

The
Immaculate
Conception
The and
Co-redemptrix

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Queenship Publishing

IMPRIMATUR

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Published by:

Queenship Publishing
P.O. Box 220
Goleta, CA 93116
(800) 647-9882 (805) 692-0043 FAX: (805) 967-5843
<http://www.Queenship.org>

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 1-57918-250-x

The Immaculate Conception and The Co-redemptrix

The following presentation was given by Dr. Mark Miravalle, Professor of Mariology at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, at the Mariological Symposium held at Washington, D.C., on February 21, 2004 and entitled “The Immaculate Conception in the Life of the Church: A Theological Symposium in Honor of the 150th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.”

On February 17, 1941, the “Property” of the Immaculata, Fr. Maximilian Kolbe, was arrested by the Nazi Gestapo, eventually leading to his martyrdom in Auschwitz. During the few hours before his arrest, Fr. Maximilian was inspired to write the heart of his unparalleled mariological ponderings regarding the “Immaculate Conception.”

The following are excerpts from this last written testimony:

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION:

These words fell from the lips of the Immaculata herself. Hence, they must tell us in the most precise and essential manner who she really is.

Since human words are incapable of expressing divine realities, it follows that these words: “Immaculate,” and “Conception” must be understood in a much more beautiful and sublime meaning than usual: a meaning beyond that which human reason at its most penetrating, commonly gives to them . . . Who then are you, O Immaculate Conception?

Not God, of course, because he has no beginning. Not an angel, created directly out of nothing. Not Adam, formed out of the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7). Not Eve, molded from Adam’s rib (Gen. 2:21). Not the Incarnate Word, who exists before all ages, and of whom we should use the word “conceived” rather than “conception.” Humans do not exist before their conception, so we might call them created “conception.” But you, O Mary, are different from all other children of Eve. They are conceptions stained by original sin; whereas you are the unique Immaculate Conception.

. . . Creatures, by following the natural law implanted in them by God, reach their perfection, become like him,

and go back to him. Intelligent creatures love him in a conscious manner; through this love they unite themselves more and more closely with him, and so find their way back to him. The creature most completely filled with this love, with God himself, was the Immaculata, who never contracted the slightest stain of sin, who never departed in the least from God’s will. United to the Holy Spirit as his spouse, she is one with God in an incomparably more perfect way than can be predicated of any other creature.

What sort of union is this? It is above all an interior union, a union of her essence with the “essence” of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in her, lives in her. This was true from the first instance of her existence. It is always true; it will always be true.

In what does this life of the Spirit in Mary consist? He himself is uncreated Love in her; the Love of the Father and of the Son, the Love by which God loves himself, the very love of the Most Holy Trinity. He is a fruitful Love, a “Conception.” Among creatures made in God’s image the union brought about by married love is the most intimate of all

(cf. Mt. 19:6). In a much more precise, more interior, more essential manner, the Holy Spirit lives in the soul of the Immaculata, in the depths of her very being. He makes her fruitful, from the very instance of her existence, all during her life, and for all eternity.

This eternal “Immaculate Conception” (which is the Holy Spirit) produces in an immaculate manner divine life itself in the womb (or depths) of Mary’s soul, making her the Immaculate Conception, the human Immaculate Conception. And the virginal womb of Mary’s body is kept sacred for him; there he conceives in time — because everything that is material occurs in time — the human life of the Man-God.¹

In a 1933 Letter from Nagasaki, St. Maximilian explains further that in the name, “Immaculate Conception,” the Mother also gives us the secret of her very nature:

In her apparition at Lourdes she does not say: “I was conceived immaculately,” but “I am the Immaculate Conception.” This points out not only the fact that she was conceived without original sin, but

also the manner in which this privilege belongs to her. It is not something accidental; it is something that belongs to her very nature. For she is Immaculate Conception in [her very] person.²

The uncreated Immaculate Conception and the created Immaculate Conception. The Divine Spirit and the human spouse perfected in His grace are united by an interior, *essential* union. Uncreated love conceives and dwells within the depths of her soul, and she becomes His quasi-incarnation.³ For this reason, as St. Maximilian tells us, Mary is also the Mediatrix of all graces and gifts of the Spirit:

The union between the Immaculata and the Holy Spirit is so inexpressible, yet so perfect, that the Holy Spirit acts only by the Most Blessed Virgin, his Spouse. This is why she is Mediatrix of all grace given by the Holy Spirit. And since every grace is a gift of God the Father through the Son and by the Holy Spirit, it follows that there is no grace which Mary cannot dispose of as her own, which is not given to her for this purpose.⁴

Does St. Maximilian go too far in speaking in this manner of the wonders of the Immaculate Conception?

Or does he say too little? The Mariology disclosed by the saint of the Immaculata, generous and profound as it is, in no way exhausts the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. His unrivaled pneumatological discoveries prepare the way for a new comprehension of the inseparability of the Uncreated Immaculate Conception with the created Immaculate Conception. But the mystery continues. The brilliance of St. Maximilian's methodology in his return to Trinitarian Mariology specific to the Holy Spirit also propels us to ponder more deeply the other relationships of the Immaculata with her Triune God.

Perhaps least developed of these, from a Trinitarian perspective, is the relationship between the Immaculate Conception and the Heavenly Father. The Father-daughter relationship is one of the most precious of human relationships, and no other relationship captures more the love of the Creator for creation, and the appropriate reciprocal love of creation for the Creator than the relationship between the Eternal Father and Mary Immaculate. At the heart of this union of Perfect Daughter to Perfect Father, which represents and exemplifies how every creature should be united to its Creator, is the stainlessness and fullness of grace possessed by the Immaculate Daughter. *This "stainless-fullness" is given to her by the Eternal Father through the Spirit and in view of the foreseen merits of the Son, which is the foundation of her perfect response of fiat-love to everything given to her and asked of her by her "Abba," God the Father of all mankind.*

As the example of St. Maximilian makes clear, the dogmatic proclamation of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 does not end its doctrinal development, but rather encourages more unveiling and more appreciation of its sacred mystery. Certainly Contemporary Mariology would do well to follow the example of St. Maximilian in striving to incorporate a more Trinitarian perspective and methodology in relation to the Blessed Virgin if we seek to be true to the full glory of Mary Immaculate.

We must seek to view Mary from the perspective of the Father, as the Virgin Daughter Immaculate, his greatest masterpiece. We must view Mary afresh from the perspective of the Son, as perfect Mother in the order of love, and most intimate partner and co-redeemer in the historic sufferings of Redemption. We must view Mary from the perspective of the Spirit, as his entirely pure and eternally faithful spouse, in a certain sense his "quasi-incarnation," and the Mediatrix of all of the Sanctifier's gifts to humanity. Only by seeking to comprehend the Immaculate One with the mind of the Trinity, and striving to love her through the heart of the Trinity, can we hope to do even partial justice to her.

Western Mariology must be on guard against the subtle tendency (even unconscious at times), to think first in terms of apologetics, rather than in terms of mystery. If the first question of our mariological methodology is, "how can I explain this to someone who does not believe it?," rather than, "what is the

depth and fullness of this revealed Marian mystery?,” the resulting product will be a Marian minimalism, a “too summary an attitude” as the Council prohibits,⁵ which will always fall short of what the human mind and heart should truly grasp with the help of grace about the Mother of the Word, who is God’s climax of creation.

Here we see light from the East. The Eastern Church looks first to the transcendence of the all pure Theotokos, the “God-bearer,” which it liturgically praises as the “ever holy, ever pure, ever blessed and glorious Lady.”⁶ In his 1998 Marian Lenten letter to the Orthodox world, the present Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, writes:

The Lady, the Virgin Mother, shines as the one who conceived joy for the world. She shines as the meaning of history; the goal of creation; She who made our composition heavenly She deliberately followed her Son, Himself God, from His Birth to His Passion and Cross. And the God-man from high on the Cross, sent forth His Most Holy Mother to all of us as our Mother in the order of grace.

She supports our life and sanctifies our time We are purified through her tears; through the divine beauty we are saved; and we keep holy silence in the presence of the overwhelming awe.⁷

The inestimable magnitude of the Immaculata in her overflowing plentitude of divine grace (cf. Lk. 1:28) and her absolute freedom from all sin (cf. Gen. 3:15), is described by Bl. Pius IX in *Ineffabilis Deus*:

Therefore, far above all the angels and all the saints so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of his divinity that this mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot even imagine anything greater, and which, outside of God, no mind can succeed in comprehending fully.

“The Co-redemptrix” Because “The Immaculate Conception”

The Immaculate Conception, the unparalleled prodigy of grace granted by the Eternal Father, is (along with her Divine Maternity), *the foundation for all of the subsequent roles assigned her by the Trinity for the benefit of humanity.*

Indeed, the humble Virgin of Nazareth is the Co-redemptrix not only because she is Mother of God, but also because she is the Immaculate Conception.

Stainless, full of grace, and in total enmity with Satan and his seed of evil and sin, the Immaculate One is created by the Father, in view of the merits of the Son, precisely to be the perfect human cooperator “with Jesus” in the historic work of human salvation.

Any sin on Mary’s part, original or personal, would establish a bond or union between herself and Satan, the historic foe of the Redeemer. Mary, then, would become a type of “double-agent” — working with Jesus, but also having an association with his Adversary, the very person and power from which Jesus seeks to buy back humanity.

No, the woman chosen to be humanity’s representative, to participate intimately and proximately with God himself in restoring supernatural life to souls, must be without any union through sin with the Enslaver and Defiler of humanity. Thus was she created immaculate by God the Father of all mankind, crafted from incorruptible “wood” so as to be the New Ark of the New Covenant, carrying the Redeemer of the world in her immaculate womb and dying with Him in her immaculate heart for the Redemption of the world (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 58, 61).

Pope John Paul II teaches the essential relationship between the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady’s coredemptive role with Jesus in salvation, and explains that her complete immunity from all sin allowed for the perfect fulfillment of this co-working role in Redemption:

We must above all note that Mary was created immaculate in order to be better able to act on our behalf. The fullness of grace allowed her to fulfill perfectly her mission of collaboration with the work of salvation; it gave the maximum value to her cooperation in the sacrifice. When Mary presented to the Father her Son nailed to the cross, her painful offering was entirely pure.⁸

We do not seek mediation from one who is himself at odds with the person with whom we desire to be reconciled. We do not seek relief from a debt by asking assistance from someone who is himself in a state of debt to the person we owe.

This is why the Father in his infinite wisdom, in assigning to the Virgin Daughter the providential roles of Co-redemptrix and its consequential roles as Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate for all humanity, created her in full union with the Redeemer, with no association in any dimension with the Enemy, and in absolute segregation from sin. In this way, Mary Immaculate becomes the Co-redemptrix with Jesus the Divine Redeemer in the historic work of Redemption, which indeed “buys us back” (*redimere* — to buy back). She becomes the Immaculate Mediatrix of all grace, who with the one Mediator “brings us the gifts of eternal salvation.”⁹ She becomes the all pure Advocate

who presents our petitions to our Divine Judge and King.

There is yet another sense in which the Immaculate Conception brings clarity to Mary's coredemptive mission. The objection is sometimes raised, "How can Mary be Co-redemptrix if she herself was in need of Redemption?"¹⁰ The answer is found in a proper understanding of her Immaculate Conception.

Indeed, it is true that Mary needed to be "redeemed" for her own salvation, and in order to actively participate in the process of human Redemption for the rest of humanity.

In the papal definition of the Immaculate Conception, Bl. Pope Pius IX states that Mary, from the first instant of her conception was freed from original sin and all its effects "in view of the merits of Jesus Christ."¹¹ This refers to the higher or more sublime manner in which Mary was redeemed, beyond all other children of Adam and Eve. In Mary's redemption, she did not have to suffer the experience of original sin and its effects and later be cleansed through sacramental baptism, but rather by an application of the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ at Calvary. Preserved from any experience or effect of original sin, she is redeemed in a more sublime manner than the rest of humanity. For this reason, the immaculately conceived Mother owes more to her saving Son's redemption than any other redeemed creature.

How, then, is Mary's redemption enacted so as to allow her to participate in the historic accomplishment

of Redemption at Calvary? This higher form of redemption is effected at Calvary in the *first intention of the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ*, which is precisely to redeem Mary.¹² The graces of the first intention are applied to Mary at the moment of her conception, which in turn allows her to become the sinless Co-redemptrix in union with the universal Redeemer in the Redemption of the rest of the human family — both in intention and accomplishment — at Calvary. There is no contradiction in the historic role of the Co-redemptrix in the participation of the Redemption and Mary's own personal need and reception of the graces of Redemption. God, who is outside of time, indeed who is the creator of the temporal order, is not limited by historical necessities, still less is he restrained by our limited understanding of his purposes. He can do as he wills. And in the absolutely unique gift of the Immaculate Conception, he has done so. As Vatican theological consultor, Fr. Jean Galot summarizes:

The first intention of the redemptive sacrifice was concerned, according to the divine plan, with the ransom of Mary, accomplished in view of our ransom . . . Thus, while she was associated in the sacrifice of Calvary, Mary already benefited, in advance, from the fruits of the sacrifice and acted in the capacity of a ransomed creature. But she truly

cooperated in the objective redemption, in the acquisition of the graces of salvation for all of mankind. Her redemption was purchased before that of other human beings. Mary was ransomed only by Christ, so that mankind could be ransomed with the collaboration of his mother

Hence there is no contradiction: Marian co-redemption implies the foreseen redemption of Mary, but not the foreseen fulfillment of the redemption of mankind; it expresses the unique situation of the mother who, while having received a singular grace from her own Son, cooperates with Him in the attainment of salvation for all.¹³

Does this primordial intention of Jesus Christ to redeem his mother and then, as subsequent intention, the rest of humanity violate the “one sacrifice” of Jesus Christ offered for all as discussed in Hebrews (cf. Heb. 10:10)? It does not, as the Redemption remains one, although its intentions and efficacious applications are twofold. The one redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ at Calvary does not constitute “two redemptions,” but one sublime Redemption with two saving applications: the first application effecting the Immaculate Conception of Mary and thus preparing her to be the Co-redemptrix

in her cooperation in objective Redemption; the second application effecting the Redemption of the human family accomplished with the Co-redemptrix.¹⁴

We can see then how foundational was the grace of the Immaculate Conception. Indeed, Mary is “*The Co-redemptrix*” because she was first “*The Immaculate Conception*.”

Development and Controversy

The crowning of Our Lady with the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 was preceded by a history of intense theological controversy. It was, in fact, one of the fiercest and lengthiest theological debates in the history of Catholic doctrinal development.¹⁵ Much light can be obtained by examining the controversy leading to this Marian dogma, in terms of the process of general doctrinal development (which encompasses the guidance of the Spirit of Truth working through the instrumentality of frail and fallen human nature), and in evaluating contemporary mariological doctrinal development, specifically the present discussion concerning the doctrine of Mary Co-redemptrix.

We can summarize the extensive history of the development of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which spans numerous centuries and hundreds of theologians, by examining the major pronouncements and teachings, as well as censures

and penalties, promulgated by the Papal Magisterium in the course of the second Christian millennium. The teachings and disciplines of the Holy See offer an example of the ebb and flow, the agonies and ecstasies relative to the Immaculate Conception doctrine which preceded the *ex cathedra* victory of Bl. Pius IX in 1854, when, guided and protected by the Holy Spirit, he proclaimed it as a Marian dogma.

Founded upon the inspired Word, which implicitly reveals the Mother of the Redeemer as being in “enmity” with sin (Gen. 3:15) and “full of grace” (Lk. 1:28), the Fathers of the Church attributed numerous titles to Our Lady, which bespeaks their gradual awareness of her immunity from original sin and her plenitude of grace. Bl. Pius IX provides examples of this Patristic witness in the defining constitution:

This doctrine so filled the minds and souls of our ancestors in the faith that a singular and truly marvelous style of speech came into vogue among them. They have frequently addressed the Mother of God as immaculate, as immaculate in every respect; innocent, and verily most innocent; spotless, and entirely spotless; holy and removed from every stain of sin; all pure, all stainless, the very model of purity and innocence; more beautiful than beauty, more lovely

than loveliness; more holy than holiness, singularly holy and most pure in soul and body; the one who surpassed all integrity and virginity; the only one who has become the dwelling place of all the graces of the most Holy Spirit. God alone excepted, Mary is more excellent than all, and by nature fair and beautiful, and more holy than the Cherubim and Seraphim. To praise her all the tongues of heaven and earth do not suffice.¹⁶

The Patristic testimonies, particularly from the East, were generous and numerous. In the fourth century, St. Ephraem incorporates the venerated New Eve model in comparing Mary’s stainlessness to Eve before Eve’s fall: “Those two innocent . . . women, Mary and Eve, had been created utterly equal, but afterwards one became the cause of our death, the other the cause of our life.”¹⁷ The Syrian “Harp of the Holy Spirit” then sings of her in an address to Jesus: “Thou and Thy Mother are the only ones immune from all stain; for there is no spot in Thee, O Lord, nor any taint in thy Mother.”¹⁸

From the West, St. Ambrose testifies that the Mother of Jesus was “free from all stain of sin.”¹⁹ Severus, bishop of Antioch declares that “She . . . formed part of the human race, and was of the same essence as we, although she was pure from all taint and immaculate.”²⁰ St. Sophronious, the seventh century patriarch of

Jerusalem, refers to a pre-purification of grace in the case of Mary: “You have found the grace that no one has received . . . no one has been pre-purified besides you.”²¹ St. Andrew of Crete calls her the “pure and entirely Immaculate Virgin,”²² and the ninth century monk, Theognostes of Constantinople directly mentions Our Lady’s immaculate origin from conception: “. . . she who from the beginning had been conceived by sanctifying action”²⁴

It is against this background of Tradition’s positive laud of the Immaculate Conception during the first Christian millennium, that St. Bernard of Clairvaux writes his historic letter to the Church of Lyons (c.1140), adversely affecting the doctrine’s acceptance for the next several centuries. The great Doctor of Marian Mediation, who rightly proclaimed “*de Maria numquam satis*,”²⁴ nonetheless felt compelled to reject this prerogative of his Queen due to a mistaken notion of the transmission of original sin.

In his letter to the canons of Lyons who had begun to celebrate the Feast of the Conception of Mary, St. Bernard rejects the feast and the doctrine behind it on the basis of the Augustinian notion that conception was directly connected with concupiscence. According to St. Augustine,²⁵ original sin infected the human body, which then automatically infected the soul at its infusion into the body. Mary, therefore, could not have been sanctified at her conception, but only in the womb after conception, and this act “rendered her birth holy, not her conception.”²⁶

Almost two centuries later, the Church is gifted with the theological breakthrough of the Subtle Doctor, Bl. John Duns Scotus (†1308) and the proper understanding that original sin is not passed on through infected body to infected soul upon the soul’s creation and infusion, but rather through a privation of grace in the soul at the moment of conception due to the sin of Adam and Eve.²⁷ The rejection of the doctrine by St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas,²⁸ St. Albert the Great,²⁹ St. Bonaventure,³⁰ and other scholastics, many of whom are significantly influenced by St. Bernard, is the dominant historical setting during the early part of the second millennium, a situation which eventually calls for the intervention of the Papal Magisterium.

The Feast of the Conception of Mary continues to spread, in spite of the theological opposition, to become an almost general celebration in the West. By the mid-fourteenth century, the feast is solemnly celebrated in Rome,³¹ and later in the century by the “Sovereign Pontiff and by the Cardinals” in unison.³² It must be kept in mind that the nature of the feast at this time constituted a celebration of the general sanctification of Mary in the womb of St. Ann, without the clear delineation of the exact nature and time of the actual sanctification.

At about the same time, Pope Gregory XI approves the well-known *Revelations* of St. Bridget of Sweden, with his two immediate papal successors, Urban VI and Boniface IX, confirming the approbation.³³ The *Revelations* record Our Lady’s words that: “It is the

truth that I was conceived without original sin,"³⁴ and explains further:

Believe, my daughter, seeing that they think rightly who believe and profess that I was preserved from the original stain; wrongly, however, those who think the contrary, especially if they do so with temerity.³⁵

. . . . Know that I was conceived without original sin, and not in sin Know that my Conception was not known to all because God willed it that way . . . thus it was pleasing to God that his friends would piously doubt of my Conception, and each would manifest his zeal, until the truth would be clarified at its foreordained time.³⁶

As the *Revelations* were widely promulgated and respected throughout medieval Christendom, its influence was significant upon theologians and bishops alike in growth of support for the Immaculate Conception. We see here one example of the direct influence of authentic private revelation in the historical development of doctrine, not as a legitimate foundation for the doctrine, but rather as a supernatural spark to stimulate development at an appropriate historical time in the Church's life and thought.

The Council of Basle which convenes in the mid-fifteenth century (Sept. 17, 1439) attempts to define the Immaculate Conception doctrine in their declaration from the 37th session, which states:

. . . We define and declare that the doctrine according to which the glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, by a special effect of divine preventing and operating grace, was never stained with original sin, but has always been holy and immaculate, is a pious doctrine, comfortable to the cult of the Church, to Catholic Faith, to right reason, and Sacred Scripture; it must be approved, held and professed by all Catholics; furthermore, it is no longer allowed to preach or teach anything contrary to it.³⁷

Even though the Council had been placed under an anathema by Pope Eugene IV (due to its papal stance, something not immediately relevant to the issue of the Immaculate Conception), the declaration nevertheless illustrates the depth of theological and hierarchical commitment to the doctrine at this time.

But new attacks on the doctrine are soon to surface in the latter part of the fifteenth century. History bears out the fact that *Marian dogmatic development is typically juxtaposed with fierce and repeated theological conflict, and*

oftentimes between bishops and theologians in full fidelity to the Holy See.

Sixtus IV and Papal Approval of the Feast

The Franciscan Pope, Sixtus IV (1471-1484) is the first pontiff to make an official magisterial pronouncement relative to the Immaculate Conception. Pope Sixtus issues sixteen constitutions with reference to Mary's Conception,³⁸ but the first major bull is issued in 1477 and entitled, *Cum praecelsa*. In this Bull, the pontiff officially approves the prayers of the Office of the Conception, and grants indulgences for those who recite the Office or attend Mass in its honor.³⁹

The atmosphere at the time the bull is promulgated involves an intense theological battle over the issue, essentially between the Dominican and the Franciscan orders. Dominican theologian Vincent Bandelli had written a book two years prior in which he strongly attacked the Immaculate Conception doctrine as impious, heretical, contrary to the teaching of the Church, and to sound reason.⁴⁰ This leads Sixtus IV to order a public disputation on the issue in his presence in Rome in early 1477. Fr. Bandelli defends his Maculist position, and the Minister General of the Franciscans, Francis Insuber of Brescia articulates the Immaculist stance. The Immaculist position proves victorious, which leads Sixtus IV to immediately grant official

approval to the Mass and Office of the Conception of Mary.⁴¹

The papally approved feast is clearly and specifically Immaculist, with Our Lady being referred to as "Immaculate" ten times, and with some thirty references to her having been conceived without original sin,⁴² using phrases such as:

You are all beautiful, O Mary, and the stain of original sin is not in thee [2nd antiphon of 1st Vesp.].⁴³

And:

Today is the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin Mary. God who, by the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, did prepare a worthy dwelling . . . grant, we beseech thee, who by his foreseen death did preserve her from all stain of sin . . . [Collect of the Mass and Oration of the Office].⁴⁴

But the papal sanction does not end the controversy. Bandelli authors another book in 1481, in which he seeks to interpret the Pope's document as referring to Mary's sanctification after the instance of animation, thus inferring that it teaches her "spiritual conception" and not her natural immaculate conception. Moreover,

opponents do not celebrate the papally approved feast, but rather return to the more generic feast of “Mary’s Sanctification.”⁴⁵

This leads Sixtus IV to respond with the bull *Grave nimis* in 1482, in which he threatens to excommunicate the objectors and also those who charge their opponents with heresy. He also condemns any who claim that the Holy See was referring only to the spiritual conception of Mary or the general sanctification of Mary. But in the second issue of the bull, *Grave nimis* (posterior) in 1484, the Pontiff also forbids the Immaculists to accuse their opponents of being guilty of the “crime of heresy or of mortal sin, since the matter has not been decided as yet by the Roman Church and the Apostolic See.”⁴⁶ Because the Church has not yet formally decided the doctrinal question, proponents and opponents of the feast alike can not be declared heretical or in grave sin *per se*.⁴⁷

Considering the clarity and firmness of Sixtus IV’s intervention, one can imagine that the “pious belief” of the Immaculate Conception (as it was termed) would be essentially free from any accusation of heresy, and that doctrinal development leading to the definition in 1854 would proceed in a fundamentally peaceful process. Moreover, in a promising move Sixtus’ successor, Innocent VIII, immediately follows his predecessor’s initiatives by approving a religious congregation from Spain with the title, “Religious of the Immaculate Conception of Mary” in the Bull, *Inter innumera* (1489).⁴⁸ However, *the next three centuries would witness ubiquitous theological standoffs, strong*

papal interventions, and serious ecclesiastical censures, all of which would constitute the tumultuous journey of this doctrine to the nineteenth century solemn definition.

The Council of Trent in the sixteenth century sought in general to restrict its doctrinal treatments to the specific areas brought into question by Protestant objections. Nonetheless, when the subject of the universality of original sin is brought up during the fifth session in 1546, the issue is raised as to whether or not the Mother of Jesus was subject to the universal law. Immediately, a number of theological debates ensue. After much intense discussion, the Council concludes with the following declaration:

This same holy Synod declares that it is not its intention to include in this decree, where there is question of original sin, the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Rather, the constitutions of Sixtus of happy memory are to be followed.⁴⁹

Trent therefore, refers to the Mother of Jesus as “Immaculate”; does not include her within the universal law of original sin; and refers to Pope Sixtus and his defense of the Immaculist position. As Bl. Pius IX comments in *Ineffabilis Deus*, the Council of Trent “sufficiently insinuated by this declaration that the Blessed Virgin Mary was free from the original stain.”⁵⁰

And yet controversy continues. In 1567, the great Marian pontiff, St. Pius V condemns one of the propositions of Baius, which reads: “No one but Christ was without original sin, and therefore the Blessed Virgin died in consequence of the sin contracted through Adam”⁵¹ The Dominican pontiff also issues a bull, *Super speculam*, in 1570, in which he speaks of the evil effects of the controversy which continues to rage over the Immaculate Conception. In an effort to prevent the present scandal from infecting the faithful, St. Pius V renews the teachings and censures of Sixtus IV, the Council of Trent, and adds the following new restrictions: “. . . no one is allowed to discuss either of the opinions in sermons given before the people . . . or to write or dictate anything in the vernacular on the question.”⁵²

Note the paternal character of Pius V’s actions. He acts as a good father of the family who enters into a heated family conflict, and intervenes by first reiterating the truth and then by calling a halt to any further discussion until emotions settle. The specific concern of Pius was the scandal being caused amidst the common faithful. We will repeatedly see the importance of the *sensus fidelium* in this historical drama.

Despite this, the theological battle rages on, and seventeenth century popes once again come to the defense of the doctrine. In 1616 Pope Paul V issues the Bull, *Regis pacifici*, in which he recalls the pronouncement of Sixtus IV, Trent, and Pius V, but

notes that these did not suffice to stop the conflict. Paul V therefore reiterates with “Apostolic power” his predecessors’ teachings, but with additional punishments for offenders.⁵³ A year later, the ecclesial storm still continues, and Paul V issues a decree, *Sanctissimus* (Sept. 12, 1617) whereby the Roman pontiff for the first time officially forbids anyone from denying the Immaculate Conception in public.⁵⁴ The expressed reason for the papal action is the scandal, quarrels, and dissensions caused among the common faithful whenever public sermons or teachings deny the Immaculate Conception or positively teach that she was conceived with original sin. In short, the denial of the Immaculate Conception is rejected by the *sensus fidelium*, and the Vicar of Christ respects and protects the Spirit acting through them.⁵⁵

A few years later, Pope Gregory XV extends the prohibitions of Paul V against the public denial of the Immaculate Conception to the realm of private conversations and writings as well, until such time as the Holy See would resolve the issue.⁵⁶ Once again, this papal directive requiring absolute silence for those denying the Immaculate Conception is prompted by the reaction of the common consensus of the faithful.⁵⁷ It is also noteworthy at this time that heads of state begin requesting the Holy See for a papal definition of the Immaculate Conception, with repeated petitions coming from the Kings of Spain.⁵⁸

Under the pontificate of Urban VIII, a pontiff who also advances the cause of the Immaculate Conception

through the granting of generous indulgences relative to the doctrine,⁵⁹ we have an interesting historical case of a decree contrary to the doctrine being drawn up by the Holy Office a few months before Urban's death and published three years after his death. The decree from the Holy Office states: "It is not permitted to attribute the title of 'Immaculate' to the Conception of the Blessed Virgin; one must say the Conception of the Immaculate Mary."⁶⁰ It is generally agreed upon by historians that the Holy Office decree did not have the approval of the Holy Father.⁶¹ We see here an instance of how a doctrinal Congregation can err on a disciplinary matter relative to a doctrine when it does not have direct pontifical approval.

With the papal election of Alexander VII in 1661, the doctrine gains one of its greatest papal champions. In the Bull, *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*, Alexander exacts the nature of the feast of the Immaculate Conception as the belief of Mary's immunity from original sin at conception, refers to the doctrine as a "*pia sententia*," or "pious belief," (a theological category of certainty that had been proposed but not approved at Trent⁶²), and confirms and broadens the canonical penalties of his papal predecessors for those rejecting the doctrine.⁶³

In 1708, Pope Clement XI provides further magisterial foundation for an eventual definition in the Bull, *Commissi Nobis*, by establishing the feast of the Immaculate Conception as a holy day of obligation for

the entire Catholic Church.⁶⁴ Little more than a century later, Pope Gregory XVI, the immediate predecessor of Bl. Pius IX, grants permission for an additional petition to the Litany of Loreto to read: "Queen conceived without original sin, pray for us."⁶⁵

By the nineteenth century, the Holy See has received and continues to receive numerous petitions for the solemn definition, both from the hierarchy and from the common faithful.⁶⁶ So significant is the factor of petitions from the People of God to the pontiff in the development of this Marian doctrine that Bl. Pius IX refers to the positive role of petitions as one of the legitimate criterion for its solemn definition in *Ineffabilis Deus*.⁶⁷ Far from the mistaken notion that petitions directed to Rome are merely a contemporary invention for democratized pressure within the Church, petitions from the hierarchy and the common faithful comprise a substantial element in the true papal discernment for solemn definitions.⁶⁸

Another positive influence for Bl. Pius IX in his discernment for the infallible declaration is the Church-approved apparitions of Our Lady of Grace received by St. Catherine Labouré in 1830, in which the "Medal of the Immaculate Conception" is revealed by Our Lady and swiftly spreads throughout Europe and beyond. The petition surrounding the "Miraculous Medal," as it was spontaneously referred to by the faithful, reads "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." The immediate and universal acceptance

of this medal so essentially linked to the Immaculate Conception doctrine and the plethora of miracles associated with it, make a strong positive impression on Pius IX.⁶⁹

In summation, centuries of fierce theological battles moderated by papal interventions, juxtaposed with a persevering liturgical, theological and devotional development, serve as the historical platform upon which Bl. Pius IX courageously crowns the Virgin Mother of God with the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 1854. The historical tempest which precedes the definition seems to symbolically manifest itself on the actual day of the definition by a violent storm outside of St. Peter's Basilica. As Sardi, the respected documenter of the history and acts concerning the definition, then describes:

At the precise moment His Holiness was going to define the dogma, a light breeze lifted the drape in front of the great window above the altar of the Chapel of Most Holy Mary of the Pillar, and a sunbeam lit up the person of the Holy Father and his pontifical throne. Many marveled at this event because of the solemn moment when it occurred . . .⁷⁰

Immaculate Conception and Mary Co-redemptrix: Parallels in Doctrinal Development

The Holy Spirit guides and nurtures a seed of revelation found in the Word of God, written or handed down, so that it takes root and grows gradually to full blossom and beauty within the garden of the Church in the form of a defined dogma. As the Spirit is one, so are his ways similar and detectable within the process of this development of doctrine. While there is always some dimension of the beauty of diversity within the movements of the Spirit, so too is there a certain uniformity and pattern.

In this light, we find at least seven similarities, true parallels of doctrinal maturation, as we juxtapose the development of the Immaculate Conception with that of Mary Co-redemptrix. In the case of the Immaculate Conception doctrine, these stages or levels of maturity eventually led to its solemn definition. So, too, the presence of *these same seven characteristics* in the development of the Coredemptrix doctrine offers significant evidence for its own doctrinal maturity.

1. Longstanding Liturgical Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows

Of great significance is the papal approval of the Feast of The Conception of Mary by Sixtus IV in 1477 and its critical role in the Immaculate Conception's doctrinal progression. In the case of Mary Co-redemptrix, we

also have a liturgical feast celebrated in Rome which likewise dates back to the fifteenth century, the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

In fact, until 1960, the role of Mary Co-redemptrix was liturgically celebrated twice a year. The first feast focused upon the “compassion” or co-suffering of Mary at Calvary and was celebrated on the Friday before our present Palm Sunday. The second feast, historically promoted by the Servites of Mary and celebrated on September 15, accentuates the entire coredemptive life of the Virgin as highlighted in seven scriptural and traditional events or “sorrows”: 1. Simeon’s prophecy in the Temple; 2. the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt; 3. the loss of the Christ child in the Temple; 4. the encounter of Mary with Jesus on the way of the cross; 5. her suffering during the crucifixion and death of Jesus; 6. the taking down of Jesus from the Cross; and 7. the burial of Jesus in the tomb.

Moreover, the first official use of the Co-redemptrix title by the Holy See comes on May 13, 1908, in a document by the Congregation of Rites in reference to the Feast of the Seven Sorrows. In positive response to a petition seeking to raise the rank of the feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary to a double rite of second class for the universal Church, the Congregation of Rites expresses its hope that “the devotion of the Sorrowful Mother may increase and the piety of the faithful and their gratitude toward the merciful Co-redemptrix of the human race may intensify.”⁷¹

These liturgical celebrations of the Co-redemptrix doctrine makes clear that the role has been believed and venerated for over a half millennium in the liturgical life of the Church.

2. Conciliar Teaching on Marian Coredemption

The conciliar teaching of Trent on the Immaculate Conception doctrine, however implicit, nonetheless clearly established the doctrinal integrity of the position. In addition, there were those at Trent who desired a solemn definition of the Immaculate Conception,⁷² but the Council saw it sufficient for that time to reflect the legitimacy of the doctrine in its other teachings.

The Second Vatican Council in its preparatory stage similarly received over 450 petitions for the solemn definition of the Mary Co-redemptrix and her subsequent role as Mediatrix of all graces⁷³ and deemed it sufficient for the purposes of a non-defining pastoral council to present a certain teaching on Marian Coredemption. The Council did so in its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. In the eighth chapter, which is dedicated to Our Lady, the Fathers clearly teach her coredemptive role:

Committing herself whole-heartedly and impeded by no sin to God’s saving will, she devoted herself totally, as a handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of

her Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of redemption . . . (LG, 56).

And:

Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which was born of her. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross as a mother to his disciple, with these words: "Woman, behold thy son" (Jn. 19:26-27), (LG, 58).

And further:

She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the temple, shared her Son's sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning

charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace (LG, 61).

The fact that the Second Vatican Council, which was pastoral by nature (as determined at its outset by Bl. John XXIII), did not define the Coredemption doctrine cannot be used as a valid argument against its definability. Trent did not define the Immaculate Conception, nor did Vatican I define the Assumption, although it had received from participating Fathers numerous petitions to do so.⁷⁴ Rather, the solid conciliar teaching on the truth of the Co-redemptrix role reflects an unquestionable theological basis in the sources of Revelation for a potential definition.

3. Petitions from the Faithful, Hierarchy, and Heads of State

Bl. Pius IX's acknowledgement of the numerous petitions from the hierarchy, common faithful, and even heads of states received by the Holy See for the Immaculate Conception's definition illustrates the papal respect given to the *sensus fidelium* in the process of discerning the timeliness and appropriateness of infallible declarations. Pius XII made the same acknowledgement for the vast number of petitions received in favor of the Dogma of the Assumption.⁷⁵

The largest number of per annum petitions received by the Holy See for any single cause in the history of the Church has been for the solemn definition of Mary Co-redemptrix. In the last ten years, over seven million petitions have been received by the Holy See from over one hundred and fifty countries in support of this infallible declaration.⁷⁶ More than five hundred and fifty bishops, including forty six cardinals, have also joined in the petition during the past ten years.⁷⁷

As Spain was foremost in national support for the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Philippines and Mexico are leaders in the national calls for the definition of Mary Co-redemptrix. Over seventy percent of the Mexican hierarchy has petitioned the Holy Father for the definition.⁷⁸ The Philippines have produced the largest number of lay petitions. Former Philippines President, Mrs. Corazon Aquino, petitioned the Holy See for the dogmatic proclamation while in office.

4. Indulged Prayers in Relation to Mary Co-redemptrix

Lex orandi, lex credendi — as the Church prays, so she believes. The indulgences approved by the Holy See for prayers associated with the Immaculate Conception also finds its parallel with the Co-redemptrix doctrine.

On June 26, 1913, the Holy Office issued a document expressing the Congregation's satisfaction in adding the

name of Mary to the name of Jesus in the indulgenced greeting, "Praised be Jesus and Mary" which is then responded to, "Now and forever." The document then states: "There are those Christians whose devotion to the most favored among virgins is so tender as to be unable to recall the name of Jesus without the accompanying name of the Mother, our Co-redemptrix, the Blessed Virgin Mary."⁷⁹

Six months later, the same Holy Office granted a partial indulgence for the recitation of a prayer of reparation to the Blessed Virgin (*Vergine benedetta*). The prayer ends with the words: "I bless thy holy Name, I praise thine exalted privilege of being truly Mother of God, ever Virgin, conceived without stain of sin, Co-redemptrix of the human race."⁸⁰

5. Religious Congregations Bearing the Co-redemptrix Name

As was the case with Innocent VIII and the approval of the "Religious of the Immaculate Conception of Mary," congregations with the Co-redemptrix title have received Church approval. The North Vietnamese religious congregation, "The Congregation of the Mother Co-redemptrix," which was approved by the local bishop in 1941 and approved by the Holy See in 1953, was forced to relocate to South Vietnam due to Communist persecution, and later expanded to the United States.⁸¹ Presently, a religious congregation of

priests and religious found in Italy, Slovakia, Russia, the Netherlands, and several other countries, with the name of “The Family of Mary Co-redemptrix” is rapidly growing in vocations, particularly in Eastern Europe.

6. Private Revelation Stimulating and Confirming the Co-redemptrix Doctrine

As the *Revelations* of St. Bridget and the apparitions of the Miraculous Medal to St. Catherine Labouré offer stimulation and growth to the Immaculate Conception doctrine, confirmed in the life of the Church, so too has ecclesiastically approved private revelation served to confirm the truth of Mary Co-redemptrix and, specifically, its eventual solemn definition.

From the same *Revelations* given to St. Bridget of Sweden, Our Lady offers a direct testimony to her role as Co-redemptrix: “My Son and I redeemed the world as with one heart.”⁸² Our Lord re-iterates the same truth of the Co-redemptrix doctrine in his own words: “My Mother and I saved man as with one Heart only, I by suffering in my Heart and my Flesh, She by the sorrow and love of Her Heart.”⁸³ These revelations positively influenced theologians and popes alike for the next three hundred years and were repeatedly referenced by theologians and bishops during the seventeenth century “Golden Age” of Marian Coredemption.⁸⁴

More recently, a number of contemporary Marian apparitions approved by the Church have spoken of

the Co-redemptrix role. The apparitions of Our Lady of Akita in Japan (1973), manifest Our Lady’s ongoing coredemptive role in the form of messages and scientifically verified lacrimations.⁸⁵ The apparitions received ecclesiastical approbation from the local ordinary, Bishop John Ito (1984). The related apparitions of the Lady of All Nations in Amsterdam (1945-1959), which has been declared of supernatural origin by Bishop Josef Punt of Haarlem-Amsterdam (May 31, 2002), contains numerous messages from Our Lady which speak of the roles of Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate, and the eventual solemn definition of these roles. For example, in the message of April 29, 1951:

I stand here as the Co-Redemptrix and Advocate. Everything should be concentrated on that. Repeat this after me; The new Dogma will be the “dogma of the Co-Redemptrix.” Notice I lay special emphasis on “Co.” I have said that it will arouse much controversy. Once again I tell you that the Church, “Rome,” will carry it through and silence all objections. The Church, “Rome,” will incur opposition and overcome it. The Church “Rome,” will become stronger and mightier in proportion to the resistance she puts up in the struggle. My purpose and my commission to you

is none other than to urge the Church, the theologians, to wage this battle. For the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit wills to send the Lady, chosen to bear the Redeemer, into this world, as Co-Redemptrix and Advocate.

. . . In the sufferings, both spiritual and bodily, the Lady, the Mother has shared. She has always gone before. As soon as the Father had elected her, she was the Co-Redemptrix with the Redeemer, who came into the world as the Man-God. Tell that to your theologians. I know well, the struggle will be hard and bitter (and then the Lady smiles to herself and seems to gaze into the far distance), but the outcome is already assured.⁸⁶

To be sure, private revelation, even that which is approved by the Church, can never serve as the theological foundation for a Church doctrine or its potential definition. Nevertheless, the history of dogmatic development bears out the fact that “certain supernatural lights which it pleases God to distribute to certain privileged souls,” to use the words of Bl. John XXIII,⁸⁷ have sparked and assisted the development of certain doctrines at key historical periods of the Church. Perhaps our best contemporary example is

the new ecclesial emphasis on Divine Mercy, which has been directly stimulated through the revelations to St. Faustina Kowalska, and has inspired the Church to the liturgical development of a universal feast of Divine Mercy on the Sunday following Easter Sunday, as well as the doctrinal development on Mercy for our present troubled age as manifested in the 1982 papal encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia*.

7. Theological Controversy and Mary Co-redemptrix

If history tells us anything about the journey of Marian dogmas, it is that theological controversy and emotionally charged debate will be their constant companions. This is visible in a dramatic way in the seven centuries of battle over the Immaculate Conception, with some of history’s greatest theologians, such as St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Albert the Great, and St. Bonaventure, finding themselves on the opposing side of the eventual dogma. This is also evident in the prior dogmatic proclamation of Mary as the “God-bearer” at Ephesus (431), with the historic confrontations between St. Cyril of Alexandria, Nestorius and their respective followers.

Theological controversy in itself, therefore, should never be used as a legitimate argument for the inappropriateness of a doctrine or its definition, as oftentimes the controversy becomes the very reason why the Bishop of Rome is called to speak definitively

and bring peace to the family of the Church upon the necessary foundation of the truth.

The fact that the Papal Magisterium has never deemed it necessary to call for a public prohibition of the discussion of Mary Co-redemptrix due to controversy and its subsequent scandal for the faithful,⁸⁸ let alone prohibiting even private discussion as it did for the Immaculate Conception debate,⁸⁹ should give a better historical context in which to understand the arguably lesser degree of theological disagreement over Marian Coredemption. This, of course, is due in our own time to the authoritative presentation of the doctrine by the twentieth and twenty-first century Papal Magisterium and the Second Vatican Council.⁹⁰

In light of the clear Church teaching on the doctrine, the hub of debate in the case of Mary Co-redemptrix focuses more upon the question of its potential definition as a dogma of the Faith. This would historically parallel where the Immaculate Conception development was in the first half of the nineteenth century. Now, as then, the Magisterium has settled the question of doctrinal integrity, and the theological discussion is centered around questions of the appropriateness and timeliness of a solemn definition.⁹¹

What makes a Marian doctrine definable? It is the establishing of its foundation in divine revelation and its organic maturity in that faith, worship, and life dimension of the Church which we call “Tradition.”⁹² Both Magisterial and conciliar teachings confirm the

foundations of Mary Co-redemptrix in the sources of Revelation. Certainly the other criteria which, at the time, had indicated doctrinal maturity for the Immaculate Conception are likewise present for the doctrine of Mary Co-redemptrix (i.e., the liturgical celebration of the role, the unprecedented petitions from the *sensus fidelium* and hierarchy, the private revelational confirmation, etc.), and do in fact offer evidence for its maturity within the Church’s contemporary living Tradition.

Conclusion

May the Holy Spirit, through the Immaculate Conception, enlighten the Vicar of Christ to receive and act upon Heaven’s perspective of timing and appropriateness, for the solemn definition of the truth of Mary Co-redemptrix, and her subsequent roles as Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate for humanity. May this year-long celebration of the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Immaculate Conception lead to a greater acknowledgement and praise of her sublime fullness of grace and her historic and continuous coredemption in the hearts of the People of God, and for the salvation of all humanity.

John Paul II has taught us that “Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix did not cease with the glorification of her Son.”⁹³ And he has recently re-iterated the truths of the

Immaculate Conception and Marian Coredemption in his February 11, 2004 message for the World Day of the Sick:

The keystone of history lies here: with the Immaculate Conception of Mary began the great work of Redemption that was brought to fulfillment in the precious blood of Christ . . . At the foot of the Cross Mary, made Mother of humanity, suffers in silence, participating in her Son's suffering, ready to intercede so that every person may obtain salvation.⁹⁴

Notes

- ¹ H. M. Manteau-Bonamy, O.P., *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit: The Teachings of St. Maximilian Kolbe*, Franciscan Marytown Press, 1977, pp. 1, 2, 4.
- ² St. Maximilian Kolbe, *Letter from Nagasaki to the Youth of the Franciscan Order*, February 28, 1933.
- ³ Manteau-Bonamy, *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit*, pp. 63-64.
- ⁴ St. Maximilian, *Letter to Father Mikolajczyk*, July 28, 1935.
- ⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, November 21, 1964, 67.
- ⁶ The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.
- ⁷ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, *Universal Lenten Encyclical on the Mother of God and Mother of us All in the Order of Grace*, March 1998.
- ⁸ John Paul II, December 7, 1983 Address, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, December 12, 1983, p. 1.
- ⁹ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 62.
- ¹⁰ A more technical version of the objection is posed as follows: It appears that Mary cannot participate in the obtaining of the graces of Redemption (commonly deemed objective Redemption) as the Co-redemptrix when she herself needed to be redeemed. If she did participate as Co-redemptrix in the obtaining of the graces of Redemption, it is because without her the obtaining of graces has not been accomplished. But if objective Redemption has not been accomplished, then she cannot personally benefit from it. This would be to accept that objective Redemption is at the same time being accomplished by her, and at the same time has already been accomplished, which would be a contradiction. For extended responses, cf. J. B. Carol, "Our Lady's Coredemption," *Mariology*, vol. 2, Bruce, 1957; Friethoff, *A Complete Mariology*, Blackfriars, London, 1985, p. 182; J. Galot, S.J., "Maria: Mediatrix o Madre Universale?," *Civiltà Cattolica*, 1996, I, pp. 232-244.

- ¹¹ Bl. Pius IX, Dogmatic Bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8, 1854.
- ¹² For an extended treatment, cf. Carol, “Our Lady’s Coredemption”; Friethoff, *A Complete Mariology*, p. 182; Galot, “Maria: Mediatrix o Madre Universale?,” pp. 232–244.
- ¹³ Galot, “Maria Corredentrice: Controversie e problemi dottrinali,” *Civiltà Cattolica*, 1994, III, p. 218.
- ¹⁴ Cf. Carol, “Our Lady’s Coredemption,” p. 418.
- ¹⁵ For a more comprehensive treatment of the history of the doctrinal development of the Immaculate Conception, cf. G. Roschini, O.S.M., *Maria Sanctissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, vol. 3, pp. 37–219; A. Carr, O.F.M.Conv., G. Williams, O.F.M.Conv., “Mary’s Immaculate Conception,” *Mariology*, vol. 1, Bruce, 1955, pp. 344–370; A. Robichaud, S.M., “Immaculate Conception in the Magisterium of the Church,” *Marian Studies* 5, 1954. A majority of citations presented here were located from these extended works.
- ¹⁶ Bl. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*.
- ¹⁷ St. Ephraem, *Sermones exegetici; opere omnia syriace et latine*, 2.
- ¹⁸ St. Ephraem, *Carmina nisibena*, 27.
- ¹⁹ St. Ambrose, *Expositio in ps. 118, serm. 22*, n. 30; *PL* 15, 1599.
- ²⁰ St. Severus, *Hom. Cathedralis*, 67; *PO* 8, 350.
- ²¹ St. Sophronius, *Orat. in Deiparae Annunt.*, 25; *PG* 87, 3246–3247.
- ²² St. Andrew of Crete, *Hom. 1 in nativ. Deiparae*; *PG* 97, 813–814.
- ²³ Theognostes, *Hom. in dormit. Deiparae*; *PO* 16, 457.
- ²⁴ “About Mary, never enough.”
- ²⁵ Cf. St. Augustine, *Contra Julianum*, ch. 15, n. 54; *PL* 44, 814.
- ²⁶ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epist. 174, ad canonicos lugdunenses*; *PL* 182, 332–336.
- ²⁷ Bl. John Duns Scotus, *Opus Oxoniense*, lib. 3, dist. 3, p. 1.
- ²⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *In 3 Sent.*, dist. 3, p. 1, art. 2; id., *Summa Theologica*, III, 27, 2, ad. 2.
- ²⁹ St. Albert the Great, *In 3 Sent.*, dist. 3, art. 5.
- ³⁰ St. Bonaventure, *In 3 Sent.*, dist. 3, pars 1, art. 1, q. 2.

- ³¹ J. B. Malou, *L’Immaculée Conception de la bienheureuse Vierge Marie considérée comme dogme de foi*, vol. 1, Brussels, 1857, p. 131; Cherubinus Sericoli, O.F.M., *Immaculata B.M. Virginis Conceptio iuxta Xysti IV Constitutiones*, Rome 1945, pp. 12–13; cf. Robichaud, “Immaculate Conception,” p. 88.
- ³² P. Doncoeur, S.J., “Les premières interventions du St. Siège relatives à l’Immaculée Conception, XII–XIV siècles,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique*, vol. 8, 1907, p. 700; Le Bachelet, S.J., “Immaculée Conception,” *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Paris, 1903, vol. 7, col. 1101; cf. Robichaud, “Immaculate Conception,” p. 90.
- ³³ Cf. Pourrat, “Brigitte,” *Catholicisme*, Paris, vol. 2, 1949, col. 271–272; cf. Robichaud, “Immaculate Conception,” p. 92.
- ³⁴ St. Bridget of Sweden, *Revelations*, bk. 6, ch. 49.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ St. Bridget, *Revelations*, bk. 6, ch. 55; cf. D. Cerri., “Enchiridion auctoritatum super duodecim. . . triumphos B. Mariae Virginis Matris Dei in originale peccatum,” *Pareri dell’Episcopato Cattolico . . . sulla definizione dogmatica dell’Immacolato Concepimento della Beata Virgine Maria*, Rome, 1852, part 3, vol. 6, 1852, p. 174; cf. Robichaud, “Immaculate Conception,” p. 92.
- ³⁷ Le Bachelet, “Immaculée Conception,” col. 1113; Sericoli, *Immaculata B.M. Virginis*, p. 21; Malou, *L’Immaculée Conception*, p. 60; cf. Robichaud, “Immaculate Conception,” p. 94.
- ³⁸ Sericoli, *Immaculata B.M. Virginis*, pp. 26, 29.
- ³⁹ J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, 32, Paris-Leipzig, 1901, 373–374. For information on Sixtus IV, cf. Sericoli, *ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ V. Bandelli, *Libellus recolectorius auctoritatum de veritate conceptionis B.V. Mariae*, Milan, 1475.
- ⁴¹ Sericoli, *Immaculata B.M. Virginis*, pp. 31–33.
- ⁴² Sericoli, *ibid.*, p. 80.
- ⁴³ Sericoli, *ibid.*; cf. Robichaud, “Immaculate Conception,” p. 98.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

- ⁴⁵ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum*, 374-375.
- ⁴⁶ Sericoli, *Immacolata B.M. Virginis*, appendix.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ Malou, *L'Immaculée Conception*, pp. 148, 156; C. Passaglia, S.J., *De Immaculato Deiparae semper Virginis conceptu*, Rome, 1855, vol. 3, pp. 1782-1783; Letter of the Bishop of Málaga, Spain, *Pareri*, part 1, vol. 3, p. 12; Letter of the Bishop of Toledo, Spain, *Pareri*, part 1, vol. 3, p. 121; Cerri, "Enchiridion," pp. 111, 112.
- ⁴⁹ Concilium Trident, sess. 5; DB 792.
- ⁵⁰ Bl. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*.
- ⁵¹ *Bullarium Privilegiorum ac Diplomatum Romanorum Pontificium*, vol. 4, part 3, p. 429; DB 1073.
- ⁵² St. Pius V, Bull *Super speculam*, 1570; *Bullarium Romanorum, ibid.*, p. 138.
- ⁵³ *Bullarium Romanorum*, vol. 5, part 4, pp. 209-211.
- ⁵⁴ Paul V, Decree *Sanctissimus*, September 12, 1617; *Bullarium Romanorum, ibid.*, pp. 234-235.
- ⁵⁵ Cf. Robichaud, "Immaculate Conception," p. 113.
- ⁵⁶ Gregory XV, Decree *Sanctissimus*, June 2, 1622: "Hoc suo praesente decreto. . . extendit et ampliavit etiam ad privata colloquia et scripta, mandans et praeciens omnibus et singulis supradictis, ne de cetero. . . neque etiam in sermonibus et scriptis privates audeant asserere, quod eadem Beatissima Virgo fuerit concepta cum peccato originali, nec de hac opinione affirmativa aliquo modo agere, seu tractare, exceptis tamen quibus a Sancta Sede Apostolica fuerit super hoc specialiter indultum." Cf. *Bullarium Romanorum*, vol. 5, part 5, p. 45.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.* Note: Special exception was made for the private discussion of the issue among the Dominicans in a decree issued one month after *Sanctissimus*. Cf. *Bullarium Romanorum, ibid.*, p. 46.
- ⁵⁸ For example, in 1627 Pope Urban VIII received a formal request from Philip IV of Spain for its definition; cf. P. Guéranger, "Mémoire sur la question de l'Immaculée Conception . . ." *Pareri*, part 3, vol. 7, p. 28; Le Bachelet,

- "Immaculée Conception," col. 1174; J. Mansella, *Il Dogma dell'Immacolata Concezione della Beata Vergine Maria*, Rome, 1866, vol. 1, p. 218.
- ⁵⁹ Cf. Urban VIII, *Cum sicut accepimus*, 1639.
- ⁶⁰ Archangelus a Roc, O.F.M.Cap., "Joannes Maria Zamoro ab Udine, O.F.M.Cap., praeclarus mariologus," *Collectanea Franciscana*, Rome, 1945-1949, vols. 15-19, p. 117; Le Bachelet, "Immaculée Conception," col. 1174; cf. Robichaud, "Immaculate Conception," p. 118.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶² Cf. Robichaud, "Immaculate Conception," p. 120.
- ⁶³ Cf. *Bullarium Romanorum*, vol. 6, part 5, pp. 182-184.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 11, part 1, p. 206.
- ⁶⁵ J. Bourassé, *Summa aurea de laudibus B.M.V.*, Paris, 1862, vol. 7, col. 608-612; *Pareri*, part 3, vol. 6, pp. 574-579.
- ⁶⁶ Cf. Bl. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*; Malou, *L'Immaculée Conception*, p. 216.
- ⁶⁷ Cf. Bl. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, middle section of the document.
- ⁶⁸ This is confirmed by both Bl. Pius IX and Pius XII in relation to their respective Marian *ex cathedra* definitions. Cf. Bl. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*; Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution of the Solemn Definition of the Assumption, *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950; *AAS* 42, 1950, p. 754.
- ⁶⁹ J. Dirbin, C.M., *St. Catherine Labouré of the Miraculous Medal*, Tan, 1958, p. 178; cf. R. Laurentin, *Catherine Labouré et la Médaille Miraculeuse*, Paris, 1976.
- ⁷⁰ V. Sardi, *La solenne definizione del dogma dell'Immacolato Concepimento di Maria SS.*, *Atti e documenti*, vol. 2, p. 428.
- ⁷¹ *AAS* 1, 1908, p. 409.
- ⁷² Cf. Carol, *Fundamentals of Mariology*, Benzinger, 1956, p. 107.
- ⁷³ Cf. G. M. Besutti, O.S.M., *Lo Schema Mariano al Concilio Vaticano II*, Edizioni Marianum, 1966, p. 17; cf. M. Miravalle, "With Jesus": *The Story of Mary Co-redemptrix, Queenship*, 2003, p. 167.
- ⁷⁴ Cf. Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, p. 754-755.

- ⁷⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrix* petition center archives, PO Box 220, Goleta, CA 93116, May, 2003.
- ⁷⁷ Note: These numbers reflect only the last ten years, without including the great number of hierarchical petitions for the dogma prior to 1993; cf. *Vox Populi* petition archives.
- ⁷⁸ Cf. *Vox Populi* petition archives.
- ⁷⁹ *AAS* 5, 1913, p. 364.
- ⁸⁰ *AAS* 6, 1914, p. 108.
- ⁸¹ Cf. *The Official Catholic Directory*, P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 2003, p. 1305.
- ⁸² St. Bridget, *Revelations*, bk. 1, ch. 35.
- ⁸³ St. Bridget, *Revelations*, bk. 9, ch. 3.
- ⁸⁴ Cf. Miravalle, “*With Jesus*,” pp. 113-124.
- ⁸⁵ Cf. T. Yasuda, S.V.D., “The Message of Mary Coredeptrix at Akita and Its Complementarity with the Dogma Movement,” *Contemporary Insights on a Fifth Marian Dogma, Mary Coredeptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations III, Queenship*, 2000, pp. 235-249; F. Fukushima, *Akita: Mother of God as Coredeptrix, Modern Miracles of Holy Eucharist, Queenship*, 1997.
- ⁸⁶ *The Messages of the Lady of All Nations, Queenship*, 1996, April 29, 1951 message, pp. 49-51.
- ⁸⁷ Bl. John XXIII, Close of the Marian Year, Feb. 18, 1959.
- ⁸⁸ St. Pius V, *Super speculam*; cf. *Bullarium Romanorum*, vol. 4, part 3, p. 138.
- ⁸⁹ Gregory XV, *Sanctissimus*; cf. *Bullarium Romanorum*, vol. 5, part 5, p. 45.
- ⁹⁰ Cf. Miravalle, “*With Jesus*,” chs. 11-13, pp. 149-208.
- ⁹¹ Note: Although a lack of knowledge of contemporary papal and conciliar teachings on Marian Coredeptrix has caused unnecessary debate as to even its doctrinal legitimacy.
- ⁹² Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, November 18, 1965, ch. 2.

- ⁹³ John Paul II, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, March 11, 1985, p. 7.
- ⁹⁴ John Paul II, “Mary Gives the Answer to Suffering: Jesus,” for the Twelfth World Day of the Sick, February 11, 2004, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, January 21, 2004, p. 7.

