

co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix

I believe that the teaching of the holy Catholic Church
is God's teaching, without exception.

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The Teaching of the Church

Second Vatican Council: “Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from, nor adds anything to, the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator.”¹

Pope John Paul II: “Beside the merciful Heart of Christ, we venerate the *Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Mediatrix of grace and of salvation.”²

Pope John Paul II: “mediatrix of mercy”³ and “...she acts as a mediatrix not as an outsider, but in her position as mother.”⁴

Pope John Paul II: “In contemplating the *Theotokos*, almost at this journey’s end, we look upon the true face of the Church, radiant in all her beauty, shining with ‘the glory of God which is on the face of Christ’ (2 Cor 4:6). O Advocate, help the Church to be ever more like you, her exalted model. Help her to grow in faith, hope and love, as she searches out and does the will of God in all things (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 65). O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!”⁵

Pope John Paul II: “Dear brothers and sisters! Let us turn our eyes to the Immaculate, all Holy and all Fair. May Mary, our Advocate, Mother of the ‘King of Peace’, who crushes the serpent’s head, help us, the men and women of the third millennium, to resist the seductions of evil; may she rekindle faith, hope and charity in our hearts, so that, faithful to our call and ready to make any sacrifice, we may be fearless witnesses to Jesus Christ, the Holy Door of eternal salvation.”⁶

Pope Paul VI: “It is also important to note how the Church expresses in various effective attitudes of devotion the many relationships that bind her to Mary: in profound veneration, when she reflects on the singular dignity of the Virgin who, through the action of the Holy Spirit, has become Mother of the Incarnate Word, in burning love, when she considers the spiritual motherhood of Mary towards all members of the Mystical Body; in trusting invocation, when she experiences the intercession of her advocate and helper;⁷ in loving service, when she sees in the humble handmaid of the Lord the queen of mercy and the mother of grace; in zealous imitation, when she contemplates the holiness and virtues of her who is ‘full of grace’ (Lk. 1:28); in profound wonder, when she sees in her, ‘as in a faultless model, that which she herself wholly desires and hopes to be’;⁸ in attentive study, when she recognizes in the associate of the Redeemer, who already shares fully in the fruits of the Paschal Mystery, the prophetic fulfillment of her own future, until the day on which, when she has been purified of every spot and wrinkle (cf. Eph. 5:27), she will become like a bride arrayed for the bridegroom, Jesus Christ (cf. Rev. 21:2).”⁹

Pope Pius XII: “Whoever, therefore, reverences the Queen of heaven and earth—and let no one consider himself exempt from this tribute of a grateful and loving soul—let him invoke the most effective of Queens, the Mediatrix of peace....”¹⁰

Pope Pius XI: “Let them pray to Him, interposing likewise the powerful patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mediatrix of all graces, for themselves and for their families, for their country, for the Church....”¹¹

Pope Pius XI: “And now lastly may the most benign Virgin Mother of God smile on this purpose and on these desires of ours; for since she brought forth for us Jesus our Redeemer, and nourished Him, and offered Him as a victim by the Cross, by her mystic union with Christ and His very special grace she likewise became and is piously called a reparatrix. Trusting in her intercession with Christ, who whereas He is the ‘one mediator of God and men’ (1 Timothy ii, 5), chose to make His Mother the advocate of sinners, and the minister and mediatrix of grace, as an earnest of heavenly gifts and as a

token of Our paternal affection we most lovingly impart the Apostolic Blessing to you, Venerable Brethren, and to all the flock committed to your care.”¹²

Pope Pius XI: “Receive, we beseech Thee, O most benign Jesus, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Reparatrix, the voluntary homage of this expiation....”¹³

Pope Pius X: “Nevertheless, by this companionship in sorrow and suffering already mentioned between the Mother and the Son, it has been allowed to the august Virgin to be the most powerful mediatrix and advocate of the whole world with her Divine Son (Pius IX. Ineffabilis).”¹⁴

Pope Leo XIII: “Among her many other titles we find her hailed as ‘our Lady, our Mediatrix,’ (St. Bernard, Sermon II in Adv.) ‘the Reparatrix of the whole world,’ (St. Tharasius, Orat. in Praesentatione) ‘the Dispenser of all heavenly gifts.’ (On Off. Graec., 8 Dec.)”¹⁵

Pope Leo XIII: “The recourse we have to Mary in prayer follows upon the office she continuously fills by the side of the throne of God as Mediatrix of Divine grace; being by worthiness and by merit most acceptable to Him, and, therefore, surpassing in power all the angels and saints in Heaven. Now, this merciful office of hers, perhaps, appears in no other form of prayer so manifestly as it does in the Rosary. For in the Rosary all the part that Mary took as our co-Redemptrix comes to us, as it were, set forth, and in such wise as though the facts were even then taking place; and this with much profit to our piety, whether in the contemplation of the succeeding sacred mysteries, or in the prayers which we speak and repeat with the lips.”¹⁶

Pope Leo XIII: “She it is from whom is born Jesus; she is therefore truly His mother, and for this reason a worthy and acceptable ‘Mediatrix to the Mediator.’”¹⁷

Pope Leo XIII: “Let us take as our mediatrix with God the most glorious VIRGIN MARY, the invincible Queen of the Rosary, Who has such great power over the forces of hell, and has so many times made Italy feel the effects of Her maternal love.”¹⁸

Man and Woman

It is not possible to understand the Virgin Mary’s role in God’s plan, without first understanding that God wills men and women to have different roles within His plan. It is not possible to understand the Virgin Mary in relation to Christ, without first understanding the proper relation between men and women in God’s plan. It is not possible to understand the Virgin Mary’s role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix, et cetera, without first understanding that God gives different roles to men and women. Many people, who promote the idea of Mary as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate, do not correctly understand that men and women have different roles in God’s plan. As a result, they misunderstand the true meaning of Mary as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix.

Eve was created to be a helper to Adam. “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’” (Gen 2:18). Similarly, the Virgin Mary was created to be a helper to Jesus Christ. “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord....” (Lk 1:38).

Women are created to be helpers to men. “Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve....” (1 Tim 2:11-13). The Virgin Mary fulfilled this Scripture in her whole life, especially in her relationship with her Divine Son Jesus Christ. Jesus taught in the Synagogues on the Sabbath; Mary was silent. Jesus taught the Apostles and the other disciples and the crowds; Mary did not teach, but only listened. Jesus led and Mary followed.

If you cannot accept this teaching, then you cannot understand Christ’s place in Creation, nor Mary’s place in Creation, nor your own place in Creation. Whoever rejects this teaching about men and women, rejects God’s plan for Creation. Any woman who refuses to accept the role given to her by God, in relation to men, within the Church, the family, and society, cannot possibly understand the true meaning of Mary’s role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix. The same is true for any man who refuses to accept the proper role of a man in the Church, the family, and society.

Mediator and Mediatrix

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus....” (1 Tim 2:5). There is only one Mediator between God and Creation: Jesus Christ. Therefore, Mary’s role as Mediatrix cannot be that of a female mediator. The role of Mediatrix is fundamentally different from the role of Mediator, because the role of women in God’s plan is fundamentally different from the role of men. The feminine form of the word implies both that the person is female and that the role is a feminine role. The feminine role called “Mediatrix” is to be a helper to the Mediator. Christ mediates between God and humanity; Mary merely assists Christ. Mary participates in Christ’s mediation, but she herself does not mediate. And Mary would not have the role of Mediatrix at all, except that Christ exercised His role as Mediator perfectly in her case.

Mary’s assistance to Christ does not consist in doing what Christ does in a lesser way. Mary does not mediate, not even in a subordinate or auxiliary way. When Christ taught the crowds, Mary did not stand at His side and add her own words to His Word. When Christ led the Apostles, Mary was not second in command. Mary’s role is not a reduced version of Christ’s role. Mary’s role is not a secondary or lesser type of Christ’s role. Mary’s role in God’s plan is fundamentally and radically different than Christ’s role.

As Mediatrix, Mary’s role is not to mediate, not even in a secondary or auxiliary way. Mary’s role as Mediatrix is to help and assist Christ. Mary does not mediate, she merely assists the One who does mediate. In no way and in no sense of the word is Mary a mediator. The role of Mediatrix is merely to assist the one Mediator, Jesus Christ. Mary assists Christ in His work as Mediator, not by doing any mediating herself, not even with and under Christ. Rather, she assists Christ by helping Him when He mediates. The Virgin Mary participates in Christ’s work of mediation, but she does not, in any way whatsoever, act as a mediator herself. Mary does not stand before God to Mediate for the People of God. Instead, she kneels before Christ, in worship of Him, and assists Christ as He stands before the Father as the one Mediator.

How does Mary assist Christ in mediation? First and foremost, through the prayers and sufferings of her whole life. Mary offers her whole life and her whole self to God, as both a prayer and a sacrifice of the highest order, united to the supreme prayer and sacrifice of the life and death of Jesus Christ, for the sake of all those for whom Christ mediates.

Advocate and Advocatrix

Mary’s role as Advocatrix should use the feminine form of the word, so as to indicate that her role is the feminine role of assistant to Christ our Advocate. The use of a Latin word as a theological term also has the advantage of allowing the word to be given a specific definition apart from what would be the common meaning of the word in each language. Also, Mary’s role as Advocatrix is substantially different than Christ’s role as Advocate; use of a separate word, “Advocatrix,” clarifies this difference.

As with the term Mediatrix, the feminine word Advocatrix implies both that the person is female and that the role is a feminine role. Mary’s role as Advocatrix is not to advocate for us before God, but to assist Christ in His role as our Advocate before God. The Virgin Mary participates in Christ’s work of advocacy, but she does not, in any way whatsoever, act as an advocate herself.

Mary is subordinate to Christ, but her role is also radically different from Christ’s role. Christ is our Advocate (1 Jn 2:1). Mary is not our Advocate. Her role as Advocatrix is to assist Christ in His role as Advocate for us before God. Mary does not stand before God to Advocate for the People of God. Instead, she kneels before Christ, in worship of Him, and assists Christ as He stands before the Father as our Advocate.

The Virgin Mary is our Advocatrix. This term is feminine, which correctly implies that the role is a feminine role of subordinate assistance to the one true Advocate, Jesus Christ. However, some persons promote the use of the expression: “Advocate for the People of God.” This particular expression is seriously flawed because it lacks any reference to Christ. Mary does not stand alone before God as our Advocate. Jesus Christ stands alone before God as our Advocate, while Mary kneels before Christ, in worship of Him, and participates in His advocacy. The Virgin Mary is not herself the Advocate for the People of God. Jesus Christ is the Advocate for the People of God; Mary is His subordinate assistant in His work of advocacy.

Redemptor and Redemptrix

There is one Redeemer of all Creation, Jesus Christ. A Redemptrix is not a female Redeemer nor is she a female co-Redeemer. The role of Redemptrix is fundamentally different from the role of Redeemer, because the role of women in God's plan is fundamentally different from the role of men. The feminine form of the word, Redemptrix, implies both that the person is female and that the role is a feminine role.

As with the terms Mediatrix and Advocatrix, the Redemptrix has a role which is both radically different from, and wholly subordinate to, the Redemptor. Mary is not our Redeemer; Mary is not a co-Redeemer with and under Christ. Mary is not a female Redeemer. There is one Redeemer, Jesus Christ. The Virgin Mary's role as Redemptrix is fundamentally different from Christ's role as Redeemer, because the role of women in God's plan is fundamentally different from the role of men.

Mary's role as co-Redemptrix is intrinsically different from Christ's role as Redeemer. Mary does not redeem, she merely assists the One who does redeem. Mary participates fully in Christ's work of Redemption, but she herself redeems no one. In no way whatsoever is Mary a co-Redeemer. The role of the co-Redemptrix is merely to assist the one Redeemer, Jesus Christ. In the Redeemer/redeemed relationship, the Virgin Mary is wholly on the redeemed side of the relationship. Mary was redeemed by Christ. She participates in Christ's redemption of us by assisting us as we respond to God's grace and accept Christ and follow Christ to our salvation. The Virgin Mary does assist Christ in His work of redemption, but not by redeeming, not by co-redeeming, and not by doing any work of redemption per se, not even in a subordinate way. Christ is the one Redeemer; Mary is merely assists Christ as He redeems.

Christ is Divine and is the source of our salvation, whereas Mary can do nothing to save us without Christ. Mary's role is to assist Christ in obtaining our redemption. Christ suffered for us on the Cross, whereas Mary suffered at the foot of the Cross. Christ died on the Cross for our salvation, whereas Mary did not die for our salvation. Her later death was not an act whereby she saved us, but rather an act in which she herself was saved by Christ. Christ is able to save us, because Christ is God. Mary is not able to save us, because she is not God. Mary can only assist Christ in His work of salvation. This radically different and wholly subordinate role is indicated by the feminine form of the words: Mediatrix, Redemptrix, Advocatrix.

Mary's participation in Christ's work of redemption can be divided into two parts: her life on earth and her eternal life in Heaven. In this life, Mary accepted God's whole will. She lived her whole life, even from her earliest days, in complete obedience and love of God. She accepted God's plan to make her the Mother of the Messiah. She accepted all that God asked of her throughout her life, even when her Divine Son Jesus Christ had to suffer and die on the Cross. Mary lived a life of prayer, self-denial, and works of mercy, even to her last days on earth. Yet throughout her holy and prayerful life, Mary never redeemed anyone, not even herself. She accepted God's plan to bring salvation to the world and she accepted and followed her part in that plan. Christ died alone on the Cross. Mary did not die on another cross next to Christ. Mary did not redeem anyone. Mary did everything she could to assist Christ in offering redemption to all.

In Heaven, the Virgin Mary continues to do everything she can to assist Christ in His work of redemption. Yet, even from Heaven, Mary does not redeem anyone, neither directly nor indirectly. The Virgin Mary prays to her Divine Son Jesus Christ for the salvation of each and every person throughout Time and Place. Mary offers her entire self to God for the sake of our salvation by Christ. Yet even this act of total self-giving does not bring about our salvation, not even in an auxiliary or supplementary way. Even in Heaven, Mary is powerless to save or redeem anyone. Only Christ can save our souls. Only Christ can redeem the world. Mary can do a great deal to assist Christ, but she cannot redeem even a single soul herself. Everyone who is saved has benefited from Mary's work as assistant to Christ the Redeemer. Yet none have been saved by Mary, not even partially. You cannot understand Mary's role in salvation until you understand this truth.

The Meaning of “co-” in co-Redemptrix

Christ’s role of Redeemer is significantly different than His role as Mediator and Advocate. When Christ acts as Mediator between God and mankind, we do not have any role as mediators. We are the subject of the mediation. Christ mediates for us; we do not mediate for ourselves. When Christ acts as our Advocate before God, we do not have any role as advocates. We are the subject of advocacy. Christ advocates for us; we do not advocate for ourselves. But, when Christ acts as our Redeemer, we must necessarily participate in our own redemption. We must co-operate with God’s grace, or we will not be redeemed. We must accept the gift of Love-Faith-Hope. We must exercise the gift of our Redemption through prayer, self-denial, and works of mercy. Christ’s role as Redeemer requires our co-operation in order to result in our eternal salvation. Therefore, the Virgin Mary is not merely the Redemptrix, she is the co-Redemptrix, because she assists us when we co-operate in our own redemption. Mary is our co-worker in the work that we all must do in order to be saved, the work of co-operating with Christ, the Redeemer, in our own redemption.

The prefix “co-” in co-Redemptrix does not refer to Mary’s role in relation to Christ as Redeemer. Some say that the “co-” in co-Redemptrix means that Mary works with Christ in Redeeming us. But, if that were the meaning, then we would have to add “co-” before many other titles of Mary. Mary is called co-Redemptrix, but she is not called co-Mediatrix or co-Advocate, and with good reason. The prefix “co-” in co-Redemptrix refers to Mary’s role in relation to us, not to Christ; we have a special role to play in our redemption by Christ, a role which we do not have in Christ’s mediation and advocacy for us.

When Christ acts as Mediator, He is assisted by Mary the Mediatrix. Christ acts; Mary assists. When Christ acts as Mediator, our role is not that of mediator at all. When Christ acts as Advocate, He is assisted by Mary the Advocatrix. Again, Christ acts and Mary merely assists. When Christ acts as Advocate, our role is not that of advocate at all. We do not actively participate in Christ’s role as Mediator and Advocate; we are subject to Christ’s mediation and advocacy. But, when Christ acts as our Redeemer, we not only accept the Redemption offered to us by Christ, we also actively participate in our own redemption. We participate in our own redemption by co-operating with God’s grace: we accept Christ’s teaching, we change our lives to conform to Christ’s Way, we take up our crosses and follow Christ, etc.

The “co-” in co-Redemptrix refers to Mary’s role in relation to our work of participating in our own redemption. Mary co-operates with us in our work of accepting Christ and following Christ and changing to become like Christ. Mary is a co-worker with us in our task of participating in the Redemption offered to us by Christ. The “co-” in co-Redemptrix implies a rough equality between Mary and ourselves in the work of our redemption. Mary participates in our redemption much as we participate in our redemption. Mary’s role in our redemption is fundamentally different from, and wholly subordinate to, Christ’s role in our redemption. But her role is very similar to our role in that she joins with us when we participate in our redemption by Christ.

The prefix “co-” implies a similar role between two or more persons. This meaning is seen in words such as: co-worker, co-author, co-pilot, co-anchor. In some cases, one of the individuals is subordinate to the other, as with the pilot and co-pilot. In other cases, the individuals have roughly the same level of leadership or authority, as may be the case with co-authors or co-anchors. But neither meaning can be applied to Mary’s role in assisting Christ towards our redemption. Mary’s role in our redemption is not only subordinate to Christ’s role, but also radically different from Christ’s role. The “co-” prefix is not used to describe an individual who has a role which is both different from, and subordinate to, the role of another individual.

Mary is not a co-worker with Christ in obtaining our redemption, not even in a subordinate way. However, Mary is a co-worker with us as we participate in our Redemption. Mary has a role in assisting Christ with our redemption; in that role she is the Redemptrix, the subordinate assistant to the Redemptor. The “co-” in co-Redemptrix does not refer to Mary’s role as Christ’s assistant, but to her role as a co-worker with us as we participate in our redemption.

Some Christians interpret the “co-” prefix to mean that Mary works “with” Christ, in a subordinate role, in our Redemption. On the contrary, it is not enough to say that Mary is subordinate to Christ. We must also understand that her role is entirely different than Christ’s role in our redemption. The prefix “co-” in co-Redemptrix cannot refer to Mary’s role in relation to Christ, even if it is interpreted to mean “with and under” Christ, because Mary’s role is substantially and fundamentally different

from Christ's role. The prefix "co-" in co-Redemptrix can only refer to Mary's role in relation to us. We do not participate in Christ's mediation or advocacy. But we do participate in Christ's work of bringing us redemption. That is why Mary is called co-Redemptrix, but she is not called co-Mediatrix or co-Advocatrix.

The term "Redemptrix" refers to Mary's role as Christ's subordinate assistant in Christ's work of Redemption; the "co-" prefix is not needed to describe that aspect of Mary's role. Instead, the "co-" prefix describes another aspect of Mary's role, whereby she co-operates with us as we participate in our redemption. The word Redemptrix is sufficient to describe Mary's role in relation to Christ as our Redeemer. The prefix "co-" means something in addition. The "co-" prefix does not refer to Mary's cooperation with Christ, nor to Mary as a co-Redeemer with Christ, nor to Mary as a co-worker with Christ in His work of Redemption. We each participate in our own redemption by Christ. Mary's is a co-worker with us, a co-helper with us, cooperating with us, as we participate in our redemption by Christ.

Christ as God is infinite; Mary is finite. The Son of God redeems; the mere human woman Mary does not redeem. Christ is God; Mary is not God; therefore, Christ and Mary cannot have similar roles. Christ is Messiah; Mary is not Messiah; therefore, Christ and Mary cannot have similar roles. Mary is not co-Redeemer with Christ. The prefix "co-" in co-Redemptrix must be understood to refer only to Mary's role as co-worker in our work of participating in our redemption. The "co-" prefix in co-Redemptrix does not refer to Mary's role in relation to Christ, but to her role in relation to us. Mary's role in our redemption is comprehensive and indispensable, but she is not the Messiah and she does not have a similar role to the Messiah.

The Virgin Mary does not have a co-redemptive role with Christ, not even if this role is understood to be secondary and subordinate to Christ. Mary has a unique role, substantially and fundamentally different from Christ's role and wholly subordinate to Christ's role. Christ alone redeems; Mary assists Christ in His work of redemption.

The Correct Term is "co-Redemptrix"

The word co-Redemptrix should be written with a capital "R" and a lowercase "c," because "Redemptrix" refers to Mary's participation in Christ's Divine work of Redemption, whereas the prefix "co-" refers to Mary's participation in our own weak and imperfect efforts to accept Christ's Redemption. Many people write this word with a capital "C" and a lowercase "r," because they do not understand this truth.

A Reflection of the Trinity

The three aspects of Mary's triune role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix are interrelated, much as the three persons of the Trinity. These are not three separate roles, but three different aspects of one role. Mary's triune role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix is a reflection of the Most Holy Trinity. Her role as co-Redemptrix is a reflection of the Father; her role as Mediatrix is a reflection of the Son; her role as Advocatrix is a reflection of the Spirit.

Her role as co-Redemptrix is a reflection of the Father. How did Christ redeem us? By doing the Father's will, even unto death. "Father...not what I will, but what thou wilt." (Mk 14:36). The Father draws us to the Son so that we can be saved. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." (Jn 6:44). Mary does not offer us redemption, but her role as co-Redemptrix is a reflection of the First Person of the Trinity, from Whom comes all redemption.

Her role as Mediatrix is a reflection of the Son. Her Divine Son Jesus Christ is the one Mediator between God and Creation. "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...." (1 Tim 2:5). Mary is not the mediator, but her role as Mediatrix is a reflection of the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, the one Mediator.

Her role as Advocatrix is a reflection of the Spirit. "But the Counselor [Paraclete, Advocate], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." (Jn 14:26). Mary is not our Advocate, but her role as Advocatrix is a reflection of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Paraclete.

Analogies

No analogy is a perfect and complete description of something. An analogy can only go so far towards describing something. An analogy can help explain, but cannot prove, a particular idea. The following analogies are meant to help explain Mary's role, as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix, in relation to Christ.

Christ and Mary are not like a pilot and co-pilot. The pilot flies the plane, but the co-pilot also flies the plane. The pilot and co-pilot have the same role, even though the co-pilot is subordinate to the pilot. Christ and Mary do not have the same role, not even with the provision that Mary's role is subordinate to Christ's role. It is true that Mary is radically subordinate to Christ.¹⁹ But Mary's role is also radically different from Christ's role. It is a serious theological error to claim that Mary has much the same role as Christ, even if that role is said to be with and under Christ. In truth, the Virgin Mary's role is both radically subordinate and radically different from Christ's role.

To continue the same analogy, Christ and Mary are more like pilot and crew member. The pilot flies the plane, the crew member assists the pilot in flying the plane. The crew member never flies the plane, but only assists. Christ mediates between God and Creation. Mary never steps into that role, not even for a single instant, not even in a way which is subordinate to Christ. Instead, she assists Christ the one Mediator. On the other hand, Christ and Mary are not like pilot and stewardess, because the stewardess does not assist the pilot in flying the plane. Christ and Mary do not have the same roles, but neither are their roles unrelated.

Another analogy is found in the medical profession. Christ and Mary are like surgeon and nurse. The surgeon operates on the patient; the nurse assists the surgeon, but she does not operate on the patient. Christ redeems humanity; Mary assists Christ in redeeming humanity, but she herself does not redeem anyone. In her role as co-Redemptrix, Mary does not redeem, nor does she do any work of redemption per se. She merely assists Christ in His work of redemption.

Within the same analogy, Christ and Mary are not like the chief surgeon and the surgical intern. The surgical intern is subordinate to the chief surgeon, (some would say radically subordinate), but they both have basically the same role. The chief surgeon performs operations; the surgical intern also performs operations. Christ and Mary do not have the same role in obtaining our redemption, nor do they have roles which are similar with the exception that Mary is subordinate to Christ. Instead, Christ and Mary have radically different, but closely-related, roles.

Christ and Mary are not like a teacher and an assistant teacher. When Christ taught, Mary did not stand by His side and also teach. Mary assisted Christ during His teaching Ministry, by praying and suffering and being merciful to others. When Christ healed, Mary did not stand by His side and also heal. Instead, she assisted Christ by imitating His holiness and by offering her whole self to God. When Christ chose the Twelve Apostles, He first spent all night in prayer to God. Mary assisted Christ in this decision, not by verbally advising Him and not by choosing some of the Twelve, but by her prayer and self-sacrifice. Men and women today should imitate these examples from Christ's life in their relationships with one another.

Christ and Mary are not like two attorneys: lead counsel and co-counsel. The attorney with the role of co-counsel is subordinate to the attorney with the role of lead counsel, but they both have basically the same role. They each might question a witness or make a motion before the court. Mary is subordinate to Christ, but her role is also radically different from Christ's role. Christ is our Advocate (1 Jn 2:1). Mary is not our Advocate. Her role as Advocatrix is to assist Christ in His role as Advocate for us before God. Mary does not stand before God as Advocate for the People of God. Instead, Mary kneels before Christ, in worship of Him, and she assists Christ as He stands alone before the Father as our Advocate.

Exceptions to Mary's role as Mediatrix of Grace

The Virgin Mary is Mediatrix of Grace. Pope Pius XI even calls her "Mediatrix of all graces."²⁰ However, a correct understanding of this title requires two exceptions to the phrase "Mediatrix of all graces."

1. The Virgin Mary is not the Mediatrix of the grace given by the Divine Nature of Christ to the Human Nature of Christ. There is no mediator between Christ's Divine and Human Natures,

therefore, there can be no mediatrix between Christ's Divine and Human Natures. The Virgin Mary does not intercede with the Divine Nature of Christ to obtain grace for the Human Nature of Christ. The Virgin Mary does not intercede with the Most Holy Trinity to obtain grace for the Human Nature of Christ. Mary does not pray for Christ to be saved or to be blessed by God. Christ is Mary's Savior and God, so He never requires her intercession in the least. Mary never interceded for Christ; from the time of the Annunciation, Mary always understood that Christ is God.

During her lifetime on earth, the Virgin Mary understood that her child was the Christ-child and the Son of God. Thus, she did not pray for his salvation or for his holiness. If anyone ever did say any prayers for the Christ, such prayers had no effect on the soul of Christ, which has no need of prayer or intercession. Christ's body and soul are united with His Divinity, and so His body and soul have no need of anything more. Christ could fast in the wilderness for 40 days, because His body and soul were always united to His Divinity. Christ could die on the Cross, only because His Divinity allowed his suffering and death. Nothing can happen to the Humanity of Christ, except that Divinity of Christ permits it.

The Virgin Mary is not able to intercede between Christ and God. Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Trinity. Mary cannot intercede with God on behalf of God. Mary cannot intercede with the Father on behalf of the Son or the Spirit. God is so thoroughly One that any mediation between the Persons of the Trinity is completely impossible. There is no mediator within the Trinity, for God is One. "Now an intermediary implies more than one; but God is one." (Gal 3:20).

The Virgin Mary is not able to intercede between the Divine Nature and the Human Nature of Christ, nor between the Human Nature of Christ and the Trinity. The Human Nature of Christ is fully human, and so has need of God's grace. However, grace flows in abundance upon the Human Nature of Christ from the Divine Nature of Christ. The Divine and Human Natures of Christ are so thoroughly, intimately, and irrevocably united, in One Person, that any mediation between the Divine and Human Natures of Christ is completely impossible. The Human Nature of Christ has no need of the intercession or mediation of the Virgin Mary, nor of any other person.

Suppose that some holy person prayed for Christ, when He was a child. God would look favorably on such a prayer, and perhaps provide grace to some poor sinner in need, because of this virtuous act. But the Son of God has no need of the intercession of any created person. The Virgin Mary is called "full of grace" (Lk 1:28). The saying "full of grace" can also be correctly applied to the Human Nature of Jesus Christ. Mary is full of grace because she receives an abundance of grace from Jesus Christ, her God and Savior. Christ is full of grace because His Divine Nature is united to His Human Nature. The Human Nature of Christ receives a super-abundance of grace from the Divine Nature of Christ, so much so that no intercession, mediation, prayers, sacrifices, or any other act by any part of Creation (other than the Human Nature of Christ) is needed to obtain, for Christ's Human Nature, from Christ's Divine Nature, any kind or degree of grace or favor from God.

Jesus Christ, in His Human Nature, is not the Mediator of grace given to His Humanity from His Divinity. Christ cannot stand between His Divine Nature and His Human Nature; the Divine Nature and Human Nature of Jesus Christ is all that He Is. The Divine Nature of Jesus Christ is the source of grace proceeding to the Human Nature of Jesus Christ; the Human Nature of Jesus Christ is the recipient of grace proceeding from the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ. Since Christ Himself is not the mediator of the grace He Himself receives, neither can the Virgin Mary be the Mediatrix of graces she herself receives. There is no mediator between God and Christ and there is no mediator between Christ and Mary.

2. The Virgin Mary is not the Mediatrix of the grace given by the Trinity to the Virgin Mary. When Mary receives grace, from Christ as Source of grace by virtue of His Divinity, and through Christ as Mediator by virtue of His Humanity, she is the recipient, not the Mediatrix, of that grace. She cannot be both mediatrix and recipient of the same grace. She cannot stand as Mediatrix between Christ and herself.

Suppose two persons have a disagreement. If they choose a mediator to attempt reconciliation between them, the mediator cannot be one of those two. A person cannot be judge over his own case. Neither can someone be a mediator of their own case. Thus, Mary cannot be Mediatrix in the case of the grace she herself receives. She also cannot be the Mediatrix of the grace that Christ Himself receives in His Human Nature, because Mary can only be Mediatrix where Christ is Mediator.

The grace given by the Divine Nature of Christ to the Human Nature of Christ have no mediator. Christ's Human Nature is the recipient of grace and Christ's Divine Nature is the source of that grace. Grace given by the Most Holy Trinity to the Human Nature of Christ have no mediator.

Christ is the Mediator of all grace with one exception. Christ is not the Mediator of grace given to Christ's Human Nature. Mary is the Mediatrix of all grace with two exceptions. Mary is not the Mediatrix of grace given to the Human Nature of Christ. Since Christ is not the Mediator of grace received by His Human Nature, neither can Mary be the Mediatrix of that grace. Mary is also not the Mediatrix of grace given to her from the Trinity through Christ; then she is the recipient, not the mediatrix. Thus, in the singular case of the grace received by Mary, Christ is the Mediator without a Mediatrix. But, in all other cases where Christ is Mediator, Mary assists Christ as Mediatrix.

Furthermore, the Virgin Mary has no intercessor or mediator other than Jesus Christ. No one can intercede for the Virgin Mary with God except Christ, the Son of God. If someone, other than Christ, could pray and obtain God's grace for the Virgin Mary, then there would be additional exceptions to the phrase "Mediatrix of all graces." If your prayers could obtain grace for Mary, then Mary would not be the mediatrix of that grace obtained by your intercession. There are only two exceptions to Mary's role as Mediatrix of all grace: grace from God to Christ and grace from Christ to Mary. Therefore, no one can intercede with God for Mary except Christ.

The Mediatrix has only one Mediator, Christ the Lord. The Mediatrix has only one intercessor, Christ the Lord. The Mediatrix is so closely bound to the Mediator in the love of God that no one can intercede between them. Mary is Christ's closest disciple and most perfect imitator. No one can intercede with Christ for Mary, because no one is closer to Christ than Mary. No one can intercede with Christ for Mary, because no one is more like Christ than Mary.

Persons other than Christ and Mary can offer their prayers and sacrifices to the Trinity for one another. In this way and to some extent, the faithful share in Christ's work of Mediation and Redemption. What Mary does in assisting Christ in His role as Redeemer, Mediator, Advocate, etc., can be done—to some extent—by any of the faithful. For this reason, we pray for the intercession of the saints and angels in Heaven, and we ask others, even in this life, to pray for us. Mary's role as Assistant to Christ is something that we all can imitate and share. Nevertheless, Mary's role, as Assistant to Christ, is unique and preeminent among all created persons.

Is the Virgin Mary Assistant to Christ in all that He does? No. Christ is God and God as the One Divine Eternal Act exists before and beyond all Creation, before and beyond Heaven, before and beyond Mary, before and beyond Time and Place. Therefore, Mary cannot share in all that Christ does. Christ is God, Mary is not. She shares in His work of Redemption, but not in every work of the Trinity, nor in every work of any One Person within the Trinity. God is infinite and Mary is finite, therefore Mary cannot share in every work of God or of Christ.

Does the Human Nature of Christ share in every work of the Divine Nature of Christ? No. The Divine Nature of Christ is infinite and the Human Nature of Christ is finite. Christ's Divine Nature shares in every work of His Human Nature, because the infinite can encompass the finite. But Christ's Human Nature cannot share in every work of His Divine Nature, because the finite cannot encompass the infinite. Therefore, within the One Person of Jesus Christ, His Divine Nature is beyond the complete comprehension of even His own Human Nature. Within the One Person of Jesus Christ, there is ever that aspect of His Divine Nature which is apart from and beyond His Human Nature.

No Other Exceptions

There are no other exceptions to Mary's role as Mediatrix of all grace. Mary is Mediatrix of all grace given to all angels and to all created persons, other than Christ and Mary.

The Virgin Mary is the Mediatrix of grace given by God throughout all Time and all Creation. How can Mary be the Mediatrix of grace given by God before her own beginning at the Immaculate Virgin Conception? If Heaven were stretched out in Time, with events occurring in an absolute order of before and after, she could not. If Heaven was within Time, then she could not dispense grace to persons living before she arrived in Heaven. But Heaven is beyond Time and the Virgin Mary left earth for Heaven at the time of her Dormition.

When the Virgin Mary left this humble earth, the birth place of her Savior and Son, to rejoin her Divine Son where He dwells in Heaven, she entered into the Timelessness of Heaven. In Heaven

there is no absolute ordering of before and after. Heaven is present to all persons throughout Time, from Time's very beginning to its very end, all at once. From Heaven, which is outside of and beyond Time, the Blessed Virgin Mary can be the Mediatrix of grace given at any point in Time. God's merciful grace, which flows from Heaven to Creation, is not limited or obstructed by Time, because Heaven is with God Who is Eternity. The Most Blessed Trinity pours out immeasurable merciful grace through Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary upon all of Creation, throughout all Time and Place, and beyond Time and Place.

In Heaven, beyond Time and Place, all the Elect can watch any event, throughout Time and Place, as it is happening—present tense—not as mere images of past events. Furthermore, the Elect in Heaven participate in the Providence and Grace of God throughout Time and Place. The Elect in Heaven participate with God in the creation of the Universe. The Elect do not merely watch the events of Time and Place, but rather, because they are united with God in love, they participate in the work of God.

Since the Elect in Heaven participate in the work of God, then the Virgin Mary must also participate in the work of God. Since the Elect in Heaven participate in the Providence and Grace of God, then the Virgin Mary must also participate in the Providence and Grace of God. The Virgin Mary is closer to Christ and more like Christ than any other created person. Therefore, Mary's role must be unique and preeminent, below Christ, but above every other created person.

God created the Universe through Christ and for Christ. "For from him and through him and to him are all things." (Rom 11:36). All created things are patterned after Christ: "through whom are all things and through whom we exist." (1 Cor 8:6).

From her place in the Timelessness of Heaven with the Eternal Triune God, the Virgin Mary participates, through her Divine Son Jesus Christ, in the creation of the Universe and assists Christ in pouring out the grace of the Trinity on all Creation. The Virgin Mary, in her perfect humanity, participates and assists in all that the Perfect Humanity of Christ does. God created Adam and Eve, through Jesus Christ, with the participation of the Virgin Mary. God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, through Christ and with Mary. God's Providence and Grace, throughout all Time and all Creation, is through Christ and with Mary.

From her place in the Timelessness of Heaven with the Eternal Triune God, the perfect humanity of the Virgin Mary participates in nearly all that the perfect Humanity of Christ does, throughout all Time and all Creation. Christ's humanity is united to His Eternal Divinity, and so Christ can be present throughout all Time and Place, and beyond Time and Place. The Virgin Mary dwells in Heaven, with her Divine Son Jesus Christ, with the Eternal Triune God, and so she too can be present throughout all Time and Place, and beyond.

When God created Adam and Eve, Christ and Mary were there. When Adam and Eve fell from Grace, Christ and Mary gave them grace to admit their sins and repent. When Abraham offered his only son as a sacrifice to God, God gave Abraham the grace to love God so selflessly through Christ with Mary. When the Israelites were delivered out of slavery in Egypt and wandered through the desert with God for forty years, Christ and Mary were there. "For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ." (1 Cor 10:4). The Virgin Mary assists Christ in dispensing the Providence and Grace of God to all Creation, throughout all Time and beyond.

The Virgin Mary is the Mediatrix of grace given even from the beginning of Time, before she was conceived on earth, because she dwells now with God, Who is Eternity, Who is beyond Time and Place. All the Elect in Heaven dwell with the Eternal Triune God. All the Elect in Heaven assist Christ and Mary in pouring out grace on Creation, even from the very beginning of Time and Place.

The Virgin Mary is the Mediatrix even of grace given by God before she was conceived. Once the perfect-Virgin Mary entered into Heaven, beyond Time and Place, she could then be present-tense to all persons, places, and events, everywhere and everywhen. From her place with God, Who is Eternity, the Virgin Mary fulfills her role as assistant to Christ as He pours forth grace throughout all Time and all Place, and beyond Time and Place.

The merits of Christ's Passion were applied from the Eternal Now to bring about the Immaculate Conception at a point in Time before Christ's Passion had occurred. This is not a result of God, within Time, applying foreseen merits as if it were money loaned in view of foreseen future earnings.

Rather, Christ's Passion and death on the Cross is a source of grace, for all Creation, throughout all Time, from the Eternal Now of Heaven.

Heaven is outside of Time. Once the Virgin Mary entered into Heaven, she left Time and Place. From Heaven, with God Who is Eternity, the Virgin Mary can be present to all persons and all places throughout Time. In this way, God continually pours forth grace from Christ on the Cross, with the Virgin Mary as the holy Assistant and Mediatrix of Jesus Christ, to every Time and Place. Therefore, the Virgin Mary is Mediatrix of grace given by Christ, even from the beginning of Time and Place. From her place in Eternity, the Virgin Mary is the Mediatrix of her Divine Son Jesus Christ, even for the multitude of graces given before she was conceived and born on Earth. Furthermore, anyone can ask God to give grace to persons throughout Time and Place, because God is beyond Time.

Whenever anyone states that the Virgin Mary is Mediatrix of All Graces, it must be clearly understood that she is not the Mediatrix of grace given to the Human Nature of Christ, nor to her own human nature, but to all the rest of Creation, throughout Time and Place, and even outside of Time and Place, in the Timelessness of Heaven. The Virgin Mary is the Mediatrix of all graces which proceed from the Most Blessed Trinity to all Creation, except the human natures of Christ and herself. Thus, there are two exceptions to the expression "Mediatrix of all graces."

The Virgin Mary is not only the Mediatrix of Grace; she is also the Mediatrix of God's Providence. And she is correctly called the Mediatrix of mercy. For this reason, the Virgin Mary should be called simply "Mediatrix."

The Difference between Mediatrix and Mediator

How does Christ's role as Mediator differ from Mary's role as Mediatrix? Christ mediates between God and Creation. Mary never mediates; she merely assists Christ in His work of mediation. The Mediatrix is merely the assistant to the Mediator. Christ is God, but Mary is merely human. Christ is the head of all Creation; Mary is not the head, but rather part of the body. All created things are patterned after Christ. Mary is patterned after Christ. All creation is not patterned after Mary. The Human Nature of Christ is the greatest of all created things. The Humanity of Christ is thoroughly and intimately united to His Divine Nature. Thus, when God pours out Grace on Creation, He does so through and with the Humanity of Christ. The human nature of the Virgin Mary is not united to God in the same way as with Christ's Humanity. The human nature of the Virgin Mary is not united in One Person with a Divine Nature. Mary has such a closeness to Christ that she is concerned with all that the Christ is concerned with; she intercedes for all persons and events throughout Creation, (except herself and Christ) because of the purity of her love for Christ. But God does not Act through Mary as God Acts through Christ.

The One Divine Eternal Act chooses the Human Nature of Christ as the Head of all Creation. The One Divine Eternal Act offers Grace and Providence throughout Creation through the intimate union of Christ's Humanity and His Divinity. Not so with Mary as Mediatrix. Christ's role as Mediator is fundamentally and substantially different than Mary's role as Mediatrix because Christ is Divine. Without Christ, Mary is nothing. Without Mary, Christ is still the Second Person of the Trinity. Mary's role as Mediatrix results from and is dependent upon Christ's role as Mediator.

There is a further reason why Christ's role as Mediator is different than Mary's role as Mediatrix. Christ is male, but Mary is female. The title "Mediatrix" should be clearly understood as fundamentally different from "Mediator," because a mediatrix is a woman and a mediator is a man. Men are meant to have a fundamentally different role than women in God's plan for humanity. God has designed Creation so that men and women have different roles in the Church, the family, and society. This design is intrinsic to the human race and to Creation itself. Eve was created to be the helper to Adam (Gen 2:18). Men are meant to be leaders; women are meant to be the helpers of men. The feminine form of the word, Mediatrix, implies the role of an assistant or helper, whereas the male form of the word, Mediator, implies the role of a leader. Mary is not a Mediator, she is a Mediatrix. Mary was created to be the helper to Christ in His work of salvation. Thus, the role of Mediatrix must always be understood to be both different than, and subordinate in function and capacity to, the role of Mediator. Mary is the subservient assistant of Christ in His work of salvation.

A Mediatrix is, by definition, an assistant to a Mediator. The use of the feminine word indicates a difference, not only in gender, but also in role. Christ as Mediator is a unique role. Mary as Mediatrix is a very different role and so also a unique role. If Mary's role was much the same as Christ's role,

then neither role would be unique. Christ's role is to lead; Mary's role is to assist. Thus there are two reasons why Mary's role is different than Christ's role. First, Christ is God and His human nature is united to His Divine Nature; Mary is not God and her human nature is not united with a Divine Nature. Second, Christ is a man and Mary is a woman. Christ is a man; Mary is a woman. Mary does not have the type of role within Creation given only to men.

Most Christians today do not understand that God has created men and women to have different roles within Creation. It ought to be obvious, (but it is not, in the present day,) that a mediatrix would have a different role than a mediator, because one term refers to a female and the other to a male. But our society has almost completely lost the understanding that men and women are created to have intrinsically different roles in the Church, the family, and society. This lack of understanding about the different roles of men and women has resulted in a lack of understanding about the different roles of Christ and Mary.

Heaven, Hell, Purgatory

The Virgin Mary is not only Mediatrix of Grace and Providence, she is also Mediatrix of all that the power of God does towards all of Creation, with two exceptions—Christ and herself. Mary is also Christ's holy assistant even in rewarding the just in Heaven and in punishing the unjust in Hell. Mary is Christ's holy assistant in raising the dead at the general Resurrection and in assuming the just to the new Heaven after the Resurrection.

Is the grace of God present and effective within the fires of Hell? The condemned in Hell do not receive grace from God, for that is why they are condemned and that is part of their condemnation. Yet God is present in Hell in the sense that God's power keeps Hell and the citizens of Hell in existence, and God gives Hell order and justice. Hell is not a place where the devil reigns and keeps a perverse kind of order. Hell is a place where the devil is sent to be punished. The devil will be a prisoner within the prison of Hell and not its warden. God rules in Heaven, on Earth, and under the Earth; therefore, God rules even in Hell. That is why Christ, after His death on the Cross and before His Resurrection, descended to Hell. Christ went to Hell to bring renewed order to this place where the unrepentant are punished by God.

Mary is Mediatrix of grace given by Christ to the holy souls in Purgatory. Mary is Christ's holy assistant in nearly all that He does. The holy souls in Purgatory receive more than grace from God. The holy souls in Purgatory receive knowledge and just punishment and comfort and more. Mary is Christ's holy assistant in dispensing all of these things within Purgatory. Mary is not merely Mediatrix of grace, but of much more. That is why Mary should be called simply: "Mediatrix."

Grace and Salvation

Why does God give grace to you for your salvation? God's reason, for anything and everything that God is/does, is all that God is/does. God is One Divine Eternal Act. His reason for dispensing grace to anyone at any time is everything that God is/does, including His understanding of all persons, places, things, and events throughout all Creation, especially His understanding and love for Christ's Divine sacrifice on the Cross and for the Virgin Mary's participation in that one sacrifice. The reason that God dispenses grace to you for your salvation is All that God Is, and Christ's one true sacrifice on the Cross and Mary's sharing in that sacrifice, and then also by the prayers and sacrifices of others.

Grace is an effect of the One Divine Eternal Act. To receive grace is to be touched directly by God. The grace you receive through Christ with Mary is not first given to her, and then given from her to you. God gives you grace directly and immediately from God. The sacrifice of Christ's suffering and death on the Cross is first among the events of all Creation and, therefore, it has the first place within Creation as a reason for all that God does.

When Christ was on the Cross, the Virgin Mary was at the foot of the Cross. There she received grace from Christ. Mary was not on a second cross, doing the same work as Christ. Rather, she was at the foot of Christ's Cross as His holy Assistant. She was not at the foot of the Cross to dispense grace to Christ, but to receive grace. Mary is not the Mediatrix of all grace without exception. She did not dispense grace to Christ when He died for her salvation. She did not dispense grace to herself at the foot of the Cross.

When the angel Gabriel announced to the Virgin that she would be the mother of the Messiah, Mary did not consider herself to have a similar role as that of the Son of God, but rather the role of His humble assistant. “And Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’” (Lk 1:38). She calls herself the handmaid of the Lord, meaning both that she is the humble assistant of God and also that she is the humble assistant of the Messiah, her Lord. The Virgin Mary is not equal to Christ, nor does she have the same role as Christ; the Virgin Mary is the humble and holy Assistant of Christ.

The Definition of Dogma

“The Church's Magisterium exercises the authority it holds from Christ to the fullest extent when it defines dogmas, that is, when it proposes, in a form obliging the Christian people to an irrevocable adherence of faith, truths contained in divine Revelation or also when it proposes, in a definitive way, truths having a necessary connection with these.”²¹

Dogmas are truths found in the Sacred Deposit of Faith (Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture) and infallibly taught by the Sacred Magisterium. Such truth may be present in Tradition and Scripture either explicitly or implicitly. But any truth properly called a dogma must have been taught explicitly and infallibly by the Sacred Magisterium, even if that truth itself is present only implicitly in Tradition or Scripture.

The Second Vatican Council clearly taught the different ways that the Magisterium can teach infallibly. The Pope can teach infallibly by his sole ability and authority. Papal infallibility was used to define Church teaching on the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.²² The body of Bishops led by the Pope can also teach infallibly. This type of infallibility is often exercised by an Ecumenical Council.

The Church can also teach infallibly by the constant teaching and witness of the body of Bishops led by the Pope. (This is sometimes called the “universal and ordinary Magisterium.”) Most dogmas fall under this type of Church teaching. It is often difficult to discern which teachings of the Church have been taught infallibly by the constant teaching and witness of the body of Bishops led by the Pope, because the infallibility of such teachings is not based on one particular infallible statement or definition.

Many truths found in Tradition or Scripture have not yet been taught explicitly and infallibly by the Church. Many theological questions are open questions which the Magisterium has not yet decided. These truths are not generally classified as dogmas, but they could be defined by the Magisterium in the future. Once it is infallibly and explicitly defined, a doctrine becomes classified as a dogma.

The So-called “Fifth and Final Marian Dogma”

Some persons claim that the doctrine of Mary's role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate is the “fifth and final dogma” to be declared about the Virgin Mary. They list five dogmas about the Virgin Mary: 1) her perpetual virginity; 2) her Immaculate Conception; 3) her Assumption to Heaven; 4) her role as Mother of God; 5) her role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate. These five truths about the Virgin Mary are part of the teaching of the Church. But the claim that there exist only five dogmas to be defined by the Church about the Virgin Mary, comes from a combination of arrogance and ignorance.

First, the Church already teaches more than five dogmas about the Virgin Mary. In addition to the above listed doctrines, Church teaching on the Queenship of Mary is a dogma of the Church. The teaching of the Church that Mary is Queen of Heaven is a well-established teaching of the Church. The Church has, for many years, celebrated the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the liturgical calendar (in August). The Church has prayed the fifth glorious mystery of the Rosary, in remembrance of Mary's Queenship in Heaven, for many centuries. Mary's role as Queen of Heaven is a true and certain teaching of the Church under the “universal and ordinary Magisterium,” and should certainly be included on any attempted list of Church dogmas about Mary.

There are at least several other Marian doctrines which rise to the level of a dogma. The Virgin Mary is often called “Spouse of the Holy Spirit.”²³ This teaching has been taught by the Church through centuries of Church history. The Church has constantly and universally taught the doctrine

that Mary suffered with Christ during His Passion and Crucifixion. Mary's sacrifice at the foot of the Cross is a Marian dogma. The doctrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary has been accepted and taught by the Church as a sure truth of the Faith and has become an integral part of our veneration of Mary and our worship of God. This doctrine is also a Marian dogma, yet it is not on the list of five Marian dogmas.

The Virgin Mary is the Mother of the Church.²⁴ This teaching is drawn from Sacred Scripture, especially the passage where Christ on the Cross, in one of the last acts before His death, gave His mother to us all (Jn 19:26-27). This constant teaching of the Church is certainly a Marian dogma, yet it is not included in the list of five dogmas. The expression "fifth and final Marian dogma" does not allow the Magisterium to teach as a dogma that Mary is the Mother of the Church.

Ironically, many persons who promote this idea of the "fifth and final Marian dogma" also repeatedly refer to Mary's Queenship, her role as Spouse of the Holy Spirit, her role as Mother of the Church, her Immaculate Heart, and her suffering with Christ. Why then do they claim that there can only ever be five dogmas about the Virgin Mary?

If anyone tries to claim that these doctrines do not yet rise to the level of a dogma, they must still admit that the Church could infallibly define such doctrines in the future. Either way, the dogmas about the Virgin Mary cannot be limited to five. There are many fundamental truths to be known about the Virgin Mary. Numerous doctrines about the Virgin Mary are already dogmas of the Church, while other doctrines await further clarification and definition by the Magisterium. And there is no support in Tradition, Scripture, or the Magisterium for a list of Marian dogmas limited to five.

Second, those who make this claim do not even understand the five doctrines which they list and promote. They do not understand that Mary's perpetual virginity includes a virgin conception and a virgin birth. They do not understand that her Immaculate Conception, which kept her free from original sin, also made it impossible for her to commit the least personal sin throughout her entire life. They do not understand that Mary died and rose from the dead, before being assumed into Heaven, and that the faithful will also be assumed into Heaven (after the general Resurrection). They know that Mary's role as Mother of God is a dogma, but they do not understand that Mary's role as Mother of the Church is also a dogma. They do not understand that Mary is Mediatrix of God's Providence. They do not understand that her role as Mediatrix of all grace has two exceptions. They do not understand why the title co-Redemptrix begins with "co-" when the other titles do not. They do not understand even these five doctrines about Mary, and yet they claim that these are the only five Marian dogmas which can be known and defined by the Church.

Third, the claim that the so-called fifth dogma is the "final dogma" implies that God will not reveal to His Church any further truths about the Virgin Mary. How can they be certain that God does not understand more than five fundamental truths about the Virgin Mary? This claim is really a claim to know everything that God knows about Mary. The Vox Populi petition even claims "such a definition will bring to light the whole truth about Mary."²⁵

This claim attempts to limit what the Church can teach about the Virgin Mary. These persons not only attempt to pressure the Magisterium to infallibly define these three titles, but, in claiming that this is the "final dogma," they are claiming that the Magisterium cannot infallibly teach or define any further truths about the Virgin Mary. Who put them in charge of the truth, apart from God and the Sacred Magisterium, that they should decide which things and how many things can be infallibly taught about Mary? The idea of limiting Marian dogmas to five does not come from the Magisterium, but rather attempts to usurp the authority of the Magisterium.

In the same Apostolic Constitution wherein Pope Pius XII infallibly defined the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven, he also taught on the subject of her death (called her "Dormition") and her Resurrection, prior to her Assumption. The Magisterium has not yet infallibly defined Church teaching about the Virgin Mary's death and Resurrection. Future clarification about the Dormition and Resurrection of the Virgin Mary by the Sacred Magisterium could define an additional Marian dogma.

There are other important theological questions about the Virgin Mary which await clarification and possible infallible definition by the Sacred Magisterium. For example, the Magisterium has not yet decided whether Mary's Immaculate Conception was also a miraculous virgin conception and her holy birth was a miraculous virgin birth. The Church teaches that Mary was entirely free from both

original sin and personal sin, throughout her life. But Mary's holiness is more than the mere absence of sin. Mary's holiness is greater than that of all the saints and angels put together. A future infallible definition by the Magisterium could further clarify and define this doctrine.

Other teachings of the Church which either are already dogma or could be defined as dogma by the Church include: the role of the Virgin Mary as martyr among martyrs; the predestination of the Blessed Virgin Mary; her perfect holiness and perfect imitation of Christ; her roles as Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, Reparatrix of the whole world, Mother of all the living, etc. And there are many more truths about the Virgin Mary: her holy childhood, her increase in holiness and grace, her role within the Holy Family, and her fundamental role within each and every one of the Seven Sacraments.

Thus, there are many Marian dogmas which can be infallibly defined by the Sacred Magisterium in the future. The Magisterium is able to decide upon these important Marian doctrinal questions. The expression "fifth and final Marian dogma" incorrectly claims that the Magisterium cannot decide infallibly on any Marian doctrinal questions other than those five. Since this claim detracts from the fundamental ability and authority of the Sacred Magisterium to define doctrine infallibly, this claim is a serious theological error and is contrary to the Catholic faith.

Fourth, all the Marian doctrines are closely interconnected, so that it is ridiculous to try to number them. Notice that they list three separate titles for Mary under one dogma, because these three are related. But all the doctrines about the Virgin Mary are related to one another and to every doctrine about her Divine Son Jesus Christ. For example, Mary's Immaculate Conception was also a virgin conception, which is part of her perpetual virginity. Mary's perfect virginity includes her sinlessness, which began with her Immaculate Conception. Her perfect virginity is dependent upon and proceeds from Christ's perfect virginity. Her Immaculate Conception means that she is sinless, which is part of the reason that she was assumed into Heaven, before the rest of the faithful, in imitation of Christ's Ascension. Her role as Mediatrix flows from her role as Mother of God, but she is also thereby Mother of the Redeemer, Reparatrix of the whole world, etc. Mary's perfect virginity is part of her perfect imitation of Christ, which is part of the reason that she who was without sin nevertheless died and rose from the dead, just as Christ died and rose from the dead. All truths about the Virgin Mary are one Truth. There are not five dogmas to be known about the Virgin Mary. There is one truth to be known about Mary, and only God knows it in all its fullness.

Fifth, the Virgin Mary is greater and holier than all the rest of humanity put together, except for the Human Nature of Christ. Therefore, the entire human race put together, except for Christ and Mary, cannot fully comprehend the Virgin Mary. The whole truth about the Virgin Mary is beyond complete comprehension by any human mind, other than that of Christ and Mary. Those who think that they can understand and number and limit the truths about the Virgin Mary are overestimating themselves and underestimating her.

Future Infallible Definitions

The Magisterium of the Church will continue to teach infallibly about the Virgin Mary and her place in God's plan. The Magisterium may declare infallible definitions having to do with Mary's role in God's plan under a number of different titles. However, the Sacred Magisterium of the Catholic Church will never infallibly declare any doctrine about Mary to be fifth or final. The Magisterium cannot infallibly number doctrines, because doctrines are not numbered within Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. And the Magisterium cannot infallibly declare that there are no further doctrines which could be known or declared in the future, because the whole truth about the mysteries of faith is beyond human comprehension.

One cannot make a list of all of the infallible teachings of the Church. It is difficult to say which teachings of the Church have been taught infallibly. Much of the infallible teaching of the Church falls under the first form of the third charism of the Sacred Magisterium, that is, under what is called "the universal and ordinary Magisterium." Such teachings are usually established by the constant teaching and witness of the Bishops in union with the Pope, not by a particular infallible definition in a particular document.

Furthermore, the infallible Sacred Magisterium cannot merely state that the Virgin Mary is Mediatrix, co-Redemptrix, and Advocate without also defining what those terms mean. The infallible

definition of the Immaculate Conception, in the Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, does not even use the term “Immaculate Conception.” Instead, that document gives a precise definition of this truth about Mary. The Magisterium could not infallibly define the term “Immaculate Conception,” without also defining its meaning, because that would have left the faithful uncertain as to the correct meaning of the term. An infallible proclamation without an accompanying definition would be empty. The Magisterium cannot infallibly define that the Virgin Mary is Mediatrix, co-Redemptrix, Advocatrix without also explaining the meaning of those terms. Most of those who strongly promote this doctrine have a limited understanding as to what the terms mean.

Attempts to Pressure the Magisterium

Some groups of Catholics have attempted to pressure the Sacred Magisterium of the Church to infallibly declare the Virgin Mary as Mediatrix, co-Redemptrix, and Advocate. Such efforts show a distinct lack of faith and humility.

The teaching of the infallible Sacred Magisterium proceeds from the Trinity. Any attempt to pressure the Magisterium to teach a particular doctrine is really an attempt to pressure God and cannot possibly succeed. Those who make such attempts are acting as if they believe that the infallible teaching of the Sacred Magisterium is merely the result of human will and action. They are acting as if God was not involved at all.

Faithful Catholics who believe in the Virgin Mary as Mediatrix, co-Redemptrix, Advocatrix can pray, practice self-denial, and be merciful to others, as a way to speed the acceptance of this teaching by the whole Church. Another way to spread this true doctrine throughout the Church is to study the doctrine so as to understand it better. Many who favor this doctrine hardly understand it at all. They pressure the Church to accept a doctrine which they themselves do not correctly understand. They are very much mistaken.

Errors in the Petition of Vox Populi

The following is the text of the petition of the lay organization “Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici,” addressed to the Pope, which Vox Populi is asking Catholics to sign. This petition contains serious theological errors.

“With filial love, we the faithful wish to humbly petition you, the Vicar of Christ, to solemnly define as Christian dogma the Church’s constant teaching on Mary’s co redemptive role with Christ the Redeemer of humanity. It is our belief that such a definition will bring to light the whole truth about Mary, Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, Spouse of the Spirit and Mother of the Church. Therefore it is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will guide you, Holy Father, to define and proclaim the Blessed Virgin Mary as Coredeptrix, Mediatrix of all grace and Advocate for the People of God.”²⁶

First, the Virgin Mary’s role as co-Redemptrix is not a co-redemptive role. Her role is not to redeem. Only God can redeem us. Christ is God; Mary is not. Mary’s role as co-Redemptrix is to assist Christ in His redemptive work and to cooperate with us as we accept and follow Christ. Mary walks beside us as we are redeemed by Christ. Mary cannot co-redeem because she is not co-Messiah and she is not co-God Incarnate.

Second, such a definition (of Mary as Mediatrix, co-Redemptrix, Advocatrix) is not the whole truth about the Virgin Mary. It does not complete the Church’s teaching about Mary. The implication is that such a definition is the final dogma to be taught by the Church about Mary. There are certainly further teachings about the Virgin Mary (see above), therefore this definition does not “bring to light the whole truth about Mary.” A correct definition would increase the Church’s understanding of the Virgin Mary, but certainly would not complete our understanding about her.

Third, Mary is not “Mediatrix of all grace.” She is not Mediatrix of grace which proceeds from the Trinity to the humanity of Christ, nor is she Mediatrix of grace which proceeds from Christ to herself. In addition, the term “Mediatrix of all grace” is lacking because Mary is Mediatrix of God’s Providence as well as of God’s grace.

Fourth, the term “Advocate” is inaccurate when rendered in the English language. Unlike the terms Mediatrix and co-Redemptrix, the term “Advocate” lacks the feminine form which would help

distinguish it from Christ as Advocate and the Holy Spirit as Advocate. A better term is “Advocatrix.” Mary’s role as Advocatrix is exercised as a member of the People of God. She is not above or apart from the people of God. The People of God are the Body of Christ, with Christ as its head. Mary is a part of the body, not a part of the head. Mary is Advocatrix for us, but she is also with us as a part of the People of God. The expression “Advocate for the People of God” tends to portray Mary as if she were our Advocate instead of Christ or along with Christ. Truly, Christ alone is our Advocate. Mary is not an Advocate at all, not even in a way which is subordinate to Christ. Mary’s role as Advocatrix is both fundamentally different from, and radically subordinate to, Christ’s role as the One Advocate for the People of God.

The Vox Populi organization has stated that millions of persons have signed this petition.²⁷ But the petition is filled with theological errors. What would happen if the Sacred Magisterium responded by infallibly defining this doctrine in its correct form, in contradiction to the version found in the petition? Some persons would certainly respond to God’s grace, by admitting their error and placing their faith in the teaching of the Church. Even so, it is likely that at least some persons would respond by rejecting the teaching of the Magisterium. Vox Populi is gathering the support of millions of persons for a doctrine which, though true in its correct form, is full of theological errors as they present it. By encouraging people to firmly adhere to their particular version of a doctrine not yet defined by the Magisterium, they are laying the groundwork for dissent from Church teaching.

Associated Theological Errors

Numerous erroneous theological ideas have become associated with the true doctrine of Mary as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix. First, this true doctrine is neither the fifth Marian dogma nor is it the final Marian dogma (see above). The claim that this doctrine is fifth and final is not a part of the doctrine itself, nor is it even implied by the doctrine.

Also, some persons have gone so far as to suggest that acceptance and proclamation of this doctrine by the Magisterium is associated with the end of the world. “And we must proclaim it to the world in order for the Immaculate Heart to Triumph and the Holy Spirit to come, in our hearts first and then in all nations.”²⁸ The claim is even made that proclamation of this dogma will result in a time of peace for the whole world.²⁹ Such apocalyptic and eschatological claims are not a part of the doctrine itself, nor are they even implied by the doctrine.

Some claim that acceptance of this doctrine will “make known the whole truth regarding her unique participation with and under Her Divine Son in the work of Redemption.”³⁰ The doctrine of Mary’s triune role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix does shed light on Mary’s participation in Christ’s work of Redemption, but it is not the whole truth. This false claim that the doctrine is the whole truth is similar to the false claim that it is the last Marian dogma; both erroneously assume that nothing further could be known or taught about Mary by the Sacred Magisterium. On the contrary, the Sacred Magisterium cannot be prevented from teaching and defining further truths about Mary.

Many who repeatedly refer to Mary as Mediatrix of all graces fail to mention the two exceptions: she is not Mediatrix of the grace received by Christ’s human nature, nor is she Mediatrix of the grace which she herself receives. In addition, they often ignore Mary’s role as Mediatrix of Providence, and, in truth, of nearly all that God does with respect to Creation.

The expression “Advocate for the People of God” is an incorrect phrasing of Mary’s true role. Christ is the one true Advocate for the People of God; any expression which refers to Mary’s participation in Christ’s Advocacy must contain some reference to Christ. For example, the term Advocatrix is feminine. Women were created to be helpers and assistants to men. So the term Advocatrix implicitly contains the idea that the Advocatrix is helper and assistant to the Advocate. Mary is not properly called “Advocate for the People of God,” but she can be correctly called: “Advocatrix to the Advocate for the People of God.”

Many of those who promote the doctrine of Mary as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate understand that Mary’s role is subordinate to Christ. They use the expression “with and under Christ” to refer to her subordinate role. However, they fail to understand that Mary’s role is not only subordinate to Christ’s role, but also substantially and fundamentally different than Christ’s role. They incorrectly speak as if Mary had a role of her own as a Redeemer, Mediator, and Advocate, whereas the truth is that Mary only participates in Christ’s role as Redeemer, Mediator, and Advocate. Mary’s

role is to assist Christ. Mary does not do any work of redemption, mediation, or advocacy; she only assists Christ in His work of redemption, mediation, and advocacy.

Another common error suggests that the “co-” prefix in co-Redemptrix refers to Mary’s role in relation to Christ. They say that the “co-” prefix means “with” and that Mary has a co-redemptive role with and under Christ. This claim is a distortion of true doctrine. Mary is co-Redemptrix, but she is not a co-Redeemer, nor even “with and under” Christ. Only Jesus Christ has the role of Redeemer. The Virgin Mary cannot, in any sense of the word, be called co-Redeemer. Christ is the Son of God and so He alone has the power to Redeem the world. The Virgin Mary is not Divine and does not have the power to redeem anyone, not even herself. Even a moderated expression of this idea, which gives Mary a co-redemptive role which is subordinate to Christ is unacceptable, because Mary’s role as co-Redemptrix is substantially and fundamentally different than Christ’s role as Redeemer. Mary’s role is not redemptive or co-redemptive, because only God Incarnate can redeem us.

This controversy about the meaning of “co-Redemptrix” is really a controversy about how Christ our Redeemer accomplishes our redemption. If a mere human person were able to offer redemption to anyone, then God could have redeemed us through Abraham or Moses or Peter or Mary. Some Jews have the idea that the Messiah will be merely human, that he will not be God Incarnate. On the contrary, the Christian idea is that God became Incarnate in Christ Jesus because no mere human person would be able to accomplish our redemption. Mary is not able to redeem the human race, not even “together with Christ,” because no mere human person can redeem anyone. Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross is able to redeem us because Christ is God Incarnate. Many mere human persons have suffered crucifixion, but none were able to offer redemption except God Incarnate. Mary’s great suffering at the foot of the Cross has no power whatsoever to redeem anyone, not in the least, because the sufferings of a mere human person are not able to redeem. God alone redeems. We mere human beings must participate in our redemption by Christ and assist others in their redemption by Christ, but we have no ability to obtain or offer redemption to anyone, not even in a way which is partial and subordinate to Christ.

Mary participates in Christ’s work of redemption in a way which is both radically subordinate to, and radically different from, Christ’s role. The expression “with and under Christ” refers to the subordinate aspect of Mary’s role, but fails to acknowledge the fundamental difference in her role. Mary does not have the role of Redeemer, not even in a subordinate way.

The meaning of the “co-” prefix is very widely misunderstood. If the “co-” prefix referred to Mary’s role “with and under” Christ, then that prefix would also be used in front of her other titles, for Mary does nothing alone. Instead, the “co-” prefix in co-Redemptrix refers to Mary’s cooperation with us as we participate in our redemption by Christ. Redemption is different from Mediation and Advocacy because each of us must participate in our own redemption by cooperating with God’s grace. Mary cooperates with us and is a co-worker with us as we are saved by Christ the One Redeemer.

Examples of Theological Errors

The following quotes erroneously speak as if Mary’s role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix were much the same as Christ’s role as Redeemer, Mediator, Advocate. Though some of the quotes correctly point out that Mary’s role is subordinate to Christ’s role, they fail to show an understanding of the fundamental difference between Christ’s role and Mary’s role.

A popular book about this Marian doctrine states: “The fact that Mary together with Christ redeemed the human race quite naturally led the faithful who continued to meditate on this fact to coin the word Coredemptrix in order to describe her role.”³¹

This quote has a phrasing similar to that attributed to Pope Benedict XV: “...we may rightly say that she redeemed the human race together with Christ.”³²

Both quotes speak of Mary redeeming the human race “together with Christ.” It is a serious theological error for anyone to claim that Mary redeemed the human race, even in a way which is partial or subordinate to Christ. In truth, Mary does not redeem anyone, not even “together with Christ.” Only God Incarnate can redeem the human race. Without the Incarnation, the Crucifixion would be ineffective. One may rightly say that Christ redeems the human race with the assistance of the Virgin Mary. But it is entirely incorrect to claim that Mary does any work of redemption, as if she had a similar role to Christ in our salvation. This quote from Pope Benedict XV is a rare example of a theological error in a papal document.³³

Christ is God; Mary is merely human. If a mere human person could redeem anyone, then why did God become Incarnate in Jesus Christ and then die for us? Mary's role as co-Redemptrix is not at all the same as Christ's role as Redeemer. Christ alone redeems the human race; He does not redeem together with Mary. Mary's role is to assist Christ in His work of redemption. Her role is fundamentally different from Christ's role; He redeems and she does not redeem. Mary does not ever redeem anyone in the least because Mary is not God Incarnate. God became Incarnate in order to suffer and die for us. If Mary had a co-redemptive role, then the meaning of the Incarnation and the Crucifixion would be substantially different.

The same book quoted above also calls Mary "the distributor (Mediatrice) of all graces and the great intercessor (Advocate) for her children after Jesus himself...and the Holy Spirit..."³⁴ The theology found in this quote is deeply flawed. Mary's role as Mediatrice is not to distribute all graces, but to assist Christ as He mediates for us before God and to assist Christ as He dispenses grace to us. If Mary were the distributor of all graces, then what would be Christ's role? If a mere human person could Mediate and Advocate for the People of God, then why did God become Incarnate?

Christ and Mary do not have the same role, neither each alone nor both together, as the distributors of all graces. Christ mediates; Mary assists. She herself does not mediate. Christ advocates; Mary assists. She herself does not advocate. Christ acts; Mary assists. Mary cannot be correctly called "the great intercessor (Advocate) for her children after Jesus and the Holy Spirit"³⁵ because Mary's role is not the same as Christ and the Holy Spirit's role. Christ is the Second Person of the Trinity; the Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity. Mary is not the fourth person of the Trinity. She cannot possibly have the same role as Christ and the Spirit, not even with the proviso that her role is subordinate to Christ and the Spirit. Rather, the truth is that Mary merely participates in Christ's role as Advocate. Thus, it is better to call her "Advocatrix"—a different word for a different role.

Dr. Mark Miravalle is a promoter of Mary's role as "the Co-redemptrix, Mediatrice, and Advocate." However, he speaks of Mary as if she has a "co-redemptive role with Jesus."³⁶ Though he correctly states that her role is subordinate to Christ's role, he incorrectly speaks as if Mary has much the same role as Christ. On the contrary, Mary's role is both different from, and subordinate to, Christ's role.

Dr. Miravalle calls Mary "the New Eve, who with and under her Son redeems all peoples."³⁷ Again, he correctly states Mary's subordinate role, but he incorrectly speaks as if Mary could redeem. On the contrary, Christ redeems all peoples; Mary does not redeem anyone, she only participates in Christ's redemptive work. This type of theological error is common in writings about this doctrine. Mary is repeatedly and incorrectly described as if she had the same kind of redemptive role as Christ. Theological errors such as these impede the definition and proclamation of this doctrine by the infallible Sacred Magisterium.

Note the grammar used in the several of the above quotes. Mary is the subject of the sentence about redemption; Christ is only mentioned in a dependent clause. The grammar they use is a reflection of their theology. Mary is spoken of as if she were the one doing the redeeming. If Mary is the subject of the sentence, then the sentence is theologically incorrect, because Mary is a mere human person who cannot do any redeeming, not even together with Christ.

If Christ is the subject of the sentence, as in, "Christ redeems together with Mary," the statement is closer to the truth, but it still incorrectly implies that Mary does some work of redemption, as if both Christ and Mary could redeem. On the contrary, Christ does the work of redemption; Mary merely participates in Christ's work. Christ alone redeems; Mary assists Christ, but she does no redemptive work per se. She only participates in Christ's work. Christ redeems; Mary assists Christ in His work of redemption. This point is important because correct doctrine teaches that salvation is from Christ, from God Incarnate who suffered and died for us, whereas the above incorrect doctrine teaches that salvation is from Christ together with Mary.

Dr. Miravalle also states that "Co-redemptrix means 'with the Redeemer.'"³⁸ He considers the prefix "co-" to refer to Mary's role with Christ in our Redemption. If that were the case, then the same prefix would also precede her other roles, for she does nothing alone. On the contrary, the prefix refers to Mary's role with us, as we cooperate with God's grace towards our salvation. Mary is co-worker with us as we follow Christ. Mary is like the Church in that she assists us as God's grace leads us to salvation. But salvation itself comes from Christ. Without Christ, Mary cannot save. Without Christ, the Church cannot save. Even with Christ, Mary does not save us or co-save us. Therefore, the "co-" prefix can only refer to Mary's cooperation with us as we participate in our salvation by Christ.

Consider the following quote from Dr. Miravalle: “*only when our Holy Father, in his freedom as Vicar of Christ, proclaims this Marian truth on the highest level of revealed dogmatic truth, will our Lady then be released to mediate the special graces necessary for our present human situation.*”³⁹ On the contrary, Mary does not mediate grace. Christ mediates grace; Mary merely assists Christ in His work of mediating grace. The Mediatrix is not the Mediator, she is the “Mediatrix to the Mediator.”⁴⁰

This quote reflects a fairly common belief, associated with the doctrine of Mary as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix, that formal proclamation of this doctrine by the infallible Sacred Magisterium is necessary for future events to unfold. While the doctrine itself is implicit in Tradition and Scripture, and has been taught repeatedly and explicitly by the Ordinary Magisterium, the belief that a proclamation is necessary to unbind the Virgin Mary’s power as Mediatrix is not found in Tradition, Scripture, or the Magisterium. It is contradictory to call Mary the Mediatrix of all graces and yet claim that she cannot be the Mediatrix of certain graces until a particular proclamation by the Magisterium. Mary has exercised her unique role in God’s plan throughout the history of the Church, despite the lack of official Marian dogmatic proclamations in the early Church. Mary exercised this same unique role, from her place in Heaven before Christ, even in Old Testament times, before she was conceived and born, before anyone on earth had even heard her name. An official dogmatic proclamation is not necessary to allow Mary to act as Mediatrix. This erroneous idea comes from false private revelation.

False Private Revelation

The true doctrine of Mary as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix has become associated with, and distorted by, particular false private revelations, those of Ida Peerdeman at Amsterdam.⁴¹ Many persons, in accepting this true doctrine about Mary’s triune role, have also accepted the false private revelation associated with it. As a result, their understanding of the doctrine has been impaired.

Numerous theological works, which support this true doctrine, also repeatedly refer to the same false private revelation, giving the reader the impression that the two are inseparable. Some theological works, on the subject of this true doctrine, inexplicably include several false conclusions based solely on this particular false private revelation.

The Magisterium is able to infallibly teach this doctrine about Mary, because it is based on Tradition and Scripture. Constant references to the false apparitions and messages of Ida Peerdeman at Amsterdam undermine the understanding and acceptance of the true doctrine. In my opinion, the Magisterium should not approve of this doctrine until it has become completely dissociated from the false private revelation and from the false ideas which have grown up as many bad weeds around a single good plant. Some persons have incorrectly connected the false apparitions and messages of Amsterdam to the true private revelations of Fatima, Akita, Medjugorje, Garabandal, and others. These last have no real connection to the falsehoods of Ida Peerdeman at Amsterdam.

There is no support whatsoever, in Tradition, Scripture, and the Magisterium, for the claim that there are, or can only ever be, five Marian dogmas. The Church has never numbered the dogmas about the Virgin Mary. The Church has never numbered the dogmas about Christ or the Church or the Trinity. Neither has the Church ever taught, even implicitly, that there are a set number of dogmas about the Virgin Mary. However, the Church has clearly taught several other dogmas about Mary in addition to the ones in the list of five.

So then, why do some persons promote the idea of a “fifth and final Marian dogma?” They have been influenced by the false apparitions and false messages of this claimed private revelation at Amsterdam. This false private revelation promotes the doctrine of Mary as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate, but also distorts that doctrine in a number of ways. One distortion is the claim that this doctrine is fifth and final. This insidious error implies that the Magisterium cannot teach and define any further dogmas about the Virgin Mary, and it implies that other teachings about Mary (her Immaculate Heart, her Queenship, her suffering at the foot of the Cross, etc.) are not dogmas. Another distortion purports to give Mary a similar role to Christ in redemption, mediation, advocacy. And there are many other errors in this false private revelation.

All false apparitions and false messages, (such as those which pretend to be a private revelation from the Trinity or from Jesus or Mary,) contain some truth. If a false private revelation contained only falsehoods, then no one would believe and be deceived. False private revelations always contain some truth—the bait on the hook, so to speak—such as praise for God and Mary, encouragement to

prayer, etc. One can recognize false private revelation because the messages also include some falsehoods or distortions of truth. There are three possible types of falsehoods: 1) denial of something true, 2) assertion of something false, or, 3) distortion of something true. This last type of falsehood is the most insidious and damaging to the Church. It begins by acknowledging a true doctrine, but then distorts one or more essential parts of the doctrine into something erroneous. This last type of falsehood is found in the false private revelations which both promote and distort the doctrine of Mary as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate.

The idea that Mary has a role in God's plan as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix does not come from private revelation, but is implicit in Tradition and Scripture. Pope Leo XIII even used the terms "co-Redemptrix" and "Mediatrix" in the 1890's and Pope Pius X called Mary "advocate" in the early 1900's (see above). A claimed private revelation from the 1940's and 1950's is not the source of this idea.

The Council of Trent

"3. If any one asserts, that this sin of Adam,—which in its origin is one, and being transfused into all by propagation, not by imitation, is in each one as his own,—is taken away either by the powers of human nature, or by any other remedy than the merit of the one mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath reconciled us to God in his own blood, made unto us justice, sanctification, and redemption; or if he denies that the said merit of Jesus Christ is applied, both to adults and to infants, by the sacrament of baptism rightly administered in the form of the church; let him be anathema: For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved. Whence that voice; Behold the lamb of God behold him who taketh away the sins of the world; and that other; As many as have been baptized, have put on Christ." ⁴²

Summary of Correct Doctrine

Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, Mediator, Advocate. Christ is assisted by the Virgin Mary in her triune role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix. The following 12 points are an important part of a correct understanding of this doctrine.

1. Mary's triune role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocatrix is a reflection of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity.
2. All three aspects of this one role are substantially different from, and wholly subordinate to, Christ's triune role as Redeemer, Mediator, Advocate.
3. Mary's role is different from, and subordinate to, Christ's role because, in God's plan for Creation, the role given to women is different from, and subordinate to, the role given to men.
4. The "co-" prefix in co-Redemptrix refers to Mary's cooperation with us; it does not mean that Mary is co-Redeemer, not even with and under Christ. (The "co-" prefix should not be capitalized, since it refers to our mere human efforts towards our salvation; the "R" in co-Redemptrix should be capitalized since it refers to Divine efforts towards our salvation.)
5. Mary is not a co-Redeemer and is not able to save anyone, not even with and under Christ. Christ alone redeems; Mary merely assists Christ in His work of redemption. Her role is not co-redemptive.
6. Mary is Mediatrix of all graces, but with two exceptions. She is not Mediatrix of grace given to Christ, nor is she Mediatrix of grace she herself receives from Christ.
7. Mary is also Mediatrix of Divine Providence and of mercy and of all that God does within Creation, except with respect to Christ and herself. Therefore, she should be called: "Mediatrix."
8. Mary is Advocatrix. The term "Advocate," when applied to the Virgin Mary, is theologically deficient because it lacks the feminine form, which would distinguish Mary's different and subordinate role from Christ's role as Advocate. Use of the Latin form of the word allows a clear theological definition to be attached to the term, unfettered by the various connotations which the word "advocate" has when translated into various languages.⁴³

9. The expression “Advocate of the People of God” can only be used to refer to Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit. The Virgin Mary has no role of advocacy herself; instead, her role as *Advocatrix* is to assist Christ, our Advocate. Mary is not “Advocate of the People of God,” but rather is a humble assistant to Christ, the Advocate of the People of God.

10. Mary does not stand before God as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, *Advocatrix*. In truth, only Christ stands before God to redeem, mediate, and advocate. The Virgin Mary humbly kneels before Christ, in worship of Him, and assists Christ fully in His work of redemption, mediation, advocacy.

11. Mary is truly co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, *Advocatrix*. But this true doctrine is neither the fifth Marian dogma, nor is it the final Marian dogma. The claim that this doctrine is “the fifth and final Marian dogma” is a serious theological error which contradicts the teaching of the Church.

12. Theological works about Mary’s triune role as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, *Advocatrix* should omit any and all references to the false private revelations of Ida Peerdeman at Amsterdam. Works on this topic should clearly and unequivocally reject the apparitions and messages of Ida Peerdeman.

When Should the Doctrine Be Infallibly Defined?

This doctrine should not, and probably will not, be defined until several things occur. First, the doctrine must become dissociated from the false private revelations of Ida Peerdeman at Amsterdam. Second, the doctrine must be freed from numerous serious theological errors which plague most writings on this topic. Third, the correct understanding of this doctrine must spread throughout much of the Church, so that the definition can be planted as a seed in well-prepared fertile soil.

The currently-popular version of this doctrine is distorted and deficient. This version cannot be infallibly defined as is, because it is full of errors. If the correct doctrine were defined at a time when most promoters of the doctrine are in error, many would reject the infallible definition and the authority of the Sacred Magisterium. When faced with a choice between rejecting their own errors and rejecting the authority of the Church, too many persons would choose to reject the Church. That is why it would be imprudent to define this true doctrine prematurely—because so many persons, who seem to be devout, are significantly lacking in faith.

Perhaps it would be wise for the Church to issue a document on this doctrine first under the fallible Ordinary Magisterium. Then the faithful could discuss the doctrinal points in such a document, and arrive at an increased understanding, in preparation for a future infallible pronouncement.

The doctrine of Mary as co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, *Advocatrix* may be infallibly defined by the Sacred Magisterium whenever the Holy Spirit wills. This true teaching, in its correct form, does not come from private revelation, nor from theologians, nor from special interest groups. This true doctrine comes from God alone.

Endnotes:

¹ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 62. Auxiliatrix means “Helper,” Adjutrix means “Benefactress.” In other languages, the titles are expressed in the following ways: in Italian: Avvocata, Ausiliatrice, Soccorritrice, Mediatrice; in Spanish: Abogada, Auxiliadora, Socorro, Mediadora; in French: d’Avocate, d’Auxiliatrice, d’Aide et de Médiatrice.

² Pope John Paul II, *Angelus*, Sunday, 23 June 2002, (Vatican web site, www.vatican.va), <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/angelus/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_ang_20020623_en.html>.

³ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Mater*, 25 March 1987, (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1987), n. 41.

⁴ *Redemptoris Mater*, n. 21.

⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Angelus*, Jerusalem, Sunday, 26 March 2000, (Vatican web site, www.vatican.va), <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/travels/documents/hf_jp-ii_ang_20000326_jerusalem_en.html>.

⁶ Pope John Paul II, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, *Angelus*, 8 December 2000, (Vatican web site, www.vatican.va), <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/angelus/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_ang_20001208_en.html>.

⁷ *Lumen Gentium*, n. 62.

⁸ Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 103.

⁹ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Marialis Cultus*, For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion To the Blessed Virgin Mary, 2 February 1974, (New Advent web site, [newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)), <<http://www.newadvent.org/docs/pa06mc.htm>>, n. 22.

¹⁰ Pope Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Ad Caeli Reginam*, 11 October 1954, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_11101954_ad-caeli-reginam_en.html>, n. 51.

¹¹ Pope Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Caritate Christi Compulsi*, 3 May 1932, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_03051932_caritate-christi-compulsi_en.html>, n. 31.

¹² Pope Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, 8 May 1928, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_08051928_miserentissimus-redemptor_en.html>, n. 21.

¹³ Pope Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, 8 May 1928, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_08051928_miserentissimus-redemptor_en.html>, “Prayer of Reparation.”

¹⁴ Pope Pius X, Encyclical Letter, *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum*, 2 February 1904, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_02021904_ad-diem-illum-laetissimum_en.html>, n. 13.

¹⁵ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Adiutricem Populi*, 5 September 1895, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_05091895_adiutricem_en.html>, n. 8.

¹⁶ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Iucunda Semper Expectatione*, 8 September 1894, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_08091894_iucunda-semper-expectatione_en.html>, n. 2.

¹⁷ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Fidentem Piumque Animum*, 20 September 1896, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_20091896_fidentem-piumque-animum_en.html>, n. 3.

¹⁸ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Dall’alto dell’Apostolico Seggio*, 15 October 1890, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18901015_dall%27alto-dell%27apostolico-seggio_en.html>, n. 19.

¹⁹ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, n. 15, “This role of Mary, totally grounded in that of Christ and radically subordinated to it....” <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae_en.html>.

²⁰ Pope Pius XI, Encyclical Letter, *Caritate Christi Compulsi*, 3 May 1932,

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_03051932_caritate-christi-compulsi_en.html>, n. 31.

²¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (New York: Doubleday, 1994), n. 88.

²² Pope Pius IX, Apostolic Constitution, *Ineffabilis Deus*, 8 December 1854.

Pope Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, 1 November 1950.

²³ For example, Pope John Paul II quoted Saint Grignion de Montfort calling Mary the “most faithful spouse of the Holy Spirit....” Address Of The Holy Father To The Participants In The 8th Mariological Colloquium, (Friday, 13 October 2000),

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2000/oct-dec/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20001013_8-colloquio-mariologia_en.html>

²⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 963.

²⁵ Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici, Vox Populi web site, “Petition,”

<<http://www.voxpopuli.org/petition.php>>.

²⁶ Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici, Vox Populi web site, “Petition,”

<<http://www.voxpopuli.org/petition.php>>.

²⁷ Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici, Vox Populi web site, “About Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici,”

<<http://www.voxpopuli.org/info.php>>. As of June of 2003, they claim nearly 7 million persons have signed the petition.

²⁸ Howard Q Dee, “Our Lady’s Ambassador: John Paul II, Fatima, and the Fifth Marian Dogma,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, ed. Dr. Mark Miravalle, S.T.D., (Goleta, California: Queenship Publishing, 2000), p. 8-9.

²⁹ Dee, “Our Lady’s Ambassador,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, p. 10.

³⁰ Ernesto Cardinal Corripio Ahumada, “Forward,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, p. xiii.

³¹ Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins, “The Proposed Marian Dogma,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, p. 24.

³² Richard Gribble, C.S.C., “The Coredeptrix, the Cross, and Contemporary Society,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, p. 94; he cites Pope Benedict XV, Apostolic Letter, “Inter Sodalica,” (1918). I was unable to find a copy of this Apostolic Letter.

³³ Most of the theological statements in papal documents fall under the fallible Ordinary Magisterium. Only a few papal statements fall under the infallible Sacred Magisterium.

³⁴ Calkins, “The Proposed Marian Dogma,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, p. 33.

³⁵ Calkins, “The Proposed Marian Dogma,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, p. 33.

³⁶ Dr. Mark Miravalle, “In Battle Array with the Co-redemptrix,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, p. 42.

³⁷ Miravalle, “In Battle Array,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, p. 49.

³⁸ Miravalle, “In Battle Array,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, p. 47.

³⁹ Miravalle, “In Battle Array,” *Contemporary Insights On A Fifth Marian Dogma*, p. 48. Italics are from the original text, written and edited by Dr. Mark Miravalle.

⁴⁰ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Fidentem Piumque Animum*, 20 September 1896,

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_20091896_fidentem-piumque-animum_en.html>, n. 3.

⁴¹ The false messages of Ida Peerdeman of Amsterdam use the expression “The Lady of All Nations.”

⁴² Council of Trent, Fifth Session, <<http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct05.html>>.

⁴³ For example, the Spanish “abogada” is correctly translated as “advocate,” but the word is also used to refer to lawyers. The English language tends to call attorneys “counselor,” so that the term “advocate” has a different connotation in Spanish than in English. Use of the Latin “Advocatrix” avoids the problem of varying connotations in different languages.