explicit what I think is already implicit in my theological discussions with Pentecostals, namely, Mary's *exemplificatio* of holiness and the efficacy of her presence and intercession in the life of the church."<sup>3</sup> Four years later he published an article devoted to the topic of Mary, and in the last essay he wrote, he mentioned Mary again.<sup>4</sup> While many other theologians have also inspired me, the reason I mention these two dear brothers here is that Br. Gros' example helped to inspire this attempt to treat Mary ecumenically and Del Colle's Spirit-Christology was what first prompted the idea of a Spirit-Mariology and served as the initial impetus for this dissertation.

### *Spirit-Mariology*

Let me briefly explain how Spirit-Christology led me to consider a Spirit-Mariology. The traditional approach to Christology has been more from a Logos perspective, which the church took to counter challenges to Christ's divinity.

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<sup>3</sup>Ralph Del Colle, Amos Yong, Dale Irvin, and Frank Macchia, "Christ and Spirit: Dogma, Discernment, and Dialogical Theology in a Religiously Plural World," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 12, no. 1 (2003): 43.

<sup>4</sup>Del Colle, "Mary, the Unwelcome (?) Guest in Catholic/ Pentecostal Dialogue," *Pneuma* 29 (2007): 214–225. Del Colle, "Spirit Christology: Dogmatic Issues," in *A Man of the Church: Honoring the Theology, Life, and Witness of Ralph Del Colle*, ed. Michel Barnes (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2012), 7–19.

Unfortunately, this one-sided approach had drawbacks, of which I mention only one here. The emphasis on the Logos, which was made to combat adoptionistic tendencies in the first centuries, emphasizing Christ's divinity over his humanity, had the inadvertent effect of distancing him from the rest of humanity. If Christ lived a sinless life and performed miracles simply by virtue of his divine nature, then how could anyone ever hope to emulate him? Spirit-Christology, however, proposes that Jesus in his kenotic humanity was dependent on the Holy Spirit to overcome temptation and to take authority over evil forces. He did not rely solely on his divine "Logos" nature.<sup>5</sup> The pastoral advantage of Spirit-Christology is that Jesus is understood as a human being like others who lived in dependence on the Holy Spirit, and thus provides a model that may be emulated by those who are receptive to the indwelling and empowering of the Spirit.

It is important to bear in mind, however, as Del Colle insists, that Spirit-Christology does not replace Logos Christology but only supplements it, balancing the theological scales, so to speak, between Christ's divinity and his

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<sup>5</sup>Gary Badcock concurs that scholastic theology saw Christ's anointing—or unction—as being primarily a function of the Logos. In the hypostatic union, Jesus' humanity is "anointed" by the divine nature. The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus, in this schema, is "secondary and derivative." *Light of Truth and Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 146.

humanity.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the Spirit-Mariology I propose is intended to be a complement to traditional Mariology, not a replacement. This is because Mary's relationship with Christ is ontological. In being born of her, Christ became flesh of her flesh. Christ and Mary are ontologically linked not only through the flesh, Christ having inherited Mary's genetic material, but also through the Spirit, Mary having conceived Christ by the Spirit. That Christ's humanity is derived from Mary's is a part of the teaching of the apostles. Further, because Mary was indwelt by Christ she was forever marked by the presence of divinity within her. Exactly how and to what degree the presence of Christ within her transformed her is part of the mystery of Mary that the traditional church has been contemplating for the last two millennia. A Spirit-Mariology, however, adds the

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<sup>6</sup>Ralph Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit: Spirit-Christology in Trinitarian Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3–4, 147–149. Del Colle, "Spirit-Christology: Dogmatic Foundations for Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3 (1993): 91–112: "The primary issue is how to acknowledge the pneumatological dimension of Christology without utilizing it to displace *logos*-Christologies and their trinitarian outcome. It is a question of complementarity and enrichment rather than wholesale reconstruction and revision of traditional Christology" (98). Cf. Harold Hunter, "Spirit Christology: Dilemma and Promise," *Heythrop Journal* 24, no. 2 (1983): 127–140. Cf. David Coffey, "Spirit Christology and the Trinity," in *Advents of the Spirit: An Introduction to the Current Study of Pneumatology*, eds. Bradford Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney, 315–338 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 325.

perspective of the Spirit: how and to what degree did the overshadowing of the Spirit transform her?

I should point out, however, that a Spirit-Mariology is not a true parallel to Spirit-Christology since Mary is only human, not both human and divine as her Son is; however, like the humanity of her Son, Mary was dependent on the Holy Spirit. A pneumatological approach to Mary is important because over the centuries Mary has been primarily understood christologically rather than pneumatologically. In the last three chapters I have presented theologians who recognized the pneumatological aspects of Mary, but the fact is most traditional reflection on Mary centered on her relation to her Son rather than to the Spirit.<sup>7</sup> The result has been that Mary has been understood primarily in terms of her privileges as the highly exalted Theotokos rather than as the humble young woman of Nazareth whose entire life was lived by the Spirit. This is not to deny the privileges that the church has proposed for Mary, but to indicate that Mary can be an exemplar of faith and holiness for ordinary men or women when she is seen, like her Son, as a person totally dependent on the Holy Spirit, doing nothing except in cooperation with the Spirit.

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<sup>7</sup>Carl Baechle, "The Christological Roots of Cappadocian Mariology: Mary as Theotokos and Perpetual Virgin," *Diakonia* 34 (2001), 35–50. Najeeb George Awad, "'The Holy Spirit Will Come upon You': The Doctrine of the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit," *Theological Review* 28, no. 1 (2007): 23–45.

In presenting Mary as Spirit-overshadowed and Spirit-baptized, I give an overview of the insights regarding Mary in relation to the Spirit in the earlier chapters by first briefly summarizing the findings of the biblical chapters (2–4), and then the historical chapters (5–7). I then proceed to my construction of a Spirit-Mariology, that is, a study of Mary in relation to the Spirit, specifically a Spirit-overshadowed, Spirit-baptized Mary.

The motif I have chosen to envision the relation of Mary to the Spirit—Spirit-baptism—is a metaphor that enables a portrayal of Mary’s person as one so infused with the Spirit that her entire life becomes a life in the Spirit. I use metaphorical language as well as abstract in presenting this proposal as I see it as an appeal to the Christian imagination as well as to reason.<sup>8</sup> Here I speak of a

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<sup>8</sup>Del Colle admits to a Catholic imagination but suggests that the Catholic and Pentecostal imaginations have points of convergence. At one point he asks, “Is the Catholic/Orthodox imagination too distant from the Pentecostal one in this regard?” “Unwelcome (?) Guest,” 217–218, 223. The crucial role of imagination as well as reason in considering doctrines with which one tends to disagree is noted by Bruce Marshall in his essay, “The Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian,” in *A Man of the Church: Honoring the Life, Theology, and Witness of Ralph Del Colle*, ed. Michel René Barnes (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2012), 35 of 23–39. Marshall cites John Henry Newman as making the same point. “Faith and Private Judgment,” in *Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations* (London: Longmans, 1849), 204. “The heart is commonly reached, not through reason but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, by description. Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us.” Newman, *An Essay in Aid of A Grammar of Assent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 89–90.

Christian imagination here rather than a Catholic one (despite the root meaning of Catholic: universal) because it is my hope that followers of Christ of all traditions will ask the Holy Spirit to open their minds and hearts to this concept of Mary as a way we may all think together about Mary in order to love and honor her together appropriately.

A Christian imagination is essentially a pneumatological imagination,<sup>9</sup> one that is set at liberty by the Spirit of truth to seek truth wherever it may be found, even from the other denominations and traditions. Such an imagination is necessarily humble, bold, and loving: humble because it is willing to learn from the other, bold because it is willing to expand its horizons, and loving because it is compelled by the Spirit to seek the unity for which Christ prayed and gave his life (John 17:22–23; Eph. 2:14; 4:3).

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<sup>9</sup>According to Yong, the imagination is “the vehicle through which the self negotiates its engagement with the other so that both self and other are brought into a new relationship such that each is no longer opposed to the other” (*Spirit-Word-Community*, 222). He cautions, however, that “it is important not to exalt the human imagination as an autonomous faculty or human freedom as an autonomous activity,” since “as contingent creatures . . . human beings are also fully dependent on and related to God, or, for our purposes, the Spirit of God” (229). While “in the Spirit . . . the horizons of what are at the edge of our experiential possibilities continuously expand,” giving broader range to the imagination, Yong points that the imagination also has “a self-critical component” that serves a “corrective function” (229). In other words, the Spirit who widens our horizons is the same Spirit who corrects and gives discernment. So, while free to soar, the pneumatological imagination is also responsive to the guidance of the Spirit that would keep it from error.

Please note that my motive here is not to convince readers to embrace the Marian doctrines but rather to encourage them to open their imagination as well as their intellect, and, should the Spirit so lead them, their heart to Mary, if they have not already done so, because only in doing so will they be able to appreciate the faith and logic of which these doctrines are an expression and, more importantly, find room in their minds and hearts to honor and welcome Mary into their lives as Elizabeth did, as Christ himself did, and as the beloved disciple did when Christ bequeathed her to him from the Cross.

Following the presentation of the Spirit-baptized Mary, I discuss the implications of such a Mary for the concept of Spirit-baptism for Pentecostals and others and then conclude with implications for mothers, families, and women in ministry.

### *Mary in the Gospels and the Apocalypse: A Review*

The chapters that treat Mary and the Spirit in the Gospels demonstrate that the evangelists see Mary and her motherhood in pneumatological terms. Matthew's view is consistent with Luke's that Mary's conception of Christ was of the Spirit, not of man, and portrays her as the fulfillment of the mothers in his genealogy who by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8) overcame their ethnic and/or moral ineligibility to become women of the Spirit whom God honored by

choosing them to become mothers of Israel, matriarchs in the line of David and of Christ. The irony is that despite the outward appearance of ineligibility due to the unusual circumstances of Jesus' conception, Mary meets every criterion for messianic motherhood.<sup>10</sup>

Luke's witness to Mary's relation to the Spirit is the most personal of all the evangelists' and the most essential to this thesis. He begins with the angelic message that the Holy Spirit would come upon Mary and the power of the Most High would overshadow her (Luke 1:35), paralleling the language in Acts 1:8 that the apostles would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. At the Annunciation, or immediately thereafter, Mary experiences the first, hidden Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit upon her that results in Christ's conception. This first Pentecost anticipates the second, fuller Pentecost in which the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Acts 2:17–18; Joel 2:28–29). After Elizabeth's Spirit-filled confirmation that Mary was the mother of her Lord, Mary rejoices in a prophetic song of thanksgiving for the great things God has done for her personally as well as for the reversal of fortunes by which the poor and

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<sup>10</sup>Even though the genealogies in the Gospels cannot be historically verified as indicating Mary's Davidic roots, Matthew's, at least, does indicate Joseph to be the descendent of David; and therefore Mary does meet the criteria since she has married into his family.



humble will be exalted and the rich and powerful abased and for God's mercy in remembering, i.e., keeping his promises to Abraham.

Using a more theological approach, the Johannine evangelist confirms Luke's understanding of Mary as Spirit-baptized by pointing to her faith and her indissoluble bond to Christ by the Spirit that was so strongly evident at Jesus' first miracle at Cana and at the Cross from which Christ endorsed her spiritual motherhood. Then, in the Apocalypse, John the revelator portrays Mary (the corporate figure of the church as well as the woman) as a cosmic figure, clothed with the sun, the moon at her feet, her head crowned with twelve stars, yet still linked by the Spirit to the earth and to "the rest of her offspring." She births a Son who is to "rule all the nations with a rod of iron" (Rev. 12:5; cf. 11:15–18). Her mortal enemy the dragon, having sought, in vain, to devour her Son, tries to destroy her instead, and, failing that, makes "war on the rest of her offspring."

This passage portrays the personal and the corporate Mary eschatologically. Though no longer confined to earth, Mary still identifies with the suffering church, with whom she is united by the Spirit in the communion of the saints. Along with all the saints in heaven and on earth (the bride, the new Jerusalem),<sup>11</sup> Mary joins in the prayer of the Spirit for the coming of the

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<sup>11</sup>Rev. 19:7–8. Thomas, *Apocalypse*, 683.

bridegroom, at whose appearing all suffering will cease (Rev. 21:4), since Eden will be restored and God's servants will see his face (Rev. 22:4).

*Marian Titles from History: A Review*

As is evident in the historical chapters, Mary has been known by a number of titles that represent the major Marian doctrines and dogmas that the ancient churches East and West have embraced over the centuries. Among the more prominent are the New Eve, Ever Virgin, Theotokos, and Daughter of Zion. The New Eve<sup>12</sup> is the role Mary has played whereby God uses her obedience to reverse the effects of the Fall, which her predecessor had precipitated through disobedience. Whereas, at creation, God took Eve from Adam's side to be his companion, and Adam declared her "flesh of my flesh" and "mother of all living" (Gen. 2:18, 23; 3:20); in the restoration Christ came from Mary's womb, thus becoming flesh of her flesh (and she, in turn, becoming spirit of his Spirit), thereby establishing a spiritual family of which he is head and of which he names Mary mother (John 19:27).

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<sup>12</sup>The concept of Mary as the New Eve began as early as Justin, Tertullian, and Irenaeus. As mentioned, both Ephrem and Jacob emphasized it. John Henry Newman, "A Letter Addressed to the Rev. E. B. Pusey," in *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching Considered* (London: Pickering, 1876), 33–35.

The church declared Mary Ever Virgin (*Aeiparthenos*) for the same reason she declared her Theotokos, in acknowledgement of her Son's divinity. The title is inclusive of the Virgin Birth (or, more precisely, the virginal conception), but adds the miraculous preservation of Mary's virginity during birth and her choice to live virginally thereafter,<sup>13</sup> since, due to her sacred status as Mother of the Lord, it is only fitting that she be totally consecrated to God, a holy vessel dedicated to sacred use only. *Panagia* (All-Holy), a title used primarily in the East, denotes Mary's holiness, which, like Ever Virgin, is based on the fittingness that the mother of the Holy One (Luke 1:35) be herself holy.

Theotokos, which literally means "God-bearer" but is usually translated in English as "Mother of God," is the title bestowed on Mary at the Council of Ephesus (431) in affirmation of Christ's divinity against Nestorius' claim that Mary was mother of Christ (*christotokos*) only, not of God. Still another title,

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<sup>13</sup>Mary's perpetual virginity is a Catholic dogma. The virginal conception was accepted (*ante partum*) in the first century, and her virginity *in partu* (during childbirth) and *post partum* (after) were affirmed by both Ambrose and Augustine. Ambrose, *Letters*, 1-91, trans. Sister Mary Melchior Beyenka, FC, 26 (Baltimore: CUA Press, 1954), letters 32, 44, 59. Augustine, *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. Mary Sarah Muldowney, FC, 38 (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1959), s. 186.1; s. 196.1. PL 38.999, 1019. Thomas Aquinas refers to this preservation of Mary's virginity as miraculous. *Summa theologiae* 3.28.2, ad. 3.

Daughter Zion,<sup>14</sup> is given to Mary as she represents the faithful of all generations who long for the consolation of God, the restoration of Israel promised through the prophets.<sup>15</sup> Even as, in Paul's allegory, the mother of Isaac, the son of promise, symbolizes "the Jerusalem above," the free woman who bears children "according to the Spirit," so the church has also come to see Mary as, by analogy, the Jerusalem from above, the mother of all born according to the Spirit (Gal. 4:21–31), since her son, like Sarah's, was a son of promise according to the Spirit. As Daughter Zion and the Jerusalem from above, Mary represents both the church and the people of Israel.

I allude to these titles here because they, and the doctrines they represent, are integral to historic Marian thought. Although unacknowledged explicitly in these titles, the Holy Spirit is intrinsic to what they assert about Mary. As the

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<sup>14</sup>Ezekiel envisions Jerusalem (Zion) restored as a holy city set on a high mountain (Ezek. 40:2), wherein God dwells (Psa. 87:1–2): "This is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever" (Ezek. 43:7; "The LORD Is There," 48:35). J. Andrew Dearman, "Daughter Zion and Her Place in God's Household," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 31 (2009): 144–159. Magnar Kartveit, *Rejoice, Dear Zion!: Hebrew Construct Phrases with "Daughter" and "Virgin" as Nomen Regens* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 133–137.

<sup>15</sup>Isa. 62:1–5; Ezek. 6:8ff.; 12:16; 14:22; Mic. 4:8ff; Zeph. 3:4; Zech. 2:10; 9:9; Luke 2:25; John 12:15; Matt. 21:5. Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger) follows René Laurentin in linking Mary to Zeph. 3:14–17. *Daughter Zion*, 42–43. Laurentin, *Structure*; Laurentin, *Short Treatise*.

New Eve, and as Daughter Zion, Mary is mother of all born of the Spirit. She becomes Theotokos by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. She is Ever Virgin and *Panagia* by the consecration and sanctification of the Spirit. The same Spirit who inspired the Testaments unites them in Mary, the Daughter Zion who by the Spirit becomes both the mother of the Messiah and the first Christian, i.e. the first to be born of the Spirit. Her person embodies the people of God who faithfully await “the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38). That Mary’s relation to the Spirit was not explicitly articulated in these titles is an indicator of the historical underdevelopment of pneumatology, particularly in the West; and it was realization of this inadequacy that prompted Paul VI to encourage more reflection on Mary in relation to the Spirit:

It is sometimes said that many spiritual writings today do not sufficiently reflect the whole doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit. It is the task of specialists to verify and weigh the truth of this assertion, but it is our task to exhort everyone, especially those in the pastoral ministry and also theologians, to meditate more deeply on the working of the Holy Spirit in the history of salvation, and to ensure that Christian spiritual writings give due prominence to His life-giving action. Such a study will bring out in particular the hidden relationship between the Spirit of God and the Virgin of Nazareth, and show the influence they exert on the Church. From a more profound meditation on the truths of the Faith will flow a more vital piety.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>*Marialis cultus* §27. This is not to say that the church fathers never speak of Mary in relation to the Spirit. Hear, for example, what Augustine says about Mary in a sermon on the nativity: “Let us consider who is this virgin, so holy, that the Holy Spirit deigned to come to her; so beautiful, that God chose her for His Spouse; so fruitful, that the whole world receives of her bringing forth; so

Four Marian titles that can help to fill this pneumatological gap are Temple of the Holy Spirit, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Burning Bush, and Spirit-Bearer (Pneumatophor). The first title, Temple of the Holy Spirit,<sup>17</sup> or similar forms such as Sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, was used by Ildefonus in the seventh century, Hugh in the twelfth, and Scheeben in the nineteenth. The title Spouse of the Holy Spirit came later, although the idea of an espousal of Mary to the Spirit was also early.<sup>18</sup> Francis and Clare of Assisi popularized the title Spouse of the Holy Spirit,<sup>19</sup> which Scheeben later synthesized with “Mother of God” to

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chaste that she is virgin after childbirth.” *Sermo de Nativitate Domini* 121.5, in *Inter opera Sancta Augustini*: ET Daniel Doyle, “Mary, Mother of God,” 542 of 542–545, in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). Cf. Thomas Livius, *The Blessed Virgin in the Fathers of the First Six Centuries* (London: Burns & Oates, 1893), 276. *Nota bene*: I have not been able to find the Latin text or confirm the authorship.

<sup>17</sup>As chs. 2–3 indicate, Jacob of Serug calls Mary the “purest shrine in the world,” while Ildefonsus calls her the sanctuary of the Spirit. Hugh also calls Mary the temple of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>18</sup>Methodius (d. ca. 311) was perhaps the first to formulate the concept of Mary’s betrothal to the Holy Spirit (“Holy Spirit betrothing Mary unto himself and sanctifying her”). *De Simeone et Anna*, PG 18.347–382; “Oration on Simeon and Anna,” ANF 6:385. Prudentius (348–405) also spoke of Mary’s relation to the Spirit as an espousal (“the unwed virgin espoused the Spirit,” *innuba virgo nubit spiritui*). *Apotheosis*, lines 571–572. PL 59.969A. As indicated in ch. 6, Amadeus in the twelfth century referred to the Spirit as the bridegroom and spouse of Mary.

<sup>19</sup>Francis popularized the title and shared it with Clare (1194–1253), proposing Mary as spouse of the Holy Spirit as exemplar for virgins. Office of the Passion, Compline, Antiphon 2; Form of Life Given to Saint Clare and Her Sisters

formulate his principle of Mariology, “bridal motherhood.” Burning Bush has been used for Mary for many centuries but most often in reference to the indwelling of the Son rather than to that of the Spirit (e.g., Amadeus). Bulgakov has re-imagined the Burning Bush as Mary on fire with the Holy Spirit. The last title Pneumatophor (Spirit-bearer), or its feminine form *Pneumatophora*, has only recently been retrieved for Mary by Bulgakov and Bilaniuk, as mentioned in the previous chapter. John Paul II has also used both Burning Bush and Pneumatophor in reference to Mary.<sup>20</sup> Since three of these titles are explicitly pneumatic, and one, Burning Bush, suggests itself as a metaphor for Spirit-baptism, their retrieval would help in the attempt to understand Mary pneumatologically.

### *Marian Insights from History: A Review*

In addition to the titles there are a number of mariological insights to be garnered from the historical chapters, some of which also have implications for other theological loci. The first insight I will mention is that while the coming of

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1. Clare included the title in her Rule (6.2). *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. Regis Armstrong and Ignatius Brady (New York: Paulist Press, 1982). Dwight Longenecker and David Gustafson discuss the problematic nature of the title in *Mary: A Catholic Evangelical Debate* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003), 79–94.

<sup>20</sup>*Redemptoris Mater* 9, 26.

the Holy Spirit upon Mary was primarily to effect the incarnation, it also had a sanctifying effect on her personally. With this is a correlating insight into the economic Trinity, namely, that the coming of the Holy Spirit logically precedes the coming of the Logos in Mary, i.e., the Spirit's overshadowing is prior to conception. Note that I use the words *precede* and *prior* not in the sense of time but rather in the sense of logical sequence.<sup>21</sup> This logical pneumatological precedence suggests the possibility of an equalizing factor that would balance the priority of the Son to the Spirit inherent to the *filioque*, assuming that the economic Trinity does indeed reflect the immanent Trinity.<sup>22</sup>

Another insight is that Mary is empowered by grace to actively participate in her own sanctification. Sanctifying grace not only inclines Mary's will toward God and toward the highest good but frees it, allowing it to actively participate in the work that the Holy Spirit does in her. This has implications for both soteriology and for theological anthropology. It suggests the possibility and perhaps even the necessity of continuous progression in holiness. A person's intellect, volition, and affections are restored, i.e., illumined, freed, purified, by

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<sup>21</sup>Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 42.

<sup>22</sup>Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* trans. J. F. Donceel (New York: Burns & Oates, 1970), 22.



the Spirit to the point that they can assist in the transformation process rather than detract from it.

Another insight is that the Holy Spirit affects Mary not merely through created grace, the impersonal something that Catholics generally refer to as sanctifying grace, but also through uncreated grace, the personal coming of the Spirit on Mary in a Pentecostal, existential sense. In this understanding of the Spirit, the Spirit not only gives gifts but presents the gift of self to Mary. Mary is indwelt by the person of the Spirit even as she was indwelt by the unborn Son of God. This has implications for pneumatology, specifically, the personhood of the Holy Spirit. It also implies a proper mission for the Spirit, a notion that David Coffey has championed.<sup>23</sup>

Another insight is Mary's elevation above nature by the Spirit. Mary's life as described by theologians over the centuries suggests that, overshadowed by the Spirit, Mary lived a supernatural life, one that exhibited many of the same virtues and graces Christ himself manifested, yet with considerably fewer, or less apparent, charisms. Yet there were limitations to this supernaturalization since Christ as well as Mary had a mortal body that exhibited signs of human weakness such as weariness, hunger, and thirst, as well as a soul that

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<sup>23</sup>David Coffey, "A Proper Mission," 227–250. Coffey, *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2011); Coffey, "'The 'Incarnation' of the Holy Spirit in Christ," *Theological Studies* 45 (1984): 466–480.

experienced heartache and at one time at least an overwhelming sense of abandonment. Mary herself struggled to understand, was anxious for the safety of her Son, and even attempted to intervene when it was no longer her place to do so, yet despite these human weaknesses (which were not sinful in themselves), she was faithful even to the Cross. Such is the paradox of supernatural living in a fallen world.

The insight that the theologians have given through their emphasis on Mary's virginity is twofold. First and foremost is its indication of Christ's divinity. For a human mother to bear such a Son requires an awareness of the dignity of such an office. As the sacred vessel that contained God of very God in person demands nothing less than one's total consecration. Though God initially consecrated Mary through electing her from before the foundation of the world to be the mother of his Son, and then miraculously preserved her virginity through conception and childbirth, Mary had a part in that consecration once she became old enough. That is why the theologians over the centuries have believed that Mary was inspired of the Holy Spirit to take a vow of virginity even before her betrothal to Joseph and why she remained in a virginal state after Christ's birth. The Catholic and Orthodox have traditionally interpreted this to indicate that the celibate/virginal life is to be preferred to the married state as it allows persons to be more fully available to answer God's call (1 Cor. 7:7).

Still another insight from these theologians comes from the multifarious images that they use to imagine Spirit-baptism. Ephrem associates Spirit-baptism with water baptism: as the physical water flows over the body in water baptism, so the water of the Spirit flows over the soul in Spirit-baptism. Ildefonsus imagines Mary's experience of the Spirit as a sober inebriation. Amadeus sees the relationship between Mary and the Spirit as an espousal whose conjugal embrace is a breath and a kiss. Hildegard describes the effect of the Spirit on Mary using such metaphorical terms such as greening, ointment and healing, fire and warmth, and dew and moisture. All these attempts indicate the ineffability of Spirit-baptism. While Luke indicates that the primary purpose of Spirit-baptism is empowerment for witness, the full implications for human persons in terms of sanctity and spirituality has yet to be fully studied, although Frank Macchia has certainly helped us to move forward in that direction.<sup>24</sup>

The representative modern theologians in chapter 7 have continued the task of clarifying the role of the Spirit in Mary's life (and in humanity in general). Scheeben, for example, has developed Mariology in trinitarian terms: Mary is daughter of the Father, bridal mother of the Son, and spouse and temple of the Holy Spirit. Scheeben also suggests that not only does Mary have a substantial union with the Son, but that she also has a moral union with the Spirit. This has

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<sup>24</sup>Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*.

implications for pneumatology in that he envisions the person of the Holy Spirit in relational terms rather than relying on the abstract terminology traditionally used for personhood such as individual and incommunicable subsistence or existence. Bulgakov's major contributions are his explanation of *theosis* in terms of "divine humanity" and his revival of the images of Pneumatophor and Burning Bush for Mary. Mühlen represents the attempt of Vatican II to correct Catholic excess by emphasizing pneumatology. For Mühlen, Mary is related transcendently to the Logos by the Spirit, and is thus supernaturalized in such a way that she acts in union with the Spirit and the other members of the church to minister charismatically to others. His contribution to pneumatology is his effort to enhance the personhood of the Spirit by his use of "We" as the trinitarian counterpart of the "I" of the Father and the "Thou" of the Son.<sup>25</sup> Together the theologians demonstrate that Mary has throughout church history been seen in pneumatological as well as christological terms, and therefore the attempt to further understand Mary in relation to the Spirit is actually nothing new. It is gratifying to think that one is joining in one of the on-going theological projects of the last two millennia, that is, to better understand the operation of

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<sup>25</sup>I also see his "We-in-person" as being helpful in explaining the concept of the communion of the saints.

the Spirit in Mary and thereby better understand the operation of the Spirit in all human persons.

### Imagining a Spirit-Baptized Mary

Keeping in mind what the Scriptures and the tradition have said about Mary from a pneumatological perspective, I now attempt a re-conceptualization of Mary in relation to the Spirit by using Spirit-baptism,<sup>26</sup> a motif brought to prominence during the modern Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal, as a way for Christians, regardless of tradition, to reflect on Mary together. Since virtually every church or denomination that comprises the body of Christ universal, has, to some extent, been impacted by the renewal, it seems almost intuitive to use what is arguably its primary theological distinctive—Spirit-baptism—to conceptualize what God has done in Mary by the Spirit. Hopefully, this re-conceptualization of Mary will prove to be more mutually acceptable for all

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<sup>26</sup>Del Colle considers the potential of Spirit-baptism, a Pentecostal distinctive, in dialogue with the traditional Catholic understanding of sanctification in “The Pursuit of Holiness: A Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 37, no. 3/4 (2000): 301–320. “The long history of spiritualities within Catholicism, along with its venerable theological tradition that has attempted to think all things human on its journey from God and to God, is continually challenged by the catholicity of human experience and personhood. Pentecostalism, in its apocalyptic freshness and comparative youth, explores ways to rekindle the passion with which it began and that still irrupts in its midst. To suggest that each is in need of the other is to state the obvious” (320).

concerned, including Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Catholics, and Orthodox, even though not all will agree on specific points of doctrine.

### *Review of Other Marian Proposals*

Other scholars have foreseen the ecumenical potential of the Spirit-baptism metaphor, among them D. Lyle Dabney who calls it “a central New Testament metaphor for the entirety of salvation.”<sup>27</sup> As mentioned earlier, Frank Macchia has written a treatise on Spirit-baptism as a comprehensive soteriological metaphor, linking it particularly with eschatology.<sup>28</sup>

As for proposals for a pneumatological Mary, Paul VI called for a study of the relation between Mary and the Spirit, while John Paul II spoke of Mary as bearing “in herself, like no other member of the human race, that ‘glory of grace’ [the Spirit] which the Father ‘has bestowed on us in his beloved Son.’”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>D. Lyle Dabney, “‘He Will Baptize You in the Holy Spirit’: Recovering a Metaphor for a Contemporary Pneumatological Soteriology” (paper presented at the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Okla., March 8–10, 2001). An edited version is published in *Man of the Church: Honoring the Theology, Life, and Witness of Ralph Del Colle*, ed. Michel Barnes (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 176–184.

<sup>28</sup>Macchia, *Baptized*.

<sup>29</sup>Paul VI, *Marialis cultus*; John Paul II, *Redemptoris mater*. Sieme LaSoul analyzes the relation of Mary and the Spirit in *Marialis cultus*, while Jaroslaw Jasianek studies Mary in relation to the Spirit in the thought of both Paul VI and

Anthony Tambasco, citing concerns about “overly zealous” and “exaggerated” Mariologies, explains them as a result of a descending Mariology, that is, a “Mariology ‘from above,’” which suggests the possible antidote of an ascending Mariology, or a Mariology from below, which looks at Mary not from the perspective of her unique prerogatives and privileges but from that of her human challenges that require her to rely on the Holy Spirit to face them courageously and perseveringly.<sup>30</sup>

Among the other proposals for a pneumatological Mary, perhaps the most prominent is that of Elizabeth Johnson, who calls Mary “Spirit-filled” and a woman of the Spirit. Ultimately, however, her vision of a liberated Mary eclipses her pneumatological Mary as she asks Mary to descend from her pedestal to join in the struggle against patriarchalism. It is as though Johnson’s sees Mary’s high

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John Paul II. For Jasianek, authentic Marian devotion is directed toward the Holy Spirit as the one who spiritualized her. Jean-Pierre Sieme LaSoul, *La Sainte Vierge Marie et l’Esprit Saint dans la “Marialis Cultus”* (Rome: Tesi di Dottorato in Sacra Teologia con specializzazione in Mariologia, 1998). Jasianek, “Hacia una Mariología Pneumatológica: La Relación entre el Espíritu Santo y María en la Teología Posconciliar” (PhD diss., Universidad de Navarra, 2002). Jasianek, “Principio Pneumatológico del Culto Mariano,” *Scripta Theologica* 35, no. 3 (2003): 889–902 at 902. Jasianek, “La Presencia del Espíritu Santo en la Maternidad de María,” *Scripta Theologica* 38, no. 2 (2006): 671–700.

<sup>30</sup>Anthony Tambasco, *What Are They Saying About Mary?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 6, 8, 10.

status as the projection of men rather than God.<sup>31</sup> In her attempt to free Mariology from the patriarchal hold of Christology by substituting pneumatology, Johnson presents Mary as sister rather than mother, friend of God rather than handmaid, and prophet rather than virgin,<sup>32</sup> for, overlooking their prominence in Scripture, Johnson sees handmaid, virgin, and mother as having been co-opted in a patriarchal stratagem to subordinate women.<sup>33</sup>

In a compassionate critique of Johnson's proposal, Kilian McDonnell questions the advisability of replacing Mariology's gendered christological context with a ungendered pneumatological one, since the move appears to be motivated by a hesitancy to submit to subordination of any kind, even obedience to Christ, lest such submission be construed as normative for male-female relationships. McDonnell is also concerned that a pneumatological approach to Mary would entail the abandonment of the hard-won ecclesiological approach privileged by Vatican II.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Johnson, *Sister*, 25.

<sup>32</sup>Johnson, *Sister*, 26–34, 297–304.

<sup>33</sup>Johnson, *Sister*, 101–104. Johnson, "The Marian Tradition and the Reality of Women," *Horizons* 12, no. 1 (1985): 124–126.

<sup>34</sup>McDonnell, "Feminist Mariologies," 549.



While, like McDonnell, I am concerned that efforts to eradicate patriarchalism sometimes cut too close to the heart of the Gospel, I do not see pneumatic Mariology as necessarily antithetical to a christological/ecclesiological Mariology, but rather complementary, just as Spirit-Christology is (or should be) a complement to Logos Christology, not a replacement.

I take Johnson's point that putting too much emphasis on Mary's privileges may have served to make her appear inaccessible to women who struggle in life, but it is not necessary to ask Mary to descend her pedestal<sup>35</sup> (which implies denying her privileges) to understand her as a woman who underwent many struggles, as the Gospels clearly indicate.<sup>36</sup> It was only after Mary's journey of faith that she was put on the pedestal and only in retrospect that the church came to recognize the special graces that enabled her to enact the

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<sup>35</sup>In Luke 1, Mary freely acknowledges her smallness in contrast to God's greatness. In giving her *fiat*, she calls herself the handmaid of the Lord (v. 38). In the *Magnificat*, as she rejoices in the great things that "the Mighty One" has done for her, she reiterates her awareness of her "low estate" (vv. 46–51). Since Mary did not put herself on a pedestal, it is not her place to remove herself from it.

<sup>36</sup>Beginning at the Annunciation, Mary did not understand all that the angel told her, that Simeon told her at the Presentation Only after years of prayerfully pondering the unfolding events of her Son's life of which she herself was sometimes a participant as well as a witness did she come to a fuller understanding. Even when at last she did understand that her Son would suffer and die, that did not alleviate her suffering as she watched it happen. Clearly, neither as his mother nor as his disciple was she greater than her Son (Luke 6:40). She too had to learn "obedience through what he suffered" (Heb. 5:8) and through what she compassionately suffered alongside him.

role to which she so courageously consented at the Annunciation. But again, as Scripture makes evident, those special graces did not eliminate Mary's human struggle, just as Christ's fullness of grace (John 1:14) did not prevent his.

Before proceeding to my own proposal, let me mention one more proposal for a pneumatological Mary, that of Raneiro Cantalamessa (mentioned also in the first chapter), who suggests that we take another look at Mary through a charismatic lens.<sup>37</sup> Cantalamessa acknowledges the need for a pneumatology from below as well as one from above, for he speaks of the wind of the Spirit as blowing from two directions: "There is, so to say, the Spirit that comes from on high . . . who works through . . . the hierarchy, in those in authority, and especially in the sacraments. There is, then, the opposite direction, from the bottom, as it were, where the Holy Spirit blows from the basis or single cells of the body that form the Church." He admits, however, that Catholic pneumatology has concentrated primarily on its "sacramental application" and "institutionalized forms" to the point that it has "neglected the action of the Holy Spirit seen at work in Mary." The remedy he proposes is a restoration of a place for the charisms in the church so that there can be "a good balance between

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<sup>37</sup>Cantalamessa, *Mirror*, 175–181.

repetition and invention."<sup>38</sup> For Cantalamessa, then, Mariology is in the category of a pneumatology from below in the sense that her presence and prayer in the church are charismatic rather than sacramental.

In proposing a Spirit-baptized Mary, I refer to the overshadowing of Mary by the Spirit not only at the conception of Christ but at every moment of her life, beginning with her own conception. Let me reiterate the caveat that in doing this, my objective is not to convince persons of other traditions of the truth of Catholic dogma or doctrine, but rather to suggest that by re-imagining the life of Mary pneumatologically, even the controversial Marian dogmas are not beyond the Christian imagination. Although readers, due to the constraints of their own traditions, will no doubt consider themselves unable to espouse everything about Mary presented here, I hope that they will consider this proposal, though not strictly confined to *sola scriptura* (as no theological proposal ever is), as being in no way contrary to Scripture or heterodox but rather a reasoned, faithful position, and, dare I hope, even a Spirit-illuminated interpretation.

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<sup>38</sup>Cantalamessa, *Mirror*, 180–181.

*Imagine!*

Here then is my attempt to re-imagine Mary from a pneumatological perspective in which I suggest rather boldly, perhaps rashly some might think, that regardless of tradition, it does not overtax the Christian imagination to think of Mary as engraced from conception and living her life in constant communion with the Spirit.

Whatever one's tradition, it does not strain the Christian imagination to consider the possibility that from before the foundation of the world God predestined a humble Jewish girl from the backwaters of Galilee to be the mother of the Redeemer,<sup>39</sup> or that by the Spirit God prepared her from conception to be the mother of the Incarnate Son. It does not strain the Christian imagination to consider the possibility that this girl, before she knew that God would call her to be the mother of the Redeemer, was led by the Spirit to consecrate herself body and soul to God, to be devoted wholly and exclusively to the fulfillment of her sacred vocation, even as the vessels in the temple were consecrated solely to sacred use.

It is not too hard to imagine that God would have specially created this girl as innocent and as untainted as he had originally created Eve, in Mary's case

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<sup>39</sup>"He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (Eph. 1:4).

adding a special grace that preserved her from inheriting the guilt of original sin or from any inclination to sin and that instead inclined her to love God and to desire to please him above all else. Nor is it too hard to imagine that God would have filled her with the Holy Spirit while she was yet in her mother's womb, since he did as much for John the Baptist<sup>40</sup> (only in her case from the moment she was conceived) so that, as she grew and matured, she grew only closer to God,<sup>41</sup> enabling her to remain pure at every stage of her life, a holy vessel fit to bear the Holy One of God (2 Tim. 2:21; Luke 1:35). It is not too hard to imagine, as tradition itself has imagined it, that God placed her in the home of righteous, God-fearing parents, like those of John the Baptist, who brought her at an early age to the temple,<sup>42</sup> much as Hannah brought Samuel (1 Sam. 1:24–28), to ensure that her nurture would reinforce her nature, i.e., her God-given inclination to be totally at his disposal. It is not too hard to imagine how a girl so filled with the Spirit and grace would have given God her unconditional “let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38) even though in the natural what God was

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<sup>40</sup>If John was “filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb” (Luke 1:15), it is not unthinkable God would have done as much for Mary, if not more. Similarly, neither is it too hard to imagine that what God did for the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah and for St. Paul before they were born, he did the same or more for Mary. Cf. Psalms 139:15–16; Isaiah 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; Galatians 1:15.

<sup>41</sup>Taking “every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

<sup>42</sup>*Protoevangelium of James* 10.

asking may have seemed too much. No, it is not too hard to imagine that a girl who knew nothing but God's love would want to give him her everything.

Over the centuries, the Christian imagination that had no difficulty envisioning the virginal conception by the Spirit (until modern times) had no problem imagining the preservation of Mary's virginity during birth through another miraculous intervention. For the early Christians, such a birth was as easy to imagine as the post-Resurrection Jesus appearing in their midst despite closed doors. If a virginal conception was not too hard for the one to whom nothing is impossible, then neither was a virginal birth. If the grace of the Spirit preserved Mary from sin, they reasoned, it was not too hard to imagine that the Spirit would preserve her body from the wounds of childbirth. No, it is not too hard to imagine that the Holy Spirit who had overshadowed her at the conception would have overshadowed her at the birth, preserving her virginity *even in childbirth* as a sign of her Son's divinity, even as the virginal conception was such a sign, and confirming her own calling to remain forever consecrated to God, still a further sign of that divinity. No, for the early Christians at least, and for many of the later ones, it was not too much for God to ask of the mother or even of the earthly father who had agreed to raise the Son of the Most High as his own. (Is it ever too much for God to ask someone to consecrate themselves, body and soul, to his worship and to the service of his people?) In the Christian

imagination, since God's dignity requires such a sacrifice, then God's grace will not only enable it but bless it and fructify it.

Once Mary gave God her consent, consecrating herself totally to him, it is not hard to imagine her life as a journey of faith in which it was God's good pleasure, at the beginning at least, to give her repeated confirmations of what the angel had told her. The Holy Spirit confirmed the Child's identity to her, first, through Elizabeth and the prenatal John. Then further confirmation came through Joseph's decision not to divorce her despite his initial resolution to do so. Then, after Jesus' birth, she received the confirmations of the shepherds and their reports of still more angels, and of Simeon and Anna, and of the magi, confirming time and again that she was not the only one who had received the good news that her Child was the Savior of the world.

Neither is it difficult to imagine that the Holy Spirit continued to indwell Mary even after Christ's birth. Indeed, it would hardly have seemed charitable of God to do otherwise for the woman who had sacrificed everything for the sake of bringing the Savior into the world (Rom. 11:29; James 1:17). Had not the angel reassured her that God was with her and that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her (Luke 1:28, 35)? It was only fitting that the Spirit would continue to be with her and in her, filling her with grace and gracing her with the virtues and gifts she needed to fulfill her calling. In fact, it would be unimaginable that the Spirit

would not have graced Mary with the holiness, faith, humility, joy, holy boldness, fortitude, and perseverance she needed to do what God had called her to do.

No, neither is it hard to imagine that the Holy Spirit would have stirred up within Mary a holy desire to understand the events that surrounded her Child's birth and that afterwards led to the trials she faced throughout Jesus' infancy, childhood, and ministry. The desire to understand was not mere intellectual curiosity, nor was it like that illicit desire to know things that were not for anyone to know that led Eve to sin. No, Mary's continual pondering of the things she heard and witnessed was based on a Spirit-inspired desire for truth, a God-given desire for the understanding and wisdom she needed to fittingly mother her holy Child. It was only good and right that she would want to understand Simeon's prophecy that her Son would be opposed and that a sword would pierce her own soul. In fact, it was not long after this prophecy was made that it began to be fulfilled, first, as she fled with Joseph and the Child by night to escape Herod's wrath, and later as she and Joseph retraced their steps to Jerusalem in frantic search for their lost twelve-year-old. No, it is not hard to imagine that the Holy Spirit would give her the understanding and wisdom she needed when she needed it, but never so much that she did not experience the same struggles as any other disciple.



At the wedding at Cana, it is not hard to imagine that Mary was led by the Spirit to mention the shortage of wine to Jesus. Although in his reply he seemingly distanced himself from her and from the situation, she undeterredly instructed the servants to do whatever he told them, and then, to everyone's surprise (except hers), Jesus performed a miracle, meeting the need in a superabundant way, in response to his mother's faith. (Yes, it was hard for Jesus to resist faith.)

After spending a few days with Jesus and his disciples in Capernaum after the wedding (John 2:12), Mary rarely saw her Son, except perhaps the time he returned to Nazareth only to barely escape with his life (Luke 4:16–30). No, it is not hard to imagine the Holy Spirit sustaining her as she experienced first the joy of hearing the hometown people marvel at her Son's gracious words and then the horror of watching them try to push him over a cliff only a short time later (vv. 21–29). When Mary and other family members attempted to see Jesus out of concern for his well-being, he once again seemingly distanced himself, indicating that natural motherhood and other familial relationships have little significance in the kingdom of God apart from obedience to God (Luke 8:19–20). No, it is not hard to imagine how painful this must have been to Mary, since as a mother she would have naturally wanted to secure her Son's safety. Yet even as she learned

the hard lesson of obedience through the things she suffered, even as her Son did (Heb. 5:8), the Holy Spirit was always there with her, in her, sustaining her.

The last time the Gospels portray Mary in Jesus' presence is at the Cross, the mother standing in solidarity with her crucified Son as the soldiers divide his clothes among them, casting lots for the seamless tunic, perhaps one that she herself had woven. One can only imagine the pain she felt as her Son gave the beloved disciple to her be her stand-in son and, in turn, gave her to the disciple to be his mother. Yet it is also possible to imagine that even in the midst of that staggering sorrow the Holy Spirit would have opened her heart and filled it with love for her new son. As Jesus gave up his Spirit, and as she saw the water and blood flow from the wound in his side, it is not hard to imagine that she would have fallen back again on the comfort of the Holy Spirit who had sustained throughout her life. Even as she watched Jesus' removal from the cross, his burial, the rolling of the stone in front of the tomb, blocking her view, sealing it shut, the Spirit sustained Mary through that night and the next, filling her heart with an inexplicable hope even though in the natural there was no hope. Then, at Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension, the Holy Spirit would have filled her heart to overflowing with supernatural joy even as the apostles also rejoiced as he ascended a cloud hid him from their view (Luke 24:23; Acts 1:9; cf. John 14:19).

When the apostles, the women, and other disciples, apparently even Jesus' formerly faithless brothers (John 7:5), gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem to await the promise of the Father, Mary was among them, a silent but central figure in that assembly. It is not hard to imagine her recalling the coming of the Holy Spirit upon her at Christ's conception.<sup>43</sup> That had been a quiet, private moment; she had told no one about it until after Elizabeth had confirmed it. Now, as she devoted herself to prayer in one accord with her new spiritual family, Mary found herself anticipating this next coming of the Spirit, only this time it would be an unprecedented revolution of the Spirit that would transform Jesus' double-minded (James 1:8; Matt. 6:24), weak-kneed (Heb. 12:12), slow-of-heart-to-believe (Luke 24:25), believing-only-when-seeing (John 20:25) disciples into hard-preaching, Sanhedrin-defying, crowds-throwing-rocks-defying, storm-and-snake-bite-surviving rocks of men and women who would storm the gates of Rome, braving death itself, and, in their death, bury the Roman gods and launch an army of prophets, dreamers, and visionaries, men and women, young and old, free and slave, as the prophet Joel had foretold, who would take Jesus' message to the ends of the world. Mary herself would be transformed afresh in

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<sup>43</sup>While Mary had not existed a single moment apart from the presence and sanctifying effect of the Spirit upon her, at the moment after she had spoken her "Let it be to me according to your word," the Holy Spirit came upon her in a different way, causing her to conceive and anointing her to be the mother of the Son of the Most High.

this coming of the Spirit, anointing and empowering her for her new role as the mother of her Son's spiritual brothers and sisters, the church. No, it is not at all hard to imagine that she would have contrasted this Pentecost with the private coming of the Holy Spirit on her at the Annunciation, because this time the Spirit came not as the dewfall but as a rushing mighty waterfall, not as a gentle breeze but with the roar of a rushing mighty wind, the tongues of fire resting on each one, enflaming their hearts with God's love, so overwhelming them that their first response was to open their mouths in glossolalic praise to God for his unspeakable gift and the mighty works performed in their midst (2 Cor. 9:15; Acts 2:11).

Though the Scriptures speak neither of the end of Mary's life nor of her passage to the next, it is not too hard to imagine that the Holy Spirit who by a superabundance of grace had preserved her body and soul without blemish during her earthly life would also preserve her at the end from bodily corruption, ushering her on angels' wings to the portals of heaven where her Son would lead her in triumphal procession (2 Cor. 2:14) to sit by his side in the Kingdom of heaven as his beloved and honored mother (Matt. 20:23; Psa. 45:6-9). No, it is not too hard to imagine that the one who commanded, "Honor your father and your mother" (Exod. 10:12), would honor his own mother in heaven,

although not for her natural motherhood so much as for her faith and obedience even to the Cross.

What of Mary in heaven? What full communion with the Holy Trinity will be like is beyond the human imagination except as a dim reflection of the reality, but since such is the blessed hope of the Christian faith, then should we not to at least try to imagine the same for Mary? Why is it so hard to imagine that Mary, the humble woman of Nazareth whose entire life was overshadowed by the Spirit and consecrated to God, should now be in heaven enjoying the vision of God that even as an earthbound human being she had enjoyed in contemplating the face of her Son? In heaven Mary enjoys full participation in the life of the Trinity, even as Jesus had prayed for all his disciples ("I in them, and you in me," John 17:21, 23). Yes, beyond all doubt, Mary is now face to face with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, knowing as fully as she is known (1 Cor. 13:12).

Yet, it is important also to imagine that even in heaven, Mary's heart will still be a maternal one, for she never ceases to love and intercede for her "other offspring" on earth who "keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus," fighting the good fight of faith, against whom the dragon continues to wage war (Rev. 12:17; 1 Tim. 6:12). Her intercession, which is only a cooperative, derivative one, is one that enters into the intercession of her Son who "always lives to make intercession" for those who draw near to God (Heb.

7:25), and into the prayers of the Holy Spirit who “intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words . . . according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:26b–27). She joins her voice too to that of the martyrs who continually cry out from under the altar, “How long, O Lord” (Rev. 6:10) and to the Spirit’s and the Bride’s “Come” (Rev. 22:10) and to St. Paul’s “Our Lord, come!” (“Maranatha,” 1 Cor. 16:22). No, it is not even too hard to imagine Mary’s continued activity on earth, her ministry being a heavenly extension of the charisms, the Spirit enabling her to touch earth even from the portals of heaven (Rev. 12). For believers for whom, as for Mary, “nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37), no, not even this is beyond the Christian imagination, for Paul declares that one day Christ will transform our lowly bodies “to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself” (Phil. 3:20–21; cf. 1 Cor. 15:43–53; Col. 3:4). In heaven as on earth, Mary continues to burn with the fire of the Holy Spirit, every thought under the control of the Spirit, every act empowered by the Spirit, every relation enriched by the love of God that is shed abroad in her heart and the hearts of all the faithful by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

While this attempt falls short, I am sure, of the reality, this is the Mary I propose for the Christian imagination. Again, the reason I speak in terms of imagination here is what I propose is not that non-Catholics believe what Catholics believe about Mary, but that they attempt to understand what

Catholics believe for the sake of Christian unity. My hope is that imagining Mary from the viewpoint of the work of the Holy Spirit in her life will facilitate this understanding and enable non-Catholics to see the Catholic Mary not as heterodox but as a faithful expression of how over centuries of contemplation Catholics have come to perceive the blessed woman God chose to be the mother of his Son. My hope too is that Catholics and non-Catholics alike will see the beauty of Mary as an exemplar of the Spirit-overshadowed life, and thus be inspired to seek the continuous coming of the Spirit in their own lives and communities of faith that they too might live, as Mary did, under the shadow of the Spirit.

*The Theology of a Spirit-Baptized Mary*

How theologically is Mary's relationship to the Spirit to be explained? If it is true, as Del Colle states in his last essay,<sup>44</sup> that "every aspect of the mystery and work of Jesus Christ is a work of the Holy Spirit," then the same must be true of his mother, of whose substance his flesh is derived.<sup>45</sup> As Del Colle explains, in Catholic theology, both Jesus and Mary are said to be full of grace

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<sup>44</sup>Del Colle, "Spirit Christology: Dogmatic Issues," 7.

<sup>45</sup>Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.22.1–2.

(John 3:34; Luke 1:28), but Mary's fullness is only analogous to that of Jesus.<sup>46</sup>

Del Colle explains the difference in terms of divinity and divinization. While only Jesus had a divine nature, Jesus and Mary each had a human nature that was divinized by the Holy Spirit. "Divinized" here does not mean to become divine in the sense that one's human nature is obliterated, but in the sense that the human nature is indwelt by divinity.<sup>47</sup> So, what Del Colle is saying is that the human natures of both Jesus and Mary are indwelt by the Spirit. Mary is full of grace in the sense that she is indwelt by the Spirit of God, but Jesus' fullness has a greater meaning. Not only is his human nature indwelt by the Spirit but it is also united with the divine nature of the Logos through the hypostatic union. In other words, the difference is that Mary is not hypostatically united to a person of the Trinity as Jesus is. The implication is that if Jesus who had a divine nature as well as a human nature was dependent on the Spirit to do the works of God, how much more would a person with no claim to divinity be dependent on the Spirit? Not only is Mary indwelt by the Spirit at the moment her mother conceives her, but her conception of Christ is itself a work of the Holy Spirit. The human substance that Christ receives from Mary is united by the Spirit to the

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<sup>46</sup>Del Colle, "Spirit Christology: Dogmatic Issues," 9.

<sup>47</sup>"Those in whom the Spirit dwells are divinized." *Catholic Catechism* §1988. Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* Letters to Serapion 1.24: PG 26.585, 588.



divine nature of the Logos and implanted in Mary's womb. Through the indwelling, Mary is Pneumatophor (Spirit-bearer), and through the conception she is Theotokos (God-bearer).

Since the Father eternally spirates the Holy Spirit through the Son (the *filioque*), Mary's relation to the Spirit is enhanced at Christ's conception. She who has been a Spirit-bearer by reason of the indwelling from her conception is now also a Spirit-bearer by reason of the presence of the unborn Son within her who is himself both the Spirit-bearer *par excellence* and the Spirit-baptizer. This is to say that having conceived Christ, Mary is Spirit-bearer by reason both of the indwelling of the Spirit and that of the ultimate Spirit-bearer, the Spirit-baptizer himself. When the Holy Spirit comes upon Mary to conceive the Spirit-baptizer, she herself receives a fresh baptism,<sup>48</sup> or anointing, only this time one that empowers her to become a mother and to fulfill her motherly vocation. This moment of the Spirit's coming upon Mary anticipates the future coming of the Spirit at the Jerusalem Pentecost as well as those of the house of Cornelius at

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<sup>48</sup>If Evangelicals cannot accept that Mary was filled, or baptized, with the Spirit from the first moment of her conception, i.e., the Immaculate Conception, then at least it seems they should be able to see the coming of the Spirit on Mary at the Annunciation as a Spirit-baptism, especially since there is such a strong biblical basis for that (Luke 1:35; Acts 1:8). Indeed, even if Spirit-baptism were defined as classical Pentecostals have defined it, that is, as empowerment for witness, then Mary could at least be said to be so empowered by the overshadowing by the power of the Most High.

Caesarea and on the Ephesians (Acts 2:1–4; 10:44–45; 19:1–7) when the Spirit is poured out on all flesh, thereby empowering the disciples for global witness and enabling all believers to conceive Christ by faith, that he might be formed and come to full maturity in them, even “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (John 1:12; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:13).

At the Annunciation, Mary receives the Holy Spirit in a new, fuller way enabling her to conceive and bear Christ and thus to become a Spirit-empowered witness *par excellence* through the ultimate proclamation of the Word of God through the birth of her Son. This moment of the Spirit’s coming is an anointing for Mary’s maternal vocation, enabling her to face with grace and fortitude all the trials that being the Mother of God would entail.

In making the distinction between Spirit-indwelling and later coming of the Spirit, I am proposing something beyond the classical Pentecostal distinction between Christian initiation and empowerment.<sup>49</sup> I point rather to the progressive nature of the Spirit-filled life. In Mary’s case, there is a distinct point at which the Holy Spirit comes into her life by overshadowing her and dramatically changing the course of her life. However, the comings of the Holy Spirit in people’s lives are not always so dramatic. The stages from one level of

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<sup>49</sup>Howard Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1984).

grace to another may be blurred in the relative ordinariness of people's lives. However, life in the Spirit is by its very nature one of growth and progress. At times no growth may be perceived, even as a seed buried in the ground typically give no outward indication of the changes occurring within, but at the proper time the growth becomes apparent. New life emerges from what outwardly seemed but barren earth. The Johannine evangelist speaks of such growth in terms of receiving "grace upon grace" from Christ's fullness (John 1:16). This explains how that even though Mary is already graced and filled with the Spirit prior to the Annunciation, the fullness of that grace is relative. She increases in grace throughout her life even as her Son "increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor [grace, *charis*] with God and man" (Luke 2: 52; cf. v. 40). Further, her fullness is derived from Christ's. While, on the one hand, Mary conceives Christ by the Spirit, on the other, she receives the Spirit afresh as Christ spirates the Spirit within her. (I follow Amadeus here.)

What this means is that Mary cannot be totally understood apart from her relation to both the Spirit and Christ. In other words, Spirit-Mariology cannot be separated from Christology (in which I include both Logos and Spirit-Christology). This also suggests that Mariology cannot be totally understood apart from the Trinity, since Mary's relations to Logos and the Spirit point to her relation to the Father from whom they both proceed. Mary is related to Christ as

his mother by her faith and obedience as well as by her physical motherhood. Even more than their physical bond, their spiritual bond is the basis of Christ naming Mary the mother of his brothers and sisters according to the Spirit. (This has ecclesiological implications as well.) Mary is related to the Spirit as God's dwelling place and as the instrument she herself places freely and totally at the Spirit's disposal. Mary is related also to the Father as his most beloved daughter, chosen in Christ from "before the foundation of the world" to "be holy and blameless before him" (Eph. 1:4).

What is the end point of this growth in grace by the Spirit? The Orthodox call it deification, or *theosis*, participation in the divine nature: "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness . . . so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature" (1 Pet. 1:3–4). Matthias Scheeben calls it supernaturalization.

At this point let me return to Scheeben's vision of Mary's substantial union with Christ and her moral union with the Spirit. Scheeben envisions Mary's union with her Son as one that determines her very existence, such that she does not exist apart from her Son. While at first reading Scheeben seems to be overstating his point here, there is a truth embedded in what he says. Compare what he says to what St. Paul said of himself, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in

the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Having died with Christ, Paul has no life apart from the life of Christ in him. Is this not what Scheeben is claiming for Mary? She has no life apart from the life of Christ in her. Such, Scheeben taught, is the eschatological hope of every Christian. What Scheeben says about the Spirit and Mary is less radical in comparison. He ascribes only a moral union between Mary and Spirit, but even so, it means that her person reflects that of the Spirit. It is because of her likeness to the Spirit that Scheeben calls her a dove.

What Scheeben is proposing then as the end point of Mary's growth in holiness as it is sustained by her life in the Spirit is *theosis*, or, as St. Peter called it, participation in the divine nature. To avoid going too far with this notion, I think Daniel Keating's two rules regarding it are helpful: "(1) that which participates is necessarily distinct (and distinct in kind) from that which is participated in; (2) that which participates possesses the quality it receives only in part; that which is participated in necessarily possesses that quality fully and by nature."<sup>50</sup> *Theosis*, then, is the end point of growth in holiness.

The key to growth in any person's relation to the Spirit, as it was for Mary, is receptivity. Such is the message of Luke. It is Mary's yes at the Annunciation

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<sup>50</sup>Daniel Keating *Deification and Grace* (Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2007): 98.

that opens her life to the overshadowing of the Spirit that brings about the conception of the Son, transforms her life, and revolutionizes her world. Jacob of Serugh made this same point. Receptivity, however, is not passivity, but personal freedom in action. It is openness not only to propositional truth but to a radical life in Christ by the Spirit.

### *The Spirit's Effect on Mary*

What effects does the Spirit have on Mary? There is more to be said than that the Spirit makes Mary holy. The question is, in what ways does she become holy? Here, while I differentiate between Spirit-indwelling and later coming of the Spirit, I do not try to establish an order for the effects of the Spirit, as experience indicates that such effects vary since people develop and mature at different rates and in different ways. However, I do loosely follow the pattern I see in Mary's life.

*Consecration.* Consecration by the Spirit includes sanctification, holiness, and purity (separation from sin). God prepares Mary for her role as Mother of God by sanctifying her in a unique way from birth. Catholics refer to this special preparation as the Immaculate Conception, whereas Orthodox, who define original sin differently, do not consider such a dogma necessary. However, Orthodox do hold to Mary's sinlessness throughout her life, which they attribute

to the Spirit: “The fulness of grace was truly bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin and her personal purity was preserved by the perpetual assistance of the Spirit.”<sup>51</sup> Mary’s consecration might be compared to the evangelical emphasis on consecration to service<sup>52</sup> in addition to personal holiness.<sup>53</sup>

Mary’s need to be specially prepared for her role as Christ’s mother parallels the need for all people to be prepared for Christ’s coming. Luke describes John’s message and baptism of repentance as one of preparation: “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (1:17). On the mountain, God orders Moses to make special preparations in anticipation of God’s tabernacling among his people during their sojourn in the desert. God gives detailed instructions to

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<sup>51</sup>Georges Florovsky, *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*, vol. 3, *Creation and Redemption* (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1976), 182.

<sup>52</sup>“Full-time Christian service” is the wording Evangelicals and Pentecostals (and others) have frequently used to refer to consecration to service. E.g., Zac Poonen, *Where Do I Go from Here, God?* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1972), 82–83.

<sup>53</sup>Palmer, *Entire Devotion to God*, 96–100. See also her *The Way of Holiness* (New York: [n.p.], 1854), 21–22, 125–126, 263. Two of Elisha Hoffman’s hymns sing of such consecration: “Jesus Shall Have It All,” *Pentecostal Hymns: Nos. 1 and 2 Combined*, comp. Henry Date (Chicago: Hope, 1898), 83, and “Is Your All on the Altar?” *Songs of Praise: Number Two*, J. Wilbur Chapman and O.F. Pugh, comps. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1905), 70. A. G. Ward, “Soul Food for Hungry Saints: A Heart Talk on Consecration,” *Pentecostal Evangel* (August 9, 1922), 2–3. Darrin Rodgers, “A Call to Full Consecration: Rediscovering Pentecostalism’s Reason for Being,” *Assemblies of God Heritage* 20 (2010): 3–5. Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 167.

Moses regarding the construction of the tabernacle that will serve as God's dwelling place in the midst of his people (Exod. 25:8). If God arranged such careful preparation for a dwelling made with hands, would he not arrange that even greater care be taken to prepare the woman from whom the incarnate Son would derive his humanity, and within whom he would gestate for nine months? It is only fitting that God would specially consecrate a holy virgin to be the mother of the one whom, as Solomon said, "heaven, even highest heaven, cannot contain" (2 Chron. 2:6; 1 Kings 8:27).

*Indwelling.* The coming of the Holy Spirit on Mary at her conception can be called an indwelling, for in coming upon her the Spirit not only gives her "sanctifying grace," but also becomes personally present to her and in her. Since the indwelling does not occur as the result of any cooperation on Mary's part, as she had previously existed only in the mind of God, it is a gratuitous Spirit-baptism whereas at the Annunciation Mary actively receives the Spirit when she gives her consent, much like the disciples in Acts 1-2 received the promise of the Father after actively praying and waiting. In other words, with the exception of the falling of the Spirit on infants or children before they are old enough to give their free consent, John the Baptist being a prime example (Luke 1:15), the coming of the Spirit upon a person typically involves both divine gratuity and human receptivity.



Although I distinguish between Spirit-indwelling and Spirit-anointing for vocation and witness, my intent is not to downplay the indwelling. All creaturely life may live and move and have its being in God (Acts 17:28), but not all creaturely life is a fit dwelling place for God. To be the temple of the Spirit of God is a blessed privilege, and it is not one reserved for Mary alone, as the Scriptures make clear. The indwelling is that inner presence of God and communion with the Blessed Trinity for which all humanity is intended. It was lost because of sin, but through absolution and reception of sanctifying grace through the Spirit, a person is re-fitted for heaven on earth. Such absolution, forgiveness, is obtained at the foot of the Cross, typically the confessional for Catholics and the altar or mourners' bench for Pentecostals and Evangelicals, but God's mercy begins to flow for all with repentance at the altar of one's own heart.

*Hiddenness.* The work of the Spirit in a person's life is not always visible. In Mary's life this is especially true, since even the Scriptures do not expound on her earthly life in any detail apart from the nativity accounts. Since Matthew tends to focus on Joseph rather than on Mary, only Luke can be said to spotlight her at any length. John's Gospel also says little of Mary although he does focus on her twice, each time at a crucial point in Jesus' ministry, at the beginning and at the end.

The times of hiddenness and silence may be seen as kenotic, self-emptying, in preparation for the trial Mary would face at Jesus' passion. Her kenotic years were primarily those during Jesus' ministry. At one point she even tries to intervene, only to have her Son remind her that her place is to believe and obey, not to control and protect. It is a time of role reversal in which her Son who has submitted to her authority for thirty years now submits only to the authority of his Father in heaven, expecting her to do the same. As she watches her Son's popularity wane, beginning with the hometown people turning against him, and hearing of the religious authorities seeking to entrap him, Mary has to relinquish her own dreams for her Son and to adopt God's. During this time of relinquishment, the Holy Spirit enables Mary to release her own preconceived notions of what God had in mind for her Son and accept God's intentions (Matt. 16:23).

*Virtues and Gifts.* The Holy Spirit is the source of all of the virtues and gifts attributed to Mary. Mary's faith and obedience are the virtues Christ specifically mentions (Luke 8:21; 11:28), while Luke's nativity account points to her humility and willingness to serve (reminiscent of Rebekah, Gen. 24:15–20, 57–58), her joyfulness and gratitude, her kindness and courage, as well as her thoughtful, persistent desire to understand. The Johannine gospel accentuates Mary's fortitude and perseverance. At the Cross the theological virtues of love, faith, and

hope are what enable to stand firm during her greatest trial. All of these virtues are the fruit of the Spirit, the good fruit of a life consecrated to God and controlled by the Spirit.

*Charisms.* Catholics define the charisms much the same way as Pentecostals define what they call the gifts of the Spirit. The charisms are not the virtues or gifts that affect the quality of a person's character (such as the fruit), but the graces the Spirit gives to enable effective ministry and witness. Mary's *Magnificat* is a manifestation of a prophetic charism. Not only does Mary express thanksgiving for what God has done for her personally and for his mercy in remembering Israel, but she prophesies of the transformation that God will bring in reversing the roles of the poor and wealthy, the weak and the powerful. It seems odd that this kind of bold prophetic message would come out of this young girl's mouth, but that is an indication of its pneumatic origin. The Spirit delights in doing things in unexpected ways (John 3:8). While motherhood might be considered Mary's greatest charism, it is not only a charism but a vocation.

*Vocation.* At the Annunciation, the angel reveals to Mary that she has been chosen and prepared for a special purpose, to become the mother of the Son of the Most High. It is the Holy Spirit who equips and enables her to fulfill her vocation, i.e. her ministry. Motherhood is sometimes considered a biological function rather than a vocation, but Mary's calling to motherhood is definitive

for her. It is who she becomes by virtue of the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit upon her at the Annunciation. Further, this anointing, or overshadowing, comes only after Mary gives her consent. Connected as it is to mission and vocation, this anointing of the Spirit implies that the person so commissioned or called will willingly cooperate with the Spirit in fulfilling that calling. God does not anoint a person for a mission which the person has refused. This is why epiclesis is so important. The Spirit longs to be welcomed and invited. Mary's response, "Let it be to me according to your word," is her invitation to the Spirit to overshadow her so that she will become the mother of God's Son.

*Empowerment.* The kind of empowerment the Spirit imparts varies according to a person's mission or calling. Mary is empowered through the overshadowing to become the mother of God. The Holy Spirit acts creatively in her to bring about the Incarnation. The Spirit takes the human matter that Mary contributes, and unites it to the divine nature of the Logos to form the person of the God-man, Jesus. Mary needs the Holy Spirit not only to enable her to conceive her Son but to have the strength to be a fit mother for him. Just as it was impossible for Mary to conceive without the Spirit's assistance (since she had relations with no man), so it would have been impossible for her to properly fulfill her role as mother of God's Son without the Spirit's anointing. The reason God created her in such a special way and prepared her so carefully for

motherhood was that her Son was holy. As the human being to whom he would be most closely related, Mary needed to be holy as well. The coming of the Spirit on her at the Annunciation might be considered an added baptism of holiness.

*Communion of the Saints.* One instance of the Spirit's coming in Mary's life occurs at the Visitation. The Spirit's revelation of the unborn Christ's presence in Mary is the catalyst of a spiritual chain reaction, whereby each person present is filled with the Spirit, and witnesses to Christ's presence among them. The prenatal John leaps, Elizabeth confirms, and Mary rejoices. It is the presence of Christ the Spirit-baptizer in Mary that causes Elizabeth and John to be filled with the Spirit. The coming of the Spirit on Elizabeth and John is often described as an instance of the prophetic charism,<sup>54</sup> but it is also an instance of the communion of the saints whereby the spiritual good of God's presence in Christ is shared among them by the Spirit, in a way analogous to the multiplying of the loaves. The spiritual effect of this good is undiminished in the sharing but rather multiplies to overflowing, as manifest in their shared jubilation, culminating with Mary's *Magnificat*.

*Deification.* The indwelling of the Spirit brings receptive persons into communion with the Holy Trinity, by uniting them to the risen Christ in such a

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<sup>54</sup>Robert Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 226–227.

way that their human nature is not eradicated, but “hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). The Orthodox refer to this as *theosis*, or divinization (as distinguished from apotheosis). As partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), those who receive the Spirit live not in or for themselves but only in Christ who in turn lives in them (Gal. 2:20) by the Spirit.

*Suffering.* The presence of the Spirit in a person’s life does not exclude suffering as Christ’s life is the greatest exemplar. In consenting to become Jesus’ mother, Mary implicitly consents to suffer alongside him. Such is the nature of motherhood. She has heard with her own ears Simeon’s prophecy that not only will her Son be opposed but her own soul will be pierced by a sword. She has experienced poverty from an early age. With Herod seeking to kill her infant Son, she has endured exile and refugee status as a young mother. The unusual circumstances of her child’s conception may well have led to her stigmatization and that of her entire family throughout Jesus’ childhood and beyond. Mary’s inability to fully understand Jesus’ calling and ministry is also a source of pain. Knowing that many of his followers are deserting him and that rulers in Jerusalem are seeking his arrest is excruciating. No doubt the Spirit uses Mary’s suffering early in life to prepare her for her final test when she stands at the foot of the cross beside her crucified Son, with only two or three other women and the beloved disciple, the only one of his closest disciples not to desert him. Mary’s

perseverance and fortitude in the midst of such suffering are evidence of the Spirit's presence and sustaining power in her life.

*Spiritual Motherhood.* When Jesus presented his mother and disciple to each other as mother and son at the cross, he inaugurated the new spiritual family he had come to establish (John 1:12–13). The children of God are born, like Christ, “not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God,” i.e., of the Spirit, with Jesus as the head, “the firstborn among many brothers” and sisters (Rom. 8:29), “the beginning, the firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1:18; cf. Eph. 5:23). Christ's mother is not only a mother of the flesh but of the Spirit, for before conceiving him in her womb she conceived him in her mind by the Spirit through faith.

As mother of the head, the New Adam, Mary is the New Eve, the spiritual mother of all who live according to the Spirit, i.e., all who receive Christ through faith and are born again of the Spirit. As any good mother, Mary wants all her children to share in the fullness, the inheritance, of her firstborn. She wants them not only to be sons and daughters of the promise but to live in the existential reality of that promise, i.e., the promise of the Father, which is the Spirit. She wants all her children to be consecrated, indwelt, and anointed by the Spirit even as the humanity of her Son was (and as she was). She wants the family image, the beauty of Christ's goodness and kindness, to shine in their faces by the Spirit.

The essential characteristic of this new family is life in Christ by the Spirit, life in the Spirit (Gal. 5: 16–25; Rom. 8:12–17).

Because of limited space, I cannot cover with all effects the overshadowing of the Spirit had on Mary. In addition to the ones already mentioned, others are the freedom of the Spirit, intercession, and glorification, i.e. the Assumption. Mary's relation to the Spirit defines her entire life.

### The Implications of Spirit-Mariology

The implications of this proposal of a Spirit-baptized Mary are manifold. I have already mentioned several in the section entitled, "Marian Insights from History: A Review," above. Here I limit my remarks to those regarding Spirit-baptism, for women and families

### *Implications for Spirit-Baptism*

I confine my remarks here to the implications of a Spirit-baptized Mary for Spirit-baptism for Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Catholics, any ecclesial community that is open to the move of the Holy Spirit. On the basis of this study of the Spirit-baptized Mary, keeping in mind the experience of the early church as well as the interpretation and experience of Spirit-baptism by classical Pentecostals and Catholics in the renewal, I would suggest that although Spirit-



baptism has been often understood by Pentecostals and charismatics as an initial dramatic outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 1–2), such an experience is only one of a series of Spirit-comings. Prior to such an experience, the Spirit is at work in the lives of Christians even though they may not recognize his presence in their lives. In the case of those who live in humble repentance before God, the Spirit has graced them (sacramentally or otherwise) and indwelt them, although often in a quiet, seemingly imperceptible way. Even in the case of those who have not received sanctifying grace, the Spirit has touched and influenced their lives through prevenient grace, convicting them of sin, providing for them, protecting, guiding, and wooing them. Their entire lives can be understood as having never been without the influence and sustaining power of the Holy Spirit.

What the charismatic renewal has done is awaken the church to the realization that the Spirit longs for the faithful to actively seek, pray, and expect his continuous coming and the manifestation of his operation in their lives and in the lives of others through them. The Spirit's dealings with the human heart become perceptible to those who through the spiritual disciplines develop spiritual sensitivity and discernment. These who maintain active receptivity to the Spirit can experience the effusion of the Spirit not just as a one-time experience but as a continuous outpouring. When they first consciously experience the power of the Spirit coming upon them, persons and communities

are transformed instantaneously, but they need to remain continuously attuned to the Spirit through earnest, expectant prayer so that they will be continually refreshed in power, boldness, joy, holiness, virtue, understanding, and love. This is clearly demonstrated in the life of Mary, who experienced not only the continuous indwelling of the Spirit but also the overshadowing of the Spirit at Christ's conception, which was followed by repeated comings of the Spirit upon her including her experience of the Holy Spirit at the Jerusalem Pentecost itself.

Much of past debate concerning Spirit-baptism has revolved around timing or sequence. Catholics, for example, have proposed that the indwelling of the Spirit first occurs at water baptism, which for them generally entails infant baptism except in the case of adult converts. This is somewhat parallel to the Spirit's indwelling of Mary at her conception. While many Catholics argue for Spirit-baptism occurring at water baptism as well as Spirit-indwelling, classical Pentecostal teaching claims that Spirit-baptism typically comes later in a more dramatic way than other comings of the Spirit and punctuated by glossolalia or other charisms. However, if Spirit-baptism is defined as beginning at the reception of sanctifying grace and the indwelling of the Spirit, which in Mary's case occurred at her conception, then what Pentecostals have historically called Spirit-baptism is only one manifestation of the Spirit's presence in a person's life. In other words, the issues involving timing or sequence tend to disappear when

one recognizes the various ways the Spirit works in the life of a person or community of faith. Because every person is different, the work of the Spirit manifests differently in each case, but while it always begins with the gratuitous action of God, once the person is mature enough, God expects active receptivity so that they may continue receiving the dewfall of the Spirit.

Another classical Pentecostal concern has been the problem of elitism that has arisen in which those claiming Spirit-baptism are considered the Haves, and those who do not the Have-Nots. As a result, many have become so concerned that they might alienate others, there has been a tendency to downplay Spirit-baptism from the pulpit. In the Catholic Church, many consider Renewalism as a type of spirituality that is not normative for the church. I think this is a mistake. Life in the Spirit is normative because it is the kind of life Christ lived and Mary lived.<sup>55</sup> To be a Christian/Catholic is to believe in the regenerated life, which is, by definition, new life in Christ by the Spirit. The Spirit continues to fall upon receptive persons, anointing them for the service and witness. To minister effectively, people need the power of the Holy Spirit. How can Christians have

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<sup>55</sup>No doubt, part of the problem is that a certain culture has grown up around Charismatic Catholics that non-Charismatic Catholics see as foreign to the Catholicism that they are accustomed to. Classical Pentecostalism certainly has its own distinctive culture. Since we are human beings, this seems inevitable. The question is how to separate the truth of Spirit-baptism from the cultural trappings that give it the appearance of just another alternate form of spirituality.

effective witness without it? The reason Jesus came and then returned to heaven was to pour out the Spirit upon all flesh upon his return to the Father. To deprive ourselves of the empowerment and anointing of the Spirit is to neglect God's best gift, the one Jesus called the "other Helper (*Paraklētos*)" (John 14:16).

Among Catholic theologians there is a growing consensus that the church needs the charisms as well as the sacraments. The same is true for the Protestant churches, only maybe the way they would express it is that they need the charisms as well as pulpit preaching and choir singing. Certainly the Spirit is intimately involved in the sacraments, and preaching and hymn singing are charisms in themselves, but they are often as predictable as sacramental liturgies are. The church needs to provide the time and the space in which the charisms may be exercised. This includes, for Catholics, the need to create more opportunities for the laity. As history has shown, the Catholic Church has nothing to fear from Spirit-baptized Catholics as they are often among those who are the most faithful in attending Mass and participating in the sacraments.

The point that I am making here then is that Mary's example demonstrates that Spirit-baptism should not be seen only as a single crisis event. It should be seen as a lifelong experience of the Spirit which is marked at various points by comings of the Spirit at crucial times but also by a continual daily coming in response to fervent, expectant prayer. Generally timing and sequence

are not important; receptivity to the Spirit is key. Further, although spiritual elitism does rear its ugly head, in the attempt to squelch it, there is the danger of quenching the Spirit. We must not let it. Preaching and teaching concerning the role of the Spirit in the Christian life are critical. Pneumatology is implicitly christological and trinitarian, and Marian a lesser sense. The gospel is preached fully only when Pentecost is also preached. A notion of a Spirit-baptized Mary may help to spread that message in the Catholic Church and perhaps elsewhere.

### *Implications for Women*

The Spirit-baptized Mary is an exemplar for all persons, men and woman alike, but Mary is especially a model for women. Here I attempt not a systematic treatment of the implications for women so much as a plea for a change in the way women, especially mothers, are treated in the church; a reminder of the sacredness of parenting, and the need for Spirit empowerment, wisdom, and holiness to be effective parents; and finally a call to church leaders to provide women opportunities to serve the church in ways that fit their vocations and giftings. In light of John Paul II's remarks on the genius of women and his call for a new feminism which, he holds, only women can formulate, women need to step forward to meet the challenge. May the Spirit-baptized Mary be our inspiration.

*Motherhood.* By giving Mary the high honor and unparalleled privilege of being the mother of his incarnate Son, God demonstrates the high value he places on women, motherhood, and mothers, especially spiritual mothers. The fact that he chose a poor, humble Jewish girl from an obscure village with no worldly influence or power to conceive God's incarnate Son, share her very DNA with him, and nurture him reflects the high regard God has for women.

Society, on the other hand, for all its claims to honor motherhood, has sadly developed a tendency to disdain it. Young women especially are often encouraged to prioritize their careers over their families by postponing having children. Many consider motherhood an impediment to personal fulfillment. The cherished goal of many women is to break the glass ceiling both in the marketplace and in the church, by becoming the CEO of a corporation or the senior minister of a congregation. (The latter, of course, is not possible in the Catholic Church.) My point is not that women should not aspire to prestigious positions, pursue professional careers, or develop their abilities as fully as possible; the point is that those who do choose to prioritize their families are often given little support and virtually no encouragement in doing so.

God, however, has demonstrated through Mary what his priorities are. In choosing Mary for the most blessed, highest role that anyone could ever have, that of mothering and nurturing his Son, he demonstrates that little is more

important than motherhood (and fatherhood), the nurturing of children and young people to love and serve God above all else. For the church to reflect the values of God's Kingdom, it must learn to value women and mothers as God does.

*Family Life.* Another implication of a Spirit-baptized Mary is the supernatural quality of motherhood and fatherhood and family life in general. Typically, parenthood is considered merely a natural role, but Mary demonstrates that motherhood at its best is one supernaturalized by the Spirit. To be a spiritual mother, not just a natural one to her children, a mother needs the anointing of the Spirit for her vocation of motherhood. She needs the supernatural love, joy, resourcefulness, holiness, fortitude, discernment, and wisdom that only the Holy Spirit can give. In other words, the church needs to teach women and fathers and grandparents that the only truly Christian way to raise a child is to do so in the joy and strength of the Spirit. During those long nights when crying babies keep their parents pacing the floor for seemingly endless hours, they need the strength and joy of the Holy Spirit to sustain them. When the children become teenagers and try their wings before their parents are ready to let them go, they need the peace of heart and mind that only the Holy Spirit gives. When grown children break their mothers' hearts, those mothers need the strength and comfort of the Holy Spirit to give them hope for their

children, faith to entrust their children into God's safekeeping, and love that keeps on loving no matter what. The life of the Spirit is to be lived in every aspect of life, especially family life.

*Women in Ministry.* Although motherhood should have the highest priority and mothers should be given high honor, it is also important to consider the role of women in Christian service, especially those who are not privileged to have children or whose children are grown. What are the implications of a Spirit-baptized Mary for women in ministry? The *Magnificat*, whose words are proclaimed from virtually every Christian pulpit and repeated daily in the Divine Office (the Catholic Liturgy of the Hours), is unquestionably the most important example of a woman's words recorded in the gospels. They are the words of the mother of Christ who, by a charism of the Spirit, proclaimed the mighty work of God in her that would revolutionize the world in favor of God-fearers, the humble, the poor, the besieged Israel, and all of Abraham's faithful offspring. That a woman's words are an essential part of the gospel seem to suggest that it would be fitting for a woman to proclaim them in the church.

However, the issue is not as simple as it appears in the Catholic Church at least, because the church sees gender as a barrier to ordination, since Christ and the apostles that he handpicked were all male. Since this is not immediately germane to this thesis, I cannot pursue the topic here, but it is interesting that in



the Catholic tradition, as well as in more recent Catholic scholarship, Mary has sometimes been called a deaconess in the service of Christ's priesthood, which suggests that such a role may be appropriate for other women as well.

Apparently, some women were deaconesses in the first millennium, but the church does not accept them as valid examples since this apparently occurred only in schismatic sects.

I am somewhat ambivalent about the role of women in ministry since I do see motherhood as a woman's highest, most sacred calling. On the one hand, I understand the natural (perhaps fallen) tendency for men and women is to desire to achieve the highest possible level in any human endeavor (ministry included) rather than to content themselves with what they have at hand to do. That could be considered as a good thing, for God has called us to use our talents in the service of the church to the best of our ability. On the other hand, something is to be said for contentment. Take Jesus, for example. As the Great High Priest in the heavenly realm (Heb. 4:14), he could have demanded the title of high priest in the earthly temple, since, after all, it was his Father's house and rightfully his (Luke 2:49; 19:46; John 2:16; Jer. 7:11); but he did not. He chose rather to limit himself to the calling the Father had placed on him for that time, that of Redeemer (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). Similarly, rather than aspiring to the highest place (Luke 14:7–11), the better place for women, as it was for Mary of Bethany

(and, truth be told, as it is for men), is to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn from him (Luke 10:39).

Since the Catholic Church does not consider it fitting that women serve as priests, then so be it. I would rather sit at the feet of Jesus than have the best seat in the house, because sitting at Jesus' feet is, as he himself acknowledged, the best seat in the house: "Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42).

On the other hand, if a woman believes she is called to preach, for example, it seems only right and good that she have the opportunity to pursue that calling, provided that she go through a discernment process to have the calling confirmed. If confirmed, it seems only fitting and proper that the church provide training for her as well as a place of service. Why waste the talents of women especially when there are not enough men to do everything that needs to be done? As a Catholic, I cannot and have no desire to propose that women be ordained priests,<sup>56</sup> but I do believe that the church should provide more opportunities for women to use their abilities in the service of the church. If, as

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<sup>56</sup>My thinking runs along the lines of since only women have the supreme privilege of motherhood, then let the men have the priesthood.

Scheeben says, Mary served as a deaconess to Christ,<sup>57</sup> then it seems only fitting and right that women be allowed to serve similarly today.

If the church considers diaconal ordination unsuitable for women, again, so be it, but then let the church create a way appropriate for women that will allow them to assume roles beyond the tasks traditionally allotted to them (e.g., child care and children's catechesis) should their vocation so incline them. In a culture in which women are even more likely than men to pursue higher education, there are many who long to serve the church in a way commensurate with their giftings and callings. Like anyone else, a woman wants to put her talents to good use. Let the church listen with an open heart and mind to the cries of women who feel stifled or even relegated to second-class membership.

Since the church has named Teresa of Ávila, Catherine of Siena, Thèrese of Lisieux, and Hildegard of Bingen doctors of the church, it seems incongruous to discourage or bar women from places of service in the church that will allow them to respond to their vocations and make full use of their God-given gifts in the service of the church. Hildegard preached and evangelized; why are women not encouraged to do so in the church today? It is not as though there are enough men stepping forward to fill the need. Once a woman has raised her children,

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<sup>57</sup>*Manual*, §216, 2:223.

should she be so privileged as to have them, she often has the time and the desire to devote herself to the service of the church. Anna the prophetess comes to mind. After becoming a widow, she spent the rest of her life devoted to prayer (Luke 2:36–38). How does the church today make a place for mothers and grandmothers who once their children are grown have the time and desire to serve the church?

### Epiclesis

Mary's life demonstrates for all believers, men and women, that Spirit-baptism is the lifelong flow of the Spirit in which every moment is an epicletic moment, every challenge an opportunity to call down the Holy Spirit upon their lowliness and poverty and lack of understanding:

Come, Holy Spirit,  
ignite us afresh with the fire of your love;  
overshadow us, as you overshadowed Mary, with your power;  
allow Christ to be born anew in us that we may be Christ to others.

Embolden us in the face of persecution and trial;  
flood us anew with your joy and peace;  
anoint us afresh for our vocations with compassion for the poor;  
illumine our minds with fresh insight and wisdom.

Renew us and heal us each time we receive Holy Communion;  
operate in us the charisms that will restore lives and revitalize the church;  
infuse us with the virtues and gifts we need to be holy as you are holy;  
so indwell us that your life continuously flows through us to others.

Amen.

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