

**THE EUCHARIST : THE CHURCH
IN THE HEART OF CHRIST**

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How the Church offers herself
to the Father – in Christ
with the Holy Spirit
for Mary Mediatrix

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BY WAY OF PREFACE

The Eucharist: the Church in the Heart of Christ, that is the title of this book. Certainly, all of Christ is present in the Eucharist, his heart as well as all of his body, all his soul, and all the Divinity of the Word of Life that he is in person. But the Heart of Christ truly seems to be the explanatory sign of all the Eucharist: it is the human symbol of all of God's Love for his Church, which he has redeemed at the cost of his Blood shed on the Cross of Calvary. And love does not have a reason; or if it does, it is love itself that is its own reason. Love can only be explained by love, which is the fullness of its reason. There is therefore no reason that more fully or more completely explains the Eucharist than the very Love of God, symbolized by the Heart of Christ.

The Eucharist: the Church in the Heart of Christ, it is an action of the Church who goes to Christ and unites herself to him within the most intimate part of his Being, within his very Life, and within his Love. It is therefore the action of the Church who, in the Eucharistic communion in which she is but one with Christ, unites herself to the love of God in order to become, herself, the Love of the men who are her brothers in the world, and thus to become her own Love, to participate in her own sanctification, in her own personal growth in charity as the Body of Christ. And with the passage of time, from Eucharist to Eucharist, from communion to communion, the Church grows and is built up by going to Christ and uniting herself to him, with the very Love of God that she had received on the day of Pentecost and that she continues to receive each time that this great Mystery of Christ and the Church is perpetuated and renewed.

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A word on the genesis of this work: what impelled me to write a book about the Eucharist, which – as is evident to all – is not an easy subject to deal with?

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BY WAY OF PREFACE

One evening in November 1975 – Tuesday, November 11 to be precise, a day that is celebrated by all as the anniversary of the Armistice of the Great War (November 11, 1918) , but a day that is even more glorious in the Church as the commemoration of the eternal rest of the great Saint Martin (November 11, 397), and finally a day that is intimate and special, one that calls to mind the baptism of brother Mutien–Marie of Ciney (November 11, 1895), nephew of Saint Mutien–Marie of Malonne, both of them great servants of Mary – on that evening, I received the grace of the priestly vocation.

The day of November 11, 1975, was the fourth of five days of a spiritual retreat in which I took part, a retreat that had been placed under the patronage of Mary and which, for this reason, was called *Five days with Our Lady*. Now, on the evening of this fourth day, the retreatants, kneeling before the exposed Blessed Sacrament, contemplated in spirit the Passion of Our Lord. And it was at this precise moment that, drawn to Jesus–Host, I responded to the call of grace that came through the Mediation of Mary. So I can say that, on that evening, I was already conscious, albeit dimly, that my entire priestly life would be consecrated both to the Eucharist through Mary, and to Mary through the Eucharist.

Having entered a Benedictine abbey in France as a postulant on October 2, 1976, I professed my first vows on April 4, 1978. It was in this manner that the grace of my priestly vocation, which I had received on November 11, 1975, began to be inserted into the mission of the Universal Church. On June 29, 1983, I was ordained priest and minister of the Almighty Lord: on that unforgettable day, the grace of my priestly vocation, which had been until then but a personal grace, truly became a grace that was ecclesial, because it was sacramental, through the imposition of the Bishop's hands. But, a dozen years later, on November 25, 1994, I left this French abbey and returned to Belgium. It was, in fact, time for the grace of my priestly vocation to receive an even greater and more open insertion into the mission of the Church. This is what happened through my incardination, as a secular priest, in the diocese of Namur, on November 28, 1997.

Let us go back a little. In September 1981, I had the opportunity to go to Ciney, in Belgium, with several confreres. I did not know at the time that it would be the beginning of my attachment to the diocese of Namur, to which I presently belong. I had, in fact, already read the life of brother Mutien–Marie de Ciney, but once I arrived at Ciney, I had the opportunity to study his autobiographical manuscript. And very soon this brother of the Christian Schools, renowned for his sanctity, became very dear to me. Not only because my visit to Belgium had allowed me to pray at his tomb several times, but also due to the fact that, for twelve years, I had attended a school run by brothers of the same Congregation, and also because, besides the coincidence of November 11 mentioned above, I had received the sacrament of confirmation and renewed my profession of faith on May 15, 1969, that is, on the anniversary of the blessed death of brother Mutien–Marie of Ciney (May 15, 1940). But, even more recently, this dear brother manifested his presence in my life, for May 15, 2002, was the day chosen by Divine Providence for my installation as Titular Canon of the Cathedral Chapter of Saint–Aubain in Namur: truly, Mary, through the intercession of her servant, founded my priestly vocation in the city and diocese of Namur!

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Through the intercession of that great Apostle of Mary who was Brother Mutien–Marie of Ciney, the date of November 11, 1975, reminded me, not only of my priestly vocation, but also of my confirmation in the faith. As the sacrament of confirmation is nothing other than baptism in its perfection, I also could not forget this last–mentioned sacrament, which is the source and foundation of all Christian life, and, by that very fact, of all priestly life. I was born on April 2, 1957, and the sacrament of baptism was conferred on me on the twenty–eighth day of the same month; I was given the sole Christian name of Daniel. For me, therefore, this sacrament means two things: a name, Daniel; and a date, April 28. First, the name. Daniel is one of the four great Prophets of the Old Covenant: he announces the victory and triumph of the Kingdom of God over the kingdoms of this world. For the Christians of the New Covenant, Daniel is thus the Prophet of the Eucharist, since, in this sacrament, Christ anticipates his glorious and triumphal return at the end of time. Next, the date. On April 28, the Church celebrates the birth in Heaven of Saint Louis–Marie Grignon de Montfort (1716), Doctor of the Church, one of the greatest Apostles of Mary. So to enter, on such a day, into the Church, of which Mary is the type and model, is an unequivocal sign of a calling to the service of Mary.

Today, therefore, I am sure – I firmly believe it to be the case – that my priestly mission is entirely directed towards the Eucharist and towards Mary: towards the Eucharist for Mary, and towards Mary for the Eucharist. But there is more. Since November 11, 1975, reminds me of the one baptism in which all Christians participate, this day causes my memory to be taken over by the Trinitarian Mystery of the One God, whose extension to all of creation constitutes baptism itself. Indeed, Brother Mutien–Marie of Ciney had received the mystical grace of an intimate union with the Trinity, a grace which had developed in him through the hidden and discrete influence of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, a nun of the Carmelite convent of Dijon (now located in Flavignerot, France). Lastly, it is particularly under the patronage of this very same nun that my priestly mission towards the Eucharist and towards Mary falls within the proper context of the Trinitarian Mystery. And it is indeed so, since my first intimate and personal encounter with Jesus–Eucharist, my first communion, took place on April 19, 1964, anniversary of the first communion of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity (April 19, 1891).

Hence, within the general perspective of the Trinitarian Mystery, I believe that I have been called to consecrate my priestly life to the Eucharist, because of my baptismal name, and to Mary, because of the date on which I received this name. Now, on one hand, insofar as a name expresses the entire reality of a person – which is, in the course of a human lifetime, specifically immutable – that name possesses a permanent character. On the other hand, as a date determines a precise point in time, which is intrinsically fleeting and elusive, it possesses a transitory character. Thus, I can say that my priestly mission has the Eucharist as its constant and ultimate end; and Mary as a means to this end. In other words, my priestly life must be wholly devoted to Mary in order for it to be entirely consecrated to the Eucharist: I can accomplish my mission towards the Eucharist only if I go through Mary.

Every work, every study I undertake on the subject of the Eucharist must go through Mary: I must have recourse to Mary, address Her and entrust this work to her. It is Mary who guides me, who enlightens me, who instructs me. It is Mary who allows me to understand the Eucharist, it is She who breaks the Bread of Life for me. In a

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word: it is the work of Mary. But as a person's works manifest who that person is, when Mary reveals to me, through her work, what the Eucharist is, she also reveals and manifests herself. Therefore, any study concerning the Eucharist that I might accomplish through Mary allows me to understand both the Eucharist and Mary.

All of my studies on the Eucharist must be done through Mary, in the context of the Trinitarian Mystery and Life. Now, through the Incarnation of the Word or Son of the Father, Mary becomes the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, she becomes one with Him in the bosom of the Trinity: She is completely given and surrendered to this Mystery of Love in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Thus, all that is entrusted to Mary is necessarily, and by that very fact, entrusted to the Holy Spirit: every work of Mary becomes the work of the Spirit of God, and thus the Work of God. Therefore, the study of the Eucharist that I undertake through Mary – that is to say, by entrusting it to Her – is nothing other than the Work of the Holy Spirit.

After the Incarnation of the Word of Life, after she had become the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Mary then also married, not a God, but a man: Joseph, of the house of David. In other words, the Holy Spirit, who is God and who initiates all that is both divine and human, entrusted his Spouse Mary as well as all that She accomplishes to the care and prudence of Saint Joseph. In conclusion, I can say, and I believe without hesitation, that this work, this work of God on the subject of the Eucharist, is the work of Saint Joseph, who carries out the work of Mary under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As I am attempting here to explain not only the Eucharist, but also Mary, this study on the Eucharist is nothing other than a gift or present offered to Mary by her Spouse Joseph, guided and illuminated by the Spirit of God.

PRELIMINARIES

MARY IN THE TRINITY

FOR THE CHURCH

The corporeal aspect of the mediation of Mary

*each prophet has his own particular
message and his own theology*

*the sacraments have
a prophetic component to them,
especially the Eucharist*

Dom Notker Fūglister

INTRODUCTION

1. There is a fact that imposes itself upon us: the Eucharist presents itself under the form of food, whether it be solid, like bread, or liquid, like wine; the Eucharist appears to be the perfect sacrament of Christ in person, for he said: *My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* (Jn. 6:55) As such, the Eucharist is destined to be eaten or drunk by the Church, for, without an act of nutrition, food remains absolutely without effect: *Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.* (Jn. 6:53) So any adequate study of the Eucharist must discuss, in a proper and exclusive manner, the eating of the Eucharist by the Church, a nutritive and vital act that is commonly called *Eucharistic communion*: this will be the precise subject of our study. Now, according to Saint Thomas Aquinas – the great Doctor of the incarnate Word – the Eucharist, which is the sacrament of Christ, bears this name (that which expresses its complete reality) because it contains the fullness of grace of the divinity of Christ: «Dicitur Eucharistia, id est bona gratia, quia (...) realiter continet Christum, qui est plenus gratia.» *We call it the Eucharist, that is to say, good grace, because (...) it truly contains Christ, who is full of grace.* (St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, IIIa, q. 73, a. 4, corp.) Thus, insofar as the sole subject of our study is the act of Eucharistic communion, we see that we cannot avoid placing ourselves at first – in the initial phase which these *Preliminaries* constitute – within the proper domain of the mediation of Mary. The union of Christ–Eucharist and the Church in the act of sacramental communion necessarily relates to the ministry of the Virgin Mary in her unique and exclusive office as the Mediatrix between the grace of the incarnate Word and the free will of every human person.

2. The office of the mediator, considered in its unifying function – which is the case here, since we are discussing the act of Eucharistic communion – intrinsically comprises the role of transmitting goods from one to the other, and this reciprocally: «Conjungit mediator per hoc, quod ea quae unius sunt, defert ad alterum.» *The mediator unifies by communicating to one what belongs to the other.* (St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, IIIa, q. 26, a. 2, corp.) Consequently, the mediation of Mary is necessarily exercised in a double sense: a descending sense, in which the grace of God is transmitted from Christ to the Church, and an ascending sense in which the freedom of man is committed to God, in Christ. The mediation of Mary considered in its descending sense, from Christ to the Church, belongs to the doctrine of the Church that can be considered certain, or quasi-certain. Pope Saint Pius X himself testifies to this: *Since Mary carries it over all in holiness and union with Jesus Christ, and has been associated by Jesus Christ in the work of redemption (...) she is the*

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supreme Minister of the distribution of graces. (Encyclical *Ad Diem illum*, February 2, 1904 – Latin text in Denzinger, no. 3370). On the other hand, today there still exists an incertitude, or semi–obscurity, concerning the dogmatic weight of the ascending sense of the mediation of Mary. To convince oneself of this, it is sufficient to open the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which declares simply, in a concise manner: *The prayer of the Church is sustained by the prayer of Mary* (no. 2679), prayer thus being the full and complete expression of human freedom. We see that this text, as beautiful and as precious as it is, does not tell us if the *prayer of the Church* of which it speaks also includes, intrinsically, that great Prayer of the Church that is the *Eucharistic Prayer*...

3. In order that it might one day be possible for the mediation of Mary, understood in both its senses, to be defined as a dogma of the faith, this point of doctrine must be clarified and explained in even greater depth: this is the goal we propose for these *Preliminaries*. Moreover, the attentive reader will have discovered in the title of this book – *The Eucharist: the Church in the Heart of Christ* – an expression of the ascending movement of the Church towards the Heart of Christ through Mary Mediatrix. To nourish herself of the Eucharist, the Church must place her hand upon the consecrated bread and wine, thus entrusting her freedom, through the mediation of Mary, to the merciful Love of the Heart of Jesus... But before dealing with this matter, we would like to provide in this introduction a brief doctrinal synthesis of the mediation of Mary, as well as a succinct account of the historical evolution, in the continuity of thought, of the greatest of the dogmas lived in the Church.

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4. All of the doctrinal content of the mediation of Mary is summarized under the subtitle that we have given this book: *How the Church offers herself to the Father, in Christ, with the Holy Spirit, for Mary Mediatrix*. That is, the communion of offering – realized in prayer – of Christ and the Church, sacramentally united in Eucharistic communion, is accomplished in an indissociable manner for both the eternal Father, source of the Spirit of Love, and Mary Mediatrix, Spouse of the Holy Spirit. This subtitle includes two indissociable principles, which we will have the opportunity to develop throughout the course of this book. The first principle is that the prayer of the Christian believer, insofar as it is united to the great Eucharistic Prayer of the Liturgy, is the unique and particular means through which the human person can completely offer himself, and principally his freedom, to God: when the Church goes toward Christ, when she goes into the Heart of Christ, the Church offers herself to God, in Christ, exchanging Love for Love with the Holy Spirit. The second principle is that, given that what defines a mediator is to be at the exact midpoint between the two elements of the mediation, the mediating element cannot exist except in virtue of the existence of the extremes it unites: when we draw a straight line on a piece of paper, we go from one end of the line all the way to the other, passing through the line's midpoint, but we cannot know precisely what the line's midpoint is until after we have drawn the entire line, from one end to the other; in summary, for every mediator of the corporeal order, the midpoint wholly depends on the union of the extreme points. Within the framework of research into the ascending sense of the mediation

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of Mary – that is, in the case of the Church going toward Christ–Eucharist through Mary Mediatrix – the notion of the mediator of the corporeal order is absolutely fundamental and essential: it is through the intermediary of Mary considered as a mediator of the corporeal order that the Church can place her hand upon the Eucharist, in a spiritual act of offering to the Father, in the Holy Spirit.

5. Thus, the essence of the mediation of Mary is contained in two complementary notions: one, of the corporeal order, which consists in the fact that the two extreme elements of the mediation of Mary, who are Christ and the Church, give birth, through their mutual and reciprocal union, to the mediating term or midpoint, who is Mary Mediatrix; and the other, of the spiritual order, which consists in the fact that the mediating element, or Mary Mediatrix, in virtue of her mediating and unifying action, gives birth to the conjunct and simultaneous union of the extremes of her mediation, who are Christ – and in Him, the Father in the Holy Spirit – and the Church. Let us note that these two notions of the mediation of Mary, one of the corporeal order and the other of the spiritual order, are not only complementary, but also indissociable from each other, since, the Eucharist being a food, this sacrament is necessarily eaten by the whole human person, that is, the human person considered simultaneously and inseparably as body and soul. This is why, when we shall consider the corporeal aspect of the mediation of Mary, the spiritual aspect will also be discussed, necessarily and conjointly, at that time; and the same will also be true when we shall consider the spiritual aspect of the mediation of Mary, when the corporeal aspect will also make an appearance, although from a different point of view and following a different approach.

6. In order to show the reader the continuity in time of the mediation of Mary, understood in the double sense described above (see no. 5), we shall cite several authors, diverse in their functions within the Church and in the spiritual experiences that they have undergone. We shall begin with contemporary personages (twentieth century) and then go back in time until we reach the sixteenth century; although Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori (eighteenth century), whom we shall quote, cites Saint Bernard (twelfth century), we, however, shall not go back beyond the Protestant era, that is to say, the time when Martin Luther manifested his doubt and incomprehension vis-à-vis the attitude of the Christian who invokes Mary, ut Beatam Virginem colat mediatricem loco Christi, *such that he honors the Blessed Virgin mediatrix in the place of Christ* (Martin Luther, letter of August 19, 1523, to the Chapter of the Church of Wittenberg – Werke, Briefwechsel, 3. Band, nr 648, 45); indeed, it is usually only after a doctrine of the Church is contradicted or questioned that it begins to achieve, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, its full progress and its perfect development. Let us point out that the authors cited below may at certain times emphasize one aspect of the mediation of Mary, and at other times the other aspect; but at all times in a unity of thought.

7. It would be impossible to begin this Marian retrospective without first citing the most recent of those authors who are entirely devoted to Mary and to her son Jesus: Pope John Paul II, to whom, moreover, this book is dedicated. Numerous are the discourses and other writings that this worthy Successor of Peter has dedicated to Mary. Of these, one must mention first the encyclical *Dominum et vivificantem* (*The Lord, the giver of life*) on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and of the world (May 18, 1986); but especially the encyclical that is its sequel, entitled *Redemptoris*

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Mater (The Mother of the Redeemer), on the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of the pilgrim Church (March 25, 1987). However, to celebrate with Mary the twenty-fifth year of his Pontificate, John Paul II wanted to consecrate to the Mother of Jesus a year of the Rosary, from October 2002 to October 2003. During this Marian year, a Pope who is wholly devoted to the cause of Mary said the following: *Mary «gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger» (Lk. 2:7). This is the icon of Christmas: a tiny newborn child, whom the hands of a woman wrap in poor cloths and lay in a manger. Who could imagine that this little human being is the «Son of the Most High» (Lk. 1:32)? Only she, his Mother, knows the truth and guards its mystery. On this night we too can join in her gaze and so recognize in this Child the human face of God. We too – the men and women of the third millennium – are able to encounter Christ and to gaze upon him through the eyes of Mary. (H.H. John Paul II, Homily for the Midnight Mass of Christmas 2002) To look through the eyes of Mary, to join in her gaze in order to know and to recognize God in Jesus! This is a very beautiful synthesis of the mediation of Mary considered in its principal act, of the corporeal order: namely, the Nativity of the Lord, as we shall see in the course of these Preliminaries (see Chapter Two).*

8. A Pole like Pope John Paul II, Saint Maximilian Kolbe, one of the most recent theologians of the mediation of Mary, and also one of the best known, expresses his thought in the following manner: *The Mediatrix of all graces is Mary. It is towards her that we go, like children to their mother. (Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Conference – no date – in L’Immaculée révèle l’Esprit-Saint (The Immaculate Lady Reveals the Holy Spirit), p. 69) He explains this in the following manner: Certainly the source of all good, both in the natural plane and in the supernatural (grace), is God the Father who acts at all times through the Son and the Holy Spirit: that is, the Most Holy Trinity. Truly, the only Mediator with the Father is the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, God and man, through whom all the homage that we pay to God is transformed from human to divine, and thus acquires an infinite value and becomes worthy of the majesty of the Father. Truly, we love the Father in the Son, Jesus Christ, and we should give Him all our love so that the Father may receive all our love in Him and through Him. However, it is true that none of our actions, not even the holiest of them, are without stain, and if we wish them to be pure and immaculate when we offer them to the Lord Jesus, we must give them directly to the Immaculate Lady in order for her to make them her own property and to give them as such to her Son. It is only then that they shall be without stain, immaculate. In receiving an infinite value through the divinity of Jesus, they shall glorify God the Father. (Letter to Brother Matthew Spolitakiewicz, October 10, 1935, in L’Immaculée révèle l’Esprit-Saint (The Immaculate Lady Reveals the Holy Spirit), p. 71).*

9. Around 1920, a Belgian religious, brother Mutien-Marie of Ciney, of the Christian Schools, the nephew of Saint Mutien-Marie of Malonne, wrote the following sentences as spiritual resolutions: *My vocation is love!... love for Mary! (...) I shall imitate God in his love for Mary: the Most Holy Trinity has done everything to glorify Mary. I shall love Mary through Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. I shall love Mary through My Three. I shall be the Jesus of Mary, loving Mary only through Jesus!... I shall be the love of the Most Holy Trinity for Mary, loving Mary only through My Three. (Complete unedited autobiographical manuscript, p. 111 – not to be confused with the Excerpts from which we shall reproduce a passage below). Speaking of*

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Holy Communion for the glorification of Mary, the same brother explains: *Holy Communion, practiced in this manner, would thus have the glorification of God as its goal, by reminding Jesus and Mary of their mutual love and by perpetuating, in a manner of speaking, Jesus' life of loving Mary, his Mother (...)* Of course, this is not to say that Jesus should be a means to loving Mary, that the Creator should be a means and the creature an end; rather, this is done with the tender intention of pleasing Jesus and Mary, who have placed all of their complaisance in each other. (Excerpts from the autobiography of Brother Mutien–Marie of Ciney, page 76 of the Tournai edition, 1951)

10. In her own way, which is wholly interior, Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, a Carmelite religious of Dijon, expresses how she conceives – similarly, even almost identically – the life of praise and offering to both the Most Holy Trinity and Mary: *In the heaven of our soul, let us be praise of glory to the Holy Trinity, praise of love to our immaculate Mother.* (Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, *Souvenirs (Memories)*, p. 117) And the anonymous author of the *Memories* adds, a little later: *Sister Elizabeth's belonging to the three divine Persons increased her tender devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin and gave her, as it were, a more intimate connection of grace with she who, according to her expression, was the great praise of glory to the Holy Trinity.* Her soul is so simple, its movements are so profound, *said Sister Elizabeth*, 'that we cannot detect them; she seems to reproduce on earth that life which is that of the divine Being: the simple Being; she is also so transparent, so luminous, that we might take her for light: and yet she is but the *mirror of the sun of justice.* (ibid. p. 139) And elsewhere, in a letter to a recently ordained priest, it pleased Blessed Elizabeth to compare that minister of Christ – the sole Mediator – with Mary, priest and mediatrix of divine grace: *With the Virgin, you can sing your Magnificat and thrill in God your Savior, for the Almighty does great things in you and his mercy is eternal... Like Mary, keep all these things in your heart, and keep your heart close to hers, for this sacerdotal Virgin is also the Mother of the divine Grace...* (ibid. p. 143)

11. Of a completely different nature, although possessing as much warmth, is the following testimony: *The [idea of the Mother of God] is perfectly distinct from [that of God incarnate], and does not interfere with it. He is God made low, she is a woman made high. (...)* He who charges us with making Mary a divinity, is thereby denying the divinity of Jesus. Such a man does not know what divinity is. Our Lord cannot pray for us, as a creature prays, as Mary prays; He cannot inspire those feelings which a creature inspires. To her belongs, as being a creature, a natural claim on our sympathy and familiarity, in that she is nothing else than our fellow. (...) We look at her without any fear, any remorse, any consciousness that she is able to read us, judge us, punish us. Our heart yearns towards that pure Virgin, that gentle Mother, and our congratulations follow her, as she rises from Nazareth and Ephesus, through the choir of angels, to her throne on high, so weak, yet so strong; so delicate, yet so glorious; so modest and yet so mighty. She has sketched for us her own portrait in the *Magnificat*. He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaid; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. (John Henry Cardinal Newman, excerpts from a *Letter addressed to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., on the Occasion of His Eirenicon of 1864*)

12. On the night of July 18 or 19, 1830, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to a

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French nun, a Daughter of Charity: Saint Catherine Labouré. In this apparition, it was Mary who, through her gestures more than her words, described herself as Mediatrix of grace and of offering between Christ and the Church. This is what a biographer of the saint reports to us: *Catherine communicates the interior command just as it is given to her; it principally concerns the altar: Now, for two years I have felt some urgency to tell you to build or have erected an altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin in the very place where she appeared. But above all, this altar must include a statue of the Blessed Virgin, just as she had seen her, in that place. She insists on a detail that she had never before mentioned: Our Lady held a ball in her hands, which represented the globe. She held her hands at waist-height, in a very natural manner, her eyes raised to Heaven (...) It is a look of imploration and a gesture of offering for this world: her children whom she loves to protect.* Here her face was very beautiful. I could never describe it; and then, all of a sudden, I noticed rings on her fingers, covered in precious stones, some more beautiful than the others, some larger and others smaller, and shining out from them were rays of light, some of which were more beautiful than the others (...) *The voice led her to understand that we do not hope enough: The jewels which do not shine with light are the graces that people neglect to ask of me (...) Catherine herself had specified, in the April 10 autograph (...) The Virgin offered the globe to Our Lord. This is impossible to put into words. It would be impossible for me to express it.* (René Laurentin, *Vie authentique de Catherine Labouré* (Authentic Life of Catherine Labouré), pages 184 and 268)

13. The great prophet and interpreter of Mary Mediatrix is, without doubt, Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort. Although all of his teaching is very useful and precious, we shall nevertheless restrict ourselves to quoting a short passage, the one that seemed to us to be the most important. Saint Louis-Marie recommends that we perform all our actions – of which the most excellent is certainly Eucharistic communion – *THROUGH MARY, WITH MARY, IN MARY, AND FOR MARY, in order that they might be more perfectly performed through Jesus Christ, with Jesus Christ, in Jesus and for Jesus.* (*Traité de la vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge* (Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin), no. 257) He develops this as follows: *All our actions must be performed for Mary. For as we have wholly placed ourselves in her service, it is right that we do everything for her like a valet, a servant and a slave; not, of course, because we consider her the final end of this service, which is Jesus Christ alone, but rather because she is our proximate end, our mysterious intermediary, and the easy way for us to go to him.* (ibid. no. 265) And he concludes: *GLORY TO JESUS IN MARY! GLORY TO MARY IN JESUS! GLORY TO GOD ALONE!* (ibid.)

14. Living in the same period as Saint Louis-Marie is another great Doctor: Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori. Citing an ancient author (no reference given), he tells us: *Saint Bernard exhorts us to always have recourse to this heavenly Mother, because her prayers are certainly heard by her Son: Have recourse to Mary, I tell you without hesitation, the Son shall certainly hear his mother's prayer. And he adds: My little children, it is she who is the ladder of sinners; it is she who is my greatest confidence; in her is all my reason for hope. The saint calls her the ladder because, as we can climb to the third rung of a ladder only if we first set our foot on the lowest rung, in the same way we do not reach God except by way of Jesus Christ, and we do not reach Jesus Christ except by way of Mary.* (*Le grand moyen*

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de la prière (The Great Way of Prayer), ch. 1, no. 27) And he continues on the same subject: *Other doctors speak in conformity with Saint Bernard's sentiment (...) Saint Bernardine of Siena says in a certain place (...):* Through the Virgin, the vital graces are transfused from the head, Christ, into his mystical body. From the instant when the Virgin Mary conceived in her womb the divine Word, she obtained, if I dare to say it in this manner, a certain jurisdiction over any temporal procession of the Holy Spirit. Thus, no creature shall obtain from God a grace which does not belong to the distribution made by this tender Mother (...) *Saint Bonaventure writes thus:* The whole of the divine nature having been enclosed within the womb of the Virgin, I do not hesitate to say that this virgin has obtained a certain jurisdiction over all the graces which flow from it. In her womb, as in a divine lake, the rivers of all graces find their source. (ibid.)

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15. To conclude, here is the testimony of a Spanish Jesuit, Venerable Luis de la Puente, who lived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: *Since our loss has its origin in a man and a woman, Providence wanted our salvation to also have its origin in a man and a woman; principally through Jesus Christ, who is our head, our sole mediator, and the Father of the world to come, and also through his blessed Mother. All men may address either of them with confidence, as they would address their Father and Mother. For the intention of Our Lord, in choosing Mary as his mother, was that she would also be the Mother and advocate of sinners; and that if sinners, through a natural enough fear, would not dare to turn to him for help, because he is not only a man like them and their advocate, but also their God and their judge, they would be able to turn to Mary, who is not to be their judge, but only their advocate, mediatrix, and Mother (...) I give you thanks, o Eternal Father, for having given us a Father and Mother of the same nature as ourselves, through whose intercession we are sure to be able to arrange our reconciliation with you. I give thanks to you as well, o divine Word, for wanting your Mother to be ours as well, and for wanting her to serve as our mediatrix and to present us before the throne of your mercy, defending us from the rigors of Your justice.* (Ven. Fr. Luis de la Puente, *Méditations* (Meditations), Volume I, 2nd Part, 3rd Meditation – p. 400–401)

16. We have just quoted Venerable Father Luis de la Puente; since we shall have recourse to his learning again in the course of this study, and in order to convince the reader of his great authority in matters of doctrine, here are several facts concerning him and his life: *Luis de la Puente, Spanish, was born in Valladolid on November 10, 1554 (...) He was received into the Society of Jesus at the age of twenty (...) His infirmities growing day by day, he was obliged to completely renounce both his post as a teacher of youths and the responsibilities imposed upon him by his Superior. He therefore began to write, offering to the public what he had learned up to that time, which was derived less from the reading of spiritual books than from his own personal experience, the exercise of prayer, and a continuous mortification of his will, his appetites, and his senses (...) He was especially devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. He spent entire nights in profound contemplation, prostrated on the ground before the body of his God and Savior. During the day, he*

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*often went to adore him; and it was during such visits that the Holy Spirit enlightened him extraordinarily, and filled his heart with consolations (...) He died in Valladolid, on February 17, 1624 (...) Father de la Puente appeared after his death to several people, radiant with glory (...) He allowed himself to be seen with several marks of the glory he enjoyed, and in particular with the crown of a Doctor of the Church, because he had left to the Church a salutary doctrine, which he had received from the Holy Spirit. (Account of the Life of Father Luis de la Puente, in the *Meditations*, Volume I – pages I, II and IV)*

17. We have quickly covered five centuries of the mediation of Mary: this brief look at the thought of those who have preceded us on the road of faith has allowed us to substantiate, in advance, the long chain of reasoning that we shall be dealing with and which is necessary to any rigorous demonstration. Thus, the Tradition of the Church is always the fundamental reference with regard to the objective reality of the mediation of Mary.

But what Tradition affirms, Holy Scripture confirms: the five chapters of these *Preliminaries* shall demonstrate this.

Principally, we shall see that, if Mary is Mediatrix (which is the case, according to the testimony of Tradition), then Mary exercises her mediation in a strictly corporeal manner; and this she does by means of Holy Scripture, which explicitly states that there is but one mediator, Christ (cf. 1 Tm. 2:5). This comes down to saying that our main purpose shall be to establish that the mediation of Mary is fundamentally realized by means of Holy Scripture, and at the same time by means of Eucharistic communion, this mediation therefore having, in a completely proper manner, a truly corporeal aspect. Lastly, in our conclusion, we shall produce the testimony of three Fathers of the Church in order to confirm and defend with authority all that we will have said, in general, concerning the mediation of Mary understood in its corporeal aspect.

Chapter I

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

OF MARY–MEDIATRIX

18. The goal of these *Preliminaries* dedicated to the mediation of Mary in its corporeal aspect is the study and investigation of the different aspects and the principal characteristics of the role carried out by Mary when she guides and leads the Church, by way of mediation, to the bosom of the Trinity, where she already is in a manner that is completely personal and characteristic of her, that is to say in a way that is first and perfect, since she is *hailed as a pre–eminent and singular member of the Church, and as its type and excellent exemplar in faith and charity.* (Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, no. 53) In other words, one must consider Mary to be aiding, in accordance with the Divine Will, both the Trinity and the Church; for, insofar as she is Mediatrix between Christ and the Church, Mary allows, through her efficacious aid, the union of the Trinity and the Church in Christ: *The salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. In no way does it impede, but rather does it foster the immediate union of the faithful with Christ.* (Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, no. 60)

19. To say that Mary, in Christ, is the mediatrix between the Trinity and the Church, and to say that, by this very fact, Mary allows, through her aid, the union of the Trinity and the Church in Christ, necessarily supposes, on one hand, that Mary is in the Trinity and in the Church, and on the other hand, that the Trinity and the Church are in Mary. So, concerning the first of these two propositions, Saint Maximilian Kolbe expressly teaches, speaking of Mary in the Trinity: *She is a creature so exalted that one of the Fathers does not hesitate to say she is 'the complement of the Holy Trinity.* (Letter to Brother Salezy Mikolajczyk, July 28, 1935, in *L'Immaculée révèle l'Esprit–Saint (The Immaculate Lady Reveals the Holy Spirit)*, p. 51; in fact, Saint Hesychius of Jerusalem says that Mary Mediatrix is *OLON TES TRIADOS TO PLEROMA: the total complement of the Trinity;* Patrologia Graeca 93, 1461) Later, Saint Maximilian Kolbe developed his thought by saying: *She, inserted into the love of the Most Holy Trinity, becomes from the first moment of her existence, and forever, the complement of the Holy Trinity.* (Sur l'Immaculée Conception (On the Immaculate Conception), February 17, 1941, *ibid.*, p.50) And speaking of Mary in the Church, he declares: *The Immaculate Lady knows all and guides all. One must*

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consent to her guiding us from good to better, and it is she, through us, who shall do the most for the salvation of souls, winning them to herself and thus to the Heart of Jesus. (Letter to Brother Salezy Mikolajczyk, December 28, 1934, *ibid.*, p. 113–114) This is something he had already expressed in a different way some time before: *Let us open to her our heart and our soul and our body and our all, without reservation and without limit; let us wholly consecrate ourselves to her in order to become her servants, her sons, her unconditional property; so that we might, in a way, become her, living, speaking, and acting in this world.* (Letter to the Clerics of the Order, February 28, 1933, *ibid.*, p. 113)

20. Concerning the second proposition, namely that the Trinity and the Church are in Mary, Saint Maximilian Kolbe tells us, first, with regard to the presence of the Holy Trinity in Mary: *«The Lord is with thee!» Truly, God is always with her, and in such a close and perfect way. Is she not like a part of the Holy Trinity? God the Father is her Father, the Son of God is her Son, the Holy Spirit is her Spouse! And, wherever she goes, she brings with her all of the Holy Trinity (...) Wherever she is absent, God, Jesus is absent as well; and wherever she is, the Holy Trinity is there also.* (Meditation, April 14, 1933, *ibid.*, p. 50) Second, concerning the presence of the Church in Mary, he does not hesitate to expressly declare: *One must entrust oneself to the Immaculate Lady, she is completely divine. One must completely strip oneself of oneself, and keep nothing for oneself, absolutely nothing: it is necessary that she do everything.* (Conference, February 17, 1938, *ibid.*, p. 114–115) And he develops this last point in the following manner: *To achieve this, we must live in her soul, think with her thoughts, etc., in order that there might be no difference between our ways of seeing, just as there is no difference between her desires and the Will of God.* (Conference, November 24, 1938, *ibid.*, p. 115)

21. To the testimony of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, let us add, first, that of the Venerable Father Luis de la Puente. Speaking of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, he exclaims, *Oh! what pleasure it was for the Most Holy Trinity to see this Virgin, so accomplished in all kinds of virtues! The Eternal Father gloried in having brought into the world a daughter so worthy of him. The divine Word joyfully esteemed such beauty and grace in she who would be his Mother. The Holy Spirit was delighted to have found such a spouse. In a word, the three Persons took possession of this saintly soul, and there established their residence.* (Meditations – Volume I – Part II – Meditation III, p. 409) And he continues, on the subject of the nativity of Mary: *If many rejoiced in the birth of Saint John, because he was the precursor of Jesus Christ, then how much more should the entire world rejoice in the birth of Mary, whom God destined to be his own Mother? This consideration should produce a holy joy in our hearts, and rouse us to praise God and to congratulate the Most Holy Trinity for this beloved Virgin who has come into the world; the Father, because a daughter has been born to him; the Son, because a Mother has been born to him; and the Holy Spirit, because a spouse has been born to him. O admirable Trinity, may the birth of this girl, who is so dear to You, be a thousand times blessed! Impart upon me the same feelings of joy that You give to so many others on this happy day, for Mary was born for my sake as much as for the sake of everyone else.* (*ibid.*, Meditation IV, p. 410–411) Next, to summarize all of the Church's Tradition on this subject, down to the present day, let us cite Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* on the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of the pilgrim Church. The Successor of Peter presents the role of Mary Mediatrix

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between the Holy Trinity, where Mary is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, and the Church, in which Mary occupies the first place, in the following manner: *On the day of Pentecost (...), begins that journey of faith, the Church's pilgrimage through the history of individuals and peoples. We know that at the beginning of this journey Mary is present. We see her in the midst of the Apostles in the Upper Room, prayerfully imploring the gift of the Spirit. (Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, no. 59) In a sense her journey of faith is longer. The Holy Spirit had already come down upon her, and she became his faithful spouse at the Annunciation, welcoming the Word of the true God, offering 'the full submission of intellect and will...and freely assenting to the truth revealed by him,' indeed abandoning herself totally to God through 'the obedience of faith, (Vatican II, Dei Verbum, no. 5) whereby she replied to the angel: Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word. (Lk. 1:38) The journey of faith made by Mary, whom we see praying in the Upper Room, is thus longer than that of the others gathered there: Mary goes before them, leads the way for them. (Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, no. 63) (H.H. John Paul II, Redemptoris Mater, no. 26) And a little later, the Pope adds: From the very first moment, the Church looked at Mary through Jesus, just as she looked at Jesus through Mary. (ibidem)*

22. Insofar as Mary, considered in the Holy Trinity, exercises, in Christ, the office of mediatrix between the Holy Trinity and the Church; and if we consider not the Persons – the Trinity and the Church – who are set in relation to each other through Mary's mediation, but the gift – which is grace – that Mary has the obligation of transmitting from the Holy Trinity – in Christ – to the Church; then we can say that Mary has no higher or more worthy function than that of transmitting to the Church, in Christ, all of the Mystery that is the Holy Trinity itself, that is to say, the Mystery proper to the one and triune Divinity, which is, of its very nature, uncreated Grace. In other words, Mary Mediatrix in the Holy Trinity reveals to the Church this same divine Trinity of which, in a certain way, she is a part. So, in Rome, on April 12, 1947, during an apparition to a Protestant Christian, Bruno Cornacchiola, Mary clearly proclaimed that she is, forever, Mediatrix of the Mystery of the one and triune God in Christ, saying, *I am She who is in the divine Trinity. I am the VIRGIN OF REVELATION.* (cf. Msgr. Fausto Rossi, *La Vierge de la Révélation (The Virgin of Revelation)*, p. 18) But what is also important to note is that Mary, in the course of this same apparition, addressed words to that Christian which were maternal and full of strength and encouragement in order to help him in his conversion to the sovereign Good which is the one and triune God; thus, after the above words, she said to him, *You persecute me; stop immediately! Enter into the chosen flock, the celestial court on Earth. The promise of God is, and remains, immutable: the nine Fridays of the Sacred Heart, which you had observed in order to please your faithful wife before you began following the path of error, have saved you!* (ibid.) So here we find a first principle, wholly contained within the title of our *Preliminaries: Mary in the Trinity, for the Church.*

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23. If we suppose that Mary is a mediatrix between God – in Christ – and the Church, this is the same as considering the mediation of Mary to be the means through which God, one and triune, reveals himself to the Church: Mary Mediatrix is then She through whom the Mystery of the Holy Trinity is transmitted, by mode of revelation, to the Church, in Christ. Now, for his part, Christ is also a mediator between God, whom he is himself, and the Church: Christ is he who reveals God to the Church, according to the teaching of Vatican II, which declares that *Christ (...) is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation*. (Dei Verbum, no. 2) Thus, according to our supposition, we are in the presence of two mediators: Christ and Mary. These two mediators are essentially different and distinct from each other, for Christ and Mary are both persons, and one's person is, intrinsically, totally incommunicable. In addition, Christ is a mediator in a primary or principal manner, since he possesses both a divine and a human nature, while Mary possesses only a human nature. Thus, according to the testimony of Tradition, there certainly exist two mediators, who are the two persons, distinct and incommunicable, of Christ and Mary, Christ being the principal mediator, and Mary being the secondary mediator. Now, opposed to all this, at least in appearance, is the following passage from Scripture, which declares through Saint Paul, *There is but one God, and one sole mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ*. (1 Tm. 2:5) So we must introduce a notion will allow us to reconcile these two affirmations: that of Tradition, which teaches that there are two mediators, Christ and Mary; and that of Scripture, which declares that there is but a single mediator: Christ. Now, the notion that allows such a reconciliation can be none other than that of *mystery*, that is, that which surpasses created reason, for only the notion of mystery can allow the reconciliation of the fact that a single reality can, at the same time and under the same relation, be one and double, or even one and multiple. Consequently, if Mary is truly mediatrix (and this is what we intend to demonstrate), then this can only be so in a mystical or mysterious way.

24. The mediation of Mary is of the mystical order; Mary is Mediatrix if we consider her as a Mystery with respect to Christ–Mediator. Now, as we have just established, this mystery of the Mediation of Mary rests entirely on the notion of the *person* – there are two mediators because Christ and Mary are two different and distinct persons. Therefore, as man is essentially composed of a spiritual soul and an organic and material body, it follows that the mediation of Mary – if we consider Mary as a Mystery – necessarily possesses two absolutely essential aspects: one spiritual, the other corporeal. But, concerning the spiritual aspect of the Mediation of Mary, as what is spiritual is simple and one, we are intrinsically reduced to considering solely the unique mediation of Christ, with which the mediation of Mary is then confused in its spiritual aspect. This is what Saint Paul brings to the fore when he associates the oneness of God, who *is spirit* (Jn. 4:24), with the oneness of the Mediator, who is Christ (see 1 Tm. 2:5 as cited in no. 23). Consequently, by the process of elimination, we can conclude from the above that it is solely the corporeal aspect of the mediation of Mary that allows us to consider Mary as the Mediatrix – in a mystical way – with, and in union with, Christ–Mediator.

25. Mary Mediatrix, considered in a mystical manner, and thus, by that very fact, in her union with Christ–Mediator, cannot be conceived of as Mediatrix except according to the corporeal aspect of her mediation. Now, concerning Christ–Mediator – always in the first place, since he is God – Saint Paul calls him,

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mystically, and in a corporeal manner, *the head of the body, of the Church* (Col. 1:18), and even *the head of every man* (1 Cor. 11:3). Thus, as Mary Mediatrix is necessarily different and distinct from Christ–Mediator, we can call Mary *Mediatrix*, in a mystical and corporeal manner, only in reference to that part of the human person that is not the head; that is, in reference to all that is strictly the body: Mary Mediatrix is therefore mystically, in a corporeal manner, *the body of Christ* (1 Cor. 12:27). But the notion of the *body of Christ*, in virtue of the multiple and compound aspect of the human body, necessarily refers not to a single person, Mary Mediatrix, but rather to many, as Saint Paul confirms when he says, *We, though many, form but one body.* (1 Cor. 10:17) It thus follows that Mary Mediatrix, insofar as she is mystically called the *body of Christ*, must be considered as one of the members of the Church, as a simple member of the faithful, to whom the following words of the Apostle apply, *No man has hated his own flesh; on the contrary, each nourishes it and takes care of it, just as Christ does for the Church, since we are the members of his body.* (Eph. 5:29–30)

26. In accordance with the corporeal aspect of her mediation, Mary Mediatrix must be considered as a member of the Church, the Body of Christ. This amounts to saying that, insofar as the proper function of Mary Mediatrix consists in revealing to the Church all of the Mystery of God, one and triune, in Christ, Mary Mediatrix exercises the office of Mediatrix in her own behalf: Mary, a simple member of the mystical Body of Christ, reveals to herself, by way of mediation, the entire Mystery of the Holy Trinity. And this cannot be accomplished except in and through the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion. In accordance with the corporeal aspect of the mediation of Christ and of Mary, understood in a mystical sense, Christ and Mary are corporeally distinct and different from each other: Christ is the *Head*, and Mary is the *Body*. It is thus in Eucharistic communion, in which, on one hand, Christ, acting as the Head in deciding his own mode of existence, is present under the corporeal appearances of bread and wine; and, on the other hand, Mary, acting corporeally in the eating of the sacrament, manifests her ordinary existence as a human person. Furthermore, Christ–Eucharist necessarily being passive if we consider him as *real food* (Jn. 6:55) and as *real drink* (ibid.), we must say that it is truly Mary who acts when she places her hand upon the sacrament in order to bring it to her mouth and thus be nourished by it: therefore it is truly Mary who, in virtue of the divine Will manifested by the institution of the Eucharist under the form of food or drink, reveals to herself, in a sacramental manner, the Word of God incarnate in Christ. In other words, in Eucharistic communion, Mary, through her human action, allows God, one and triune, to reveal himself sacramentally to her.

27. The corporeal aspect of the mediation of Mary consists, for Mary, in revealing to herself the Mystery of the Holy Trinity through the sacramental action of Eucharistic communion. Now, first, since all that concerns the divinity is essentially characterized by the notion of fullness, it follows that Mary, in receiving the Eucharist, carries out her office of mediatrix in a mode of qualitative fullness, that is, a fullness relative to the object of her mediation, which is the Mystery of the Holy Trinity. Second, Mary, in receiving the Eucharist, carries out her office of mediatrix in a mode of quantitative fullness, that is, a fullness relative to the totality of the proper subjects of her mediation. Indeed, we know that, in order to receive the Divinity in Eucharistic communion, it is necessary to be agreeable to God: one must possess the divine gift of sanctifying grace. Now, on one hand, the mediation of Mary – as Mystery – is

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founded on the notion of the person (see no. 23); and, on the other hand, the proper name of Mary, that is, the expression of all of her person, is *full of grace* (Lk. 1:28). Consequently, with respect to the subject of her mediation – that is, every human person called to belong to the Body of Christ, which is the Church – Mary exercises this same mediation according to a mode of quantitative fullness: because she is personally *full of grace*, Mary is the mediatrix between Christ, who is God, and each and every one of the persons who make up the Church. Finally, all of this allows us to say that, when, in virtue of her fullness of grace, Mary receives the Eucharist, she does so, necessarily and directly, as mediatrix, in Christ, between the Holy Trinity and the Church considered in all her fullness, or considered in terms of the totality of the elect of God in Christ; and that, by this very fact, it is only in an indirect manner that Mary receives the Eucharist in order to reveal to herself – insofar as she is a simple member of the Church – all of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity. In other words, Mary, in receiving the Eucharist in virtue of her fullness of grace, carries out her office of mediatrix in a mode of qualitative and quantitative fullness, that is, a fullness in relation to both the object and the totality of the proper subjects of her mediation.

28. In receiving the Eucharist, Mary sacramentally, in an absolutely full manner, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, carries out the office of her mediation, which is to reveal to the Church, in Christ, all of the Mystery of God, one and triune. But as, on one hand, Christ–Mediator is He whose living human body, visible and material, serves as the intermediary and the means through which the Church is able to see the *invisible God* (Col. 1:15), which Christ himself expressly declared, saying: *No one comes to the Father except through me (...) He who has seen me, has seen the Father* (Jn. 14:6,9); and as, on the other hand, the sacrament of the Eucharist, inasmuch as it truly contains *the bread of God* (Jn. 6:33) *made flesh* (Jn. 1:14), is called, and truly is, under the sacramental species, the *body of Christ* (1 Cor. 10:16); we may conclude, from the foregoing, that Mary Mediatrix reveals to the Church the Mystery of the Holy Trinity by means of the sacramental Body of Christ, just as Christ–Mediator accomplishes the same action by means of his personal and historical Body. So here is a second principle, wholly contained within the subtitle of our *Preliminaries: The corporeal aspect of the mediation of Mary*.

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29. For God, divine revelation consists in revealing himself in person: *In his goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself*. (Vatican II, Dei Verbum, no. 2) By this very fact, as there are three divine persons, divine Revelation is fundamentally a Trinitarian act. This is why Christ, who is the Son eternally begotten by the Father in the Holy Spirit, is called *"the fullness of all Revelation* (ibid.). Now, Mary Mediatrix, as we have seen above (see no. 22), is She who is in the Divine Trinity. Therefore, we can say that when God reveals himself as the Trinity, he also reveals, implicitly, the person of Mary Mediatrix.

But, as Mary exercises her office of mediatrix through the intermediary of the sacrament of the Eucharist considered as communion (see no. 28), God's Revelation of himself as the Trinity cannot contain the Revelation of Mary Mediatrix

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within itself except insofar as this same revelation testifies to the Mystery of Eucharistic Communion; and this, in a manner that is altogether explicit and open, since here it is a question of a sacrament, and every sacrament inherently comprises a perceptible and apparent aspect.

30. Given that we are discussing the mediation of Mary in its corporeal aspect (see nos. 24 and 28), the Trinitarian Revelation of God, with respect to the Eucharist, and concerning Mary Mediatrix, cannot be found elsewhere than in Holy Scripture, which is the corporeal aspect of divine Revelation, or *the Word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit*. (Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, no. 9) Now, in Holy Scripture, in verse 57 of the sixth chapter of the Gospel of Saint John, we find, in a single sentence, God's Revelation of himself as Trinity and, in a mutual relation, the explicit Revelation of the Mystery of Eucharistic Communion. Therefore, this verse of Holy Scripture (Jn. 6:57) can be offered as a sure foundation for the mediation of Mary in its corporeal aspect. But, by that very fact, that is to say, given that this scriptural passage deals implicitly with the mediation of Mary in its corporeal aspect (since it possesses all its proper characteristics), we must necessarily read and understand this text by means of essentially human notions, that is, not directly as being the Word of God, simple and unique (because it is spiritual), but rather as being humanly – because corporeally – *the words of God* (Jn. 3:34 – cf. Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, no. 4), which are always multiple in themselves.

31. If we have chosen the text of John 6:57 (which we shall analyze in detail below), it is because it fully corresponds to the proper characteristics of the mediation of Mary in its corporeal aspect (see nos. 29 and 30). On one hand, the mediation of Mary in its corporeal aspect possesses the following characteristics: the first, which is absolutely essential, is its corporeal dimension; the second, which relates to the way it is exercised, is that it is accomplished by way of Eucharistic communion; the third, which relates to its object, is that it allows the Most Holy Trinity to reveal itself in person. On the other hand, the scriptural passage of John 6:57 possesses the following characteristics: the first is its corporeal dimension, since it is a written text; the second is that this text uses the means of Eucharistic communion to speak to us, since it describes the communion of life, by mode of nutrition, between Christ and the Church; the third is that it allows the Most Holy Trinity to reveal itself to the reader, since it describes the comparison between the divine Trinitarian Life and Eucharistic communion. So, based on all this, given that Holy Scripture, since it contains *the words of God* (Jn. 3:34 – see no. 30), is fully included and comprised within the Eucharistic mystery, which is that of the unique Word of God communicated to man, we can say that Holy Scripture in general, and the passage of John 6:57 in particular, is the exclusive corporeal means – which is parallel to the mystery of the Eucharist and included in it – through which Mary Mediatrix reveals to the Church, in Christ, the Mystery of the Holy Trinity. By this very fact, in virtue of the two senses of the mediation of Mary, if the passage of John 6:57 comes from God through Mary, then it must likewise be read and interpreted by the Church by means of, and through the intermediary of, Mary.

32. As we have just noted (see no. 31), the object of the mediation of Mary is the Holy Trinity itself. This means that Mary is mediatrix, by mode of revelation, between the Holy Trinity and the Church. But, as we have seen that Mary reveals to herself,

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by means of Eucharistic communion, all the Mystery of the Holy Trinity (see no. 26); and in virtue of the relation of inclusion between Holy Scripture and the Eucharistic mystery (see no. 31); we can also say that Mary, by means of Holy Scripture, reveals to herself the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, a Mystery contained, not directly in the unique Word of God, but rather indirectly in the multiple words of God which comprise Holy Scripture. In other words, with respect to the object of her mediation, Mary is mediatrix between the Holy Trinity and herself. Now, on one hand, Mary, as mediatrix, is She who is in the Divine Trinity: Mary cannot be mediatrix between the Holy Trinity and herself except if she belongs, in a certain way, to the Holy Trinity (see no. 19). On the other hand, the Holy Trinity, as the object of the mediation of Mary between this same Holy Trinity and the very person of Mary, is the One who is in Mary; that is, the Holy Trinity, revealed in Christ by means of Holy Scripture, which is composed of multiple divine words, is in every human person who freely welcomes into himself this Revelation, as the Lord confirms, saying: *If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.* (Jn. 14:23) Furthermore, as we are discussing the mediation of Mary exercised by means of Holy Scripture, and as this same Holy Scripture is, intrinsically, solely corporeal and material – since it is of the order of signs – we must consider the mediation of Mary to be exercised, in the present case of Revelation by means of Holy Scripture, solely in a corporeal manner. In other words, Mary Mediatrix, although being – by mode of mediation – in corporeal and spiritual communion with the Holy Trinity by means of the Eucharistic mystery, is nonetheless, in this case, only in corporeal communion with this same mystery of the Holy Trinity; by this very fact, Mary, in the act of Revelation by means of Holy Scripture, cannot and must not be considered other than according to her body, and not according to her whole person, that is to say both body and soul. Consequently, from all the foregoing, we can easily conclude, first, that that which is solely corporeal – that is, Mary – is in that which is solely spiritual – that is, God – and second, that that which is solely spiritual – God – is in that which is solely corporeal – Mary. By this very fact, we can say that, considered as mediatrix between the Holy Trinity and the Church, Mary, who possesses a body, is similar to God, who *is spirit* (Jn. 4:24): she is the new Eve, who was created, along with Adam, *in the likeness of God* (Gen. 5:1).

33. In John 6:57, God–Trinity reveals himself to the Church through Mary Mediatrix. Now, we have just seen that, as mediatrix between the Holy Trinity – in Christ – and the Church, Mary is similar to God–Trinity. Thus, when God–Trinity reveals himself, he cannot – because he wills it to be so – fail to reveal, by that very fact, the human person of Mary who is similar to him: the Revelation of God–Trinity, in Holy Scripture, is absolutely inseparable from the Revelation of Mary Mediatrix, and this in a manner that is simple and one, in virtue of the simple character of the divinity, which is always first in what concerns the fact of Revelation. But as Mary is not similar to God–Trinity except insofar as she is mediatrix, that is to say the intermediary between the Holy Trinity and the Church, we must clearly affirm that, when God–Trinity reveals himself in Holy Scripture, Mary Mediatrix, as a human person similar to God–Trinity, serves as a point of comparison and an obligatory way of passage for the reading and interpretation, in union with the Spirit of God, of the Trinitarian Revelation of John 6:57. Consequently, as a principle, we can conclude that, when God reveals himself as the Trinity in John 6:57, one cannot fail to apply to the divine notions contained in this text all of the fully human notions which directly

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relate to these same divine notions. This means that we must necessarily compare the Trinitarian life – which is essentially one and triple, one in divine essence, and triple in persons – to human life – which is also, and is alone, one and triple, because it is one and multiple, one in its spiritual soul sanctified by grace, and multiple in its animal, organic, and material body. This is our third principle – a consequence of the first two (see nos. 22 and 28) – which will allow us to analyze the scriptural passage of John 6:57 in detail.

Chapter II

JOHN 6:57

THE POWERFUL VIRGIN OF THE NATIVITY

34. The scriptural passage of John 6:57 contains the words of Christ himself: as this is the case, this text is the expression of the Word of God addressed to men through the intermediary of Christ in person. But inasmuch as the Church reads the words of John 6:57 by means of the inspired book called the Bible, or Holy Scripture, it is also, at the same time, the Word of God addressed to men through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix, since, first, the writer of this text is Saint John, one of the members of the Church, and second, the Church receives all Trinitarian Revelation of the exclusively corporeal order – that is, by way of Holy Scripture – through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix (see no. 31). Thus, as, on one hand, Mary Mediatrix, within the context of her mediation with regard to Holy Scripture, must be considered solely according to her body; and as, on the other hand, that which is exclusively corporeal is necessarily composite and multiple; it follows that the passage of John 6:57, considered as the Word of God addressed to men through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix, cannot – inasmuch as it is a Trinitarian Revelation revealing Mary Mediatrix (see no. 33) – fail to have several (at least two) written versions of the unique Word of God revealed by Christ. In other words, the scriptural passage of John 6:57, although having but a single human formulation in the spirit of Christ who is God, nonetheless necessarily possesses at least two different formulations, written by a man – in this case Saint John – guided in the faith by the Spirit of God. By this very fact, in our interpretation of John 6:57 through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix, we shall have to take into account the various expressions that we may encounter in the different versions or translations of Holy Scripture.

35. In the Bible de Maredsous (Bible of Maredsous), we find the following French translation: *Tout comme le Père, qui m'a envoyé, est vivant, et comme je vis par le Père, ainsi celui qui me mange vivra par moi.* (Just as the Father, who sent me, is living, and as I live through the Father, in the same way he who eats me shall live through me.) (Jn. 6:57 – Bible de Maredsous, 1990 edition – This version of the Bible was produced by the monks of the Abbey of Maredsous, in Belgium, with the collaboration of the monks of the Abbey of Hautecombe, in France.) This first translation, with regard to the first clause of this sentence, places the accent on the Life of the Father and of the Son in the Holy Spirit; it is thus similar to that given in

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the Catechism of the Catholic Church, where we read: *As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.* (no. 1391) The second translation is that of the Latin Vulgate. Saint Jerome translates the original Greek in the following way: *Sicut misit me vivens Pater, et ego vivo propter Patrem; et qui manducat me, et ipse vivet propter me.* (Jn. 6:58 – In the Latin Vulgate, verse 57 is numbered 58) This second translation gives a different sense to the first clause of the sentence: here the accent is placed on the mission of the Son by the Father, a mission accomplished with relation to the divine Trinitarian Life; thus, this second translation closely resembles that given by the French Liturgical Lectionary, in which it is written: *De même que le Père, qui est vivant, m'a envoyé, et que moi je vis par le Père, de même aussi celui qui me mangera vivra par moi.* (*Just as the Father, who is living, has sent me, and as I live through the Father, likewise he who will eat me shall live through me.*) (One must nonetheless note a difference between this last translation and the text of the Vulgate, for the verb *manducat* must be translated by the present tense *eat*, and not by the future tense *will eat*.) Thus, the scriptural passage of John 6:57, with regard to the first clause of the sentence, is clearly seen to be the revelation of the Father and of the Son acting in a Trinitarian manner (the Holy Spirit being implied when we speak of the Father and the Son together), and this revelation may be described in two related ways: either the Father and the Son, in Heaven as on the earth to which this same Son was sent, live in relation to each other in the unity of the Holy Spirit (as is said in the conclusion of the Collect of the Mass); or the Father sends his Son while remaining united to Him by the bond of Life, which is that of the *life-giving* Spirit (Credo).

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36. If we compare and explain the text of John 6:57 with the help of concepts proper to the human person, that is, if we compare divine Trinitarian life to human life, which is at once both spiritual and corporeal, then we shall see that the two different ways in which the action of the Father and of the Son described in John 6:57 is expressed harmonize with each other and are united in an absolutely simple manner, and this in virtue of the very notion of the human person, which is simply similar to the knowing subject – that is, us – and to the known object, which is God (see nos. 32 and 33). Thus, our purpose below shall be to show that the act of life of the Father and of the Son in the Holy Spirit, an act of life considered *ad extra*, that is to say from the point of view of Revelation, is absolutely the same reality as that which is accomplished when the Father sends his Son, the bearer of the Holy Spirit, into the world. Thus, although God's act of life – since it is eternal – is unique in itself, whether we consider it *ad intra* or *ad extra* (the act of God *ad intra* is the act of God in itself; the act of God *ad extra* is the act of God outside itself), nevertheless, if we base ourselves on the similarity that exists between God and the human person, a similarity that attains its fullness in the hypostasis of Christ, then the act of life of God is an act of generation, if we consider it *ad intra*: it is similar to the act of a woman who conceives within herself a child in her conjugal relation with a man. So this is an act through which the Father, in the Spirit whom he himself is by his very nature (cf. Jn. 4:24), begets his Son, the *Word of life* (1 Jn. 1:1); in other words, the act of life of God *ad intra* consists in the generation of the divine Word – one, eternal and

indivisible – as it is written: *You are my son, today I have begotten you.* (Ps. 2:7) But, according to the same comparison with the human person, the act of life of God is also, and at the same time – since it is an absolutely unique act – an act of birth or of bringing into the world, if we consider it ad extra: in this case it is similar to the act through which a woman brings into the world, and into the light of day, the child she had held hidden within herself during the time of her pregnancy. Thus, the act of life of God considered from the viewpoint of birth is nothing other than the act, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, which consists in the sending into the world of the Son by the Father; in other words, the Word hidden in the secret of the Spirit of the Father is then unveiled and manifested to the world in this same Holy Spirit borne by the Son, by the Order and the mission of the Father, according to what Saint Paul wrote: *When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman.* (Gal. 4:4)

Moreover, this is confirmed by the fact that baptism – the sacrament of initiation into the shared divine Life – is called *the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word* (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1213), but also the sacrament that *"signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and the Spirit without which no one can enter the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:5)."* (ibid. no. 1215) Lastly, it seems clear that the act of divine life described in John 6:57, inasmuch as it is an act that is divinely revealed ad extra, must be considered as an act of birth, or of bringing into the world; and that, by this very fact, in virtue of the necessary comparison between divine life and human life (see no. 33), the two translations of John 6:57 quoted above (see no. 35) express, each in its own way, a single unique reality, namely the very Life of God–Trinity.

37. The scriptural passage of John 6:57, with regard to the first clause of this sentence, is a revelation of the act of divine life considered as an act of birth or of bringing into the world, that is to say, as an act equivalent to the sending of the Son by the Father in a common *life-giving* Spirit (Credo) – (see no. 36). Now, these words of John 6:57 are strictly speaking those of Christ, as we have already mentioned (see no. 34). Furthermore, this supposes that, at the moment when Christ pronounced these words of John 6:57, he had already been born of the Virgin Mary, who "brought him into the world" (Lk. 2:7). Therefore, this means that the act of divine life, inasmuch as it is an act of birth, or inasmuch as it is an act of life revealed to the world by means of Holy Scripture, necessarily and wholly depends on the act of the human birth of Christ. But, as, on one hand, the act of revelation of divine life realized through the words of John 6:57, inasmuch as they are the words of Christ, is – intrinsically – a divine act, an act of the Word of God incarnate; and as, on the other hand, the act of the human birth of Christ is an essentially corporeal act, and thus an act that is exclusively human, accomplished by Mary, Mother of Christ; it must be affirmed, jointly with – although contrary to – what we have just said, that the act of the human birth of Christ necessarily and wholly depends on the act of divine life, or the act of birth, which constitutes the revelation accomplished by the words of John 6:57, since all that is essentially human fully depends on all that is essentially divine. Consequently, from the foregoing, it is easy to conclude – always in virtue of the principle that God is first, and the creature is second – that when Christ, who is God, accomplishes the act of revelation of divine life, that is to say, an act of divine life by mode of birth, he also accomplishes at the same time the human act of his birth into the world through Mary, and this in a mystical manner, since it is

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realized through the intermediary of a second mediator united to him, who is unique (see no. 23). So Christ, the fullness of all Revelation, brings to perfection the words of the Psalmist, which state: *He spoke, and it was done.* (Ps. 32:9 and 148:5, according to the Vulgate). Finally, according to the analysis we have just done, it seems clear that verse 57 of the sixth chapter of the Gospel of Saint John can be used as a sure and absolute scriptural basis for the mediation of Mary in its corporeal aspect, since it expresses and realizes all of the principal act of this mediation.

38. We have just concluded our commentary by pointing out the fact that the principal act of the mediation of Mary resides in the Mystery of the Nativity of Christ considered as the act through which, in a manner that is one with and indissociable from this same act, the Church receives the Revelation of all of the Trinitarian Mystery in a corporeal mode (see no. 37). Now, it is not evident that, of all the Mysteries of Christ lived by Mary, that of the birth of the Lord according to the flesh would be the principal one. But, if we were to show that, in this same Mystery of the Nativity, Mary, ever Virgin, appears clothed in the very power of the Almighty, then it would be clear that the Mystery of the birth of Christ is the principal act in which and through which the mediation of Mary is exercised. This is what we propose to do below.

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39. The conclusion of our scriptural analysis (see no. 37) obliges us to consider the Mystery of the Nativity in association – this association being simple and one, since it is divine in origin – with the Trinitarian Revelation accomplished by Christ in John 6:57. As the act of Christ's birth according to the flesh is a fundamentally human act, the conclusion we have just stated can also be expressed thus: to the divine act of the Revelation that Christ accomplishes in John 6:57 must necessarily be associated, in a manner that is one and indissociable, an act that is properly human, of the same order as the aforementioned divine act, that is to say an act of human or natural revelation. In other words, in its union with Christ's act of divine Revelation in John 6:57, the act of the nativity of this same Christ accomplished by Mary must be considered, intrinsically, as an act of natural revelation, bringing human nature in all its fullness into the world and into the knowledge of all nations. This consists in the application in act of the following principle: *Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself.* (Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, no. 22) But, in virtue of the fact that Christ acts in conformity with his own words, as the Psalmist says: *He spoke, and it was done.* (Ps. 32:9 – 148:5) – (see no. 37), it follows that the association, simple and one, between the act of divine Revelation and the act of human revelation corresponds to the association, also simple and one, between divine words and human words, and, by this very fact, between the divine Spirit and the human spirit in the proper and exclusive context of Revelation. In other words, there cannot be Revelation considered as such unless we associate, in a manner that is one and indissociable, the Wisdom of God and the

philosophy of man. This is why, given that the scriptural passage of John 6:57 is fundamental with respect to the mediation of Mary, we must set down the capital rule that the concept of Mary Mediatrix cannot fail to be the fruit of the association, simple and one, of divine Revelation and human philosophy operating together.

Mary herself confirmed this when she declared: *I am the VIRGIN OF REVELATION* (Apparition of April 12, 1947 at Rome – cf. Mgrs. Fausto Rossi, *La Vierge de la Révélation (The Virgin of Revelation)*, p. 18) – (see no. 22): Mary is a Virgin, which is a fully human concept, since it is the Mystery of the Nativity that reveals and brings to its fullness the virginity of Mary ante partum, in partu, and post partum; and she is the Virgin of Revelation, which is a fully divine concept, since she preceded this declaration with another sentence: *I am She who is in the divine Trinity.* (ibid.)

40. In this association, simple and one, between divine Revelation and human philosophy, the latter is first and fundamental, while divine revelation is second, that is to say dependent on human philosophy. Indeed, human philosophy being altogether relative to the human birth of Christ (see no. 39), it follows of itself that human philosophy precedes divine Revelation, just as the human birth of Christ naturally precedes his public ministry carried out in the Trinitarian Revelation of John 6:57. Furthermore, human philosophy, because it is altogether relative to the human birth of Christ, which is an exclusively corporeal act, must be considered as a science, one not of unity but rather of multiplicity with respect to the fact of Revelation. Inversely, divine Revelation, which has as its source and origin the Word of the one God, possesses in itself the very character of unity: the Logos, in its act of Revelation, is the maker of unity par excellence. Consequently, concerning the concept of Mary Mediatrix, it is a certainty that the arguments of human philosophy will ceaselessly divide the concept without ever succeeding in grasping it in its full unity; and that, by this very fact, it can only be through the ulterior intervention of divine Revelation – in this case the inspired text of John 6:57 – that the concept of Mary Mediatrix can aspire to be fully grasped in a unity of thought. It is thus that, in the case of our interpretative conclusion concerning John 6:57 stated above (see no. 38), the two premises of the argument – namely, first, the dependence of the act of divine life by mode of birth, or seen from the perspective of Revelation, vis–a–vis the act of the human birth of Christ; and second, the inverse dependence of the act of the human birth of Christ vis–a–vis the act of divine life by mode of birth – these two premises were found to be irremediably separated from each other by essentially different philosophical concepts. Saint Thomas Aquinas testifies to this when he speaks in the following terms of the first premise founded on the proper concept of the *person*: «Propter identitatem, quae in divinis est inter naturam, et hypostasim, quandoque natura ponitur pro persona, vel hypostasi, et secundum hoc dicit Augustinus naturam divinam esse conceptam, et natam ; quia scilicet persona Filii est concepta, et nata secundum humanam naturam.» *Due to the identity that exists in divine things between nature and hypostasis, sometimes the word 'nature' is used instead of 'person'; and it is in this sense that Saint Augustine says that divine nature was conceived and born, since, of course, the person of the Son was conceived and born according to human nature.* (St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, IIIa, q. 35, a. 1, ad 1) Similarly, concerning the second premise founded on the proper concept of *nature*, Saint Thomas tells us: «In Christo sunt duae naturae, divina scilicet et humana : quarum unam accepit ab aeterno a Patre, alteram accepit temporaliter a matre ; et ideo necesse est attribuere Christo duas nativitates, unam qua aeternaliter

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natus est a Patre, aliam qua temporaliter natus est a matre.» *In Christ there are two natures, namely the divine and the human: one he received, from all eternity, from his Father, and the other he received, in time, from his mother; and this is why it is necessary to attribute to Christ two births, one by which he is born eternally from his Father, and the other by which he is born temporally from his mother.* (St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, IIIa, q. 35, a. 2, corp.) But, as we have seen (see no. 37), if we place each of the two premises into a direct relation with the text of John 6:57, considered as divine Revelation accomplished by Christ in person, then the union, simple and one, of these two premises is achieved, and the concept of Mary Mediatrix is fully grasped through this association of divine Wisdom and human philosophy.

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41. In the application of the rule by which divine Revelation and human philosophy are associated, in a manner that is simple and one, the primary reference on which one must base oneself is human philosophy (see no. 40). However, on one hand, as the proper notion of philosophy or human revelation proceeds exclusively from the notion of divine Revelation, to which this same human philosophy is united in a manner that is simple and one (indeed, the birth of the God–Man proceeds from the Will of God, who wants to reveal himself – see no. 39); and on the other hand, as the notion of divine Revelation is altogether relative to the life of God fully actualized in *the Word of life* (1 Jn. 1:1); one must necessarily conclude from the foregoing that, in the application of the aforesaid rule, the basic reference is and must be the philosophy of human life understood in all its fullness, and that, by this very fact, the proper concept of Mary Mediatrix, which is governed by this same rule, cannot be fully grasped except according to this basic reference of the philosophy of human life, and thus, necessarily, without any reference to the notion of death – inasmuch as it is opposed to life – and also, without any reference to the notion of sin – inasmuch as it is a rejection and a refusal of divine Life. Now, according to this basic reference of the philosophy of human life, if the rule of association, simple and one, between divine Revelation and the philosophy of human life applies to the words of Christ which constitute the scriptural passage of John 6:57, this same rule also applies, in an absolutely perfect manner, to the Person of Christ himself inasmuch as he is the first and original author of these same words of John 6:57. Consequently, the following principle may be posited: Christ, the incarnate Word of Life, fits fully, as a person, into the context or basic reference of the philosophy of human life. In other words, the Word of God, the Son who is consubstantial with the Father, incarnated himself in order to reveal and to communicate to men, by mode of fully assumed human life, all the divine Life which is proper to him.

This is why, in the proper context of scriptural Revelation, Christ is called a *living stone* (1 Peter 2:4): Christ is a *stone*, that is, considered as a material reality, and thus solely according to his body, which intrinsically has reference to Mary Mediatrix

in her relation with scriptural Revelation (see no. 32); and Christ is a *living stone*, that is, considered with respect to the basic reference of the philosophy of human life, a reference which is proper to the rule of association between divine Revelation and the philosophy of human life itself, as we have just seen.

42. In the proper context of the Trinitarian Revelation of John 6:57, let us apply to the Person of Christ himself the rule of association, simple and one, between divine Revelation and the philosophy of human life. As Christ is God and Man, this association attains in him its fullness and perfection, and by this very fact, divine Revelation is perfect and full with respect to the *Word of life* (1 Jn. 1:1), and likewise, the philosophy of human life is perfect and full with respect to the humanity of Christ. As the philosophy of human life is the basic reference for the application of the aforementioned rule of association, one must begin by considering the perfect philosophical knowledge of the human spirit of Christ with respect to the particular domain of human life. Now, given that the humanity of Christ was assumed by the divine Word with a view to the Trinitarian Revelation to men (see no. 41), one must hold as certain, in virtue of the communication of idioms in the Person of Christ, that the divine Word, from the first instant of his union with the humanity that he assumes, that is to say, from the moment of the conception of Christ according to the flesh, has communicated the proper character of the perfect revelation of himself as a living being. As no being can reveal his own life in a perfect manner unless he knows it intimately, it follows that from the instant of his conception, Christ–Man had perfect philosophical knowledge concerning his own human life in particular; and as Christ is the perfect Man (since he is the One who reveals man to himself – see no. 39), Christ–Man likewise had, from his conception, perfect philosophical knowledge concerning the domain of human life in general. But, at the very instant the Incarnation, the divine Word accomplished for the humanity of Christ all of the *raison d'être* of this same act of the Incarnation, namely the communication to men of the Trinitarian Mystery of the living God (see no. 41). Consequently, from the instant of his conception, Christ–Man had not only perfect philosophical knowledge of human life, but also perfect supernatural knowledge of the divine Trinitarian Life. This is what Saint John testifies when he says that Christ is *full of grace and truth* (Jn. 1:14). However, it must be noted that, with regard to all philosophical knowledge other than that of human life, Christ had acquired it during the course of his life, since it is written: *Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.* (Lk. 2:52)

43. Christ–Man, from the time of his conception, had a perfect philosophical knowledge of human life and a perfect supernatural knowledge of Trinitarian life. Now, on one hand, as Christ is the perfect Man, and on the other hand, as man in his perfection had been created *in the likeness of God* (Gen. 5:1), in other words, as the living human person is similar to the living God in his Trinitarian Mystery (see no. 33), one can say that, in the Person of Christ, the concept of human life and the concept of divine Trinitarian Life find their perfect resemblance and similitude. It then follows that Christ–Man, from the time of his conception, had a perfect philosophical knowledge, not only of human life, but also of the divine Trinitarian Life, and, jointly, a perfect supernatural knowledge, not only of the divine Trinitarian Life, but also of human life as such. By this very fact, at the precise moment of the act of the Trinitarian Revelation of John 6:57, Christ–Man possessed the two types of

knowledge of which we have been speaking. Now, philosophically, with regard to Trinitarian life, God – because he is pure act – eternally accomplishes but a single act of life: the act of generation, or the conception of the Word by the Father in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, at the very moment when Christ–Man, under the inspiration of the Word, humanly utters the words of John 6:57 as Trinitarian Revelation, he cannot fail to think in himself, in his spirit, that God is pure act: it is a fact that is connatural to his person. However, as Trinitarian Revelation ad extra, the words of John 6:57 are in no way an act of divine life by mode of generation, but rather, necessarily, as we have seen above (see no. 36), an act of birth into the world. Furthermore, as Christ speaks the Truth, since he is *full of grace and truth* (Jn. 1:14), that which he says exteriorly in words corresponds to what he thinks interiorly in spirit. Consequently, at the moment he pronounces the words of John 6:57, if Christ philosophically thinks that the act of life of God, as pure act, is an act of generation, then he also simultaneously thinks that the act of life of God is an act of birth, and he does so under the inspiration of the interior Revelation of the divine Word.

By this very fact, on one hand, as the act of generation is intrinsically the first act of life, and as the act of birth is intrinsically the subsequent or second act of life (with respect to the first act of generation); and on the other hand, as the passage from one act of life to another cannot be accomplished without potentiality, or the corresponding passive power; one must say that, in the very act of the Trinitarian Revelation of John 6:57 accomplished under the inspiration of the divine Word, Christ–Man cannot fail to think in his spirit that God–Trinity is passive power, or even that potentiality is proper to the divine Trinitarian Life in its act of Revelation ad extra. Finally, in virtue of the rule of association of divine Revelation and the philosophy of human life, it is clear that, within the proper context of the Trinitarian Revelation of John 6:57, Christ cannot fail to think in his human spirit that God–Trinity, as living Being, is indissociably both act and power, pure act in virtue of the philosophy of human life, and passive power in virtue of the Revelation of the Word of Life himself.

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44. The analysis of the scriptural passage of John 6:57 has allowed us to conclude that, with respect to the human spirit of Christ, God is indissociably both act and power if we consider him in his intimate Trinitarian life. But, as the utterance of the words of John 6:57 by Christ, an utterance which is essential to the fact of Revelation, requires the intervention and the aid of the active power of the corporeal organ of the mouth in particular, and of the head in general, it must also be added that the words of Christ in John 6:57 are not only a divine Trinitarian Revelation, but also, at the same time, a Revelation of the divine Omnipotence, insofar as we can understand it through the passage of John 6:57, and one which, consequently, is composed of passive power and of active power, in a manner that is one and indissociable, like the body and soul of a living man: in John 6:57, Christ really and practically manifests *the power of his word* (Heb. 1:3). This is why Christ had begun his discourse at Capernaum by saying, in speaking of the *bread of God* (Jn. 6:33): *I am the bread of life*. (Jn. 6:35) This, in effect, is a Trinitarian Revelation in which

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Christ speaks of divine Life in the form of food, which corresponds to the divine Life *ad extra* by mode of the act of birth, or of the second act of life, which can have no relation to the first act of life except by way of the potential means of food, itself conditioned by the power of eating of he who eats. By pronouncing the words *I am the bread of life*, that is to say by eating them through the active power of his body, Christ renders manifest and public, by mode of birth, the passive power conceived in his human spirit under the inspiration of the Word of Life eternally begotten by the Father.

45. To conclude this chapter, and to definitively explain its title (as we had announced we would do – see no. 38), let us say that, John 6:57 being considered as the fundamental scriptural passage touching on the mediation of Mary, and taking into account all that we have just said concerning this same passage, we must not be afraid to explicitly state that Mary Mediatrix, in Christ, participates in the divine Omnipotence. Consequently, it clearly appears that the Mystery of the Nativity is the principal act in which and through which the mediation of Mary is exercised, and that, therefore, Mary Mediatrix is the powerful Virgin of the Nativity.

Chapter III

MARY MEDIATRIX AND THE ROMAN PONTIFF

I

MARY MEDIATRIX : MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

(Mary Mediatrix and the Roman Pontiff)

46. If we have chosen the text of John 6:57 in order to study the mediation of Mary in Holy Scripture, it is because it consists in a Trinitarian Revelation – the proper object of the mediation of Mary – set in direct relation to the sacramental action of Eucharistic communion, which is the proper means placed by Divine Providence at the disposal of Mary for the exercise of her mediation (see nos. 29 and 30). This amounts to saying that the scriptural passage of John 6:57 is the expression – divinely revealed and humanly set down in writing – of the act by which Mary Mediatrix places her hand upon Christ–Eucharist in order to nourish herself with him and thus receive the Trinitarian Revelation fully contained in Christ, the incarnate Word of Life (see no. 26). Now, inasmuch as she is Mediatrix, Mary must necessarily be the first of all the human persons who make up the Mystical Body of Christ: if Mary is Mediatrix – and we have already proven this in our analysis of the text of John 6:57 (see no. 37) – then all necessarily pass through her, and therefore after her – since they are acting in a corporeal manner – to go to Christ–Eucharist and receive from him the Revelation of Trinitarian life. Consequently, in thus acting as the first, or by mode of priority, vis-à-vis the Eucharist, Mary Mediatrix is similar to the person of the Roman Pontiff – the Pope – since, according to Tradition, the Vicar of Christ is the first of all priests, whether they be of the first or the second order (priests of the first order are the bishops, and those of the second order are the other priests), and since every priest acts always in a manner that is first, or by mode of priority, with regard to the Eucharist, as Saint Thomas Aquinas confirms when, after having spoken of the other ceremonies of the Mass, he says that: «Sequitur perceptio sacramenti, primo percipiente sacerdote, et postmodum aliis dante ; quia, ut Dionysus dicit (...) : "Ille, qui aliis divina tradit, primo debet ipse particeps esse." » *Then comes the consumption of the sacrament, the priest consuming it first, and then giving it to the others; since, as Saint Denis affirms (...): He who transmits to others the divine things must first share in them himself.* (St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, IIIa, q. 83, a. 4, corp.)

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(Plenary sense of John 6:57)

47. According to the testimony of Tradition, Mary Mediatrix and the person of the Pope act similarly to each other when they receive the Eucharist and when, in this way, they receive from Christ the Revelation of the Trinitarian Mystery. But what Tradition affirms, Holy Scripture confirms and brings to its fullness, as we shall see in this chapter and in the next. So, after having analyzed, in the preceding chapter, the scriptural passage of John 6:57, considering principally the first clause of the sentence, we shall now study this same passage of John 6:57 in its entirety; that is to say, as Trinitarian Revelation in the first clause, and as Revelation of the Mystery of Eucharistic communion in the second clause. Now, what one must note, first of all, is that the two clauses that make up the sentence of John 6:57 are linked together by terms of comparison: *Just as... in the same way...* (Bible de Maredsous) – (see no. 35). But, in the first clause, since it consists in a Trinitarian Revelation, the divine life that is described there can only be divine life ad extra or by mode of birth (see no. 36). Similarly, in the second clause, since it consists in a sacramental action, the divine life that is described there also can only be divine life ad extra, which is also called the shared divine life. Thus, if there is a comparison between the two clauses of John 6:57, it absolutely cannot apply to the reality expressed, since it is identical for each of the two clauses; rather, it applies solely to the mode which characterizes the shared divine life as it is described in one or the other of these two clauses. Now, it is easy to ascertain that, in the first clause, the divine Life is revealed by means of the Mystery of the Nativity of Christ with which the divine Life, inasmuch as it is revealed in John 6:57, is associated in a manner that is simple and one (see no. 37); and that, in the second clause, the same divine Life is revealed by means of the sacramental action of Eucharistic communion. Consequently, the comparison in John 6:57 can apply only to the following two acts: that of the Nativity of the Lord, and that of sacramental communion.

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(The corporeal aspect of Eucharistic communion)

48. In virtue of our interpretation of John 6:57, the divine Trinitarian Life appears under two different forms which can be compared to each other: the divine Trinitarian Life under the form of the act of the Nativity of Christ, and the divine Trinitarian Life under the form of the act of Eucharistic communion. As the act of the Nativity of Christ intrinsically precedes the act of the institution of the Eucharist as communion, it is clear that the divine Trinitarian Life under the form of the act of the Nativity will serve as a basis and reference point for explaining and understanding the divine Trinitarian Life under the form of the act of communion. Thus, one must note, first of all, the following: the act of the Mystery of the Nativity of Christ is solely corporeal. Consequently, though it consists in a sacramental reality which is, like every sacramental reality, of the spiritual order, the act of Eucharistic communion, in virtue of the scriptural comparison of John 6:57, necessarily and absolutely possesses a character that is strictly corporeal. Therefore, when Christ says: *He who eats me will live through me* (John 6:57 – Bible de Maredsous – see no. 35), he

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means to speak of a true corporeal eating (which intrinsically includes a spiritual eating), so much so that, astounded by this Mystery they did not understand, *the Jews began arguing among themselves: «How,» they asked, «can this man give us his flesh to eat?»* (Jn. 6:52).

(Why the Eucharist is a food)

49. We began (see no. 1) with the fact that the Eucharist presents itself to us as food: this is an undeniable fact, willed by Christ in person. Now, still in virtue of the authority of the Lord Jesus, we have arrived at the fact that the divine life in which we participate in the act of Eucharistic communion is an act of divine life by mode of birth, an act that is of the spiritual order, but which is also necessarily corporeal (see no. 48). So we are now in the presence of two acts of divine life: the act of generation, and the act of birth. But none of this could have been conceived without considering the divine Trinitarian life to be at once and indissociably both act and power (see no. 43). In other words, we cannot conceive the divine life according to the two acts of generation and birth except insofar as the divine life is in the act of generation and in the power of birth. For God does not and will never possess more than a single act of life, the first and only one: the act of generation. However, given that the act of divine life by mode of birth is truly founded on the revelation of the Lord in John 6:57 in particular, and in all of Holy Scripture in general, we must determine precisely in what sense, and how, the divine life is in the power of birth.

So it is absolutely clear that, humanly speaking, in order to go from the act of generation to the act of birth, that is to say, in order to go from one act of life to another, it is necessary that there intervene a passive power directed to the new act in question. Now, in the case of divine life, this power, necessary for passing to a new act of life, can only coexist in the first act of divine generation: God, as we have just said, does not and will never possess more than a single act of life. Thus, this power corresponding to the act of divine life by mode of birth fully relates to the act of the generation of the Word by the Father. Now, as the act of divine life by mode of birth is exclusively of the corporeal order (see no. 48), here we must consider the act of the generation of the Word by the Father in a sense and signification (that is, in the order of the sign) that is absolutely corporeal and material. This means that we must consider the Word of God to be a true word humanly spoken by the mouth of a person, a person created in the image of the Father. Consequently, the first conclusion flowing from this is that the power directed to the act of divine life by mode of birth fully relates to the mouth of the human person. Then, on one hand, given that that which is in power is wholly opposed to that which is in act; and on the other hand, given that it belongs to a word to come out of the mouth of man; it follows that the second conclusion is that the power directed to the act of divine life by mode of birth does not go out from the mouth of man, but rather enters into it. Finally, on one hand, given that the act of divine life by mode of birth must be similar to the act of divine life by mode of generation (since God has but a single act of life); and that, consequently, the power directed to the act of divine life by mode of birth is simply confused with the power directed to the act of divine life by mode of generation; and on the other hand, given that the power that coexists in the act to which this same power is directed perpetually prevents this act from existing; the third conclusion is that the power directed to the act of divine life by mode of birth is

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nothing other than corporeal and material food, which, when it is placed in the mouth, absolutely prevents one from speaking, or at least in a correct and perfect manner (which must be the case here, as we are speaking of the Word of God): as the norms of politeness state, one does not speak with one's mouth full.

Consequently, as, in the divine Trinitarian Life, act and power remain joined together without the first act ceasing to exist (since God eternally accomplishes but a single act of life) and without the power allowing the existence of the second act (as would naturally occur in human life), one must conclude from the foregoing that if, in God or ad intra, the Son is solely Word, then on the other hand, in the divine Trinitarian Life ad extra, the Son is both Word and food. But, as on the one hand, the Son, as Word, is God, and therefore *spirit* (Jn. 4:24); and, as on the other hand, that same Son, as food, necessarily possesses a corporeal aspect (since food relates to the Mystery of the Nativity); all of this amounts to saying, first, that in the divine Trinitarian Life ad extra, the Son is the Word revealed by the Father under the form of corporeal food that, in the Holy Spirit, *gives life* (Credo); and, second, that, by this very fact, *the words of God* (Jn. 3:34 – Vatican II, Dei Verbum, no. 4), which are contained in Holy Scripture and express corporeally (since they do so in a multiple manner) the unique spiritual Word of God, must be considered as a true food that is strictly of the corporeal order. Consequently, in virtue of the comparison in John 6:57 between the act of the Nativity and that of communion, we find in the notion of divine power the reason for which the Eucharist presents itself to us under the form of food, including that of drink, since the proper context of the mediation of Mary, for which John 6:57 is the scriptural basis, is that of life (see no. 41), and since, therefore, one must consider the Blood of Christ, which is a *drink* (Jn. 6:55), to be contained within his Body, which is a *food* (ibid.).

All of this, moreover, is confirmed, in both the case of the Mystery of the Nativity and that of Eucharistic communion, by the fact that Christ was born in Bethlehem, a place whose name means *house of bread*: «Christus in Bethlehem nasci voluit, duplici ratione : primo quidem, quia «factus est ex semine David secundum carnem», ut dicitur Rom. 1 (...) : secundo, quia, ut Gregorius dicit (...) : "Bethlehem domus panis interpretatur. Ipse autem Christus est, qui ait : *Ego sum panis vivus, qui de coelo descendi.*" » *Christ wanted to be born in Bethlehem for two reasons: first, because he is a descendant of David according to the flesh (Rom. 1:3)... ; and second, because, as Saint Gregory says...: "Bethlehem is interpreted as house of bread. And Christ himself said: I am the living bread that came down from heaven. (Jn. 6:51)"* (St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, IIIa, q. 35, a. 7, corp.)

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(Christ and the sacred Writer)

50. The scriptural words of John 6:57, as an act of revealed divine life, that is to say, as an act of divine life by mode of birth, must be considered as a food of the corporeal order (see no. 49). Therefore, this obliges us to consider the words of John 6:57 to be contained, corporeally and materially, within Holy Scripture itself,

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that is to say in a manner that also intrinsically includes the fact that these same words are the words of Christ in person. Now, the text of Holy Scripture, in a general way, is the work of the Church: the inspired text was not written by Christ himself; rather, it was human persons other than Christ who wrote it, at least in a direct sense – that is to say, inasmuch as Scripture is a written and materially codified text. But, in addition, given that Holy Scripture is the solely corporeal means placed by Divine Providence at the disposal of Mary Mediatrix for the exercise of her mediation (see no. 31), the Church, in the person of the sacred Writer, is put in relation to Christ, by way of mediation, when this Writer composes his text: it is through Mary Mediatrix that the Church receives from Christ the Revelation of the Trinitarian Mystery, in a manner that is exclusively corporeal (see nos. 24 and 28). Lastly, as, on one hand, the inspired text of John 6:57 in particular, and all scriptural Trinitarian Revelation in general, must be considered to be a food of the corporeal order; and as, on the other hand, all contact of the nutritive and vital order is intrinsically a contact that is simple and one; it then follows that, during the writing of the text of John 6:57, the sacred Writer, who is a member of the Church, is united to Christ–Mediator, through Mary Mediatrix, and this in a manner that is absolutely simple and one. By this very fact, given that between Christ and the Church there exists a contact that is simple and one, not only with respect to being, but also with respect to life (by mode of food), one can conclude from the foregoing that Christ and the sacred Writer, as a member of the Church, act jointly: when the sacred Writer writes, Christ writes with him; and likewise, when Christ speaks, notably in John 6:57, the sacred Writer, and the Church that he represents, speaks with him.

(The proclamation of the Word builds up the Church)

51. In virtue of what we have just said (see no. 50), one must therefore conclude that the relational principle between Christ and the sacred Writer, as we have described it, is the very same one that governs the mediation of Mary with respect to Trinitarian Revelation by means of Holy Scripture; indeed, it is upon the basis of this mediation that our entire demonstration is founded. However, as the writing of Holy Scripture is, today, entirely accomplished and completed, the principle of which we have just spoken is of no practical interest except in the case of the preaching of the Word of God – which also necessarily includes the reading of it – accomplished by the Church by means of and through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix. Consequently, while Christ had spoken before the writing of the inspired text, today he no longer speaks in person and on his own behalf, and so the Church, when she reads and proclaims the words of Holy Scripture in general, and those of John 6:57 in particular, acts jointly with Christ, who speaks and pronounces the words with her, and he does so in a simple union with her. This amounts to saying that the Church acts as Christ does, and similarly to him, when she pronounces the words of John 6:57, or other words of Holy Scripture. The Church therefore acts as a second Christ, or rather as the mystical Christ, since in reality there is but a single Christ (see no. 23). By this very fact, in pronouncing the words of John 6:57, the Church realizes a new act of her mystical life, and thus she builds herself up, grows, and increases. Now, as, in pronouncing the words of John 6:57, Christ himself mystically realizes the act of his birth into the world (see no. 37), therefore the act of her mystical life that the Church realizes in pronouncing these same words is none other than the act of her mystical birth. But, as the Church, when she reads and

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pronounces the words of Holy Scripture that she herself has written, has already been born, this act of mystical birth must be that of a new member of the Mystical Body of Christ. Lastly, as the passage of John 6:57 is the scriptural foundation of the mediation of Mary, it is clear that the building up of the Church by means of the scriptural word, or the act of the mystical birth, in a strictly corporeal way, of a new member of the Mystical Body of Christ, is accomplished through Mary: Mary Mediatrix, in the exercise of her mediation with respect to Holy Scripture, is the reference point and the necessary passageway for the building up of the Church in Christ. In order to confirm all that we have just concluded, here is what the Council of Vatican II says concerning the preaching of the Word of God: *Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations (...) He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church.* (Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 7) And likewise, with regard to the relation between Mary Mediatrix and the building up of the Church: *The Church indeed contemplating her [Mary's] hidden sanctity (...), by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By her preaching she brings forth to a new and immortal life the sons who are born to her in baptism, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of God.* (Lumen Gentium, no. 64) In short, the Sacred Liturgy simply proclaims, speaking of Christ: *In being born among men, he calls them to be reborn.* (Sunday Preface, no. 4)

(The notion of the corporeal mediator)

52. The building up of the Church by means of Holy Scripture is accomplished through Mary Mediatrix: it is an act proper to the mediation of Mary in its solely corporeal aspect (see no. 51). Now, according to the corporeal aspect of her mediation, Mary Mediatrix derives her existence and her action from the union of the extremes for whom she is mediatrix, namely Christ and the Church (see no.5). Indeed, if we place ourselves on the level of the strictly corporeal or material realities, as we must do in this case due to the solely corporeal aspect of Holy Scripture, the mediating element is nothing other than the geometric midpoint between the two extremes of the mediation. Now, one can determine the exact position of the geometric midpoint only if we know the precise distance that separates the two extremes from each other. But, by the very fact that we know this distance between the extremes, we necessarily establish a contact and a corporeal and material link between these same extremes. Thus, it is clear that, in the case of a mediation of the solely corporeal or material order, the existence, and therefore the action, of the mediating element emanates directly and exclusively from the union of the two extremes of this mediation. By this very fact, one must affirm that, in a solely corporeal manner, the two extremes of the mediation unite with each other with a view to the existence and the action of the mediating element, or again that they realize their union for this mediating element. So, with regard to the mediation of Mary by means of Holy Scripture, one must necessarily conclude that Christ and the Church unite with each other for Mary Mediatrix, thus giving her existence and action.

However, given that Christ is not corporeally present on earth except in a passive manner, that is to say by mode of food considered as passive power (see no. 49),

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whether it be in a mediate manner, in Holy Scripture, or in a mediate and real manner, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, there is no doubt that the corporeal union of Christ and the Church, a union that is necessary in order to give existence and action to Mary Mediatrix, can only be the result of an action personally accomplished by the Church: corporeally, or materially, only an action of the Church can allow one to know the geometric distance, and thus the midpoint, between Christ and the Church. As the object of the mediation of Mary is the Mystery of the Holy Trinity (see no. 22), this action of the Church with regard to Christ necessarily must fully relate to the divine Trinitarian Life, and therefore must be accomplished supernaturally, with the grace of God; this is why the Lord himself declared: *Every man who listens to the teachings of the Father and learns from them, comes to me.* (Jn. 6:45) Lastly, one can conclude from all the foregoing that if the building up of the Church by means of Holy Scripture is accomplished through Mary Mediatrix (see no. 51), it is equally carried out for Mary Mediatrix. Consequently, in virtue of the comparison between the Mystery of the Nativity and that of Eucharistic communion, one must affirm that the action through which the Church goes toward Christ–Eucharist who is present, in a mode of passive power, in the form of food – an action in which the Church places her hand, by means of active power, upon the Sacrament in order to put it in her mouth and eat it – is accomplished for Mary Mediatrix and, by this very fact, builds up the Church in Christ. Moreover, this is what we have affirmed in the subtitle of this book, as we have already said (see no. 4): *How the Church offers herself to the Father, in Christ, with the Holy Spirit, for Mary Mediatrix.*

(Reading Holy Scripture in faith)

53. Within the proper context of the mediation of Mary, inasmuch as Mary is considered a mediator of the corporeal order, it is the Church who corporeally goes toward Christ to unite herself to him, in a manner that is simple and one, in the act of the proclamation of the words of John 6:57, in order to give birth, by this very fact, to their common mediator, who is Mary Mediatrix herself (see no. 52). In greater detail, this amounts to saying that, in order to be able to unite herself, in a manner that is simple and one, with Christ, the Church, who is composed of living human persons endowed with a material body and a spiritual soul, casts the eyes of her body on the text of Holy Scripture contained within the book called the Bible or the Gospel, in order that, by the exercise of the three mental faculties of memory, intelligence, and will, she might proclaim, through the organ of the mouth, the words of Christ recorded in John 6:57. Thus, it seems clear that the act of union, simple and one, between Christ and the Church, who together pronounce the words of John 6:57 through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix considered as mediator of the corporeal order, is the result of a double action of the Church: one corporeal, the other spiritual. However, the spiritual action we have just mentioned is not solely of the natural order, that is to say proper to the spiritual soul inasmuch as it informs the organic body of man, but rather it is also of the supernatural order. Indeed, when the spirit of the human person conceives within itself the words of Holy Scripture that the eyes of the body perceive, it cannot avoid humanly thinking that these words are human words, and not *words of God* (Jn. 3:34), since, having been spoken by Christ by means of his body (which is multiple and compound), these same words, contained within Holy Scripture, are essentially multiple, and not one as is, intrinsically, the unique Word of God. It is therefore intrinsically necessary, in order

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for the reading of the text of Holy Scripture to be an act of divine Revelation ad extra, that the action of faith intervene, so that, through the intermediary of this supernatural virtue, the spirit of the human person who reads the inspired text might be able to supernaturally think that these words, recorded corporeally and materially in writing, are the multiple expression of the unique spiritual Word of God. Consequently, one must conclude from the foregoing, within the proper context of the mediation of Mary, who acts as a mediator of the corporeal order, that the act of union, simple and one, between Christ and the Church, who together proclaim the words of John 6:57, must necessarily be the result of an action of both the body and the spirit – considered naturally and supernaturally – of each and every one of the human persons who make up the Church and who thus perfectly fulfill the following words of the Psalmist: *I have believed, this is why I have spoken.* (Ps. 115:1)

(The corporeal aspect of the virtue of faith)

54. Let us note that this faith (see no. 53) properly belongs to the context of the mediation of Mary considered as mediator of the corporeal order, since this same faith, although essentially spiritual, truly possesses a corporeal aspect. Indeed, the act of faith of the human person in question is necessarily accomplished between the corporeal action by which this human person sets his eyes upon the text of Holy Scripture and the action – which is necessarily also corporeal – by which this same human person pronounces, through the corporeal organ of the mouth, the words of Christ in John 6:57. Now, on one hand, as this act of vision, by means of the eyes, is realized with the intention of accomplishing, by means of the mouth, the act of speech, one must consider this same act of speech to be included in the act of vision; and on the other hand, as the act of speech cannot be accomplished unless it is preceded by the act of vision, one must, on the contrary, consider this act of vision to be included in the act of speech. Furthermore, given that the object of the act of vision is identical – as to its substance, which is nothing other than the Word of God revealed in Christ – to that of the act of speech; and given that this same object is in a contact that is simple and one, by mode of food which gives life, with the human person – considered, by this very fact, in his absolute fullness – who realizes the acts of vision and speech; one must therefore affirm that there is, intrinsically, a simple reciprocal inclusion between the act of vision and the act of speech, and that, by this very fact, the act of faith of the human person is included, in an absolutely simple manner, between the two aforementioned acts. So it is clear that faith truly possesses a corporeal aspect that is communicated to it in virtue of the reciprocal inclusion – which we have just mentioned – between the two essentially corporeal acts (that of vision and that of speech), united with each other in a manner that is absolutely simple and one. Lastly, all of this allows us to conclude that the building up of the Church, which is accomplished – by means of Holy Scripture – through and for Mary Mediatrix (see no. 52), is carried out in and through faith, if one considers the latter in its corporeal aspect, that is to say in relation to the mediation of Mary considered as mediator of the corporeal order. Our conclusion is perfectly confirmed by the words of the Lord when he declares: *I am the bread of life: he who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.* (Jn. 6:35) With these words, the Lord expresses in what consists the double action – corporeal and spiritual – of the Church who goes to Him: it is an action through which the Church partakes of the divine Life of Christ by mode of food or drink; likewise, by placing the

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spiritual act of the virtue of faith (*he who believes in me*) in relation to the corporeal act of refection, to repletion, by mode of drink, Christ expresses all of the truth of the corporeal aspect of the spiritual virtue of faith.

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(The link between Holy Scripture and the Eucharist)

55. The act of the proclamation of the words of John 6:57 – an act accomplished by Christ and the Church united with each other in a manner that is simple and one – is the result of a double action, one corporeal and the other spiritual (both natural and supernatural), of the Church who goes to Christ through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix considered as mediator of the corporeal order (see no. 53). But we had previously seen (see no. 52) that the act of the proclamation of the words of John 6:57 is accomplished jointly and simultaneously by Christ and the Church for Mary Mediatrix, thus giving her existence and action. Consequently, one must consider it certain that the existence and the action of Mary Mediatrix, considered as mediator of the corporeal order, depend fully on an action of the Church who, in the act of the proclamation of the words of John 6:57, goes to Christ in a corporeal and spiritual mode – naturally and supernaturally – and this in a joint and simultaneous manner, in virtue of the corporeal aspect of the supernatural virtue of faith (see no. 54). Now, concerning what is natural, the corporeal action of the human person depends entirely on the corresponding spiritual action: this dependence is that of the action of the body with respect to the action of the soul inasmuch as the latter is the principle which animates the body and brings it into action. Thus, in the act of the proclamation of the words of John 6:57, the action of the Church who reads and memorizes in her spirit the text of Holy Scripture in John 6:57 is that upon which depends the action through which the Church proclaims with her body – in a union, simple and one, with Christ – these same words of John 6:57. By this very fact, it is clear that the existence and the action of Mary Mediatrix, when she exercises her mediation by means of Holy Scripture, entirely and fully depends on the spiritual action of the Church, which consists in reading and memorizing the text of Holy Scripture in John 6:57. But this action that the Church performs – in a manner that is natural and supernatural – with the help of Holy Scripture must necessarily be performed through the intermediary of Mary Mediatrix considered as mediator of the corporeal order (see no. 31): this spiritual action of the Church – as we have described it – absolutely and totally depends on the action of Mary Mediatrix. Thus it follows that, by means of this spiritual action of the Church (an action that is intrinsically simple and one, since it is spiritual), the existence of Mary Mediatrix fully and absolutely depends on her action as mediator of the corporeal order in the act of proclamation we are discussing. This amounts to saying that, according to this same unique relation to the act of the proclamation of the words of Christ in John 6:57, the existence and the action of Mary Mediatrix become confused with each other, and this in a way that is simple and one, in virtue of the character, simple and one, of this same act of the proclamation of the words of John 6:57. Now, given that the being whose existence becomes simply confused with his action is none other than the Being par excellence (that is, God), Mary Mediatrix, in this act of the proclamation of

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the words of John 6:57 accomplished by the Church in a union, simple and one, with Christ, must be declared – both naturally and supernaturally – a creature *in the image of God* (Gn. 5:1).

(The link between Holy Scripture and the Eucharist – continued)

56. As the act of the proclamation of the words of John 6:57, accomplished by the Church (of which Mary Mediatrix is a member) in a union, simple and one, with Christ, is an act of participation in the divine Trinitarian Life by mode of Revelation (see no. 51), and therefore, by this very fact, an act, accomplished by the Church, of communion with God–Trinity, an act that is essentially simple and one in himself (*ibidem*), it is clear that Mary Mediatrix must be considered here to be similar to God–Trinity who, in this same act of the proclamation of the words of John 6:57, appears in his multiple aspect (as the Word revealed by the Father in the Holy Spirit) and in his aspect of oneness (as living Being *par excellence*). Consequently, given that, in the human person considered in his natural and supernatural aspects, what is one in him is his spiritual soul sanctified by grace, and what is multiple in him is his animal, organic, and material body; Mary Mediatrix, in the act of the proclamation of the words of John 6:57 of which we speak, must not and cannot be said to be similar to God–Trinity unless we consider her according to both her body and her soul (see no. 33). Lastly, as, on one hand, Mary Mediatrix, when she exercises her mediation by means of Holy Scripture, must not and cannot be considered other than according to her body (see no. 32); and as, on the other hand, Mary Mediatrix, when she exercises her mediation by means of the act of Eucharistic communion, must necessarily be considered according to both her body and her soul (in virtue of the double character, corporeal and spiritual, of the sacramental action of Eucharistic communion – see no. 48); one must conclude from all of the foregoing that, in the act of the proclamation of the words of Christ in John 6:57 accomplished by the Church in union, simple and one, with Christ, Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation by means of the act of Eucharistic communion. By this very fact, all of this demonstrates the intimate connection between the act of the proclamation of the Word of God and the act of sacramental communion, or Eucharistic communion, an intimate connection still lived and celebrated in the liturgy of the Mass, as the following text testifies: *The two parts which, in a certain sense, go to make up the Mass, namely, the liturgy of the word and the eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected with each other that they form but one single act of worship.* (Council of Vatican II, Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 56).

(Church–Mystery and Church–Sacrament)

57. To conclude this set of reflections, let us say that, with regard to the building up of the Church that is accomplished – through and for Mary Mediatrix – in and by the simple act of union between Christ and the Church as they both pronounce the words of John 6:57, or any other words of Holy Scripture, this same building up of the Church is realized, intrinsically, in a strictly sacramental manner, since none of this – as we have just seen (see no. 56) – can be accomplished except by means of the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion, the means used by Mary Mediatrix considered, in the exercise of her mediation, as mediator of the corporeal order. So,

CHAPTER III – MARY MEDIATRIX : MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

when we speak of *the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation* (Council of Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 48), the expression *sacrament* must be taken, not only in its spiritual sense of *mystery*, but also necessarily in its corporeal sense of *sign*, and this in virtue of the corporeal aspect which is essential to the sacramental action of Eucharistic communion (see no. 48). In other words, the Church who builds herself up by means of Eucharistic communion, considered in its relation to the mediation of Mary by means of Holy Scripture, really and truly belongs to the order of signs which are visible to the men of the entire world among whom this same Church lives each day, so that, by this very fact, she exteriorly manifests, in a visible manner, the spiritual Mystery that is her own and that is contained within her, in an invisible manner, just as the body encloses within itself the soul of the human person. So we can speak more precisely of the Church who is *for each and all the visible sacrament of this saving unity* (Council of Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 9).

(Mary Mediatrix the Mother of the Church)

58. Finally, having begun with the initial and fundamental act of the Nativity of Christ (see no. 48), and ending with the final and complete act of Eucharistic communion (see no. 56), we have completed our discussion of the comparison between these two same acts of the Nativity and of communion (see no. 47), acts considered here in their strictly corporeal aspect. By this very fact, we have been able to show in detail that Mary Mediatrix is truly – in every sense of the term – the *Mother of the Church* (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 963 – H.H. Paul VI, Discourse of November 21, 1964), just as she is – and just as truly – the Mother of Christ: Mary, considered as mediator of the corporeal order, brings into the world, in a mystical manner, each and every one of the members of the Church of Christ, and this in a manner that fully relates to the act of birth, that is to say in a manner that is strictly corporeal. So, as *the Church is built up through sacramental communion with the Son of God who was sacrificed for our sake* (H.H. John Paul II, Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 21), Mary mysteriously – mystically – brings into the world each and every one of Christ's faithful who seek to perfectly imitate the Virgin Mother while thus acknowledging her as their Mediatrix before the Son of God: *Is not the enraptured gaze of Mary as she contemplated the face of the newborn Christ and cradled him in her arms that unparalleled model of love which should inspire us every time we receive Eucharistic communion?* (Ibidem, no. 55) If Mary is the Mother of the Church, in a particular manner, in the act of the Nativity of Christ, Mary is, on the other hand, in an absolutely general manner, a «*woman of the Eucharist*» in her whole life (Ibidem, n. 53).

Chapter IV

MARY–MEDIATRIX AND THE ROMAN PONTIFF

II

THE POPE : SPOUSE OF MARY IN CHRIST

(The papal ministry in Mary and with Mary)

59. The present chapter, like the previous one, has for its goal the study of the relation between Mary Mediatrix and the Roman Pontiff (see no. 47). However, up to this point we have only announced our intention to carry out this study; we have not yet done so (see no. 46). In the chapter we have just completed, we have seen that Mary Mediatrix is the Mother of the Church (see no. 58), and therefore the Mother of each and every one of the Roman Pontiffs who hold the place of Christ on earth from Pentecost until the end of time. So the preceding chapter may be viewed as an immediate preparation for the one we are now beginning: indeed, these two chapters must be read in light of their strong dependence on each other. This is proven by the fact that, until now, we have only analyzed the relation between Christ and the Church which is accomplished through Mary (see no. 51) and for Mary (see no. 52). Now, Tradition teaches, along with Saint Louis–Marie Grignon de Montfort, that it is advisable for us to perform all our actions – of which the most excellent is certainly Eucharistic communion – *through Mary, with Mary, in Mary and for Mary* (see no. 12). Consequently, it is clear that, in the present chapter, and in relation to the previous one, what remains for us to do is to consider the relation between Christ and the Church which is accomplished in Mary and with Mary, and this in the context of the specific relation between Mary Mediatrix and the Roman Pontiff.

(Why Mary should be a priest)

60. The first thing to note here is that, although she is not a priest (of the first or the second order), Mary Mediatrix should nonetheless be a priest in order to be able to exercise her mediation in the way we have described it since the beginning of these *Preliminaries*. Indeed, according to what we have said previously, the whole of the proper exercise of the mediation of Mary consists in allowing the building up of the

CHAPTER IV – THE POPE : SPOUSE OF MARY IN CHRIST

Church in Christ, and this in the very act of the proclamation – accomplished by the Church – of the words of John 6:57 in particular (as the scriptural basis of the mediation of Mary), or of any other Trinitarian revelation in general (see nos. 51 and 52). Now, the building up of the Church, of which we have just spoken, although it is accomplished in an act of the proclamation of the Word of God revealed corporeally in Christ, it absolutely cannot be realized without the properly sacramental means of Eucharistic communion, which is the means that Divine Providence placed at the disposal of Mary Mediatrix for the revelation, in Christ, of all the Mystery of the Holy Trinity (see nos. 26 and 56). However, the use – by way of mediation, that is to say not only for oneself, but also for others – of the sacrament of the Eucharist considered as communion must be considered to be proper to the priest, whether he be of the first or of the second order. Saint Thomas Aquinas witnesses to this when he says: «Ad sacerdotem pertinet dispensatio corporis Christi, propter tria (...) Secundo, quia sacerdos constituitur medius inter Deum, et populum ; unde sicut ad eum pertinet dona populi Deo offerre, ita ad eum pertinet dona sanctificata divinitus populo tradere.» *The dispensation of the body of Christ belongs to the priest, and this is so for three reasons (...) Secondly, because the priest has been constituted as an intermediary between God and the people; thus, just as it belongs to him to offer to God the people's gifts, so it belongs to him to transmit to the people the divinely sanctified gifts.* (St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, IIIa, q. 82, a. 3, corp.) We can therefore conclude from the foregoing that Mary Mediatrix, in order to be able to exercise her mediation with respect to the building up of the Church in Christ, must personally be a priest, whether of the first or of the second order.

(Why Mary cannot be a priest)

61. With respect to the exercise of her mediation, as we have described it in this work, Mary Mediatrix must be a priest, whether of the first or of the second order, and this in a manner that is strictly personal. But, since not every mediator is a priest – although every priest is a mediator (see no. 60, where we cite Saint Thomas Aquinas) – the fact that Mary is mediatrix does not in itself permit us to consider her a priest.

In fact, it is because Mary is mediatrix that she is not a priest.

Indeed, we have clearly established above (see the conclusion of no. 45) that the Mystery of the Nativity of Christ is the principal act in which and through which the mediation of Mary is exercised. Now, we know that it was during the Last Supper, just before his Passion, that the Lord ordained the Apostles as the first priests of the New Covenant: *The Lord, having loved those who were his own, loved them to the end. Knowing that the hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father, (...) he instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of his death and Resurrection, and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return; thereby he constituted them priests of the New Testament.* (Council of Trent – Denzinger 1740) (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1337). Consequently, in the very act of the Nativity of Christ, and thus necessarily before the institution of the priesthood which took place during the Last Supper, Mary Mediatrix absolutely cannot be considered a priest, but rather solely a mediator of the corporeal order (see no. 52). This amounts to saying that Mary, although mediatrix, is not a priest because she is a woman, because she

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is the *woman* from whom is born the one sent by God: Christ (cf. Gal. 4:4). Indeed, H.H. John Paul II declared, on May 22, 1994, solemnity of Pentecost: *In order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32) I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful.* (Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio sacerdotalis*, on reserving priestly ordination to men alone)

(The spousal union between the Pope and Mary)

62. With respect to her mediation, and in order for her to be able to truly exercise it, Mary Mediatrix must be a priest, whether it be of the first or of the second order (see no. 60). However, it is absolutely certain that, because she is a woman, she is not and cannot be a priest (see no. 61). Thus it is necessary, at this point, to introduce a notion that will allow us to fully reconcile these two seemingly contradictory statements. This notion is none other than that of spousal union, a union through which and in which Mary Mediatrix could be simply associated and united with another human person, someone simply similar to her and who, being a priest, whether of the first or of the second order, would thus allow Mary Mediatrix to also be a priest, albeit indirectly, but nonetheless in a manner that is strictly personal. Consequently, given that Mary Mediatrix is first among the faithful of Christ, it is clear that, in order to be able to exercise her mediation, Mary Mediatrix must be the spouse of the Roman Pontiff, the Pope, who is first among priests (see no. 46). In other words, it is in virtue of her spousal union with the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth, that Mary Mediatrix exercises her personal priesthood – by mode of mediation considered in its principal act – in bringing Christ, the incarnate Word, into the world.

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(The Pope and Mary: yesterday and today)

63. The spousal union between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix is not something new, something alien to the traditional doctrine of the Church. On the contrary, this spousal union is present – as we shall see – in the first and fundamental act of the mediation of Mary, which is the act of the Nativity of Christ, not yet in an apparent manner (as it is and becomes through this very research), but rather in a mode that is hidden and invisible, wholly spiritual.

(The spousal character of the mediation of Mary)

64. In the act of the Nativity of Christ, Mary acts as mediator of the corporeal order, since this act of the Nativity is the principal act in which and through which Mary exercises her mediation (see no. 45), and also since this same act of the Nativity is a

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solely corporeal act. Now, the mediator of the corporeal order intrinsically requires the existence and the action – directed to a mutual union – of the two extremes of the mediation in order that, by mode of mediation, the mediating term, as such, might itself exist and act (see no. 52). Furthermore, the human person who is not Christ and who possesses an absolutely unique intimacy – of the corporeal order – with Mary Mediatrix is and cannot be other than her own human spouse, Joseph (cf. Lk. 2:4–5), since husband and wife *are no longer two, but one flesh* (Mt. 19:6). Lastly, let us be sure to note that, as action entirely depends on existence, the two extremes of the mediation of Mary, which are Christ and Joseph, are – according to existence – corporeally united to Mary even before Mary Mediatrix acts in the Nativity of Christ: the Incarnation of the Word and the spousal union of Joseph and Mary both took place before the birth of Christ, the Incarnation first (since God is first in all things) and the spousal union second (since the creature depends on the Creator). Consequently, it is quite clear that, from the first and principal act of her mediation, and in this same act (that of the Nativity of Christ), Mary Mediatrix, considered according to existence and action, realizes her mediation in a fully spousal manner.

(The spiritual marriage of Joseph and Mary)

65. In the act of the Nativity of Christ, Mary Mediatrix acts as a Mother in bringing a human being into the world, but she also acts as a Virgin in revealing – by mode of birth – the divine Being in the person of the Word of Life: Mary is the Virgin of Revelation (see no. 39). This amounts to saying that, given the perpetual virginity of Mary Mediatrix, and thus given the absolute inexistence of any carnal contact between Joseph and Mary, the union between these two spouses cannot be other than essentially spiritual. But, as marriage possesses an essentially corporeal aspect (since the spouses *are but one flesh* (Gen. 2:24)), we might be led to conclude, from all of the foregoing, that the spousal union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix is not a true spousal union. Such a conclusion would be false.

(The veracity of the union between Joseph and Mary)

66. Indeed, in the act of the Nativity of Christ, Mary acts as mediator of the corporeal order. Now, this amounts to saying that, in this act of the Nativity, Mary Mediatrix acts in a human manner. Furthermore, we have previously established that the very concept of Mary Mediatrix is intrinsically governed by the rule of association, simple and one, between divine Revelation and human philosophy (see nos. 39 and 40). Consequently, Mary Mediatrix, in the act of the Nativity, acts both divinely and humanly: she acts as Mother of God and as Mother of the Humanity of Christ. By this very fact, as we are considering the Divinity directly as a living being, we can affirm that, in the act of the Nativity, God realizes through Mary, in Christ, his act of life by mode of birth. But, as God, who is eternal, has but a single act of life, in realizing his act of life by mode of birth he also realizes, jointly, and in an indissociable manner, his unique act of life by mode of generation, or conception (see no. 36). Furthermore, as this act of divine life by mode of generation must be considered here to be realized – in Christ – through Mary Mediatrix, and as the mediation of Mary is intrinsically governed by the rule of association, simple and one, between divine Revelation and human philosophy, it is perfectly permissible to say

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that the act of divine life by mode of generation, or conception, is realized, intrinsically, in the act of the Incarnation of the Word, an act in which and through which Christ in his Humanity is begotten or conceived by Mary Mediatrix, in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk. 1:35). Thus, one can conclude from all of the foregoing that, by means of the unique act of divine life (whether considered by mode of generation or by mode of birth), the act of the Incarnation of the Word and the act of the Nativity of Christ are united with each other in a manner that is absolutely simple and one, and this in relation to the mediation of Mary, considered as mediator of the corporeal order. Now, precisely because both the Incarnation and the Nativity are corporeal actions, both of these actions must take place in time and, what is more, each of them in its own distinct period of time. Lastly, it seems clear that, given that the Incarnation precedes the Nativity in time, if, as we have said, one must consider these two actions to be simply united with each other, we cannot conceive this fact in any way other than by saying that the act of the Nativity of Christ is anticipated in the very act of the Incarnation of the Word. Moreover, this is confirmed by the words of the Angel Gabriel addressed to Mary at the Incarnation of the Word; the principal act of the mediation of Mary in its corporeal aspect is clearly expressed in the following: *"The Holy One which will be born of you shall be called the Son of God"* (Lk. 1:35). Thus, if we consider the principal act of the mediation of Mary to be anticipated in the very act of the Incarnation of the Word, one can say that, as mediator of the corporeal order, Mary Mediatrix mystically (according to the order of her mediation) realizes a corporeal union between the extremes of her mediation, which are Christ and Joseph. By this very fact, even before his spousal union with Mary, Joseph was corporeally – although mystically – united to his future wife, a fact that allows us to conceive the spousal union between Joseph and Mary to be fully real.

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(The spousal union of Joseph and Mary: synthesis)

67. We have just seen that Mary Mediatrix, in the principal act of her mediation, which is the act of the Nativity of Christ, realizes and exercises her mediation in a manner that is fully spousal (see no. 64). Similarly, we have seen that the spousal union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix is essentially spiritual (see no. 65) and essentially corporeal (see no. 66), and this relative to the act of the Nativity of Christ, whether this act be considered in itself, with respect to the spiritual character of the spousal union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix; or in the act proper of the Incarnation of the Word and jointly with this same act, with regard to the corporeal character of this spousal union. Consequently, this amounts to saying that, while one must consider the exercise in act of the mediation of Mary in a spousal manner, one must hold as certain that this same mediation of Mary must be considered according to both its corporeal aspect (which is proper and essential to it – see no. 24) and its spiritual aspect, that is, the aspect according to which the mediation of Mary is simply identified with the mediation of Christ himself (ibid.). And this leads us to point out three consequences which relate to the mediation of Mary considered in its exercise in a spousal manner.

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(First consequence: reference to sin)

68. First, if the mediation of Mary, when it is considered solely according to its strictly corporeal aspect, must necessarily be considered outside of any reference to the notion of sin (see no. 41), then, on the other hand, when it is also considered according to its strictly spiritual aspect, the mediation of Mary must necessarily be considered in full reference to the notion of sin, since, in this case, as we have just mentioned, the mediation of Mary is simply confused with the mediation of Christ (see no. 24), which is exercised and realized by mode of redemption, that is, at the price of the redeeming sacrifice of the Cross offered to the Father, in the Holy Spirit, for the forgiveness of sins. As the corporeal aspect of the mediation of Mary is proper to the act of the Nativity of Christ considered in the very act of the Incarnation of the Word (see no. 67), and as the spiritual aspect of the mediation of Mary is proper to the act of the Nativity of Christ considered in itself (*ibid.*), one must conclude, as a consequence of the fact that the mediation of Mary is exercised in a spousal manner, that the two Mysteries mentioned above, namely that of the Incarnation and that of the Nativity, differ from each other with respect to the notion of sin: the Incarnation of the Word must be considered without any reference to the notion of sin, while the Nativity of Christ must be considered in full reference to the notion of sin. Thus Pope John Paul II declared, first on the subject of the Incarnation, and then on the Nativity: *God made himself man to communicate to us, in Jesus, his divine life, as well as his eternal glory! In order to save humanity, our Redeemer was born in Bethlehem to the Most Blessed Virgin!* (Address of December 22, 1993) What Tradition affirms, Holy Scripture confirms. Indeed, at the time of the Incarnation of the Word, the notion of sin is never mentioned in an explicit manner in the words of the Angel Gabriel, although it is implicitly contained within the name of *Jesus* (Lk. 1:31) (as is the act of the Nativity within the act proper of the Incarnation of the Word – cf. Lk. 1:35 – see no. 66). On the other hand, in the words the Angel addressed to Joseph in a dream, the notion of sin is completely explicit, since Christ was declared to be he *who will save his people from their sins* (Mt. 1:21); all of this fully concerns the Nativity of Christ, since Joseph had been asking himself at that precise moment whether or not he would assume the paternity of a child who would soon be born and who was not his own son.

(Second consequence: necessity of the Roman Pontiff)

69. Secondly, if we consider Mary Mediatrix according to the corporeal aspect of her mediation, there exists – mystically, that is to say in relation to the mediation of Mary – a corporeal union between Christ and Mary Mediatrix, on one hand, and a corporeal union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix, on the other hand (see no. 66). Now, given that the concept of Mary Mediatrix absolutely cannot be grasped outside the context of the rule of association, simple and one, between divine Revelation and human philosophy (as we have mentioned – see no. 66), and given that, relative to the aforesaid rule, the basic reference is, intrinsically, human philosophy (see no. 40), we must consider these two corporeal unions, namely that between Christ and Mary Mediatrix, and that between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix, to be ordered with respect to each other in a human way. This amounts to saying that while – mystically – these two corporeal unions must be considered to be realized simultaneously (with respect to eternity), on the other hand, one must necessarily

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consider these two unions to be taking place in absolutely distinct periods of time, the corporeal union between Christ and Mary Mediatrix first, and the corporeal union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix second (on this subject, see no. 64). Thus, all of this permits us to say that, intrinsically, the corporeal union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix depends fully and totally on the corporeal union between Christ and Mary Mediatrix. But this latter union, taking place in and through the act of the Incarnation of the Word, is nothing other than the realization and the concrete and tangible manifestation of the Order given to the Son by the eternal Father, in a mutual Love: *When Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifices and offerings you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me... Then I said, «I have come to do your will, O God.» (Ps. 39:7–9) (Heb. 10:5–7)* Consequently, it is clear that the corporeal union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix is accomplished, in a mystical manner, by the very Order of the Father manifested and realized in his Son, the incarnate Word *through the action of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:18).*

Now, if we consider Mary Mediatrix according to the spiritual aspect of her mediation, it is just as clear that the corporeal union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix absolutely cannot take place and, in fact, has never taken place, and this in virtue of the perpetual virginity of Mary, the very foundation of the spiritual aspect of her mediation (see no. 65). In other words, Joseph – inasmuch as he is one of the extremes of the mediation of Mary, and is, by that very fact, someone upon whom depends the existence and the action of Mary Mediatrix – does not have the power to realize the Order of God revealed in and through his Son, through the action of the Holy Spirit. Lastly, one can conclude from the foregoing, as a consequence of the fact that the mediation of Mary is exercised in a spousal manner, that it is absolutely necessary for there to be an intervention by a human person other than Joseph, but acting in his name and in his place as the spouse of Mary, and possessing a special, mystical power which allows the realization – by the Order of God manifested in Christ – of the corporeal union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix.

This human person exists, for, like Christ and Mary, God had chosen him from all eternity: this human person is none other than Peter, the Vicar of Christ on earth. Indeed, firstly, the Order of the Father can be accomplished in two ways: either in a direct and immediate manner by the Son; or in an indirect and mediate manner by those whom the Son himself had chosen to accomplish the Order of the Father in his name and in his place, that is, the men who have received the sacrament of Orders. As the mediation of Mary supposes extremes that are essentially different from each other, the human person who – since Christ is the first extreme – realizes in himself the other extreme is not Christ, but rather one of the men who has been chosen by Christ and who has received the sacrament of Orders. Secondly, given that, at the time we are discussing, Christ is not yet born, and that, consequently, one cannot yet speak of the sacrament of Orders as such, the human person who is the other extreme of the mediation of Mary is and must be one who has received the sacrament of Orders, considered not *in reality*, but rather solely *in hope*, that is, considered according to the grace of the sacrament, and not according to the reality of the sacrament itself. So it is clear that this human person is none other than he who has received the papacy, which is not a sacrament, but which necessarily calls for and demands the reception of the sacrament of Orders in all its fullness. All of this is confirmed by the fact that, by the two aspects – corporeal and spiritual – of the mediation of Mary, the Pope is simply similar to Christ, and this in a manner that is

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fully corporeal: Christ and the Roman Pontiff are, mystically, a single *rock* (Mt. 16:18), on which is built the Church, whether one refers to it outside of the notion of sin (cf. *living stone* (1 Peter 2:4) – see no. 41, in fine), or whether one refers to it in full reference to this same notion of sin (cf. *stone rejected by the builders (...) stone of stumbling (...) rock of offense* (1 Peter 2:7–8)).

(Third consequence: relation to the end of time)

70. Thirdly, on one hand, in virtue of the exercise of the mediation of Mary considered in its corporeal aspect, there exists a corporeal union, of a spousal type, between the Pope, acting mystically in the name and place of Joseph, and Mary Mediatrix (see no. 69). On the other hand, in virtue of the exercise of the mediation of Mary considered in its spiritual aspect, there exists a spiritual union, of a spousal type, between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix (see no. 65). Now, on one hand, the corporeal union between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix, because it is corporeal, fully relates to the act of the Nativity considered, not in itself, but rather in the act of the Incarnation of the Word (see no. 67); and on the other hand, the spiritual union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix, because it is spiritual, fully relates to the act of the Nativity considered in itself. It thus follows that, since the act of the Incarnation of the Word intrinsically precedes the act of the Nativity (see no. 66), the corporeal union between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix must necessarily be considered to be prior to the spiritual union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix. Consequently, all of this allows us to say that, in and through the act of the Nativity of Christ, an act regarded as the principal spousal exercise of the mediation of Mary considered, jointly and simultaneously, according to both its corporeal aspect and its spiritual aspect, the spiritual union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix has the effect of spiritualizing, or simplifying, the strictly corporeal character of the union between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix. By this very fact, it is clear that, as a consequence of the fact that the mediation of Mary is exercised in a spousal manner, the corporeal union, of the mystical order, between the Pope – acting as a spouse in the name and place of Joseph – and Mary Mediatrix fully relates to the end of time. Indeed, given that husband and wife *are but one flesh* (Gen. 2:24), if the strictly corporeal character of the spousal union between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix necessarily possesses the property of simplification or spiritualization, then one must think and believe that the very body of the Roman Pontiff is, intrinsically, spiritualized or simplified. This amounts to saying that the very body of the Pope is inseparable from his spiritual soul sanctified by grace, and thus that, by this very fact, the very person of the Pope is immortal. Thus, we can clearly see that it is strictly the Roman Pontiff of the last days of the Church, the Pope who shall not die and who, at the second coming of Christ, will be alive (cf. 1 Th. 4:17), who is corporeally united – by mode of ministry – to Mary Mediatrix, his wife, ever living in God, the creature par excellence, she whose body is forever spiritualized by the divinity (see nos. 32 and 33) who lives in her soul, which is *full of grace* (Luke 1:28).

(The Pope and Mary in the fullness of time)

71. Lastly, on one hand, if the corporeal union, of the mystical order, between the Roman Pontiff and Mary Mediatrix is prior to the spiritual union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix (see no. 70); and on the other hand, if the spousal union between Joseph and Mary Mediatrix fully relates to the act of the Nativity of Christ, an act that is the beginning of salvation history (inasmuch as this act must be considered not only in itself, but also in the act of the Incarnation of the Word – see no. 66), and if the spousal union between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix fully relates to the act of the second coming of Christ, an act that is the end and the culmination of salvation history, then one can say that the spousal union between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix is present throughout the absolute totality of the history and of the life of the Church, from the Nativity of Christ to his Parousia, and therefore that this union is something that is completely traditional to the doctrine of the Church. This is, moreover, confirmed by the fact that, by means of the spousal union between the Roman Pontiff and Mary Mediatrix, the end of time has already been anticipated since the birth of the Lord, according to what Saint Paul says: *When the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman.* (Gal. 4:4) Thus, present throughout all of salvation history, the spousal union between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix remains hidden and invisible – because it is spiritual – ever since the first and fundamental act of the mediation of Mary, which is the act of the Nativity of Christ, appearing in broad daylight and visible to the world only at the end of time, that is to say now, since, through this present book, this spousal union between the Roman Pontiff and Mary Mediatrix receives a certain material, or corporeal, character and therefore, by this very fact, becomes visible and manifest.

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(The Pope and the Nativity of Christ)

72. In the act of the Nativity of Christ, an act that must be considered both in itself and in the act of the Incarnation of the Word, Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation corporeally and spiritually insofar as she is united spousally – in a mystical way – to the Roman Pontiff, in a general manner, and to the last Pope, in a particular manner, as he acts in the name and place of Joseph, the human husband of Mary: this is what we have just established above. Now if, first, we consider the exercise of the mediation of Mary in its strictly corporeal aspect, and this in relation to the act of the Nativity of Christ, then there exists a corporeal spousal union, of the mystical order, between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix (see no. 69). By this very fact, one can go so far as to say that the act of the Nativity of Christ is an act that is proper to the papal ministry considered in its relation to the exercise of the mediation of Mary in its strictly corporeal aspect. However, it is completely clear that, corporeally, that is to say in a manner that is corporeal, this being understood mystically and supernaturally as well as ordinarily and naturally (and this in virtue of the rule of association, simple and one, between divine Revelation and human philosophy, which must necessarily be taken into account – see nos. 39 and 40), the person of the Pope, who is a man, absolutely cannot realize the act of the Nativity of Christ considered as such, that is to say considered according to its historic mode and in its

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personal relation to Mary, who is a woman. Consequently, if the person of the Pope is truly the spouse of Mary, and this in an essentially corporeal manner (as we envisage it here), then there must necessarily exist another mode and another personal relation by which and according to which the Roman Pontiff, as the spouse of Mary, truly and corporeally – though mystically – realizes the act of the Nativity of Christ.

(The Eucharistic ministry of the Pope)

73. With respect to the mediation of Mary considered in its corporeal aspect, the Roman Pontiff – in his mystical union with Mary Mediatrix – cannot accomplish the act of the Nativity of Christ except under a mode and according to a personal relation other than those that are proper to this same act of the Nativity of Christ (see no. 72). Now, still with respect to the mediation of Mary considered in its corporeal aspect, and more precisely, with respect to the exercise of the mediation of Mary by means of Holy Scripture, we have seen that there exists a comparison – in virtue of the scriptural passage of John 6:57 – between the act of the Nativity of Christ and that of Eucharistic communion (see no. 47). Consequently, given that the words of Christ in John 6:57 constitute the scriptural basis, as such, for the mediation of Mary; and also given, in the proper context of this same mediation of Mary, that is to say within the context of union with God – in Christ – through Mary Mediatrix, that although all that is mystical is not sacramental, on the other hand all that is sacramental is mystical; it is absolutely permissible to think and to believe that the act of Eucharistic communion is nothing other than the sacramental, and thus mystical, realization of the act of the Nativity of Christ. This is implied by Pope John Paul II when he speaks of Eucharistic communion in its relation to the Incarnation, which attains its fullness – in time – at the Nativity of the Lord: *The Eucharist, while commemorating the passion and resurrection, is also in continuity with the incarnation. At the Annunciation Mary conceived the Son of God in the physical reality of his body and blood, thus anticipating within herself what to some degree happens sacramentally in every believer who receives, under the signs of bread and wine, the Lord's body and blood.* (H.H. John Paul II, Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 55)

Finally, from all the foregoing, one can conclude that, if the act of the Nativity of Christ is an act proper to the papal ministry in its relation to the exercise of the mediation of Mary in its properly corporeal aspect, it is so only under the sacramental form of the act of Eucharistic communion; and one can also conclude that, as the husband of Mary in Christ, the Pope exercises his ministry mystically (although also sacramentally) by means of the act of Eucharistic communion; and that, jointly and simultaneously, as the wife of the Roman Pontiff – who acts in the name and place of Joseph, her human husband – Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation sacramentally (although also mystically) by means of the act of the Nativity of Christ considered, not directly in itself, but rather in the sacramental action of Eucharistic communion.

(The ministry of the Pope and that of Mary : synthesis)

74. Having considered the mediation of Mary in its strictly corporeal aspect, we must – secondly and lastly – consider the mediation of Mary in its strictly spiritual aspect, and this with respect to the relation of spousal union between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix in the act of the Nativity of Christ. Now, spiritually, with regard to the exercise of the mediation of Mary as we have just described it, there exists a spousal union that is spiritual, and thus simple and one, between the Roman Pontiff and Mary Mediatrix: these two distinct persons *are no longer two, but one flesh* (Mt. 19:6). Thus one can say that, as husband and wife who are but one, both the person of the Pope and the person of Mary Mediatrix act mystically (that is to say, in the order of the mediation of Mary), not only in their own respective names, but also each in the name of the other. Given that one's person is, intrinsically, absolutely incommunicable, it is manifest that all of this supposes and necessarily includes the fact that the Pope is in Mary, and that, reciprocally, Mary is in the Pope, and also, by this very fact, that the Pope is with Mary, and that Mary is with the Pope.

Lastly, as the name of Mary Mediatrix (that is, that which expresses the entire reality of her person) is properly *full of grace* (Lk. 1:28); and as this same name of Mary Mediatrix is fully spiritual (since it has to do with grace) and thus relates completely to the spiritual aspect of her mediation; we can therefore conclude this chapter by saying, with respect to the spiritual aspect (which intrinsically supposes the corporeal aspect) of the mediation of Mary in the act of the Nativity of Christ, that, on one hand, the Roman Pontiff mystically exercises his ministry as Vicar of Christ by means of Eucharistic communion, and this in virtue of the fullness of grace proper to Mary Mediatrix (see no. 27) but also indissociably proper to the Pope due to the spousal union – of the mystical order – that unites him to the very person of Mary; and that, on the other hand, Mary Mediatrix sacramentally exercises her mediation – in Christ – by means of the act of the Nativity of Christ considered in its sacramental realization, which is the act of Eucharistic communion, and this in virtue of the episcopal character proper to the Pope but also indissociably proper to Mary Mediatrix, for the same reason as that mentioned above.

In summary, we have explained and clarified the whole of the relation of spousal union between the Pope and Mary Mediatrix, in Christ, and thus also (as we had previously mentioned – see no. 59) the whole of the relation of mystical union between Christ and the Roman Pontiff which is accomplished, by means of Eucharistic communion, in Mary and with Mary.

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Chapter V

ETERNAL SALVATION THROUGH MARY, WITH MARY, IN MARY, AND FOR MARY

75. The Roman Pontiff ministerially communicates of Christ–Eucharist through Mary, for Mary, in Mary, and with Mary (see nos. 59 and 74). Now, ministerially, the Pope – Spouse of Mary – acts in an essentially primary manner (see nos. 46 and 62). In addition, the Pope who exercises his ministry in a manner that is specially primary – due to its unique circumstances – is, properly, the last Pope, the Pope who reigns at the end of time. Lastly, as the last Pope intrinsically possesses an immortality that is natural, and even supernatural (since the exercise of the mediation of Mary is governed by the rule of association, simple and one, between divine Revelation and the philosophy of human life, the latter being the basic reference of the aforesaid rule) (see nos. 39 to 41), it can be clearly seen that, in relation to the mediation of Mary, all of the faithful, whose model – as the first among them – is the Pope, sacramentally realize their eternal salvation in their union with Christ–Eucharist. This thesis is founded on the three principal theses of the mediation of Mary, and we shall call these theses to mind and discuss them further with the help of the testimonies of Tradition: this will be the focus of our last chapter.

76. The first of the theses we want to discuss in light of the testimony of Tradition is that according to which Mary cannot truly be mediatrix except in a mystical or mysterious way; that is, in a way that fully relates to the notion of mystery (see no. 23). This amounts to saying that the first thesis is that according to which the mediation of Mary is considered to be within the very order of mystery, and thus, by this fact, within the very order of divinity. Now, divinity is – essentially, and by its nature – absolutely immense or incommensurable. Thus, when we affirm that the mediation of Mary belongs to the order of mystery, we mean that this same mediation of Mary, in and by its union to the mediation of Christ himself, does not at all modify, in any substantial way (that is, in any manner proper to divinity, which is, in itself, non–contingent), this same mediation of Christ himself. Thus, by this very fact, to consider the mediation of Mary within the order of mystery is nothing other than to consider this same mediation of Mary to be accidental, not in itself, but rather with respect to the mediation of Christ himself, the latter being considered then to be substantial.

77. This first thesis, as we have described it, is particularly well argued in the following:

«Ratione mediationis Christi : Difficultas : Solus Christus est unicus Mediator proprie dictus inter Deum et Homines (1. Tm. 2, 5). Omnes proinde gratias meruit universo generi humano, unica sua mediatione perfecta. Atqui si Beatae Virgini conceditur verum meritum, mediatio proprie dicta erga illas gratias, iniuriam videtur inferri mediationi Christi. Mediatio Christi aliquo supplemento indigeret, quod Maria ipsi tribueret.

«Solutio : (...) Quoad valorem Mariae consortii : (...) Dicitur potest vel Mariam ad opus Christi substantialiter perfectum, accidentaliter perfectionem adiecit, «ad harmoniam et pulchritudinem Redemptionis» vel ad eius «melius esse» ; vel Beatam Virginem cum Christo, debita servata subordinatione, unum principium nostrae Redemptionis obiectivae constituisse ; non eo in sensu quod actio meritoria Christi et Mariae non amplius ab invicem realiter distinguerentur, sed ambo non constituebant nisi una causa Redemptionis obiectivae, sicut in ordine naturali quando agens principale instrumento utitur, hoc ultimum non operatur nisi in virtute causae principalis, simulque cum illa totum et eundem effectum producit.

«Legitime ergo inferitur Christi mediationem, cum nec compleatur nec minuatur a Mariae cooperatione, nullam iniuriam pati. Augetur potius eius efficacia ac proinde gloria cum sola Christi virtute Beata Virgo tam intime ad Redemptionem obiectivam cooperari potuerit.»

Concerning the mediation of Christ, there is a difficulty: Christ is the one and only Mediator, strictly speaking, between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5). Consequently, he merited all graces for the entire human race, and this through the operation of his unique mediation. Now, if we were to concede a true merit to the Blessed Virgin, then a mediation, strictly speaking, with respect to these graces would seem to be injurious to the mediation of Christ. The mediation of Christ would then require a certain supplement, which would be attributed to Mary herself.

[Here is a solution to this difficulty]: concerning the value of the participation of Mary. One can say that either Mary, to the substantially perfect work of Christ, accidentally adds a perfection "for the sake of the harmony and the beauty of the Redemption", or "for the sake of improving the state of this Redemption"; or that, the due subordination being conserved, the Blessed Virgin constitutes with Christ a single principle of our objective Redemption; not in the sense that the meritorious action of Christ and that of Mary would no longer be truly distinguishable from each other, but rather that the two would constitute but a single cause of the objective Redemption, just as, in the natural order, when the principal agent makes use of an instrument, the latter acts only in virtue of the principal cause, and together with it produces a total and same effect.

Thus, one can legitimately conclude that the mediation of Christ, since it is neither completed nor diminished by the cooperation of Mary, does not suffer any injury. Its efficacy is, rather, augmented, and consequently so is its glory, since, through the

sole power of Christ, the Blessed Virgin had been able to cooperate so intimately in the objective Redemption. (I. (J.) Keuppens, *Mariologiae Compendium: Deipara, Mediatrix, Florilegium Mariale*, p. 123 and 124 – Anvers, 1938)

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78. The second thesis is that according to which it is only the corporeal aspect of the mediation of Mary that allows us to consider Mary to be Mediatrix – in a mystical manner – with Christ–Mediator and in union with him (see no. 24). Now, this amounts to saying that Mary Mediatrix cannot exercise her mediation except through the intermediary of her own organic and material body, and therefore, by this very fact, that the mediation of Mary is necessarily accomplished by means of her personal body considered as a physical instrumental cause. Thus, the second thesis is that according to which one must consider as necessary, and therefore as possible, the physical instrumental causality of the personal body, and thus, also, by this very fact, that of all of the humanity of Mary Mediatrix, and this with respect to the exercise of the mediation of Mary considered in its union with the mediation of Christ himself.

79. Concerning this second thesis, Reverend Father Réginald Garrigou–Lagrange, O.P., sets forth the state of the question in the following manner: *"Does the Blessed Virgin... transmit to us the graces we receive in the same way as does the humanity of Jesus, who is, according to Saint Thomas and many other theologians, 'the physical instrumental cause of these graces'...? The moral causality of Mary, by reparation – that is, past merit – and by her continuous intercession, is commonly admitted. But several theologians stop there and refuse to admit that Mary transmits graces by an instrumental physical causality, analogous in the spiritual order to what, in the sensible order, is the action of the harp, which, when touched by the musician, produces harmonious sounds. There are also other theologians who attribute to her this second influence in a manner that is subordinate to the humanity of Christ, insisting that, according to Tradition, Mary is in fact the neck of the Mystical Body, which, in uniting the head to the members, transmits to them the vital influx... This influence of Mary upon our souls undoubtedly remains mysterious; however, it truly seems to be an influence that is not solely moral, but one that also intervenes in the very production of grace, as a free and conscious instrument, just as when a miracle–worker heals through his contact and his blessing. Already, in the natural order, a smile, a look, the inflection and tone of one's voice transmit something of the life of the soul... The very certain influence of Christ, the head of the Mystical Body, also remains quite mysterious. That influence which Mary seems to exercise beyond her intercession is no less secret, certainly, but in our opinion its reality is quite probable even though we cannot affirm anything beyond this. Similarly, taking as an example the last dissipating waves of sound or light in the air, it is difficult to say with certainty where they still exist and where they have truly ended."* (La Mère du Sauveur et notre vie intérieure (*The Mother of the Savior and our Interior Life*), Paris, 1948, p. 240 to 247)

80. Here are some more detailed considerations relating to our second thesis. They consist of a development of the thought of Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, based on the personal opinion of Father Edouard Hugon, O.P.:

«Praevie admissa Mediatione per modum intercessionis, conceditur insuper concursus physicus Deiparae ad producendam gratiam per modum causae instrumentalis perfectivae... Actio Dei, causae principalis, tota transit per actionem Mariae, causae instrumentalis, elevat et roborat hanc actionem, de se aptam solummodo ad impetrandam gratiam, ut, mota a principali agente, ipsam et totam gratiae substantiam attingat, eamque modificet, conferendo ei optatam formam et quoad subjectum cui conferatur, et quoad quantitatem auxilii praestandi, et quoad modum secundum quem magis proficiet, et quoad tempus quo melius a nobis accipietur. Et (...) sicut in sacramento Eucharistiae effectum suum producit per modum nutritionis, sic eadem gratia, transeundo per Mariam, materna forma induitur, quae eam aptissimam reddit ad movendum cor nostrum (...) Sic melius intelligitur quomodo, in Traditione ecclesiastica Maria vocetur sive *collum Ecclesiae*, per quod scilicet totus capitis influxus ad membra corporis transit, sive *aquaeductus* per quem ex fonte derivantur aquae. Sic intelliguntur etiam facta illa initialia (...) in quibus Maria instrumenti physici munus visibiliter exercet, praesertim in Visitatione : *Ut audivit salutationem Mariae Elisabeth exsultavit infans in utero ejus, et repleta est Spiritu Sancto Elisabeth*. (Lc. 1:41)»

*Having already admitted mediation by mode of intercession, we must additionally concede the physical instrumentality of the Mother of God in the production of grace as an operant instrumental cause ... The action of God, who is the principal cause, passes in its entirety through the action of Mary, who is the instrumental cause, and elevates and fortifies this action, in itself able only to ask for grace, so that, moved by the principal agent, the action of Mary enters into contact with all of the substance of grace, and gives it a certain mode, conferring upon it a form that is chosen according to the following criteria: the subject to whom it is given, the quantity of help that it provides, the mode according to which it would provide the most benefit, and the time when it would be most readily received by us. And just as, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, grace produces its effect by mode of food, this same grace, by going through Mary, is clothed in a maternal form, which renders it better suited to stir our hearts... So now we can understand more clearly why, in the Tradition of the Church, Mary is called either "the neck of the Church", that is to say that through which all the influx of the head passes to the members of the body; or "the aqueduct", through which the waters coming from the spring are channeled. So now we can better understand the initial events... in which Mary visibly exercises her function as physical instrument, above all in the Visitation: 'As soon as Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, her little child stirred in her womb, and she herself was filled with the Holy Spirit'. (Lk. 1:41) (Armand Plessis, *Manuale Mariologiae Dogmaticae*, Pontchâteau, 1942, pp. 268–270)*

81. Concerning our second thesis, here finally is the testimony of a theologian who is quite in love with the Mystery of Mary in her mediation between Christ-Head and Christ-Body: *"Jesus is, in his humanity, but the organ and the instrument of the life of grace, a sublime instrument, supremely alive and active, an instrument conjoint with the Word of God (...) It follows all the more that she whom we call the Mother of divine grace is not the author of this life. A more precise way to express the nuance*

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here would be to say that Mary is Mother in divine grace. God truly wants to be aided by her. She herself being so overflowing with divine life, her role is to offer grace in souls (Father de Condren). She too is a sublime instrument, marvelously alive, in the hands of God! (...) Thus, all the grace of Jesus Christ passes through Mary, and through her it comes to us from him. There is an evocative word that is traditionally used in the Church to describe this great truth. Since we all form but a single Mystical Body, we say that the most blessed Virgin is its neck, just as Our Lord is its head. All life and movement come from the head, but these are communicated to the members only by passing through the neck (...) Christ Jesus is the head, from which proceeds all the life that is in the members, but he is a head that is thinking and loving, one that is so spiritually vast that it is present to all the body, or better yet, it contains within itself the entire body. Likewise Mary is indeed, as it were, the mystical organ through which must pass all the life that flows from the head to the members, but this organ is itself animated by a life so powerful that it envelops, in a way, both the head and the members. (R. Bernard, O.P., Le Mystère de Marie (The Mystery of Mary), Paris, 1933, pp. 53–56).

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82. The third and most important thesis is that according to which Mary, in receiving the Eucharist, sacramentally carries out in an absolutely full manner, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the office of her mediation, which is to reveal to the Church, in Christ, all the Mystery of God, one and triune (see no. 28). Specifically, inasmuch as Mary Mediatrix is the first of the faithful and their model, the third thesis can be reduced to this: in Eucharistic communion, Mary, by her human action, allows God, one and triune, to reveal himself sacramentally to her (see no. 26). Now, we have shown that this action of Mary Mediatrix with respect to Eucharistic communion necessarily supposes two principal facts: the first is that the Roman Pontiff is the husband of Mary in Christ, and her minister in the act of Eucharistic communion (see nos. 60 to 62); and the second, a consequence of the first, is that the act of Eucharistic communion is nothing other than the sacramental, and thus mystical, realization of the act of the Nativity of Christ (see no. 73). Furthermore, each of the two principal facts we have just mentioned supposes a fundamental fact upon which it is established: namely, in the first case, the fact that the Mystery of the birth of Christ is the principal act in which and through which is exercised the mediation of Mary (see nos. 38 and 61); and in the second case, the fact that, in virtue of the scriptural passage of John 6:57, there exists a comparison between the act of the Nativity of Christ and that of Eucharistic communion (see nos. 47 and 73). Thus, in order to establish our third thesis with the help of the testimony of Tradition, it is sufficient for us to show the ancient and unceasingly transmitted belief in the two fundamental facts mentioned above.

83. Concerning the first fact, according to which the Mystery of the birth of Christ is the principal act in which and through which the mediation of Mary is exercised, we present here the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas as reported and explained by a modern theologian, whom we have already cited above (see no. 81): *Thus speaks Saint Thomas... And, to properly define this grace of Jesus in Mary, he specifies:*

«Christ as man possesses all the fullness of grace that he needs to be the Son of God and, as such, the very author of grace... But the blessed Virgin Mary, on her part, receives all the fullness of grace that she requires in order to be the one from whom Christ receives his human nature, and she is, for this reason, the person who is closest to the author of grace: which is to say that there is in Mary enough divine grace in order that she might be able to draw to herself and conceive within her he who is the very source of grace; and that, in bringing him into the world, she might, as it were, dispense upon us all the grace that is in him.» (St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, IIIa, q. 27, a. 5, ad 1) (R. Bernard, O.P., *Le Mystère de Marie (The Mystery of Mary)*, p. 54–55)

84. Still on the subject of the first fact mentioned above, the testimony of Reverend Father Frederick William Faber – written around 1860 – is particularly eloquent, above all with regard to the exercise of the co-redemption accomplished by Mary, by mode of mediation, in the act of the Nativity of the Lord (see nos. 62 and 68): *Never has Mary been so intimately united to God as at the instant of the birth of our Savior (...) At the moment of the Nativity, she was more closely united to God than she had ever been (...) Her ecstasy at the hour of midnight was, as it were, a new bond, meant to fortify her. When she saw the newborn Child (...), was she not immersed in God as no other creature had ever been before her? (...) She kissed Our Lord all over, in a manner of speaking, in the ecstasy of her adoration. (Bethléem (Bethlehem), Volume 1, 1911 edition, p. 212–213)* And, placing an even greater accent on the spiritual aspect of the mediation of Mary in the act of the Nativity, this testimony continues as follows: *Let us reflect on all that was contained in this act of adoration (...) Mary is not only the supreme creature, she is the creature charged with representing all others. Thus her adoration was offered in the name of all creatures. It was the acknowledgement by creation of its incarnate Creator (...) This act of adoration is still alive in the Church today; it is repeated daily in the pious souls that it inspires (...); it crowns the Church with a calm superiority over the entirety of redeemed love's other acts of homage offered to the blessed humanity of the Redeemer (...) In this act of adoration, our blessed Mother has also acknowledged us to be her children. She was conscious of the place she occupied in God's creation. She began already to carry out the duties of that office, the insignia of which she publicly received on Calvary. She offered herself to the newborn Child for us. She consented to be our Mother (...) She was prepared to represent the great human family in all the tender functions she exercised on its behalf. She also offered us to Jesus. She offered us to his love. She included our name in her prayers. (ibid. p. 221 to 223)*

85. Lastly, still regarding the first fact, we must cite a rich and majestic document concerning the Queen of Heaven in the most solemn act of her high office and ministry. It is a private revelation recounted in writing by its author: Venerable Mary of Jesus of Agreda (1602–1665), a discalced Franciscan nun.

But before quoting this precious testimony, here are a few observations concerning the author in question: *The writings of Mary, in particular the 'Mística Ciudad' (in which many of the teachings and ideas bear her personal mark), her actions, her relationships with people of every social class, her way of penetrating deep into personal, social, and even political problems, all of these reveal an exceptional intelligence governed by a true understanding of things, great common sense, and*

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wisdom. To these natural gifts must be added the favors and mystical communications she received, with their light of infused knowledge and their efficacious energy on the level of action. (Dictionnaire de Spiritualité (Dictionary of Spirituality), Volume X, Col. 509, Article: Marie de Jésus d'Agreda (Mary of Jesus of Agreda))

86. Here then is what Venerable Mary of Agreda was able to behold in the Spirit of God, taking special care in describing the strictly corporeal aspect of the birth of the Lord in his communication with the very body of the Mother of God: *The Queen of creatures in the manger was excited by a strong calling from the Most High and by a gentle and efficacious transformation, which transported her beyond all that is created, and she felt new effects of the divine power; for this ecstasy was one of the rarest and most admirable of her very holy life. (La Cité mystique de Dieu (The Mystical City of God), Book IV, Chapter X, no. 474, facsimile of the 1857 Poussielgue–Rusant edition, p. 310) For over an hour, the most pure Mary enjoyed this beatific vision, with which God was pleased to favor her immediately before her divine delivery. And at the moment the vision left her and she regained her senses, she felt and saw that the body of the Child–God stirred in her virginal womb, disengaging himself and taking leave, so to speak, of that natural place in which he had lived for nine months, and that he was preparing to exit from that sacred tabernacle. Not only did this movement of the child cause the Virgin–Mother no pain, as happens to other daughters of Adam and Eve when they give birth (cf. Gn. 3:16); but, on the contrary, it completely renewed her, in transports of an ineffable joy, so that her soul and her most chaste body underwent effects so divine and so sublime that they surpass anything that created understanding could ever conceive. Her body, resplendent with a celestial beauty, was spiritualized to the point that she no longer seemed to be a human and terrestrial creature. Her face emitted rays of light like the sun shining with all its brightness. A wonderful majesty spread throughout her countenance, and her heart was inflamed with a fervent love of God. She knelt in the manger, her eyes lifted up to heaven, her hands together against her breast, her spirit lost in the divinity that was transforming her. It was in this state, as she returned from this divine rapture, that our most august Princess gave the world the only Son of the Father and of herself (cf. Lk. 2:7), our Savior, JESUS, true God and man...*" (ibid., no. 476, p. 312–313)

87. Concerning the second fact, which is that there exists, in virtue of the scriptural passage of John 6:57, a comparison between the act of the Nativity of Christ and that of Eucharistic communion (see no. 82), let us once again allow Venerable Mary of Jesus of Agreda to speak: and in this way we shall, as it were, make the connection between the two fundamental facts that we want to establish by means of old documents. So here is what she contemplated concerning the aforementioned comparison: *As (Saint Michael and Saint Gabriel) were present at the mystery in a human and corporeal form, at the instant when the incarnate Word came into the world, passing through the most chaste womb of Mary by his own power, they received him into their hands, at a suitable distance, with incomparable reverence; and just as the priest exposes the sacred host to the adoration of the people, so these two celestial ministers presented to the eyes of the divine Mother her Son, glorious and resplendent. All this took place in a very short time. And at the moment when the holy angels presented the Child–God to his Mother, Son and Mother looked at each other, and with this look she wounded the heart of the most mild*

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*Infant, and at the same time she was enraptured and transformed in him (cf. Cant. 7:10, 4:9). And finding himself in the hands of the two celestial princes, the King of the universe said to his blessed Mother, My Mother, become similar to me; for, in exchange for the human existence you have given me, I want to give you, from this day forward, by the most sublime graces, another existence, one that is wholly new and that allows a simple creature, through perfect imitation, to resemble me, who am God and man. (La Cité mystique de Dieu (The Mystical City of God), Book IV, Chapter X, no. 481, p. 319). And after having described her vision of the Mystery of the Nativity, Venerable Mary of Jesus of Agreda relates an *Instruction that I received from the Blessed Virgin...: «I want you to excel in this humble reverence and holy fear, and I want you to know that when God enters into your mouth under the sacramental species, he tells you what he had told me: Become similar to me, as you have heard and written.»* (ibid., no. 488, p. 328).*

88. Also concerning the second fact, we would like to quote with special reverence the words of Venerable Father Luis de la Puente (see no. 16) [for it was on his feast day, February 17, 1990, that I understood, in the light of the Holy Spirit, all the theological importance of the scriptural passage of John 6:57, the very foundation of the comparison relating to the second fact]. Here are his words: *We shall consider the great and generous gifts the Savior gave in being born of his blessed Mother (...) The Savior, having dwelt for nine months in the womb of the Blessed Virgin and being happy there, wished, out of gratitude and munificence, to enrich her with many extraordinary graces. Above all, he allowed her to clearly understand the mystery of his Nativity; and instead of the great pains that women suffer in childbirth, he filled her with joy, for it would not be just if she who had conceived him without any sensual pleasure were to give birth in pain. What is more surprising about this is that while he subjected himself to all the sufferings of this life, he wished, on the contrary, to spare his Mother from that which is common to all women who have children. He demonstrates a similar liberality toward us in holy communion. For as soon as he enters into us, he confers upon us the grace that is proper to the Sacrament; and if we have received it in a suitable manner, he also communicates to us, before leaving us, several other gifts, and particularly those of contemplation, of devotion and of a holy joy, which is the most just reward for the fervor with which we have just received him.* (Ven. Fr. Luis de la Puente, *Méditations (Meditations)*, Part II, Meditation XVII – p. 527–528)

89. Lastly, still concerning the second fact, and concluding the series of documents relating to the third thesis, here is more testimony from Father Frederick William Faber, profound and spiritual as usual: *Time passes, but eternity remains immobile; and so, in the midst of perpetual change, faith, which is the representative of eternity on earth, remains at rest; and it is in its immobility that we find tranquility and calm. The Bethlehem of this night, of these forty days, has never passed away. It is alive, and it lives a real life; we do not speak of the Christian village perched on top of those arid crags (...), but rather ancient Bethlehem, the Bethlehem of that solemn moment when the incarnate God lay on the ground, surrounded by animals in the Grotto. It is alive, not only in the memory of faith, but especially in the present realities of the faith. It lives a true life, continuous, uninterrupted, not only in history, in the arts, in poetry, or even in the fecund worship of the faithful and in their hearts of flesh, but also in the adorable reality of the most holy Sacrament. Around the tabernacle, which is our perpetual Bethlehem, is continued the same beautiful world*

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of devotion that surrounded the newborn Child – real devotion, which emanates from real hearts and whose reality God acknowledges in deigning to accept its homage. (Bethléem (*Bethlehem*), edition of 1911, Volume 1, p. 226–227)

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90. To summarize the three theses we have just defended using the testimony of Tradition, theses which render the foundations set down in these *Preliminaries* stable and absolutely sure, we can affirm without hesitation that, mystically, Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation by means of the strictly sacramental act of Eucharistic communion, and this in a manner that is fully corporeal, but also, at the same time, spiritual. And all of this authorizes us to think and to believe – as a final thesis – that, without any doubt, the Eucharist considered as communion is the only sacrament – for it alone possesses a corporeal aspect – that allows the human person to obtain, from the mercy of God, the anticipated reality of eternal Salvation, through Mary Mediatrix.

91. Let us note, first of all, that this final thesis we are proposing to the reader is nothing other than the theological basis of the promise made by the Sacred Heart of Jesus to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, recorded by her in 1688 as follows: *I promise you, in the excessive mercy of my Heart, that its almighty love will bestow upon all who shall receive communion on the first Friday of nine consecutive months the grace of final repentance, so that they shall not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments: my divine Heart shall be their certain refuge in that last moment.* (cf. Jean Ladame, *La Sainte de Paray : Marguerite–Marie (The Saint of Paray: Margaret Mary)*, p. 273) And let us be sure to note that this promise has been so widely diffused throughout the Church that it appears, in its Latin form, in the very decree of canonization of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque: «Tibi polliceor, in profusa mei Cordis misericordia, si qui per novem continentes menses, singulis sextis feriis quoquo mense primis occurrentibus, sacratissimam mensam adeant, omnipotentem Cordis mei amorem poenitentiae finalis beneficium eis concessurum : in offensa apud me haud ipsi morientur neque sanctis non exceptis sacramentis ; ac, in postremis illis momentis, tutum eis asylum Cor meum praebebit.» (Acta Benedicti PP. XV, Vol. XII, p. 503)

92. The reasoning behind this is as follows. Inasmuch as, by means of the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion, Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation both corporeally and spiritually, this same act of Eucharistic communion possesses both an aspect that is strictly corporeal (see no. 48) and an aspect that is strictly spiritual (like all the other sacraments). Now, we have established in the course of our study (see no. 41) that it is strictly in reference to the rule of association, simple and one, between divine Revelation and the philosophy of human life that the concept of Mary Mediatrix is fully grasped. Furthermore, in the aforesaid rule of association, we have also established that the basic reference cannot be anything other than the philosophy of human life. Consequently, it is clear that, with respect to the mediation of Mary, the act of Eucharistic communion must be considered strictly in reference to the philosophy of human life. This amounts to saying that the spiritual

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aspect of the act of Eucharistic communion must be considered here to be necessarily included in the corporeal aspect of this same act. But, given that this act of Eucharistic communion – because it is a nutritive and vital act – is essentially simple and one, one must necessarily consider the two extremes of the mediation of Mary, which realize the act of Eucharistic communion, and which are Christ–Eucharist and the Church, to be precisely and absolutely under the same relation as that which governs the act of Eucharistic communion itself. Thus, in reference to the philosophy of human life, one must say that, with respect to Christ–Eucharist who exists, humanly, under the species of bread and wine, one must consider, intrinsically, the Blood of Christ, sacramentally present under the appearance of wine, to be included in the Body of Christ, sacramentally present under the appearance of bread; and that, similarly, as to the human person who receives communion, one must consider him, intrinsically, to be composed of a body and a soul, this last being present, and included, in each and every part of the body, since, in the case of an act of nutrition (as in the present case), the soul is vivified by means of the body – through, as it were, that which includes the soul in itself.

93. In virtue of what we have just said, that is, in virtue of the inclusion, on one hand, of the Blood of Christ in the Body of Christ, and on the other hand, of the soul in the body of the human person who receives communion, it is permissible to think and to believe without any doubt that the Eucharist under the species of wine relates directly to the soul of the human person who receives communion, and that the Eucharist under the species of bread relates directly to the body of this same human person. This is why the Lord himself was able to speak of the act of Eucharistic communion, accomplished in relation to the mediation of Mary, by explicitly placing in relation to each other, on one hand, his Body – under the form of food – and the human body who receives communion, in order to allow it to participate, by mode of repletion, in the very perpetuity of his divine life; and on the other hand, his Blood – under the form of drink – and the spiritual human soul of the communicant, in order to communicate to it, by means of a faith that allows full satisfaction, this same perpetuity of his divine life, saying: *I am the bread of life: whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.* (Jn. 6:35)

94. If the Blood of Christ must be considered as included in the Body of Christ, then all of the Sacrament of the Eucharist can be reduced, mystically (that is, in relation to the mediation of Mary), to the single species of bread (including within itself the species of wine). So Eucharistic communion becomes, mystically, the union of the Body of Christ and the human body of the communicant. Now, the Lord has expressly affirmed: *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.* (Jn. 6:54) Consequently, it is absolutely permissible to say that, mystically, Eucharistic communion, inasmuch as it is the union of the Body of Christ and the human body of the communicant, is a corporeally eternal act, and therefore that, by this very fact, the human person who receives Christ–Eucharist, while able to die naturally, cannot die mystically, or supernaturally: *The bread of heaven is such that he who eats it never dies.* (Jn. 6:50) In other words, in relation to the mediation of Mary, Eucharistic communion sacramentally obtains, by anticipation, eternal Salvation for the human person who unites himself to Christ–Eucharist: Eucharistic communion is the remedy proper against *the second death* (Rev. 2:11, 21:8).

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95. Thus, we can see that Tradition and Holy Scripture both affirm that, through the Holy Eucharist received in communion, the body, as well as the soul contained in it, obtains from God, almighty and merciful, anticipatory participation in eternal life, through Mary Mediatrix. We have just briefly shown this; but we shall discuss it in greater depth in the book that is to follow this one. For the present, and to conclude our final chapter, let us remember the words that Mary addressed on April 12, 1947, to Bruno Cornacchiola (see no. 22): *The promise of God is, and remains, immutable: the nine Fridays of the Sacred Heart that you have observed... have saved you!*

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96. The objective reality – as a point of doctrine of the authentic Christian faith – of the mediation of Mary is not textually contained in Holy Scripture and revealed by it in appropriate and perfectly adequate terms. Indeed, we find no text in the Bible that, by itself, reveals to us that Mary is mediatrix in the same way and to the same extent as does the text of Saint Paul that clearly states that Christ is *mediator between God and men* (1 Tm. 2:5). So it is only by means of, and on the basis of, the living Tradition of the Church, which affirms without question the practical and ever-existent fact of the mediation of Mary, that we can deduce and thus declare that Holy Scripture, taken in its absolute fullness as divine Revelation codified in writing, or as the Word of God manifested and communicated to mankind in a strictly corporeal or material manner, signifies (in the full sense of the word *sign*), by mode of confirmation, the existence and the experienced fact of the mediation of Mary.

97. What we have just said may be regarded as the general conclusion of our *Preliminaries*. And the same may be said of the following, in a word: while it contains the Revelation of God–Trinity in the total Christ, that is, Head and Body, the Bible is the permanent manifestation – by mode of sign – of Mary Mediatrix in the exercise of her mediation. To confirm this, we can once again recount the apparition of Mary to Bruno Cornacchiola, in Rome, on April 12, 1947: *Presenting herself to her prodigal son, Bruno Cornacchiola, the Blessed Virgin adds: I am the Virgin of Revelation. Bruno Cornacchiola was later asked why, in his opinion, She wanted to define herself in this way. What was his answer? I quote it here: «Being Protestant, I sought to combat her by following the interpretation of the Bible that I preferred. She, on the contrary, presented herself with the Bible in her hand, as if to say: you intended to write against me; however, I am She who emerges from Holy Scripture validly interpreted by the Church, that is to say the Immaculate, ever-Virgin, Mother of God, risen to Heaven.»* (Msgr. Fausto Rossi, *La Vierge de la Révélation (The Virgin of Revelation)*, p. 40)

98. If, in Holy Scripture, Mary Mediatrix – jointly and simultaneously with the Holy Trinity – is revealed to the Church in Christ, then Holy Scripture serves as a means of communication, and is thus an instrument of mediation for Mary between God–Trinity, in Christ, and the Church. By this very fact, Mary Mediatrix – according to the confirmation of Holy Scripture – exercises her mediation, in a strictly corporeal manner, by means of this same Holy Scripture. Now, when Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation by means of Holy Scripture, she also exercises it, in a parallel manner, by means of the strictly sacramental act of Eucharistic communion. But as, on one hand, Holy Scripture, in virtue of its material codification, essentially possesses a stable and permanent character; and as, on the other hand, the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion – because it is accomplished by mode of

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temporal and perishable food – essentially possesses a transitory and changing character; it is clear that Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation in a final manner by means of Holy Scripture, and in a mediate manner by means of the act of Eucharistic communion. Thus, we should not hesitate to clearly affirm that, with respect to the mediation of Mary exercised by means of Holy Scripture, and this in a manner that is strictly corporeal, the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion – insofar as it is an act proper to Mary Mediatrix – intrinsically possesses an aspect that is truly, though mystically, corporeal. Moreover, this is also affirmed by the living Tradition of the Church, first and fundamentally.

We shall demonstrate this below by presenting to the reader four patristic texts that relate to this theological doctrine. They are two texts by Saint Augustine, one by Saint John Chrysostom, and a citation of Ambrosiaster by Saint Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*.

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99. The first text by Saint Augustine is the following: *Be what you see, and receive what you are.* (Sermon 272, for the day of Pentecost – PL 38, 1247) Throughout the sermon from which this text is taken, Saint Augustine addresses himself to the newly baptized and speaks to them of the Eucharist. And it is after having cited the following passage from Saint Paul: *You are the body of Christ* (1 Cor. 12:27), that the orator pronounces the succinct formula quoted above. So it is clear that, in this context, the word *what* refers to the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, since Saint Augustine says: *Receive what you are*, describing in this way the spiritual – and therefore simple and one – communion between Christ and the Church, which are mystically identical. By this very fact, it is permissible to say that, by the words *Be what you see*, Saint Augustine gives the sacrament of the Eucharist received in communion an aspect that is strictly corporeal, relative to the visibility that it essentially possesses inasmuch as it is a sign, and thus he gives it an aspect that is intrinsically associated with the notion of sensible and delectable food, according to these words: *Taste and see how good the Lord is.* (Ps 33:9 – Refrain sung at communion since the fourth century)

100. Here is the other text by Saint Augustine: *If we truly understand in this sense the words of the Savior: As my Father, who is living, has sent me, and as I live because of my Father, so he who eats me shall live because of me, then he meant to say this: The self-abasement to which my mission has reduced me has had the result of making me live for the sake of my Father, that is to say, it has made me depend on him, as one greater than myself, throughout my life; so each of those who will eat me will live because of me, due to this participation in my person.* (Treatise 26 on Saint John, no. 19 – French translation made under the direction of M. Raulx, Bar-le-Duc, edited by Louis Guérin, 1872 – PL 35, 1615) This interpretation of the well-known scriptural passage of John 6:57 is absolutely valid; Saint Augustine points this out just before he provides it to us: *This interpretation is acceptable; one may hold it to be true while continuing to recognize that the Son is, by nature, equal to the Father.* Certainly, this text by Saint Augustine argues perfectly for our

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proposition: the mission of the Word being nothing other than to carry out the Order of the Father in *the Incarnation and the Redemption* which *constitute a single mystery of love* (H.H. John Paul II, address of November 10, 1993), it is clear that the scriptural passage of John 6:57 – according to the interpretation of Saint Augustine – establishes a comparison between, on one hand, the relation that exists between the Father and the Son, a relation that is personified in *the Spirit whom the Father eternally gives to his Son, and who rests upon Jesus, the incarnate Word, from his conception and his baptism to his resurrection...* (The Bishops of France, *Catéchisme pour adultes (Catechism for Adults)*, no. 234), and a relation which, by this very fact, in virtue of the mystery of the Incarnation, possesses a strictly corporeal dimension; and on the other hand, the relation that exists between Christ–Eucharist and the Church in the act of sacramental communion, a relation which, in virtue of the comparison that we are establishing, itself also possesses a dimension that is strictly corporeal, and a relation which, because of the sacramental mode that characterizes it (with respect to the notion of sign), intrinsically possesses, by this very fact, an aspect that is truly – though mystically – corporeal.

101. Commenting on a passage by Saint Paul (1 Cor. 10:16), Saint John Chrysostom declared: *Why add: «The bread that we break»? This is what truly takes place in the Eucharist, whereas on the cross the opposite took place, according to these words: The bones are not to be broken. (Num. 9:12) That which Christ did not suffer on the cross, he suffers on the altar for your sake; he allows himself be divided, so that he may be given to all.* (Homily 24, no. 2, on the two epistles to the Corinthians – PG 61, 200 – from the French translation of Rev. Fr. J. Bareille, Paris, edited by Louis Vivès, 1872). In this rich and beautiful text, Saint John Chrysostom explains, theologically, the liturgical rite of the breaking of the bread. Now, he explicitly says: *That which Christ did not suffer on the cross, he suffers on the altar...* This amounts to saying that there exists a comparison, or even a perfect similitude – perfect because it relates to the person of Christ, who is perfect in every way – between the action of breaking the bones of Christ on the Cross and the liturgical action of breaking the bread. Consequently, we may consider – in virtue of the aforesaid comparison – and indeed, we must consider – if we admit that there exists a perfect similitude – the action of the breaking of the bread in its first and original realization, which is the action of the breaking of the bones of Christ. Understood in this way, the action of the breaking of the bread becomes a participation of the Church in the Passion of Christ, through the mediation of Mary, since, on one hand, we are discussing here the historical body of Christ considered during his Passion and before his Resurrection; and on the other hand, during the breaking of the bones – had this taken place – Christ would not have been able to suffer, since he was already dead (cf. Jn. 19:33). And as Christ could suffer from the breaking of his bones only in a corporeal manner, and not in a spiritual manner (again, because he was already dead), it is clear that this participation of the Church in the Passion of Christ, sacramentally realized in the liturgical action of the breaking of the bread, must be essentially corporeal. By this very fact, the sacramental action of Eucharistic communion – which is anticipated in the action of the breaking of the bread – intrinsically possesses an aspect that is strictly corporeal: this is the testimony of Saint John Chrysostom.

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102. The fourth text, sometimes attributed to Saint Ambrose, but which is actually by Ambrosiaster, is quoted in part by Saint Thomas Aquinas in the following passage: «Panis, et vinum sunt materia conveniens (Eucharistiae) sacramenti. Et hoc rationabiliter (...) Tertio quantum ad effectum consideratum in unoquoque sumentium; quia, ut Ambrosius dicit super epistolam primam ad Corinthios (...), *hoc sacramentum valet ad tuitionem animae, et corporis, et ideo corpus Christi sub specie panis pro salute corporis, sanguis vero sub specie vini pro salute animae offertur*; sicut dicitur Levitico 17, 11 quod *anima carnis in sanguine est.*» *It is fitting that bread and wine are the matter of the sacrament of the Eucharist. And this is reasonable (...) Thirdly, with regard to its effect in each of those who receive communion; for, as Saint Ambrose says concerning the first epistle to the Corinthians, this sacrament serves to protect the soul and the body; this is why the Body of Christ is offered under the species of bread for the salvation of the body, and the Blood under the species of wine for the salvation of the soul; since it is written in Leviticus (17:11): The soul of the flesh is in the blood. (St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, IIIa, q. 74, a.1, corp.)*

Here is the complete text of Ambrosiaster: «Caro Salvatoris pro salute corporis, sanguis vero pro anima nostra effusus est, sicut prius praefiguratum fuerat a Moyse; sic enim ait : *Caro pro corpore vestro offertur, sanguis vero pro anima.* (? Leviticus 17:11)» *The flesh of the Savior (was delivered) for the salvation of the body, but his blood was shed for our soul, as it had been announced in former times by Moses; indeed, he said: The flesh is offered for your body, but the blood for the soul. (? Leviticus 17:11) (In epistolam beati Pauli ad Corinthios primam (On the first epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians), c. XI – PL 17, 243). This testimony speaks for itself: one can say that the Body of Christ is offered under the species of bread for the salvation of the body, and that therefore, by this very fact, it fully relates to the body of the human person for whom it is realized, only if one supposes, and admits beforehand, that the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion essentially possesses a strictly corporeal aspect (see our final thesis, nos. 92 to 94).*

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103. Relative to the mediation of Mary exercised by means of Holy Scripture, that is to say in virtue of the authority and testimony of the Word of God committed to writing (an authority and testimony that provides confirmation – by mode of sign – to the agreement of thought among the three Fathers of the Church we have just cited), one must affirm, without any question whatsoever, that the sacramental act of Eucharistic communion intrinsically possesses a strictly corporeal aspect. As Mary Mediatrix exercises her mediation by means of the act of Eucharistic communion solely in virtue of her spousal union with the Roman Pontiff in general, and with the last Pope in particular, the strictly corporeal aspect of the act of Eucharistic communion directly relates to the person of the Pope in his union with Christ–Eucharist. But given that the body of the last Pope is spiritualized and simplified, the notion of the corporeal aspect of the act of Eucharistic communion – in order that might it not be void of all its meaning – necessarily demands that we think and believe that the sacramental species, of the corporeal order, are an essential

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part of the sacrament of the Eucharist considered, not in itself, but rather as communion, that is to say from the very instant of the consecration, and not before that instant. Lastly, if we consider the Holy Eucharist – as communion – in the context, of the mystical order, of the mediation of Mary (which has been our objective in these *Preliminaries*, as it must remain in the book that is to follow this one, and indeed throughout our life), then the sacramental species themselves, of the corporeal order, are an essential part of the sacrament of the Eucharist: this is our particular and ultimate conclusion.

104. In other words, and in conclusion, let us say that the Eucharistic species fully relate to the participation of the Church – through Mary, mediatrix and co–redeemtrix – in the Work of Christ–Redeemer. This is what was perfectly revealed by a famous Eucharistic miracle: that which took place in the city of Lanciano, Italy, in the eighth century. After the consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, the celebrant saw the host change into Flesh and the wine into Blood. Now, in 1970, at the request of the ecclesiastical authority, the holy species – which were no longer species, but rather a visible reality – were scientifically analyzed in a laboratory, and it was discovered, beyond any doubt, that the Eucharistic Flesh of the Lord was, in the present case, a piece of cardiac muscle, *striated muscle tissue of the myocardium* (Bruno Sammaciccia, *Le miracle de Lanciano (The Miracle of Lanciano)*, p. 40). Furthermore, we know very well that the Heart of Christ, although it was one of the parts of the body of Christ that had suffered the Passion – since the Lord was resurrected with a wound in *his side* (Jn. 20:25) – it was pierced by a spear only after the death of the Savior: *They approached Jesus. Finding him already dead, they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers pierced his side with his spear.* (Jn. 19:33–34). Thus, the miracle of Lanciano marvelously illustrates the mystery of the co–redemption of Mary – by way of mediation – in the act of Eucharistic communion; this is fully described in the title of our book: *The Eucharist: the Church in the Heart of Christ*.