

Original transcript: *Der marianische Mensch*
(Workshop for the Federation of Priests and Seminarians,
April 13-16, 1924)
With two sermons from: *Aus dem Glauben leben*, Volume 16
(Sermons of January 10 and 17, 1965)

Fr. Joseph Kentenich

The Marian Person

**Getting to Know Mary,
Letting Mary Shape My Life**

Translated by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus.

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Introduction

This book is like the rough sketch of a great symphony.

Its title is “The Marian Person” – in German: *Der marianische Mensch*. Father Joseph Kentenich (1885-1968) is the “composer” and the theme goes back to one of his early workshops in Schoenstatt.

It is like a *rough sketch* because the transcript handed down from the workshop (1924) is partial and incomplete – typed from one participant’s longhand notes. Judging by the typical length of talks given by Fr. Kentenich, it is estimated that about 30-40% of the verbatim text is captured in the transcript.

Still, what was written gives us enough to discern a *great symphony* uniting faith and life. Here we find in great movements the possibilities of growing toward sanctity as a child of Mary.

The Theme

The theme of this “symphony” appears in the second conference:

*The Marian person is the person
who understands as deeply as possible,
in the spirit and light of faith,
Mary’s role in the work of redemption,
and allows her to permanently shape his practical life
even to the last consequence,
so as to become a holy apostle (p. 21).*

The theme is addressed to a gathering of the recently formed “Apostolic Federation of Schoenstatt.” The workshop was for members and prospective members and included seminarians and recently ordained priests. Participants wanted to take their idealism and love of Mary to a higher level, and make it fruitful in their daily lives.

Their model was Schoenstatt’s founding generation – referred to in the workshop as the “Sodality.” Just ten years earlier, a group of young men started a Marian Sodality in the Pallottine school in Schoenstatt, Germany. Aided by their spiritual director, Fr. Kentenich, they discovered the transforming power of love of Mary and

the Christian call to become a saint. In October 1914, they accepted a challenge given them by Fr. Kentenich: to invite Mary to come and dwell in the little chapel on the grounds of the school. The resulting place of grace has come to be known as the *Shrine of the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt*, that is, the *Schoenstatt Shrine*.

Following such ideals is not always easy, and early in the workshop Fr. Kentenich addressed their feeling of being worn down by life. He uses the analogy of “out-of-tune instruments.” He then slowly lifts them into the world of the Marian person. By the end they can see that every teaching about Mary, every clue in Scripture and dogma, is an invitation to shape their lives with her and in her.

Later Expressions

When we examine the whole of Fr. Kentenich’s lifelong ministry, it is rather surprising that we scarcely find him using the term “Marian person” outside this 1924 workshop. But the underlying concept is an unmistakable part of the whole “symphony” of his life’s message and mission. We find the theme in prominent places in the Dachau prayers published in *Heavenwards*, such as:

Let us walk like you through life,
let us mirror you forever,
strong and noble, meek and mild,
peace and love be our endeavor.

Walk in us through our world,
make it ready for the Lord¹.

Or, in another place:

We want to mirror ourselves in your image
and seal our covenant of love anew.
Make us, your instruments, like you in everything
and through us build Schoenstatt everywhere².

¹ J. Kentenich, *Heavenwards*, prayers from Dachau (Waukesha, 1992), p. 171, see also p. 163.

² *Heavenwards*, p. 47.

In the great *Te Deum of Heavenwards* – the hymn “O Triune God” – we find it this way:

O Triune God, be eternally praised
for all the great things you have done for us:
for giving Schoenstatt a Mother
and for immersing us, through her, deeply into Christ.

We praise you because Mary’s life
has given us the norm for our daily living
and brought the splendor of Christ the Sun
so humanly near to us³.

Or, as the rhymed translation puts it:

Our thanks to you, in Mary you are giving
to every man the pattern for his living;
she is of all your creatures barring none
the only jeweled mirror of your Son⁴.

Two Supplemental Texts

To help the reader reconstruct more of the “symphony’s” richness, two sermons have been added from later in Fr. Kentenich’s life. They are from January 1965 – over 40 years after the 1924 workshop. One immediately notices parallels to central themes from the earlier workshop. The two sermons let us appreciate in detail what Fr. Kentenich meant by the “biblical image of Mary” – and the 1965 sermons, transcribed from an audio recording, give us a better feel of his style and way of engaging his audience. Here we also see how he builds the bridges that help us apply Marian teaching to practical life.

In this case he applies it to active participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, a key theme of Vatican Council II, which was going on at that time. Here we see his “Marian person” approach in action. The Mass becomes a going with Mary to the altar, not only for one’s personal sanctification, but also in profound apostolic spirit: to make

³ *Heavenwards*, p. 56.

⁴ *Heavenwards*, p. 181.

Christ present in the world of today, to break Satan's influence, and to present all things in a great act of praise and atonement and thanksgiving to the Father. Fr. Kentenich shows how Mary's place in the plan of redemption can make us fuller participants in the great drama of the Mass and let the Mass infuse our daily lives with the life of faith.

Encouragement

It is hoped that the "rough sketch" made available here will help the reader delve more deeply into the life-changing power of love of Mary. Her role in the work of our redemption is so central, so stirring, and so inseparable from Christ that the more we let our hearts beat with hers, the more we will find them beating in Christ.

If we put these lessons into life, then the symphony will no longer be an incomplete and tentative sketch, but the full sound of the Christian life lived with and in Mary.

Fr. Jonathan Niehaus
Austin, Texas, December 8, 2007
Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Part 1

The Marian Person

Workshop, April 1924

Introduction to “The Marian Person”

What follows is an English translation of the workshop given by Fr. Kentenich in 1924 entitled *The Marian Person (Der marianische Mensch)*.

The workshop gives us a glimpse into Fr. Kentenich’s early work as director of the Apostolic Movement and the Apostolic Federation of Schoenstatt. In those years the rapidly growing membership took more and more of his time and strength. He regularly held retreats and workshops – both in Schoenstatt and elsewhere in Germany – for the two main branches at the time: the Federation for men (priests, seminarians, and some lay men) and the Federation for women (primarily teachers, nearly all single).

The following workshop was held for the priests and seminarians who belonged to the Federation for men. Most were still in their 20s. The workshop took place in Schoenstatt, Germany, with at least the opening and closing talk taking place in the Shrine. The workshop was held several times during 1924, but the transcript used in this book is from the April 13 to 16 session, that is, Palm Sunday to Wednesday of Holy Week. The workshop’s theme is the relationship with Mary. Fr. Kentenich’s interest is not merely information, but *formation*. How will knowing Mary shape our lives? How will belonging to the Federation (i.e. Schoenstatt) help me become a *Marian person*?

One notices that Fr. Kentenich’s choice of words reflects an early stage in his work; he has not yet developed much of the vocabulary typical of later years, especially after 1945. Many of the concepts are the same, but the vocabulary is still relatively generic. For instance, he speaks of *heimisch werden* (to feel at home) and not yet of *Beheimatung* (at-home-ness). The frequent use of the adjective *innig* (here translated as “tender”) captures the personal and loving nature of the relationship with Mary in Schoenstatt: she is close to me and I am close to her; I show through my deeds that I really love her, and she shows through her deeds that she really loves me, etc. Later on, Fr. Kentenich would express this reality using such words as *Zweieinheit* (two-in-oneness), *persönlich* and *urpersönlich* (personal and deeply personal), and ultimately *Liebesbündnis* (covenant of love).

One of the challenges of translating this workshop is the mid-grade quality of the available transcripts. Two transcripts are known to the translator – one dated April 13-16 and the other April 22-26, 1924¹. As the transcripts are nearly identical, the second seems to be only a slightly reworked version of the first, with the date of the second workshop. The April 13-16 transcript is judged to be more reliable and is therefore the basis for this translation².

Since the transcript is based on longhand notes and not a stenograph, the effect is often choppy. At times the text moves from thought to thought in “telegraphed” fashion. It is estimated that about 30-40% of the verbatim text is preserved. Still, we have every reason to believe that the note-taker has accurately captured the main line of thought and its essential detail, though gaps in the material mean that individual statements cannot be pushed too far.

Subtitles have been added and some paragraphs have been subdivided for easier reading. The choppy nature of the transcript (sentence fragments, incomplete thoughts) has been somewhat alleviated in the translation. Obvious gaps of a few words have been filled in with insertions from the editor [in brackets]. Footnotes have been added to provide greater clarity and some cross-references to major Marian works. Comments on the development of Catholic doctrine on Mary have been extensively supplemented in the footnotes so that the reader can, if desired, pursue related themes.

¹ Transcript 1: *Marianischer Mensch*, April 13-16, 1924 (with short supplement from the Marian workshop of September 8, total: 21 pages). Transcript 2: *Mariansicher Mensch*, April 22-26, 1924 (with short supplement from the Marian workshop of September 8, total: 29 pages). Both transcripts unpublished.

² The copy of Transcript 1 used here is from the archives of the Schoenstatt Fathers (USA Delegation), Waukesha, Wisconsin. The mimeograph copy belonged Fr. Otto Boenki (1900-1969), member of Schoenstatt’s founding generation. Even after Fr. Boenki came to the USA in 1924, he stayed in touch with Schoenstatt in Germany and received material such as these transcripts.

First Conference

First, I want to greet and extend to you a most heartfelt welcome to the Shrine of our Heavenly Mother. Here is a corner of the world that is dear to our hearts, which draws us into its orbit again and again. Why? Because we are vitally aware of how much our souls feel at home here. But today we are attracted to the Shrine in a most special manner because we want to participate in a totally Marian workshop. In our previous workshops the second day was the Marian day, the high point. This time the entire workshop will be totally Marian, entirely dedicated to our love of Mary. We want to experience this Marian devotion together.

The Ingolstadt-Schoenstatt parallel¹ comes to my mind. Marian devotion in Ingolstadt was so eloquent and enveloped by the Colloquants² in such a homey atmosphere that new students spontaneously caught the Marian spirit. This is how it should be for us in Schoenstatt. Whoever is with us ought to spontaneously catch something, ought to be inspired and uplifted by the tender atmosphere surrounding us. And the tender love of Mary which captivated the hearts of the Colloquants drove them to work for Mary’s interests in the apostolate, urging them to invest their belongings and lives for the religious and moral renewal of Germany. They were convinced that I am only an apostle to the extent that I am filled with Marian spirit. This same conviction was deeply held by our *Congregatio Militaris*³ and left a deep mark on our first academic meetings.

¹ See Fr. Jonathan Niehaus, *New Vision and Life: The Founding of Schoenstatt* (2nd edition: Waukesha, 2004), p. 121f.

² The members of the *Colloquium Marianum* or Marian Colloquium, the core group at the Jesuit School in Ingolstadt which cultivated a vibrant and apostolic-minded love of Mary. Regarding the Marian Colloquium and how it became a model for Schoenstatt, see *New Vision and Life*, p. 121f.

³ The “External Organization” of Schoenstatt’s founding era, consisting of the students from Schoenstatt serving in the military during World War I, and the other soldiers who were won over to the same love of Mary. See *New Vision and Life*, p. 140-146.

The Spark of Love for Mary in Every Catholic Heart

But I am getting ahead of myself. I am already speaking too enthusiastically. Back to reality. At past workshops we had to overcome many difficulties of mind and heart. And today? Today many of you are at very different stages of spiritual growth. I must first establish some common ground.

After all, we are all Catholic. In every Catholic there is at least a spark of Marian devotion. This is true for each of us without exception. The Church applies to Mary the words, “*Ego diligentes me diligo*. I love those who love me” (Prv 8,17)⁴. As a result, all of us can hope that our love for Mary will increase.

A legend about St. Alphonsus Rodriguez⁵ tells about how he once asked the Mother of God in childlike simplicity, “Do you love me?” [To which she replied:] “Why, of course!” “Really?” “Yes, without doubt! My love for you is much more than even your love for me!”⁶

St. Clement M. Hofbauer⁷ once said, “When I discover in someone’s heart even the tiniest spark of love of Mary, I am certain that this person will not perish.”

Ego diligentes me diligo! Mary sees in our heart the spark of

⁴ The passage Proverbs 8, 12-17 was used, for instance, for the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Roman Breviary (lesson i in the First Nocturn). The passage is also used in this sense by St. Alphonsus Ligouri in *The Glories of Mary* (Brooklyn, 1931 and TAN reprint), p. 63. Fr. Kentenich gave this quote a prominent place in his talk at Schoenstatt’s founding, October 18, 1914. See *New Vision and Life*, p. 101.

⁵ St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, SJ (1532-1617), Spanish Jesuit lay-brother.

⁶ As cited in *The Glories of Mary*, p. 67: “The Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez, of the Society of Jesus, once prostrate before an image of Mary, felt his heart inflamed with love towards this most Holy Virgin, and burst forth into the following exclamation: ‘My most beloved Mother, I know that thou lovest me, but thou dost not love me as much as I love thee.’ Mary, as it were, offended on the point of love, immediately replied from the image: ‘What dost thou say, Alphonsus – what dost thou say? O, how much greater is the love that I bear thee, than any love that thou canst have for me! Know that the distance between Heaven and earth is not so great as the distance between thy love and mine.’”

⁷ St. Clement Maria Hofbauer, CSsR (1751-1820), hermit, priest, and patron of Vienna; considered the second founder of the Redemptorists.

love. “Let the children come to me!” (Mt 19,14). The Mother’s love for me must be much more than my love for her. [Why?] Precisely because I am so weak. And the stronger my love of Mary is, the more helpless I will feel, because I realize [how great] the distance [is] between her and me.

We have therefore found the common ground we need to discuss our Marian devotion. Hence, we all have the right to trustingly pray from the bottom of our heart, “MTA, *ora pro nobis* – pray for us!”

Mary as Mother Thrice Admirable

Let us meditate for a moment on this invocation [***Mother Thrice Admirable***]. It causes many images to awaken in my soul. I feel drawn back to Ingolstadt. There a young priest is kneeling before the picture of Our Lady. He sees what a superabundance of graces would overflow the earth if all people had a tender love of Mary. Driven by this conviction he founded the Marian Colloquium⁸.

Fr. Rem loved Mary with a supernatural love. He therefore loved Mary precisely as the person raised up by God to the high dignity of Mother of God. He long asked himself: is there not one title that completely exhausts Mary’s greatness? And is there one which our heavenly Mother most favors? He prayed long and ceaselessly that Mary would show him which title it was. He was with his Colloquians in the chapel. They were praying the Litany of Loreto. Fr. Rem had a vision at the invocation *Mater Admirabilis* [Mother Most Admirable]. Twice he signaled to the cantor to repeat this title. In the vision it became clear to him that Mary wanted to be venerated in a most special way as *Mater Ter Admirabilis* [Mother Thrice Admirable]. Since that time there has been a picture of the MTA [in Ingolstadt]⁹.

⁸ The story of Fr. Jacob Rem, SJ (1546-1618), whose work as educator and spiritual director at the Jesuit school in Ingolstadt, Germany led to the highly effective youth group called the “Marian Colloquium” (cf. page 12, note 2). For details, see *New Vision and Life*, p. 121f and M. Kley *United with Her* (Constantia, 1977), p. 17f.

⁹ The vision mentioned here took place on April 6, 1604.

Still other thoughts come to me about this title. What is its dogmatic background? Mary is admirable¹⁰ as the Mother of God, admirable as the Mother of the Redeemer, admirable as the Mother of the redeemed.

Is Mary not also thrice admirable in other ways? The Mother of God is admirable in her childlikeness before God. For Mary, being the Mother of God is not just an exterior dignity. With her exterior dignity comes a divine childhood unlike that of any other creature before or since. Is anything more admirable in this life than being a child of God? Go through life. You will find vegetative being, sentient being, intellectual being and, high above all else, divine being¹¹. Being a child of God means to share in this divine being. Is it not something admirable to be both human and a child of God? For her part, Mary is a child of God to the highest degree. What an admirable world!

This divine being as a child of God has [distinct] stages, a path of development leading to the heights. Mary ascended to the highest stage of growth. The angel addresses her as “full of grace.” This is how Mary stands before us, as the most admirable child of God, the one chosen to be the Savior’s Mother.

What are the signs of divine life? They are faith, hope, and love. How sorely we feel the lack of this divine life in us! Only the one who is completely supernatural can save the world. But whoever is still a slave of sensuality, how can he be an instrument in the hand of God? God works through us. The more we carry God’s life in us, the more we are his instrument. This is the world in which the solution to all our difficulties is found. Unless we are at home in this world, we will only be half-priests.

¹⁰ German: *wunderbar* (for the Latin adjective *admirabilis*). The German means more than just “someone we admire;” it also indicates someone truly wonderful, remarkable, amazing, able to accomplish great deeds. For another example of this use of the word admirable, see St. Louis Grignion de Montfort (1673-1716), *True Devotion to Mary* (Rockford, IL, 1985), No. 6-8.

¹¹ The different levels of life: plant (vegetative), animal (sentient, that is, the life of the senses), mind or spirit (intellectual), and divine (the life of grace).

Mary, Admirable in Faith, Hope, and Love

Mater ter admirabilis – Filius ter admirabilis! [Mother Thrice Admirable – Child thrice admirable!]

Mary is admirable in *faith*. She believed the angel who brought her the message from heaven that she was chosen to be the Mother of God. In the destitute stable in Bethlehem she knelt next to a poor, weak Child who is the Eternal God, the Creator of the world, the Redeemer of mankind. She professes him to be God and Savior – He who is hated by all, abandoned by his disciples, hung on the scandalous tree of the Cross. And *our* faith...?

Mary is admirable in *hope*. Mary’s hope and trust were gigantic. She cast all her cares on the Lord when she saw her bridegroom’s anxious features after she had conceived. Full of trust, she embarked on the arduous journey to distant Egypt. She saw her beloved [Jesus] whipped, beaten, and grieved by brutal thugs. But she still trusted that the world would be redeemed. How is it with our trust? Who do we turn to in our struggles? None other than the faithfully caring Mother! Today one finds so little hope in the world. Pessimism and despair! What an example the saints give us in their unlimited trust! The trust of our venerable founder¹² was nearly limitless. He had a rock-solid faith in his vocation – *I am an instrument of God in Mary’s hands* – this was his firm conviction. Our founder’s idea matches that of the Federation. But if the Federation is an instrument in the hand of God, and the Federation is my vocation, then I, too, must have rock-solid trust in the victory of our cause.

F. Mayer writes of Alban Stolz¹³: When he felt the call to write books for popular edification, he wrote in his diary, “I must and will sacrifice myself for the people.” And he had rock-solid faith in this idea. This is how it must be for us. The idea “I must engage myself as an instrument of the Blessed Mother for the religious and moral renewal of the world” must be the dominant idea in our life.

¹² St. Vincent Pallotti (1795-1850), Roman native and visionary priest. He was the founder of the Pallottines, to whom Fr. Kentenich and many of the early Schoenstatt priests and seminarians belonged.

¹³ Fr. Alban Stolz (1808-1883), German theologian and popular author.

And the *love* of our Blessed Mother? She was indeed a glowing hearth of Divine Love. The closer one is to God, the more tender the love. But Mary had the most intimate connection to God possible for a creature. After all, she is the *Mother of God*, and she is *full of grace*. She powerfully expresses her ardent love of God in her song: *Exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo* [My spirit rejoices in God my Savior, Lk 1,47]. And *our* love...?

Mary and the Fundamental Forces of World History

Another relationship comes to my mind. Solomon was standing at the parapet of the palace. Turning his prophetic gaze to the desert, he saw a woman crowned with stars. Astonished, he called out: “Who is the one who arises like the dawn, beautiful as the moon, radiant as the sun, terrible as an army in battle array” (Song 6,10). We have been introduced to Mary in her gifts of grace, admirable in her childlikeness before God, admirable in its effects in her soul. But the words of Solomon introduce Mary to us in her relationship to the fundamental forces of world history: ***God, Man, the Devil.***

Pulchra ut luna – Beautiful as the moon, with its soft, charming light. The moon’s light is reflected from the sun. The same is true of Mary. She radiates a fascinating light, bright in the raiment of her virtues. But the source of all her greatness is God.

Electa ut sol – Radiant as the sun. Mary is for us what the sun is for the earth. Remove the sun, which bathes the earth in its light, and there is no more day. If we remove Mary, our life’s “star of the sea,” what are we left with? We will be surrounded by deep darkness, the shadow of death, and impenetrable night.

Mary is the Mediatrix of Graces. We receive everything through her hands. One seminarian said: Remove Marian devotion and our Federation would no longer exist. If we accept her mediation of all grace, then Mary is most certainly the sun of our life, and all the more the sun of our Federation. “Mother Thrice Admirable, increase [the life of] grace in me. I did not come [to this workshop] to hear many things, but to receive strength. We are a community. Give us all in the Federation the strength to develop a practical love of Mary.”

Terrible as an army in battle array. Does the Devil still exist?

Far too few believe in him. Sometimes he seems to us [moderns] like an old wives’ tale. Yet, the Devil does exist, and he is prowling like a lion looking for someone to devour (cf 1 Pt 5,8). If we were consistently convinced of this truth, how much more we would accomplish in the confessional! How often we would then use the exorcism¹⁴ even as our venerable father¹⁵ did.

All of these thoughts lead us into a world in which we should feel at home. Go into the depths. Translate the thoughts into life so that you can share this wealth with others.

With this we have established the common ground needed to proceed with our workshop. If we still feel inwardly reluctant about Marian devotion, then we pray all the more and all the more tenderly to the MTA.

The general superior of the Jesuits once visited the novitiate. There he found two novices who did not feel a strong urge to tender love of Mary. As he left, he said to the novice master, “Pay attention to these two novices. They will not stay with us.” And in fact, the two soon left the order. There are supernatural realities which can only be grasped by a supernatural sensitivity. Is not a deep and thorough love of Mary part of what we priests must have? MTA, help me overcome the gap! For I am only a member of the Federation to the extent that Marian devotion is part of my life.

¹⁴ Namely, the “little exorcism” which any Christian can pray to ward off the power of Satan. Fr. Kentenich’s favorite form of this (“Arise, O Lord, that your enemies may be scattered and those who hate you may flee before you...”) is found in *Heavenwards* (Waukesha, 1992), p. 176. For relevant comments see J. Kentenich, *Education and the Challenge of our Times* (2nd edition, Waukesha, 1996), p. 30f.

¹⁵ St. Vincent Pallotti.

Second Conference

Yesterday we brought into focus our common ground. The starting point was the minimum measure of Marian devotion and Marian love found in each Catholic. Then we tried to connect Mary's life with the three fundamental powers of the world¹.

Out-of-tune Instruments

I feel like a conductor about to lead a concert. But the musicians' instruments are still mostly out of tune. We have much in the Federation that is out of tune. A teacher wrote: "When I pray I still experience many contradictions. For years I could only pray the first part of the Hail Mary." She cannot pray to Mary [because] Mary is only a creature. An out-of-tune instrument!²

A Franciscan priest told me that he once had a tender love of Mary. During his novitiate a priest told him, "If you had to choose between reading something about God or Mary, you would read about God first, wouldn't you?" He answered, "Yes, of course." Later he earned two doctorates. But the more he grew in science, the cooler his relationship to Mary became. Once, at a pilgrimage place, he saw the sacristan touching devotional items to the main statue of Mary; he turned away and thought that the Church must forbid such "nonsense"....³

Some time ago in Bavaria there was a congress of the Marian Sodality for students. It was said, "We always talk about Marian

¹ God, man, and the Devil, see First Conference.

² This list of difficulties with Marian devotion is an early example of Fr. Kentenich observing the modern critical treatment of popular piety. In the early 1930s he began to describe this hypercritical approach as "mechanistic thinking" – an obstacle to the "organic thinking" which is the more properly Catholic view of faith and life. For a more thorough discussion see J. Niehaus, *The 31st of May* (Waukesha, 1995), p. 21-23, 107-130.

³ Compare this with similar examples of intellectual rejection of popular piety noted by Fr. Kentenich in the 1950s, cited in *The 31st of May*, p. 119-121.

devotion. What about Christ? Are we finally going to get to know Christ?"...

In the clergy voices are being raised, saying, "We put too much emphasis on Mary. Our way of living is so Marian. This isn't right." ... So many out-of-tune instruments!

How is it with *our* Marian devotion? Is *our* instrument also out-of-tune? We must approach the topic of Marian devotion as is we usually do in the Federation. The Federation's Marian devotion must embrace the entire person. Federation members are asking me from all sides: Where is our Marian devotion going? Why is it taking a less prominent role in our workshops? One even insisted that the Federation ought to have a slave-like Marian devotion. How many out-of-tune instruments!

Now let us look into our souls. Are our instruments also out-of-tune? Perhaps we are also struggling with difficulties about Marian devotion. The difficulties can be of two kinds:

1. Is the ideal exaggerated? (If my difficulties are in the goal.)
2. Is there something wrong in my soul? (If they are in me.)

The Essential Definition of the Marian Person

The ideal of our Marian devotion is [to become] a *Marian person*.

We distinguish between two definitions: the descriptive and the essential. To find the first we would need to look at the types [of Marian persons] and then study them. We would then need to probe them critically, that is, dogmatically, to arrive at a description of the true Marian person. The essential definition goes the opposite way. It determines the essence of the Marian person and then evaluates it dogmatically. We will go this second route in order to be more thorough.

We begin by establishing the essential definition [of the Marian person].

If I say that someone is a sensual person, I am saying that sensuality is a permanent characteristic of the person. And so, a Marian person is someone in whom Marian love and all things Marian are dominant, permanent characteristics.

Definition:

*The Marian person is the person
who understands as deeply as possible,
in the spirit and light of faith,
Mary's role in the work of redemption,
and allows her to permanently impact his practical life
even to the last consequence,
so as to become a holy apostle.*

Part I: Understanding Mary's Role in the Work of Redemption

First the intellect must understand as deeply as possible Mary's role in the plan of salvation.

The object of the Marian person's knowledge is [Mary's role in the work of salvation. It] is something real, not fiction⁴. We are all influenced by the current trends in modern philosophy. The current tendency is to retreat from Kant, Hegel, etc. and to turn more and more to concrete reality⁵. New theories of knowledge⁶ are being sought, but without negating the reality of the concrete world. This is good, because it comes closer to Catholicism, [where] we know things that are real. Mary is real, too. For many of us – including myself⁷ – our Marian devotion developed along a path from idea to person. Others go from person to ideal. [Either way,] if I am to grow interiorly, it is essential that I be interiorly gripped. It is therefore essential that I find my way to Mary as a *person*, as the person to whom my heart totally belongs.

The object of the Marian person's knowledge is Mary's role in the work of redemption. We can try to understand it from her position

⁴ That is, Mary and her role are real, not merely the product of theological speculation or popular enthusiasm.

⁵ See the development of phenomenology (Husserl, etc.) and existentialism (Jasper, Heidegger, Marcel) in the 1920s.

⁶ In the sense of epistemology.

⁷ Fr. Kentenich grew up in an era when faith was primarily understood as an exercise of the intellect and will, and only less so as an outflow of one's personal love for God. See *The 31st of May*, p. 7-8, 14-18.

as Coredemptrix,
as one of the redeemed,
and as the Mother of the Redeemer.

St. Bonaventure says of her, "God could have created a greater earth and a greater heaven but he could not have created a greater Mother than Mary⁸." Is not Mary in her greatness and nearly infinite eminence also a world of her own? Let us deeply immerse ourselves in this world and work toward helping as many people as we can to discover this world as deeply as possible. Those who think they know enough about Mary don't realize how profound a link there is between Mary and the most blessed Trinity.

St. Augustine called Mary the *dignitas terrae* – the dignity of the earth⁹. Who can comprehend it? We can understand if someone [would] spend his whole life studying ants¹⁰. Should we not also understand if someone spends his whole life trying to grasp the world

⁸ Conrad of Saxon (d. 1279), *Speculum B. Mariae V.*, tenth reading; long attributed to Bonaventure. See J. Kentenich, *Mary, Our Mother and Educator* (Waukesha, 1987), p. 140.

⁹ See St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), *De Genesi contra Manichaeos libri duo*, book two, no. 24, where he draws a parallel between Genesis 2,6 ("But a spring welled up out of the earth and watered all the face of the earth.") and the action of the Holy Spirit at the Incarnation, whereby Mary, like "the face of the earth," is watered and made fertile by the Spirit. There he interprets "the face of the earth" to mean "the dignity of the earth," of which Mary is the embodiment.

¹⁰ See later comments on the *Ameisenpater* ("Ant Priest"), such as in the sermon of January 17, 1965 (Part 2 of this collection) and the Pallottine tertianship in Milwaukee, 1952: "When we were younger... in Germany we often heard of the 'ant priest' – Fr. Wasmann – who devoted his whole life to the study of ants. Why do I bring this up? If such a little creature can attract so much attention and fill a whole lifetime, then I think one could say that Our Lady deserves it too. You know that she is also called the *negotium saeculorum*. In other words, every century has tried to discover [her riches]. *Negotium saeculorum*. And if we are allowed to be as decidedly Marian as our hearts desire, then it is clear: in the future the Blessed Mother, her person, her mission should be the object – even more than before – of our meditation, of our love, but also of our preaching and pastoral care" (*USA-Terziat*, Vol. 2, p. 276). Meant is Fr. Erich Wasmann (1859-1931), German Jesuit and oft-published expert in insects. The term *negotium saeculorum* goes back to St. Peter Chrysologus (Sermon 143, PL 52, 582D-583A).

of the Blessed Mother as deeply as possible? Can one ever say: Now I know everything? That was alright in our teenage years, but do I not need more now? Whoever thinks this way does not know the supernatural world, does not know how deeply Mary's role reaches into the most blessed Trinity, into all of dogmatic theology, into [all of] life.

Krebs tells in his book *Lebenswert der Dogmen*¹¹ that he once met a doctor in Rome who told him: "What has always attracted me to the Catholic Church is the teaching of Mary's purity. I have traveled all over the world, have seen depravity at its deepest, and there the thought laid hold of me: We have lost the ideal of purity in which one can gain strength and courage again and again in the battle with one's passions. This is the ideal which gives the Catholic Church its faith in Mary! If only I could believe, I would become Catholic alone because of this dogma!" Yes, what we need so much is the soul, the one soul who is totally pure. The *Immaculata* is part of the supernatural world of Our Lady.

A. Understanding Mary through the Knowledge of Faith

Our knowledge [of Mary] must be a knowledge of faith.

1. More than Just the Knowledge of the Senses

We distinguish between three levels of knowledge: *cognitio sensitiva, intellectiva, fidei* [knowledge of the senses, of the intellect, and of faith]. In this case only the knowledge of faith comes in play. Let us first cast a brief glance into the Protestant camp. In the whole world we find that Mary is vilified. Harnack¹² places Mary in the same category as the goddess mothers of the mystery religions. He claims that the [early] Christians [used Mary] to co-opt the idea [of goddess mothers] for the Christian religion. But I ask, "Was Mary never real?" We admit that Christianity adapted to the world it lived in. It adopted some things from the pagan religions, but gave them new meaning, infusing them with Christian spirit and thereby over-

¹¹ "The value of the dogmas for (everyday) life."

¹² Adolf Harnack (1851-1930), German Protestant theologian.

coming the pagan spirit. Remember, for Harnack there is no Christ either; Christ is only human. And so he has no room for Mary as Mother of God or God-bearer.

For us it is different. The Son protects the Mother and the Mother protects the Son. The revolution¹³ delivered a hard blow to Protestantism. It lost its state protection and its interior unity was shattered. [Today] many voices are being raised: We Protestants¹⁴ have a soul but no body; let us reclaim it from the Catholic Church [by refocusing on] hierarchy and liturgy. But liturgy brings them face to face with Mary again. While the Protestants show interest in bringing Mary back into today's church, how will they know her? Their only sources are the knowledge of the senses and of the intellect. That leaves Mary only a beautiful woman who attracts and uplifts. But the formation of the *Marian person* will be lacking.

The Protestant Jungnickel writes, "We must bring new warmth into our churches. How? With beautiful music, such as by Bach? No, we must bring Mother Mary back. Luther himself wrote a study on the Magnificat¹⁵. He would protect our undertaking if he were alive today. A pale, blond, glorious girl with big blue childlike eyes, a Mary with ears of wheat in her hand, or a daisy. Bach, etc. are said to have sung and dedicated their most beautiful hymns to her. Let us sing the old familiar hymns in her honor and do everything else befitting devotion. We want to let her gentle heavenly purity flow into the catechism. We must reclaim the German Mother Mary!" [German] Protestants see Mary as the one enthroned above the altar as a young German woman. But they are only looking at Mary with the knowledge of the senses.

We, too, look with wonder upon the loveliness of Mary, but the knowledge of the senses is not our source of knowledge. Alban Stolz once said, "Children often follow their grandparents." The "grand-

¹³ The collapse of the Prussian Protestant state at the end of World War I (just five years before this workshop took place).

¹⁴ The comments on the Protestant situation in this and the following paragraphs relate to the Lutheran church of Germany in the 1920s.

¹⁵ Martin Luther (1483-1546), *Explanation of the Magnificat*, 1521.

parents” of today’s Protestants were Catholic. Today’s Protestants are following them again. But for the most part their source of knowledge is deficient. Our source of knowledge is the light of faith.

Third Conference

Let me start by saying that we should not take all that we hear at this workshop and put it into action uncritically. That would only provoke feelings of aversion in our souls. For the moment, let each one maintain his current level of growth, but let the new ideas sink in. Then, later, you can translate them into your practical life.

2. Supported by Scripture

For us Catholics, only the *cognitio fidei*, the knowledge of faith can suffice [in laying the foundations for the Marian person]. We not only see Mary with our bodily eyes, but also in transfigured supernatural light.

The Marian person is enlightened by two sources: *Sacred Scripture and Tradition*. At first glance, Sacred Scripture does not seem to say much about Our Lady. But it really holds a great deal about her. In his own tender love of Mary, our venerable founder¹ was especially fond of the Old Testament types [of Mary]. Open the Scriptures in this light [and look at] Judith, Esther, Ruth, Susanna, the Song of Songs, and the Psalms singing of the beauty of the king’s daughter².

In the New Testament, too, we find little and yet so very much about Mary. The Blessed Mother appears to us with³

the *Ave* in her ear,
the *Magnificat* on her lips,
the Child in her arms,

¹ St. Vincent Pallotti.

² See Psalm 45. The discussion of the types (or figures or prefigurements) of Mary in the Old Testament is a long-standing theme in Mariology. See Catholic Book Publishers, *Dictionary of Mary* (2nd edition: New Jersey, 1997), “Old Testament,” p. 356-359.

³ This “litany” was a way that Fr. Kentenich often used to sum up the biblical image of Mary.” An expanded and more detailed presentation by Fr. Kentenich on this topic is found in the sermon of January 10, 1965 (p. 71-78 below).

the seven-fold sword in her heart, and
the tongues of fire over her head.

Or, taking a look at the Old Testament, we see Mary enveloped by the sun, the moon at her feet, and clothed with the radiant garment of her virtues (cf. Song 6,4 as above).

The New Testament contains a great and powerful word spoken by Mary herself: *Ecce [enim ex hoc] beatam me dicent omnes generationes* – See, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed! (Lk 1,48). [This in] the word of God! Christ once said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Mt 24,35). This is the dogmatic [image of the] Mother of God, which has so very much to say to our souls. Or [turn to] the image of the Mother of God in the Book of Revelation: the image of Mary’s virtues (cf. Rev 12,1). [The native virtue of] the natural world comes first [in time], but it is followed by words which resound through the centuries like a fanfare blast: *Ecce enim ex hoc...* – See, from henceforth...! We know it still today. We proclaim these living words in our time. The centuries have strived to make these words come true⁴. We, too, do our part.

With that I have made the connection between Church history and individual history. The Marian person grasps this. He is alert to everything concerning the Beloved of his heart.

But in Sacred Scripture we also find her contradicted. “Woman, what does this concern of yours have to do with me?” (Jn 2,4). “Who are my mother and my brothers? Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is brother and sisters and mother to me” (Mk 12,48.50). Bible scholars offer a clear response to these difficulties and the Marian person knows how to respond⁵. We want to have a healthy

⁴ See the discussion of Mary as the *negotium saeculorum* (the object of the study of all the ages), a term coined by St. Bernard. See for instance *Mary, our Mother and Educator*, p. 53f.

⁵ Clues regarding Fr. Kentenich’s reading of these passages can be found in *Mary, Our Mother and Educator*. There (p. 111-115) he interprets the moments when Christ dealt harshly with his Mother as integral to her education as his disciple, preparing her to stand at the foot of the Cross and to be our educator, so that she in turn can educate us to be disciples of Christ. He also stresses (p. 82-84) that her physical motherhood, while wondrous, does not exhaust God’s plan for her

basis for our Marian devotion. Be sure to talk about this in your communities.

3. *Supported by Tradition*

I now move on to *Tradition*. I am reminded of the creeds⁶, the council decrees, the writings of the fathers⁷. Whoever is interested in Mary should research what the centuries have said about her. The Marian person gladly studies everything in the light of faith. The light of faith is not miserly. It does not ask: Which defined dogmas do I *have* to believe? There was a time when we Catholics only valued dogma. Dogma was what everyone wanted; [it was considered] the essence of religion. Whatever did not belong to the essence was cut away. It was like trimming a tree until one had “just the essence” – but in the end all that was left was the naked trunk. Thanks be to God that this is no longer the case.

For us there is not only dogma, but also Catholic truth. The Marian person has a firm faith in the Catholic truths. The Marian person has, to use an expression of St. Clement M. Hofbauer, a “Catholic nose.” He knows how to cherish the truths which give full harmony to the Catholic life of faith. He knows and loves even those truths that are not binding on him by an “*Anathema*”⁸. Likewise with Marian devotion. The Marian person knows how to distinguish between dogma, *sententia communis*⁹, etc., but he also knows how to assent to the truths not formally defined as dogma. St. John

motherhood – she is meant to serve as mother of the Mystical Body of Christ (her spiritual motherhood). Seen this way, Christ’s seeming reproach (“Who are my Mother and brothers?”) indicates to her – and us – that the fullness of her motherhood is rooted in her hearing and doing God’s will.

⁶ Especially the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed.

⁷ An outstanding overview of Catholic teaching in the patristic era is Luigi Gambero’s definitive work: *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* (San Francisco, 1999).

⁸ The Greek word for “excluded.” In many of the Church councils, formal doctrine was defined by declaring anyone who denied it as *anathema*, that is, excluded or excommunicated from the true faith.

⁹ The common understanding of the faithful.

Berchmans¹⁰ signed with his blood the truth of Mary's Immaculate Conception. He was a Marian person. He possessed a Catholic nose. As a Marian person I must possess a delicate sensitivity for all things related to Mary.

Today there is a lot of talk, especially in Bavaria, about the dogma of Mary as Mediatrix of all graces. At the last workshop someone asked, "Why [so much ado about] this dogma?" Well, if Mary's universal mediation would be formally defined as dogma, God and Mary would receive more honor than before. In recent years scientists have discovered basic laws of physics; more are being discovered all the time. There are also basic laws of religion. It is our task to get to know them. Is not Mary's universal mediation one such basic law? Before me is the biography of Fr. Doyle, SJ¹¹. He also had a deep devotion to Mary. He signed his love with the blood of his heart in a long martyrdom for Mary, in order to gain the help of Mary's grace for his undertaking. Yes, such men are driven by the spirit of faith.

B. Understanding Mary's Role in the Work of Redemption

The Marian person tries to understand, in the spirit and light of faith, Mary's role in the work of redemption. We understand Mary as one of the redeemed and as Coredemptrix. I will consider the two points:

1. Mary in the plan of redemption as one of the redeemed.
2. Mary in the plan of redemption as Coredemptrix

1. Mary as One of the Redeemed: The Immaculate Conception

Let me begin with the Immaculate Conception.

"Maria Immaculata, benedicta es tu Virgo Maria, a Domino Deo excelso prae omnibus mulieribus super terram. Tu gloria Jerusalem,

¹⁰ St. John Berchmans (1599-1621), Dutch Jesuit seminarian.

¹¹ Fr. William Doyle, SJ (March 3, 1873-August 16, 1917), an Irish Jesuit who distinguished himself as a courageous military chaplain in World War I. See for instance Alfred O'Rahilly's biography of Fr. Doyle in German translation: *Verborgenes Heldentum: P. Wilhelm Doyle, SJ* (Freiburg/Br., 1926).

*tu laetitia Israel, tu honorificentia populi nostri. Tota pulchra es, Maria, et macula originalis non est in te"*¹².

With these words the Church rejoices on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. The liturgy of this feast deserves special attention. The solemn definition (see *Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8, 1854¹³) says she was free from sin from the very first moment of her existence. Nor was her soul ever darkened by even the slightest shadow of sin. By the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ she was already preserved from every stain of original sin. Although Mary was subject to the law of sin, she was not subject to sin¹⁴.

a. Development of the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception

How does the Church justify this dogma? It is not explicitly found in Sacred Scripture. It can only be proven through Tradition. The doctrine of the Mother of God and her immaculate purity is one of the blossoms of the original Church. But we know by divine promise¹⁵ that the Church is infallible in teachings of faith and morals, and this includes the teaching of Mary's Immaculate Conception.

The scriptural witnesses to the teaching of the Immaculate Conception are 1) the Protogospel¹⁶ and 2) story of the birth and life of

¹² "Immaculate Mary. Virgin Mary, you are blessed by the Most High Lord God before all women over the earth. You are the glory of Jerusalem, you are the joy of Israel, you are the highest honor of our people. You are all fair, Mary, and original sin is not in you" (Liturgy of the Immaculate Conception).

¹³ The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was formally proclaimed by Bl. Pope Pius IX in the bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8, 1854.

¹⁴ In other words, as a daughter of Eve and a member of the human race she is not outside the order of salvation; her freedom from sin had to be won through Christ's saving grace. But at the same time God foresaw her unique role in the work of redemption and therefore applied Christ's grace to her in such a way that she was never subject to the power of sin.

¹⁵ Mt 16,18f: the power to loose and bind entrusted to St. Peter. See also the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 553.

¹⁶ Genesis 3,15 is often called the Protogospel, that is, the very earliest good news of the coming redeemer. As Pope John Paul II once noted: "Among the biblical accounts which foretold the Mother of the Redeemer, (...) [is the one] in

Jesus. The apocryphal works, especially the Protogospel of James¹⁷, reach far back into the 2nd century. Images in the catacombs attest to the profound Marian devotion of the early Christians¹⁸. Various fathers of the Church wrote about Mary: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, Ephrem. The Blessed Mother is portrayed as the *inviolata* and *integra* [completely free from sin], the Queen of all, the hope of the despairing. Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen... The Council of Ephesus¹⁹ brings into clear focus what the Church teaches about Mary. In the foreground is Mary as the Mother of God, something which was hotly debated as part of the Christological controversies of that time.

[In the next age] the [teaching of the] Immaculate Conception was still obscure and controversial. Augustine said in his treatise *De natura et gratia*: “*Excepta itaque Sancta Maria*” [“Except for Holy

which God revealed his plan of salvation after the fall of Adam and Eve. The Lord says to the serpent, the personification of the spirit of evil: ‘I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel’ (Gn 3,15).

“These statements, called the *Protogospel* (the first Good News) by Christian tradition since the 16th century, enable us to see God’s saving will from the very origins of humanity.” (General audience of January 24, 1996).

¹⁷ Here “Protogospel” (or Protoevangelium) indicates an elaboration on the very earliest events of the life of Jesus and Mary. The Protogospel of James tells the story of Mary’s conception, birth, childhood, marriage to Joseph, and the birth and childhood of Jesus. While never considered canonical, it is a very ancient Christian text and has enjoyed great popularity through the centuries.

¹⁸ Cf. *Dictionary of Mary*, p. 40-41 (Archeology): “Inscriptions and graffiti under St. Peter’s Basilica stemming back to the 2nd or 3rd century portray Mary as a Protectrix for the Christian departed and their Mediatrix with Christ. In the *Catacombs of Saint Priscilla*, there are frescoes with the same theme.”

¹⁹ In discussing the nature of Christ, the Council of Ephesus (431) also had to discern whether Mary could rightfully be called “Mother of God” or was merely “Mother of Christ.” The Council resoundingly endorsed the title “Mother of God” (Greek: *Theotokos*), stressing that the humanity and divinity of Christ cannot be separated. If Mary is the Mother of Christ, she is not only mother of the “human Christ,” but of his whole person, and hence Mother of God. See Gambero, p. 233-240.

Mary”]²⁰. Augustine was addressing Mary’s purity from the standpoint of actual sin. The feast of the Immaculate Conception began to be celebrated in the East in the 5th century²¹. This caused scholars in the West to examine the meaning of the feastday²². English theologians assume it must be about [Mary’s sinlessness], for it is not about the physical conception, but the Immaculate Conception²³.

St. Bernard [says,] “Mary could not be sanctified before she existed. Therefore the sanctification could only happen after she had been conceived²⁴.” This is also the view of the Scholastics. Thomas

²⁰ St. Augustine, who reflecting on sin, explicitly excluded Mary from his deliberations thus: “*Excepta itaque Sancta Virgine Maria, de qua, propter honorem Domini, nullam prorsus cum de peccatis agitur habere volo quaestionem: Unde enim scimus, quid ei plus gratiae collatum fuerit ad vincendum omni ex parte peccatum, quae concipere ac parere meruit eum quem constat nullum habuisse peccatum.*” “With the exception of the holy Virgin Mary, in whose case, out of respect for the Lord, I do not wish there to be any further question as far as sin is concerned, since how can we know what great abundance of grace was conferred on her to conquer sin in every way, seeing that she merited to conceive and bear him who certainly had no sin at all?” (*De natura et gratia*, c. 36, n. 42; PL 44, 267. English translation as in: Gambero, p. 226. See also *Dictionary of Mary*, p. 191, and *The Glories of Mary*, p. 299.)

²¹ According to the *Dictionary of Mary*, the feast of the Conception of Mary was celebrated in the East as early as the 7th century (p. 191), or perhaps the 6th century (p. 542).

²² See *Dictionary of Mary* (Immaculate Conception), p. 191: “For the Greeks, initiators of the Feast, the expression ‘Immaculate Conception’ meant that Mary, from the first moment of her life, was preserved from sin.” The spread of the liturgical feast into the West led to hard questioning of what it really meant. As the discussion of original sin became more prominent in the West, the question had to be formulated this way: Was Mary preserved even from original sin?

²³ St. Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033-1109) saw Mary as free from personal sin, but not original sin. Eadmer (c. 1060-c. 1124), Anselm’s secretary, went further in his *Tractatus de conceptione Sanctae Mariae*, concluding in favor of her freedom from both personal and original sin

²⁴ St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), devoutly Marian, had reservations about the spread of the liturgical feast of the Immaculate Conception in his time and said so in a letter to the canons of Lyon (1138-1139). See J. Leclercq, H. Rochais (ed.), *S. Bernardi Opera*, Vol. 7 (Rome, 1974), p. 388-392.

wavers²⁵. It is Scotus²⁶ who deserves the credit for bringing the needed clarity. He teaches that Mary's redemption consists in preservation, not liberation from original sin. On this basis he teaches that Mary was preserved in advance. God applied the redeeming merits of Christ to Mary in anticipation of the Redeeming Deed. Mary was a daughter of Adam according to her origin but not *secundum naturam*²⁷.

In her nature the Mother is like the Son, of the same constitution as the new Adam. The two, Jesus and Mary, are truly of one flesh. Jesus forms her to take his humanity from her. He forms her [into the Mother] he wants and needs. *Omnis arbor ex fructu conoscitur* [You shall tell every tree by its fruit (Lk 6,44)]. Mary is the Mother of God, her fruit is the Son of God. The great dignity of her maternity necessarily includes all the lesser gifts. Among these is the gift of the Immaculate Conception.

²⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) worried that such a doctrine might conflict with the universality of the redemption won by Christ. See *Dictionary of Mary*, p. 191f: "Saint Thomas hesitated and, in the end, felt constrained to deny Mary a privilege that would, as he thought, be a 'derogation of the dignity of Christ as Savior of all' (*Summa theologica* III, q. 27, art. 2, ad 2) For him, as for his contemporary Saint Bonaventure, Mary inherited the legacy of Adam and contracted original sin. But she was sanctified in her mother's womb."

²⁶ Bl. John Duns Scotus (1265/66-1308). See *Dictionary of Mary* (Immaculate Conception), p. 192: Holstein: "The Franciscan theologian Duns Scotus had struck an original position, defending Mary's privilege in its fullness from the beginning of her life. He pointed out that rather than detracting from the Redemption, the privilege of a total immunization, preserving Mary from all sin, even original, would represent the most glorious result of Christ's work. A modern theologian summarizes the argument of Scotus as follows:

'There are two kinds of ransom: one is ransom paid for an individual already prisoner, redemption by *liberation*; the other is ransom paid even before the acquired right of servitude is exercised, redemption by *preservation*. In making to His Mother an anticipated application of His merits to preserve her from the taint of original sin, which as a daughter of Adam she had naturally to incur, Jesus Christ became more fully her Redeemer. Far from being diminished, the excellence of Redemption is enhanced by Mary's privilege' (X. Le Bachelet)."

²⁷ That is, in the nature of her being she did not share the punishment of original sin.

Scotus only presented his teaching as probable. It was hotly debated. The matter was not finally resolved until the [dogmatization of the] Immaculate Conception [in 1854]. According to this, Mary is not an exception to the reality of redemption and the need to be redeemed. Mary was simply preserved by the redeeming merits of Jesus Christ, while we were liberated by his Redeeming Deed. Mary could call to her Son: "My Son, in holiness I was conceived and in justice I was born."

Fourth Conference

We did not come primarily to hear talks, but to pray and sing. Through prayer and song we should find our way into a genuinely warm and tender Marian spirit. My mind's eye sees an image of our heavenly Mother. She stands before us with the Ave in her ear, the Magnificat on her lips, the Divine Child in her arms, the sevenfold sword in her heart, and on her head the radiant crown of virtue.

b. Mary as Christ-bearer in all Ages

Our Lady carries Our Lord in her arms. Mary stands before us as the Christ-bearer. What does this mean? Mary's mission is to bring Christ to earth again. In churches one often sees a statue of the Blessed Mother on one side and her Son on the other side. The image of Madonna and Child is still better. Mother and Child must not be separated. There is a wonderful image somewhere in Tirol. It portrays Mary as a monstrel carrying the Most Blessed Sacrament. Yes, Mary is the Christ-bearer¹.

She was the Christ-bearer already in her youth, as a child, as a child of God. Then as Christ-bearer who was the dwelling place of Our Lord, she became the official Christ-bearer.

It is her task to carry Christ once more into the hearts of men. This is in keeping with a supernatural law. As Christ-bearer she came to Elizabeth (cf. Lk 1, 39-56). John leapt in his mother's womb, since Mary brought the Savior to him. He was sanctified and with him Zachariah's whole house. Mary was the Christ-bearer when she brought her Son to the temple (cf. Lk 2,22-40). From her arms Simon and Anna received great blessings. Mary is the Christ-bearer in the poor stable in Bethlehem. The shepherds found Christ with Mary, the

¹ Here Christ-bearer refers to Mary as the one who bears Christ in her womb and in her arms, and – as the task entrusted to her on Calvary – to bear Christ into every person and place and times. Regarding this formula's role in the development of Fr. Kentenich's mariology, see Fr. Paul Vautier, *Maria, die Erzieherin* (Vallendar-Schoenstatt, 1981), p. 244f.

Christ-bearer. Mary is the Christ-bearer when the wise men came from the East, bringing their adoration to the Savior in the name of the whole world. Mary is the Christ-bearer on the strenuous and difficult way to Egypt, and in the carpenter shop in Nazareth. She shares joy and suffering with him for 30 years. Mary is also with Jesus at the moment when he consummates the Redeeming Deed on the cross.

Is it not a supernatural law that Mary must always be with Jesus? The facts really seem to bear this out. Is not the law also universal in scope, embracing all times and places? When Mary's place is secure, Jesus' place is also secure. "*Soli Deo*" ["to God alone"] is what the Protestants once said. [They wanted to focus all worship on God alone, removing all "distractions."] But it did not last long until they also removed Christ. I only need to remind you of Harnack who denies the divinity [of Christ]. By saying "*Soli Dei*," they wanted to render service "to God alone," but by now it has become "*solus deo*," that is, giving worship "to the sun god." The "*Soli Deo*" has now gone so far that only the sun is left. Is that only a coincidence? The Protestants separated themselves from the Christ-bearer and passed from Christ to the sun².

The Orthodox Churches give us a counterexample. They have

² The word play on "*Soli Deo*" was a frequent staple of Fr. Kentenich's reflection on secondary causes. For instance, in 1966 he said:

"There is a word which we probably all know: *Soli Deo* – to God alone! (...) *Soli Deo!* What does that 'To God alone' mean? The saints are not God, so away with the saints! Mary is not God, so away with Mary! The God-Man also has a human nature, so away with that! *Soli Deo!* Naked mankind stands before the naked personal God, especially the Triune God of Revelation.

"*Soli Deo!* When we ask how it is that today's world has become so godless, we must truly say: because it has ignored and severed and divorced the natural order from its relationship with the living God. In the end, *Soli Deo* becomes: To whom do we give ourselves? To the sun god! (...)

"From here it is not at all hard to see how this sun-god, this nature-god takes on a whole new meaning. It can be the whims of the masses, can be the *Führer* leading his people. And now the word 'God' is emptied of all meaning. Why? Because the lower order has been pushed aside in our relationship with the eternal God." (Talk, September 11, 1966, in *Propheta locutus est*, Vol. 10, p. 128f.)

kept the Christ-bearer; their faith is firm and Christ remains firm. When Our Lady is seen in the light of faith, the divinity of Christ is most secure. The ordinary faithful cling to Mary. In the 4th century the theologians argued about the divinity of Christ. But the ordinary faithful remained true to Mary. They brought their loving prayers to their Mother and when the Council of Ephesus finally concluded, solemnly declaring that Christ was true God and Mary was truly the Christ-bearer, then the faithful rejoiced without end. Mary had saved Christ.

In the Middle Ages the Cathar sect³ spread like wildfire. Kings fought to destroy it. It was overcome by the Rosary. At the center of the Rosary is the Christ-bearer.

The strongest weapon of the Counter-reformation was forged in Our Lady's workshop: the Marian Sodality⁴. Do we not owe to the Sodality, and therefore to the Blessed Mother, the fact that most of Bavaria is Catholic today?

When we consider these facts, do we not discover that Mary is the official Christ-bearer? This is a theme which the Popes discuss in their encyclicals. Pope Pius IX did not save the world through his syllabus⁵, but through the dogmatization of the Immaculate Conception. And Mary showed her gratitude for this. Mary's answer was the dogmatization of the infallibility of the Pope⁶. Those who entrust themselves to the Blessed Mother are led by her to Christ.

c. Per Mariam ad Jesum – The Christ-bearer Leads us to Christ

If we apply this to life, new perspectives open up to us; it means for us to go the way of *Per Mariam ad Jesum – From Mary to Jesus*. There are some who think that this is a detour. Some want to go the

³ The Albigensian heresy centered in Southern France in the early 1200s.

⁴ The Marian Sodality was founded in 1563 in Rome by Father John Leunis, SJ, and became an important part of the spiritual revival of the Catholic Church after the Council of Trent. See *New Vision and Life* (2004), p. 68-70.

⁵ Bl. Pope Pius IX, Syllabus of Modern Errors, December 8, 1864.

⁶ Which took place in 1870 at Vatican Council I. See Pope St. Pius X on this in his encyclical *Ad diem illum laetissimum*, February 2, 1904; Benedictine Monks of Solemnnes (ed.), *Papal Teachings: Our Lady* (Boston, 1961), No. 222.

way to Christ through mortification, humility, etc. These ways are good, but difficult. And how easily one loses the right path and becomes discouraged. Others throw themselves straight into the arms of Christ. But they soon notice the tremendous gap – on the one hand the infinite perfection of God, on the other how full of sins and failings we miserable human beings are. How can we bridge the gap? There are some who never overcome this difficulty and abandon the spiritual life they once bravely began. We turn to Mary. Because she is human like us, she completely knows our weakness and misery. We let her, our Mother, take us by the hand to her Son, the Divine Savior. Mary is the official Christ-bearer. She will also bear Christ into our hearts. She is the best and surest way to Christ.

Is there a “Marian asceticism⁷” as the Bavarian pastors fear? There is no such thing as Marian asceticism if one means “Mary only.” In our sense of the word, Marian asceticism is a true Christ-centered asceticism. If Mary fills my whole heart then I can be certain that I will come to Christ. Mother and Child cannot be separated. And because it is Mary's office to be Christ-bearer, she must lead to Christ. The opposite is also true. If I am inwardly totally on fire for Christ, then the normal development of my spiritual life will soon lead me to Mary. If I receive Our Lord in Holy Communion and see Christ in the light of faith, then I will eventually ask myself: Where did this food come from; who gave it to me? And then Mary is not far away.

Mary is the Christ-bearer and the easiest way to Christ. We recognize more and more that the entire supernatural world is a great organism through which we must pass. Therefore Marian devotion must be an essential element for members of the Federation. One of the fruits of this workshop should be the resolution: In the future I will try to acquire a still deeper Marian devotion. Marian devotion must be the formal principle⁸ of our Federation. It follows that there

⁷ That is, a Marian discipline or spirituality.

⁸ That is, not just an outward feature, but its very “soul.” See Fr. Kentenich, talk of January 10, 1963: “I think we must say that Marian devotion [is] the *formal* principle of our entire movement (...). *Form* principle or formative principle means

is no contradiction between love of Mary and love of Jesus. True Catholic love of Mary leads to love of Christ and vice versa.

d. As Christ-bearer, Mary is Patroness of the Church

Because Mary is the official Christ-bearer, she is also the patroness of the Church. Mary brings us the new life we have in Christ. We became members of Christ through Mary.

Our Lord was poor and weak. Mary clothed and nourished him. The first Adam was so vibrant, while the second is poor and weak. Our Lord is an image of fallen man. Is it not at least probable that Mary cares for each Christian exactly as she cared for her beloved Son Jesus? Of course, the deepest reason is:

1. We are members of the mystical body of Christ.
2. Mary is the Mother of Christ, including his mystical body.
3. She is therefore our Mother, too, and patroness of the Church.

When the most recent popes present Our Lady as the patroness of the Church, they are saying that Mary is the patroness of the Church as the Mother of God.

But if Mary is the patroness of the whole Church, [is she not] also [patroness] of each member and therefore my patroness, too? Does it not follow that Mary is the easiest and surest way to Christ? After all, that is her task as patroness. Does this not urge us to regive the world to Mary, so that she can lead everyone to Christ again?

This was the spirit which inspired us back when our sodalists went out into the barracks and battlefields to spread our Marian spirit. It is mirrored again in the letters and expressed in the prayer we had printed on our stationary:

“Mother Thrice Admirable, Mother of Grace,
Teach us your enemies bravely to face,
Never regarding their number and might,

a thought, a truth that wants to form practical life. (...) *Formal* principle – and there may be more than one – means *tota in toto* [totally in every part]. Exactly [like the question] “Where is my soul?” The entire soul is in every part totally and totally in every part. (...) Applied to us: Marian devotion is at work in some way or another everywhere, in all our actions.” [emphasis modified]

Spreading your love over the earth’s dark night,
So that the world through you made new
Pay to your Son His homage due⁹.”

Our soul longs for Christ. The MTA intensifies this longing. Many of us already have a personal relationship with Christ, but the longing to love Christ must also increase the intensity of our longing for Mary.

⁹ Prayer written by Fr. Kentenich in 1916. See *Heavenwards* (Waukesha, 1992), p. 172f.

Fifth Conference

We want to try to set the right fundamental tone¹ that helps us grow in unity. Before proceeding, let me address a few odds and ends.

Someone asked: Is it not unbalanced to do a whole workshop on the *Marian* person? Wouldn't it be better to talk about the *Catholic* person? This question is justified. But let me say that while every Catholic is devoted to Mary, not every Catholic is a Marian person. Whatever a Marian person does must be thoroughly Catholic, but it is not required of every Catholic to be Marian to the degree we [in the Federation] should and must be. It is not unbalanced because hidden threads connect the Blessed Mother to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These hidden threads reach into every circumstance of life and into the world. This is something a Marian person must know.

There are many saints in the Church, but few are Marian saints *per eminentiam*². To conduct a whole workshop on Mary is not one-sided because someone who is Marian to such a high degree will be interiorly connected to the [whole] supernatural world.

e. Forming the Marian person; Popular Piety

The object of our workshop is not so much to get to know the Marian person as to *form* the Marian person.

The thoughts from last night were meant to retune the out-of-tune instruments. I remind you of the meeting of sodality directors where the difficulty was raised: "How shall we love Mary since we do not yet completely know Christ? On earth we shall never attain this, not even in heaven. After all, Mary is only one way to Christ." The Franciscan priest was indignant about the excesses of Marian

¹ German: *Grundstimmung*, literally "fundamental mood." It is the atmosphere generated by sharing the same ideals and the conviction of experience.

² In the original transcript, Fr. Kentenich uses the Greek term *katexochen*, meaning: at its sharpest and most definite, the ultimate.

devotion. But as long as we are Catholic, in tune with the teachings of the Church, then excesses are not possible. *De Maria numquam satis!* [Of Mary never enough!]³ It is a master stroke of God's educational skill that he gives the Catholic faithful such a great love of Mary. God makes use of our need for a mother so that through Mary we are drawn closer to Christ.

We must not ridicule the Marian devotion of the people, otherwise we will end up with only a naked trunk like in post-Reformation Protestantism, or in the time of Josephinism⁴. If we are unhappy that so many devotional objects have found their way into the Marian devotion of our people, we must remember that this is an expression of the interior attitude of the popular soul. People need the impulses which come from outward expressions. We should not cut them down as some priests do – to their own harm! – but use them to inspire a tender Marian devotion. Let us learn this from the greatest educator of all, God himself.

To profoundly grasp this truth – that Mary is the Christ-bearer – we must tackle the resistance in ourselves and others. Both core ideas – Mary as Christ-bearer and Mary as patroness of the Church – were topics in the first years of the *MTA* [Magazine]⁵. As we came to understand [these things] we overcame the difficulties and were led, totally unconsciously, to Christ.

The ascetical masters say that if I want to come to Christ, I must practice self-denial, humility, love of neighbor, etc. All of this is fine, but the Marian person says: If I want to come to Christ, I must go to Mary. What God has joined together, let no man rend asunder (cf Mt 19,6). Therefore, you will not find Christ anywhere except near Mary, in Mary, with Mary.

³ Attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux. See *Mary, Our Mother and Educator*, p. 175. See also *True Devotion to Mary*, No. 10.

⁴ Church policies of Catholic Emperor Joseph II (reigned 1765-90) in Austria-Hungary. Josephinism insisted on state supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs, and excluded devotions from the life of the Church.

⁵ The *MTA Magazine* of the Schoenstatt Sodality. Referred to are the issues of the 1916, 1917, 1918, and 1919. Publication began in March 1916. See *New Vision and Life*, p. 146-148.

This was the way which the first [Schoenstatt] sodalists took (see Volume 1 of the *MTA*). The Marian person tries to grasp how the supernatural world is interiorly connected. He sees in Mariology the compendium of all doctrine.

He also sees that there are many ways to Christ, but that the way through Mary is the easiest and surest. He understands when Pope Pius X writes: “There is no easier means to uniting the world to Christ than Mary⁶.” Therefore the Marian person not only does apostolate in the spirit of Mary, but also does apostolate that *promotes Marian devotion*. If Marian devotion is the best means for me to reach Christ, then it is also the best means of joining the world to Christ. “Mother Thrice Admirable, Mother of grace...” This prayer contains our whole spirit and our whole program.

What conclusions should we draw? Does this mean we should race blindly into Marian devotion? No, ease your way into it. If Marian devotion is the formal principle for the Marian person, then it is the formal principle for every stage of development.

2. *Mary as Coredemptrix*

Back to the Marian person. The Marian person is a person who understands the role of Mary in the work of redemption as deeply as possible in the spirit of faith. At this point we want to move more deeply into understanding the Marian person.

a. *Radicalism in Marian Understanding and Living*

The Marian person understands Mary’s role in the work and plan of redemption. He contemplates her as one of the redeemed and as Coredemptrix.

Today I will present the “radicalism”⁷ of Marian understanding and Marian living.

The radicalism of Marian understanding is: Mary is the Mediatrix

⁶ Pope St. Pius X, encyclical *Ad diem illum laetissimum*, February 2, 1904; in: *Papal Teachings: Our Lady*, No. 224, see also Nos. 227, 234. See also *True Devotion to Mary*, No. 152-168.

⁷ German: *Radikalismus*, that is, unconditional to the highest degree.

of all Graces.

The radicalism of Marian living is the De Montfort act⁸.

b. *Dogmatic Foundations for Mary as Mediatrix*

Our topic is the radicalism of Marian understanding. What do we mean when we say Mary is Mediatrix of all Graces? I shall proceed in two steps:

- i. Mary cooperates to some degree in the work of redemption.
- ii. To what degree does she cooperate?

i. *The Fact of Mary’s Cooperation*

We conduct this proof with the help of the Protogospel: “Because you (the devil) have done this (seduced the woman and thereby plunged all mankind into perdition), I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers. She will crush your head while you strike at her heel” (Gen 3,15). In its context it means, as the early fathers point out⁹: Because you have caused man and woman to sin, I will strike you with the same weapon you have used. A woman will come and next to the woman will appear a man. Both will lead the world back to God. These are the weapons which will humiliate the devil and reclaim the prize of victory. It follows that man and woman must be a team for the duration of the battle. This battle has three phases:

- (1) The Incarnation.
- (2) The Redeeming Deed of the cross.
- (3) Individual Redemption, that is, the communication of the fruit of redemption to the individual.

If this is true, then it necessarily follows that the Blessed Mother must accompany Our Lord in this battle. In fact, she must accompany him for the duration of the battle: at the Incarnation, at the Redeeming

⁸ Marian consecration in the form promoted by St. Louis de Montfort.

⁹ See the Eve-Mary parallel of St. Justin Martyr (see Gambero, p. 46-48), St. Irenaeus of Lyons (p. 53-58), Tertullian (p. 66), St. Athanasius (p. 107), St. Ephrem (p. 116f), St. Epiphanius (p. 124f, 128-130), St. Cyril of Jerusalem (p. 135, 139), etc.

Deed of the cross, and in the bestowal of redemption on each individual.

Pope Pius X expressed it this way: From the first moment there existed an intimate connection of life – and suffering – between Jesus and Mary¹⁰. In other words, Our Lady will accompany Christ as long as the battle lasts. This includes the cross. I must not see Mary's role as concentrated only on the first moment, on the Incarnation. Early Christian thinking also saw Mary as assisting at the cross. The Vulgate translates *ipsa*: “*she* will crush your head” (Gen 3,15). In other words, Mary also had a share in the Redeeming Deed. However, this truth was not further explored in antiquity. But Mary's cooperation in the Incarnation gives the foundation for her cooperation in Redemption. I need to demonstrate this, at least briefly.

The Gospels paint this image of Mary for us: The *Ave* in her ear, the *Magnificat* on her lips, the Divine Child in her arms, the tongues of the Spirit over her head. This is how Mary stands before us. When the *Ave* reached the ear of our Mother it had a unique sound. The ancient fathers have so many beautiful things to say about this! And we find it reflected in dogmatic theology. See how the angel works to present to Mary the commission to be the Mother of God. He wishes to gain the Virgin's free consent. He gives her reasons and tries to dispel her misgivings. The angel points out the Child's task: he shall redeem the people. The fathers point out three moments:

(1) *First Phase: The Incarnation*

Our Lord not only wanted to become man, but wanted the con-

¹⁰ Pope St. Pius X, encyclical *Ad diem illum laetissimum*, February 2, 1904; in: *Papal Teachings: Our Lady*, No. 227: “Who more than His Mother could have a far-reaching knowledge of the admirable mysteries of the birth and childhood of Christ, and above all the mystery of the Incarnation, which is the beginning and foundation of faith? She not only ‘kept in her heart’ (Lk 2,19-51) the events of Bethlehem and what took place in Jerusalem in the Temple of the Lord, but sharing as she did the thoughts and secret wishes of Christ, she may be said to have lived the very life of her Son. Hence nobody ever knew Christ so profoundly as she did, and nobody can ever be more competent as a guide and teacher of the knowledge of Christ.”

scious consent of his Mother. The fathers say: If Mary had not given her consent, the world would not have been redeemed. This goes quite far, but we can see that the fathers wanted to stress the consent of our Mother. In fact, they also stressed [that her *fiat* was] a yes to the work of redemption. For the angel said to her: This Child will be the Redeemer. When she consents, Mary is also consenting to the suffering of her Son. In every joy and sorrow, Mary gave her consent with a simple *fiat*. She gave her consent out of love for us and for our redemption. The angel is extremely clear that the Child will be the redeemer of the world. The Blessed Mother gave her *fiat*: I give my yes, gladly and joyfully, to be the Mother of God.

This is, briefly, the opinion of antiquity. How emphatically did the fathers proclaim this truth to the people, and how gladly the people accepted it! God spoke the first *fiat*, Mary the second. The result of the first *fiat* was the natural world. The result of the second was the supernatural world. Does this not increase still more the awe and reverence we have in our hearts for Mary? In any case it is clear that Mary cooperated in the first stage of the battle. Pope Leo XIII calls this opinion *sententia verissima*¹¹.

(2) *Second Phase: The Redeeming Work of the Cross*

This conviction of the fathers contains the seed for the insight regarding Mary's cooperation in the sacrifice of the cross¹². What God begins, he continues in keeping with the axiom: *Sine poenitentia sunt opera Dei*¹³. Since he began the work of redemption with Mary, one can reasonably suppose that Mary will have a cooperative role in the Redeeming Deed of the cross. The interpretation of the Protogospel supports this assumption. Pius X, the great Eucharistic and Marian

¹¹ A most true position. See for instance Pope Leo XIII, encyclical *Octobri mense*, September 22, 1891 (*Papal Teachings: Our Lady*, No. 113) and encyclical *Fidentem Piumque*, September 20, 1896 (No. 194).

¹² Seminal insights include those of St. Ambrose (see Gambero, p. 202f) and St. John Damascene (p. 405f).

¹³ God's works are without repentance, that is, if he begins a work he does not relent until it is accomplished in a way consistent with its beginning.

Pope, said: Our Lady was not at his side as a spectator, but as a spiritual helpmate. In this way she earned the title Restorer of the World¹⁴.

(3) *Third Phase: Individual Redemption*

We have tried to prove that the Blessed Mother must have and indeed does have a share in the work of redemption.

Does it not necessarily follow that Our Lady must also have a share in the redemption of each individual (subjective redemption)?

ii. *The Degree of Mary's Cooperation*

Our second question is: What is her role in redemption? First, what is it not?¹⁵

1. Mary cannot be the Redeemer, because she herself was redeemed. *Nemo est causa sui ipsius* [No one can be his own cause].
2. She cannot be Coredemptrix as an equal to Christ.
3. Nor is any cooperative action of hers the direct cause.

So how is Mary's role as Coredemptrix to be understood? There are two opinions.

¹⁴ See Pope St. Pius X, encyclical *Ad diem illum laetissimum*, February 2, 1904; in: *Papal Teachings: Our Lady*, especially No. 231-233: "Moreover, it was not only the glory of the Mother of God to have presented to God the Only-Begotten (...) the material by which he was prepared as a Victim for the salvation of mankind, but hers also was the office of tending and nourishing that Victim, and at the appointed time of offering Him at the altar. (...)

"When the supreme hour of the Son came, beside the cross of Jesus there stood Mary, His Mother, not merely occupied in contemplating the cruel spectacle, but rejoicing that her only Son was offered for the salvation of mankind; and so entirely participating in His Passion that, if it has been possible 'she would have gladly borne all the torments that her Son underwent' (St. Bonaventure).

"From this community of will and suffering between Christ and Mary 'she merited to become most worthily the reparatrix of the lost world' (Eadmer, *De Excellentia Virg. Mariae*, c. 9) and dispensatrix of all the gifts that our Savior purchased for us by His death and by His blood."

¹⁵ For a more detailed text by Fr. Kentenich on this theme, see J. Kentenich, *With Mary into the New Millennium* (Waukesha, 2001), p. 71-74 (from a retreat for priests in 1941).

(1) *Billot's Position*¹⁶

Mary's *fiat* made redemption possible. Because she stood at the foot of the cross and offered up the God-man, she earned the right to be Mediatrix of all graces. But how is this possible? Redemption was wrought by Christ, but the distribution of the graces of redemption is made easier through Mary because she participated in the Redeeming Deed. Mary is accordingly the easiest way to Christ.

(2) *Scheeben's position*¹⁷

Scheeben goes further. Our Mother's cooperation at the foot of the cross moved God to more joyfully accept the redeeming merits of our Savior. She cooperated by emotionally surrendering her Son, over whom she disposed as her possession, to his redeeming death; indeed she made the sacrifice with full consent and thus fully participated in Christ's sufferings. Even here it is the blood of the Savior which is the sole cause of redemption. One does not need to go so far [to promote Mary's role at the expense of Christ's role as sole mediator].

(3) *Fr. Kentenich's synthesis*

In my view, this teaching is theologically certain. But what is the significance of Mary's universal mediation for the ascetical life and for our pastoral work? [If we take this teaching seriously,] Mary will assume a more prominent role. Our trust in her will grow. I remind you of the successes of such Marian priests as Hofbauer and Vincent Pallotti. How my reverence grows, my trust, my love for Mary, if I am firmly convinced of [her universal mediation]¹⁸!

¹⁶ Cardinal Louis Billot, SJ (1846-1931), French theologian at the Gregorian University in Rome, elevated to Cardinal in 1911.

¹⁷ Fr. Matthias Joseph Scheeben (1835-1888), prominent German theologian and mariologist.

¹⁸ This sentence reflects Fr. Kentenich's understanding of Marian devotion. To him the act of such devotion revolved around reverence, trust, and love. See for instance his letter to Professor Arnold Rademacher, April 8, 1917: "The *act* of Marian devotion is *formaliter simplex, virtualiter triplex* or, to express it somewhat unphilosophically, consists of three components: reverence, trust, love. The formal

A pastor worried [that the teaching of Mary's universal mediation would diminish] the Holy Spirit's mediation of grace. How superficial! Our heavenly Mother can only mediate graces through the power of her intercession. Nor does this teaching claim that grace is accessible to us if one turns to her in prayer. A mother also gives when she is not asked. However, if I know the principle that she implores all graces, then I will give myself entirely to the Blessed Mother, and I receive all the more graces.

I recommend the book: *The Soul of the Apostolate* by Chautard¹⁹. It discusses things just as we do in our Federation. The author shows how the interior life is joined to the apostolate, and he underscores the role of Our Lady in a most beautiful manner. Chautard also accepts Mary's mediation of graces²⁰.

object of the individual components is Our Lady in her greatness (as Queen), her might (as Advocate), and her love (as Mother).”

¹⁹ Fr. Jean-Baptiste Chautard, OCSO (1858-1935), Cistercian (Trappist) abbot of Sept-Fons in France. *The Soul of the Apostolate* (a favorite book of Pope St. Pius X and others) shows how prayer must be the soul of every apostolic work.

²⁰ See also careful distinction between Mary's role and that of Christ in Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen gentium*, No. 62.

Sixth Conference

What is the Marian person? We are still discussing the essential definition. The Marian person is the person who, in the light and spirit of faith, understands as completely as possible the position of Our Lady in the work of redemption and – constantly and to the last consequence – translates it into practical life, in order to become a Marian apostle.

Part II: To Permanently Shape My Practical Life

The second part of the definition says: Marian devotion must encompass one's entire practical life. We now want to take a moment to contemplate the life of the Marian person as he forms it in keeping with his understanding. Thus far we have talked about a twofold understanding of Mary: We have gotten to know her as one of the redeemed and as Coredemptrix. The Marian person takes seriously to the last consequence the role of the Blessed Mother as one of the redeemed and, most especially, as Coredemptrix.

A. The Marian Person and Mary's Role as Coredemptrix

Our entire confidence in Our Lady rests in the fact that she is Coredemptrix. We hear the invocation “Pray for us” in churches everywhere. But just as the life of the Marian person is deeper and broader, so too is his act of confidence. His is an unconditional, almost blind trust in Mary. [Example:] “I even entrust to you the stockings which are hanging on the line to dry. And so far not a single one has been misplaced¹.” This was a true Marian person. Everyone who is Catholic even a little trusts in Mary, but the act of

¹ Reference to an experience of one of the first Schoenstatt sodalists during World War I. A similar passage from Fr. Kentenich's talk of April 7, 1929 sheds a bit more light: “[Mary defends] my trust! For us this has always been true. Just leaf through the old issues of the *MTA [Magazine]*. In the war one of us entrusted to Mary his stockings hanging on the fence, and she took care...”

confidence of the Marian person is much deeper, broader, and more radical.

Whoever trusts in Mary in even such small matters, will also have spoken with her about the greater ones. Recall, for instance, the discernment of one's vocation, which some of you are still doing. Let us go to Mary, casting ourselves totally into her arms and expecting all things from her. The *Ave Maris Stella*² puts it so beautifully when it says, "*Vitam praesta puram*"³. I know that when I receive graces, they come to me through Mary. The Blessed Mother will implore for us the pure life. And is not the pure life the necessary prerequisite for every vocation? Let us turn to Mary with complete trust, and then see which grace attracts us. We are so unhappy because we follow so little our God-willed vocation. But if I do not lead a pure life, then God will not cooperate. *Vitam praesta puram*. Let us teach others to pray this too.

Somewhere there are seminarians who cannot muster a firm faith in their vocation to the priesthood. They are plagued by great difficulties before ordination to the subdiaconate⁴: Will I be able to persevere in the sacrifice of celibacy? We then pray to Mary: *Vitam praesta puram!* I know, if I receive grace, it is through Mary. So, go to her, so that I may preserve my purity or reconquer it. Priesthood and virginal purity cannot be separated. And this requires a constant struggle, also later as a priest. Holy purity is of such importance in keeping our spirit fresh and supple, especially in the years of preparation [for ordination]. The pure life is the best foundation for successful studies.

When, some day, we become teachers or educators in a boarding school, and see how the productivity of the one or the other falters, we should not always suppose that the reason is laziness as much as

² *Hail, Star of the Sea*, traditional Latin hymn to Mary. The hymn, dating back to at least the 9th century, has 7 four-line verses.

³ *Ave Maris Stella*, verse 6, line 1: "Keep our life pure."

⁴ At that time the first of the major orders was ordination as a subdeacon (followed by ordination as a deacon and then as a priest). Hence the crucial nature of reaching clarity about one's vocation before the subdiaconate.

it could be difficulties in the area of holy purity. *Vitam praesta puram!* How necessary it is to lead young people to [holy purity], especially today! If I want to form a holy clergy, then I must especially see to it that the youth preserves their holy purity.

Mary even helps in one's studies. It is said that the words *Ave Maria* are found on almost every page of the manuscripts of St. Thomas [Aquinas]. Did not Mary help him because he thought of her so much? Suarez⁵ was so dumb as a boy but later became the greatest theologian of his time (in fact, he always said this came about because of the Mother of God). Why should Mary not help us? Why should she not also enlighten our minds? Is this not an area where we theology students are affected to some degree by Protestantism?

"*Iter para tutum!*"⁶ We expect Mary's help in discerning our vocation. For most of us the decision has already been made. But from time to time it is good to reexamine it. As necessary prerequisites the vocation to the priesthood requires:

1. an inclination of the heart,
2. the necessary intellectual and moral qualifications,
3. the acceptance of a bishop.

Mary must help us when parents are pushing us to be priests. *Iter para tutum!* We pray to Mary that she will arrange everything so that we truly have a vocation and that we reach the priesthood. There are many difficulties to overcome, for instance, the attraction to the opposite sex. Mary must help us through her example. She is the pure, chaste Bride of God who is untouched by any stain of original sin. Let us strive to see in every girl a sister of our heavenly Mother. Then we will easily overcome many difficulties.

"*Ut videntes Jesum!*"⁷ Mary must teach us to see Jesus in every person, to do everything for Jesus, and, holding her motherly hand, to bring everyone closer to Jesus each day.

⁵ Fr. Francisco Suarez, SJ (1548-1617), Spanish Jesuit and leading theologian of the Counter-reformation.

⁶ *Ave Maris Stella*, verse 6, line 2: "Make our paths sure."

⁷ *Ave Maris Stella*, verse 6, line 3: "So that we see Jesus."

“*Semper collaetemur!*”⁸ Then a holy joy will always vibrate in our heart, a joy whose origin is in heaven. This is how the Marian person unites with Mary in every circumstance of his life. He carries out all his works trusting in her help. He is firmly convinced: “*Servus Mariae numquam peribit!*”⁹ Because the Marian person has such a great trust in Mary, he is carefree. He gives Mary everything he has. He places all of his merits at her disposal in the De Montfort act. This thought takes particular form in the capital of grace. The attitude is not one of groveling, but this: whoever is a completely Marian person gives everything for his beloved heavenly Mother.

Comments Regarding Work in the Groups

In this workshop we are sketching the ideal, the summit of the mountain which you should see. Therefore, take the resolution home with you: I want to make a greater effort. The leaders must have this clear [for themselves] and must reach the point where they can help the others strive for it, little by little. Then what unites us all will be our Marian apostolic orientation. Otherwise the only ones who can work together in a group in the long run will be the ones who have gone through the same development. While this might be fine in the seminary, it will not work later on.

At this point it is not yet necessary to be striving for the ideal, but we must depart from here with the resolution: in the future I will occupy myself with Mary more than I have in the past. Some will make more progress than others. But what must unite us is the Marian apostolic orientation. This is the Marian person who has put into practice what he understands with his mind, and not only in one stage of his growth, but in every stage, his whole life through.

⁸ *Ave Maris Stella*, verse 6, line 4: “Always rejoicing together.”

⁹ Latin: A servant of Mary will never perish. This saying was given a prominent place in the Schoenstatt Shrine in 1919, in the light frame made by Fritz Esser (1900-1924) of the founding generation. The expression can be traced back to St. Anselm of Canturbury.

B. The Marian person and Mary’s role as One of the Redeemed

Mary’s position also shows us that Mary is one of the redeemed. Mary is a creature like we are, redeemed by the same graces as us.

And yet she is so much higher than we are. Cardinal Newman¹⁰ says of her: “If Mary would appear before us, we would never be able to stop admiring her beauty.” How selfish we are when we go to Mary. We must always say “Pray for us!” The totally unselfish Marian person takes delight in praising and glorifying Mary. He decorates her images and her chapels.

But if Our Lady stands before my mind’s eye so decorated in the light of beauty and the dignity with her glorious virtues, then it will also force me to order my life entirely according to Mary, so as to become a thoroughly Marian person. Her example of virtue will lead me to Jesus, for the image of Mary is a likeness of Christ. Yes, whoever is fond of Mary as a Marian person will shape his life according to the Blessed Mother.

How the faith-imbued Middle Ages tried to put this into action! I remind you only of St. Bernard and his glowing love of Mary, and of Dante¹¹. Yes, Dante was a thoroughly Marian person. In his *Purgatorio* he instructs the suffering souls to turn to Our Lady. He portrays the suffering of the poor souls as the torment by the feeling of how far away their lives are from the high ideal of the Mother of God. Among those suffering is one who tells him he was saved at the last moment by Mary’s intercession. When [Dante] speaks of Mary it is with great enthusiasm, and in the final hymn his love echos in the prayer [he places on the lips] of St. Bernard.

The Marian person takes Marian devotion to wide horizons and deep chasms, especially in his trust in her. He constantly lauds and praises Mary. Love of Mary becomes a habit for him. She is the

¹⁰ Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890), celebrated Anglican convert and member of the Oxford Movement who became a Catholic priest and prominent English theologian.

¹¹ Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), Italian poet most famous for his masterpiece *The Divine Comedy* with its three parts: *Inferno* (Hell), *Purgatorio* (Purgatory), and *Paradiso* (Paradise).

fundamental tenor¹² of his soul, constantly alive. This fundamental tenor accompanies him even to the highest mystical heights.

The question will now arise in us: When am I a Marian person? I am not yet a Marian person when looking to Our Lady does not shake me from my lethargy, when as it does not give me the strength to overcome temptation, when it does not give me courage and strength for a constant fulfillment of my vocation in life.

Part III: So As to Become a Holy Apostle

The definition goes on to say, "...so as to become a holy apostle." We are already familiar with this part¹³. We apostles must be Catholics *per eminentiam*. But a successful apostolic activity presupposes sanctity. And sanctity only grows to the extent that we venerate Mary. With Mary one makes more progress in a month than without Mary in a whole year¹⁴.

To separate Mary from the apostolate would mean to separate [my life] from an essential point of the faith. For his part, the one who venerates Mary becomes all-powerful over the heart of the Mother.

¹² German: *Grundstimmung*.

¹³ See for instance, Fr. Kentenich's definition of a lay apostle in the introductory workshop of August 24-28, 1921 (unpublished transcript, 33 pages): "A *lay apostle* is an apostle who works constantly and with all natural and supernatural means for the salvation of souls, either indirectly through moral and religious influence (prayer and example), or directly through active initiatives on behalf of the solid continuance and unobstructed effectiveness of the institutions whose direct purpose is the promotion of the salvation of others' souls" (p. 8).

¹⁴ As in *True Devotion to Mary*, No. 222: "By this [true Marian] devotion, faithfully observed, you will give more glory to Christ in a month than by any other, however difficult, in many years." See J. Kentenich, *Mary, Our Mother and Educator*, p. 66.

Seventh Conference

What distinguishes this workshop from the ones before it is the true Marian spirit that wafts in and around us. I think that our ways of relating to the heavenly Mother are becoming more and more tender and heartfelt. We seem to be closing the gap more and more between us and Mary. Now would be the time to hear that the Federation is truly a work of Our Lady. But I must leave that for you to tell each other.

Mary, Master of Prayer

What I now want to do is round out the image of our heavenly Mother. Mary stands before us with the *Ave* in her ear, the child on her arms, the *Magnificat* on her lips, the sevenfold sword in her heart, and the tongues of fire over her head.

Yes, the *Magnificat* on her lips! In this prayer Mary poured out her whole soul. It expresses her whole interior life, but especially her prayer life. And we should pray as Mary prayed.

Prayer is called the breathing of the soul¹. What good is our physical life and all our actions if we stop breathing? We must then certainly die. What good is all our idealism, if our souls do not breathe? Then we are spiritually dead.

The saints often speak of the usefulness and the necessity of prayer. "Whoever does not pray is already damned; he already carries hell inside of him wherever he goes²." After all, he is no longer breathing. Now we know that prayer is nothing other than the connatural sharing and conversing [of the soul] with the Most Blessed Trinity. God speaks to us through these promptings.

¹ Cf. statements by St. John Vianney (1786-1859), "When we love God, prayer will become as familiar to us as breathing" (Sermons II, p. 63 and 32), and Bl. Jean Gabriel Perboire (1802-1840).

² Cf. St. Alphonsus Ligouri, *Del gran mezzo della preghiera*, as cited in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City, 1992), No. 2744: "Those who pray are certainly saved; those who do not pray are certainly damned."

We would expect that, as a masterpiece of redemption and as the Mother of the Redeemer, Mary would have learned how to pray the best. She was so intimately connected to God. If we had the same intimate connection to God, we would also attain the masterpiece of the spiritual life.

So many of our newly ordained priests complain that they regress in their spiritual life when they start to work pastorally. Why? Because they do not process their pastoral experiences on a firm enough interior foundation. In the pastoral work Federation priests often feel cast off by God; they have begun to work pastorally before the interior connection with God has become a [stable] condition. Once this connection to God has become a habit, then the outward activity strengthens the connection to God. Let us work toward helping the coming generation take more seriously the goal of developing an intimate connection with God at an earlier stage.

Prayer is also a grace. As a result, pray often and ardently for the grace of prayer. Mary, teach us how to pray! Give us the grace of prayer! She responds, “Think about how the Holy Spirit taught me to pray!”

The Magnificat – Model of Mary’s Prayer

How did Mary pray? Let us look at the Magnificat. This great prayer reveals to us the soul of the Mother of God.

Magnificat anima mea Dominum! [My soul proclaims the greatness of my Lord!] (Lk 1,46). Prayer is a conversation with God inside of me. Therefore when I pray, I should be in God. St. Paul says, “Whoever wishes to pray, must pray in the Holy Spirit” (cf Eph 6,18). In the Holy Spirit we must pray, “Abba, Father.” This is the key which should reform our prayer life. And so, the Holy Spirit is the one who speaks inside of us with unspeakable groanings, “Abba, Father” (cf Rom 8,15.26).

Prayer is often difficult for us. We want to pray as self-activity. In the long run this will tire us and make us sick. It is only possible to pray well in the Holy Spirit. St. Francis de Sales often prayed, “Come to me, Holy Spirit, and pray in me, for I cannot.” If my prayer life is only self-activity, then it takes an enormous effort, more

than even giving lectures. Instead of tormenting myself I must let the Holy Spirit pray. Now, if the Holy Spirit is not helping me, I am forced to try to set the fundamental tenor of prayer myself. But then I will pray [as a matter of obligation] and only count the minutes until I’m done. During such times my will is connected to God [but not my heart].

For those who think it is a good suggestion for them, there is benefit in weakening the sentiment³ here and there, in order to prepare for the times of dryness.

If we would only let the Holy Spirit work in us this way, then our prayer would get easier and easier. In the end what will remain in us will be the spirit of prayer, [even] when verbal prayer becomes a chore. Therefore, if I really want to pray seriously and interiorly, then the Holy Spirit must do it. Therefore put a lot of emphasis on recollection. Implore the Holy Spirit and ask Mary for the grace of prayer.

The book “The Interior Life” describes very nicely the difference between prayer and apostolic activity. If I am active as an apostle, I must draw my strength from the supernatural world. Only those can still save the world who are deeply united with the Primary Cause. God wants to save the world and he accepts as instruments those who are most perfect. God uses us as instruments. But we will only accomplish something when we are deeply connected to God.

Et exultavit... [He has lifted up the lowly...] (Lk 1,52). Mary rejoices because God has made his dwelling in her; we, too, should be constantly aware that the Holy Spirit dwells in us through sanctifying grace and will protect the treasure [of this life] like the apple of his eye.

Respexit humilitatem ancillae suae... [He has looked upon the lowliness of his handmaid...] (Lk 1,48). These words show so correctly the magnitude of our heavenly Mother’s profound humility. She knows how great she is, but she remains humble. This is true spirit of prayer. It is not found in the Pharisee reciting his long

³ Probably meant in the sense of emotional consolation.

prayers (Lk 8,9-14), but only in souls who are truly humble. Like Mary we have received our vocation from God. We are not better than the others.

Fecit mihi magna... [He has done great things for me] (Lk 1,49a). Her soul meditates on the Almighty, the All-holy. When I want to pray, I must meditate on God as the Almighty, the All-holy. *Quotidiane vilescunt!* [Familiarity breeds contempt]. We often pray without any reverence, without praying to God.

As priests we must set aside a time of connectedness to God every day. We want to imprint this deeply into the soul! If our life is not to end up totally devoid of God, then we must absolutely set aside a time for meditation and keep it. The soul must inhale and exhale.

Et sanctum nomen ejus... [And holy is his name] (Lk 1,49b). Who can lift his eyes to the God who is holy? We are full of sins and failings. Mary was immaculately pure and without blemish, without failings. She could do it – and we? We can be happy when we are washed clean in confession. And yet we [have the need to] cast ourselves into this abyss of weakness, into the abyss of God's holiness. [If we do,] then everything will turn out all right. *Abyssus abyssum invocat...* [deep is calling unto deep...] (Ps 42,8) – then I have the [way to] holiness.

Now the petitions will probably flow more spontaneously from our hearts. After all, we know that Our Lady is the Mediatrix of all graces. Joy fills our hearts. We now go home with the happy awareness: I have new graces for my vocation, for my intentions, for the Federation.

In the Marian Colloquium of Ingolstadt it was precisely the Marian atmosphere that gave [it] the position of power. We owe the entire Federation to Mary. Mary must remain in our midst. We ought to see that, in the eyes of our heavenly Mother, the entire community of the Federation is a holy throng.

Eighth Conference

Marian Saints

The Marian saints personify the fullness of the Marian person in life and action. Let me only mention as types of the Marian person: St. Clement Maria Hofbauer, St. Alphonsus Ligouri, and our venerable father [Vincent Pallotti].

From everything we have discussed thus far, we know that in the Federation we must become Marian persons. Let us learn how we can do it from these examples. The Federation can only use Marian persons. But *I* am the Federation! Now this does not mean that I am lord over the Federation; no, it means I must embody the Federation with my whole being. The idea of being active as an instrument of Mary in the moral and religious renewal of the world must find expression in my actions. In this way I must be a Marian person *per eminentiam*. We are not instruments of Mary in the sense that she simply uses us as she would, for instance, a broom, but in the sense that Our Lady, as Mediatrix of all graces, shares with us all the graces we need to attain our lofty goal.

Not only the Federation as such is an instrument of Mary, but also all those who founded it. All who founded it were thoroughly Marian persons. When they went forth from here into the barracks [of the war], all they had was a great love of Mary. The Federation sprouted from this mustard seed of love of Mary. It was decided at Hoerde to foster the love of Mary which the old Sodalists had. And our old Sodalists were Marian persons. Think about Engling, Brunner, Wormer, etc.¹

¹ Joseph Engling, Max Brunner, und Hans Wormer, who all died in World War I. For short biographies of these three, see *New Vision and Life*, p. 166-176.

*Tenth (Concluding) Conference*¹

The Image of Mary in Our Hearts

For the last time we kneel before the picture of our heavenly Mother. We must bid her farewell. I am reminded of a painting by Schiestl. A hermit is forced to flee; he leaves behind everything; the only thing he takes with him is a picture of Mary. If the Mother is with him, nothing bad can happen to him. One of you told me, "I'm beginning to feel homesick! It is as if I have been transported back to the place of my childhood. The childhood faith which I lost in the bustle of the world has reawakened. I take the image of my Mother with me back into the world."

Our older Federation brothers have a point in their spiritual daily order to make a spiritual pilgrimage [every day] to the Shrine. Let us take the image with us in our hearts; let us unite everything spiritually with our heavenly Mother, with our Shrine. We have been united by the idea of Mary. This is how it was in the Sodality². It drew the Sodalists back again and again. It is also how it should be with our Sodality prayers. We want to gather spiritually in the Shrine.

I can sense that some of you have your misgivings: "I have been here many times already but I do not find my ideal image of the Mother of God. For me she is the woman with the crown on her head, riding on the clouds." [To which I answer:] We do not require that everyone have the same image of Our Lady. Everyone has a different image of Mary:

"An image is etched into my heart,
[An image so tender and wonderfully kind;
In which each devout soul can refresh itself:
It is the image of the Mother of Sorrows.
In good days and in bad,

¹ The last part of the Eighth Conference (part of which was given by Karl Kubisch) and the entire Ninth Conference (given by Ferdinand Kastner) have been omitted here.

² That is, in the original experiences of the founding generation, 1914-19.

I want to bear this image in my heart³.]

Let us keep this image of Mary. But can we not also find our childhood image of Mary embodied in the MTA picture? Does not our Mother of God ride upon the clouds? Does she not let us place the crown on her head? Or if you prefer the image of Mary as the "Orante"⁴, can you not also see this in our picture? The MTA can pray for us by interceding to Christ for us. And much depends on finding the great spirit of unity embodied in our picture. Every title finds its resonance in the image of the MTA.

Why do I tell you all of this? In order to tune the last strings in the harp of our hearts. Many of us brought so much that was out of tune. By now this should be overcome. It is already as if the "Regina Coeli Laetare"⁵ were resounding in our hearts in gratitude for the solution to our great difficulties. Before [this workshop] our souls lacked harmony because the whole dogmatic view of Mary was not something we had integrated in our lives. Those who can only say

³ From a popular Marian song, "Ein Bild ist mir ins Herz gegraben" (by "G. v. M."). The entire song has three verses, of which the first is translated above. The other two are:

O Mother of Sorrows, immaculate-pure,
You great Queen of Suffering!
With the bright radiance of your tears
Bring light into our souls, hearts, and minds,
So that we gladly accept each sorrow
And love Jesus more faithfully every day!

Mother, let your tears flow
Into every heart and devout spirit,
That wherever the sacrificial myrrh sprouts,
The rose of genuine love will bloom!
One day in death the final sigh
Will be my ardent thanks for all your tears.

⁴ Mary praying with her arms outstretched, a popular image of Mary in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s (including in the liturgical movement).

⁵ "Queen of Heaven, Rejoice," the Marian prayer used in the Easter season in place of the Angelus. In 1924 Easter was on April 20, so this talk (on April 16) was on Wednesday of Holy Week and still before the "Queen of Heaven" could be sung.

“Pray for us” have not yet grasped and interiorly acknowledged the position of Our Lady [in the work of salvation]. They must still learn to have reverence, trust, and love, in order to be able to pray will all their might, “Regina Coeli Laetare”!

Let us do as the hermit did; let us take the image of the MTA with us out into our everyday lives. Someone said that everyone is going home from the workshop transformed. Does not the transformation affect what is happening in my soul? Recall the words of Pope Pius X: The way of the Mother to Christ is the easiest way⁶. Processes of transformation normally take a long time. But is there not a way to make rapid transformation the norm? The saints tell us that there is such a way – Mary!⁷

If it is true that no grace is distributed except through Mary, if this principle is true, then Mary is the easiest, surest way to Christ. This is the opinion of Pius X, and it is my opinion, too. Let those who cannot make themselves say “Pray for us” examine themselves and see if this is not because things are out of tune in their soul. The self is still too much in the foreground. From now on we no longer want to place the self in the foreground, but the Mother. Then I can have the most “reckless” confidence. Yes, I say, a confidence that throws all care to the wind. Oh, if only I could send you home with a portion of my reckless confidence! *Mater habebit curam* [Mother takes care]! What gives me such a reckless confidence? Scholarly

⁶ Cf. Pius X, encyclical “Ad diem illum laetissimum,” February 2, 1904; *Papal Teachings: Our Lady*, No. 224, see also Nos. 227, 234. See also *Mary, Our Mother and Educator*, p. 42.

⁷ See for instance, St. Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary*, No. 155f (“It is a short way”) and 219f, 260 (Mary as God’s “mold”): “There is a great difference between making a figure in relief by blows of hammer and chisel, and making a figure by throwing it into a mold. Statuaries and sculptors labor much to make figures in the first manner; but to make them in the second manner, they work little and do their work quickly. St. Augustine (*Sermo* 208) calls our Blessed Lady ‘the mold of God’ – the mold fit to cast and mold gods. He who is cast in this mold is presently formed and molded in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in him. At a slight expense and in a short time he will become [like] God, because he has been cast in the same mold which has formed a God” (No. 219f).

learning? Vocation? A pure adolescence? Let whoever stands take care that he does not fall. No, it is just an undivided, blind trust in Mary. Is it exaggerated for me to accept Mary’s mediation of all graces? *Servus Mariae nunquam peribit* [A child of Mary will never perish]! This trust is itself a great grace! *Servus Mariae nunquam peribit!* If I have difficulties, even struggling for weeks against the sixth commandment, then I turn to Mary. She is the Pure One. She will help me.

We do not want to have anything from God without the intercession of the Mother. Almighty God, make me a great saint through the intercession of our dear Blessed Mother. Life has run roughshod over us. Many ideals have slipped through our fingers. But we want to hold fast to one thing: MARY. Almighty God, make me a great saint and do not spare my weak nature. Some seek God through mortification, toiling to resist their will. But love of Mary urges us by its very nature to do even such things, and do them with joyful hearts.

We old ones have often asked ourselves: Why aren’t we as holy as we ought to be? It is because we have been lacking in a deep love of Mary and in earnestly cooperating [with grace]. Fr. Doyle made a make-shift whip and flogged himself with it. We do not want to forget the place of outward acts of mortification. We, too, should make our sacrifices. [For instance:] How is it with the sanctification of our Saturdays? Rosary, litany, preparation for the Marian feast-days.

May is coming; may it also come for the Federation. In May the Federation must become a great society of Mary. As long as Mary is with us in the Federation, it will endure. As long as we trust in the Mother, hold her in high reverence, and love her, we will progress on the paths of sanctity, for:

Servus Mariae nunquam peribit!

Part 2

With Mary to the Altar

Sermons, January 1965

Introduction to “With Mary to the Altar”

The sermons translated here were given by Fr. Kentenich to the German-speaking congregation at St. Michael’s Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They were held on consecutive Sundays: January 10 and 17, 1965.

As the regular celebrant of the 10 a.m. Sunday Eucharist for the Germans, Fr. Kentenich often developed a theme over the course of several weeks, at times even over the course of several months. These two sermons come from a long sequence which began in October 1964.

This was a very challenging time in the Church, for the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was in its third session from September 14 to November 21, 1964. Ordinary Catholics did not always find it easy to grasp the points of debate and the Council decisions. There were major changes and much had to be explained. One change that took careful explanation was the first implementation of the liturgical reforms. On November 29, 1964, the first changes (some Mass texts in the vernacular, the priest facing the people) had gone into effect, and Fr. Kentenich prepared the congregation not only to know what – outwardly – was changing, but what inner spirit would let them truly “think with the Church.”

Fr. Kentenich focused on two main themes during these months: the image of Mary and the connection between the outward reform of the liturgy and the interior spirit of the reform. The Marian theme addressed a confusion among many Catholics who thought the debate about Mary had ended with the Council fathers “rejecting” Mary. The Eucharistic theme addressed the challenges of adapting to new liturgical forms.

The two sermons that follow illustrate Fr. Kentenich putting in practice what he taught in the workshop “The Marian Person.” While not repeating his “definition of the Marian person,” he was evidently intent on forming:

*The Marian person (...)
who understands as deeply as possible,
in the spirit and light of faith,
Mary’s role in the work of redemption,*

and allows her to permanently shape his practical life even to the last consequence, so as to become a holy apostle (p. 21).

As in 1924, he leads to a greater understanding of Mary and her role in the work of redemption. Again, he points to the image of Mary – in Scripture, in dogma, and in the life of the Church – with special consideration of the biblical image, but also alluding to the dogmatic image. Upon this foundation he can make a stronger case that Mary should permanently shape our practical life with regard to participation in the Eucharist. Compared with the 1924 texts, these sermons have the advantage of letting us hear Fr. Kentenich “in his own voice,” coming from tape recordings of the sermons¹.

It is important to notice that Fr. Kentenich builds on both “pillars” of the Church’s Marian life: Mary is both *model* and *Mother*. *Model*: Mary, the ultimate Christ-bearer, Christ-bringer, and Christ-server, shows us how to actively take part in all parts of the Mass, especially as sacrifice. *Mother*: Mary helps us do this as our Mother and as the Mother of the Church. Along the way he weaves together both the Marian and Eucharistic strands in a motto first introduced the month before: *Cum Maria ad Altare*, that is, “With Mary to the Altar.”²

It goes beyond the scope of this introduction to discuss the Second Vatican Council and Fr. Kentenich’s insight into its significance for the life of the Church. It will have to suffice to point out that near the beginning of the sermon of January 17 he presents his understanding of the mission of Vatican II. The elements he mentions here would accompany him in the last years of his life as he guided his Schoenstatt Family through the turbulence following the Council and be central themes in his own teaching about what the Church needed to do to make Christ present in the world of today.

¹ The two sermons are published in J. Kentenich, *Aus dem Glauben leben. Predigten in Milwaukee*, Vol. 16, p. 71-105.

² For a thorough treatment of the topic, see the dissertation by Sr. M. Isabell (Rita Maria Isabell) Naumann, *Cum Maria ad altare: Toward an Integration of Mariology and Ecclesiology. The Interrelation between Mary and the Church in the Works of Fr. J. Kentenich* (Waukesha, 1999).

Sermon of January 10, 1965

Dear friends in Christ!

Since the beginning of the Council we have often heard the Catholic press speak of “conciliar Marian devotion.” This is an expression which we, who have discussed the Council at such great length, should more or less understand. What does “conciliar Marian devotion” mean? Is it different from the Marian devotion we knew before? It may have seemed to us that the heated debate on this topic raised question after question about the former way of venerating Mary. But in the end, I think we can say that the old, original, proven Marian devotion has asserted itself at the Council.

Mother and Model of the Church

Conciliar Marian devotion is Marian devotion as discussed by the Council. It can therefore mean Marian devotion in the crossfire of the Council; but it can also mean what has emerged from the crossfire. We have thoroughly discussed both aspects in the Sunday sermons of the past months. The result? Mary stands before us in a new and deeper way, especially in her relationship to the Church. Yes, what position does she have? We know it; we have made it our own: On the one hand she is the most original and perfect *member of the Church*, and on the other hand she is the *Mother of the Church*.

On different occasions the Pope³ took a stand on both points. We probably still have fresh in our minds his courage in standing up for the title “Mother of the Church⁴.” And his encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*

³ Pope Paul VI (1963-1978).

⁴ On November 21, 1964, at the end of the third session of Vatican Council II, Pope Paul VI, of his own initiative, renewed the consecration of the Church to Mary and officially gave her the title “Mother of the Church.” This was, in part, to counteract the misunderstanding caused by the Council’s decision to not have a separate Marian document, but to integrate its contribution on Mary into the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church (*Lumen gentium*). The Council’s decision, by a very close vote on October 29, 1963, was trumpeted in many circles as a vote “against” Marian devotion. Pope Paul VI also wanted to counteract a too cautious

about the Church placed the accent strongly on Mary as the most perfect member of the Church. In the encyclical we find such expressions as: She is the example of perfection, that is, the most perfect Christian, the most perfect member of the Church. She is the mirror of all virtues. Of course, one hears between the lines: she is the most incredible mirror of the virtues typical of every true member of the Church. Then a title with much meaning: She is the prodigy of genuine humanity. Recall: A member of the Church should not only be supernaturally oriented, but also genuinely human. In fact, we have even made it a habit to say that whoever is most deeply at home in the supernatural world must be an outstanding example of well-rounded humanity. And finally, a last word, a last title which rings in our ears: She is characterized and described as the “master of life”⁵. She has accomplished the masterpiece of life, the masterpiece of the Christian life, the masterpiece of being a member of the Church to uniquely and incredibly perfect degree.

Mary and Actively Living the Eucharist

Why do I repeat all this? I want to remind you again that to see Mary as a model in all things pertaining to being a true member of the

attitude by the Council Fathers who did not want to “raise any new obstacles” for the Protestants. Pope Paul VI’s declaration of Mary as “Mother of the Church” was a way to reaffirm the merits of the vibrant Marian life within the Church, and to point to Mary as more than just the “first of the Apostles.”

⁵ Cf. Pope Paul VI, encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, August 6, 1964, No. 57: “This vision of humble and profound Christian perfection leads our thoughts to Mary Most Holy, for she reflects this vision most perfectly and wonderfully in herself; she lived it on earth and now in heaven she rejoices in its glory and beatitude. Devotion to Mary is happily flourishing in the Church today; and we, on this occasion, gladly turn our thoughts to her to admire in the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Christ (and therefore, the Mother of God and the Mother of us) the model of Christian perfection, the mirror of true virtues, the pride of true humanity (*humanae naturae prodigale specimen*). We regard devotion to Mary as a source of Gospel teaching. In our pilgrimage to the Holy Land we wished to learn the lesson of real Christianity from her, the most blessed, lovable, humble and immaculate creature, whose privilege it was to give to the Word of God human flesh in its pristine and innocent beauty.”

Church is *fully in line with the Council*. Hence, we can also view her as a model of the active participation in Holy Mass promoted by the Council⁶. Moreover, it is justified for us to see Holy Mass and the Council’s mission to Christians today in the framework of the motto “*Cum Maria ad altare*” [“With Mary to the altar”]. With the Blessed Mother – at her hand, following her example, with her help – we actively live our lives centered on the altar.

To be more precise, let me remind you: at her hand we want to participate in the Liturgy of the Word. Last Sunday we discussed how this is possible and what it all entails. Like her we should listen to the Word of God, should treasure it, should ponder it, ponder it in prayer, and make it the norm for our entire lives.

What still remains to be said should be of even greater importance for us as we stand in the midst of life with so many crosses and so much suffering. It is the question: Is she also a model for us of active participation in the Liturgy of the Sacrifice⁷ – that is – of our participation in

the preparation of the sacrifice,
the carrying out of the sacrifice,
and the meal of sacrifice⁸?

After all, she is supposed to be the model of all Christian virtue, the prodigy of true humanity, the ideal for mastering daily life. And we, in the spirit of the Council, want to make the Holy Mass as we have so often said:

the middle point,
the starting point,
and the high point
of our efforts to master life.

⁶ A allusion to Fr. Kentenich’s sermons in November and December of 1964 on the implementation of the liturgical reforms of Vatican II and in approaching the Eucharist as Mary did in keeping with the motto, “With Mary to the altar!” (See especially sermon of December 13, 1964: *Aus dem Glauben leben*, Vol. 15, p. 111-132). For a thorough study of Fr. Kentenich’s analysis in these sermons see Naumann, *Cum Maria ad altare* (Waukesha, 1999).

⁷ That is, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the second main part of the Mass.

⁸ That is, the Offertory, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the Communion Rite.

Now, my dear friends, I think that in today's sermon we should lay only the foundations – and therefore not yet go into detail – for seeing Our Lady as an ideal for the preparation of the sacrifice, the carrying out the sacrifice, and the meal of sacrifice. We want to first refresh in our minds the image of our dear Blessed Mother, providing something of a summary of everything the Council has said about the image of Mary.

Biblical and Dogmatic Images of Mary

We want to look at her image. But who shall paint it for us? It is best if we ask two painters. Of course, behind both earthly painters is the Divine Painter, the Holy Spirit. In other words, we will first investigate, as the Council was so fond of doing, the biblical image of Mary, in order to then dig more deeply and inquire into the dogmatic image of Mary.

What is the difference between the two images? The biblical image of Mary portrays our dear Lady in complete simplicity yet chiseled clarity. It does not speculate, does not argue, does not seek final principles. It shows us [her]. What figure of Mary does the Holy Spirit paint for us? Upon closer examination, we discover with great fervor and gratitude: it is exactly the image of Mary, or more precisely, the figure of Mary, as it lives and moves in the Christian-Catholic people! Every single trait of this image is also etched into our soul. It may be that we do not always notice these features, but they are alive in us.

It is the task of the dogmatic image of Mary to revisit the biblical image again and again in order to find short formulae which encapsulate the figure of Our Lady and her place in the plan of salvation. The dogmatic image of Mary tries to distill out the [main] point from which the personality of Mary can be understood, the point to which all her characteristics, all her endowments, all her missions can ultimately be traced⁹.

Today we do not want to focus on the dogmatic image of Mary;

⁹ That is, the discussion of Mary's "personal character," a main theme in the Mariology of Matthias Scheeben and others. See Naumann, p. 267-276.

we leave that for next Sunday, God willing. Today we will focus on the biblical image of Mary¹⁰.

Overall Contours and Individual Features

This naturally raises the question: What does this image look like? What are its overall contours and its individual features?

The overall contours? It can be said very quickly. In truth, each of us would need to examine his own heart, his own mind. What does my image look like? What features does [my image of Mary] have? Now as an image it ought to be very vivid. And Sacred Scripture paints in a very vivid manner. Scripture shows and portrays the image like a master painter; painting an endearing image, and in a way that appeals to the senses.

Listen to how I envision her – with the Ave in her ear. The ear is a sense organ. The Ave in her ear, the Magnificat on her lips – the whole person – the Child in her arms; tongues of fire above her head, a sword in her heart. Do we see how beautiful this description is? Can all of this be found in the Scriptures? Tongues of fire above her head. Then: the dragon under her feet and the woman completely enveloped in light. Isn't this a most beautiful image? It is not difficult for us to imagine how in his day the Jewish-Israelite king [Solomon] had a dream. In his dream he saw an image. It was *the very image* Sacred Scripture later describes with these words: "Who is it that rises like the dawn..." (Song 6,10). Who is it? This is she, as described and characterized by the Holy Spirit.

If we now set out to reflect at least a little on the individual features, we quickly realize how long we could dwell on each point. Of course, we don't intend to do that now. After all, the theme is meant to lead us to active participation in Holy Mass. This is all preparatory. We therefore want to listen to at least the one or the other word about each of the individual features.

And so we look once more at her image.

¹⁰ For an alternate translation of the rest of the sermon see J. Kentenich, *With Mary into the New Millennium*, p. 36-44.

1. *The Ave in her Ear*

The Ave in her ear (Lk 1,26-38). Where does the Ave come from? From God himself! Who therefore greets the Blessed Mother? The eternal Triune God through his messenger. Theologians have always clearly pointed out that the angel did not come with a formal, direct command but a request. The eternal God appealed to the free will of the Blessed Mother: “Are you willing? We would like you to [do that]. Are you ready?” The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. Theologians also make clear that the Blessed Mother was representing [all] human nature in this moment¹¹. In *her* humanity all human nature should speak a free and voluntary “Yes” to the Incarnation of the Eternal Word.

The Ave in her ear – what does this mean? Even though the Blessed Mother was deeply faith-filled and supernatural, we cannot help but admire her original, down-to-earth attitude. She did not act rashly; she thought it over first. What did she do? She did what we must always do when asking ourselves: Whether, how, when, and where is God making a certain wish known [to me]?

She did three things: First, she pondered on the meaning of what the angel told her. It was, of course, beyond her comprehension. She never thought that she would be chosen to be the Mother of the Eternal Word, the Redeemer. She thought about it. Then, when she was unable to reach a conclusion on her own, she asked: How will it happen? The answer she got was rather unusual – what answer did she get? Nothing is impossible with God; a simple allusion to God’s omnipotence. Then, once she had her answer and her mind was at peace, she said a sincere and ardent “Yes.”

Dear friends, what would we be without this Annunciation! What would have become of the world and of us if the Blessed Mother had not spoken her “Yes” in the name of humanity, on behalf of human nature: *Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*

¹¹ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q 30, a 1, corp.: “... per annuntiationem expectabatur consensus Virginis loco totius humanae naturae” (“... at the annunciation, the consent of the Virgin stood in the place of all human nature”).

[Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word]. Have we ever really taken the time to thank her for this? Have we ever really sung her praises out of purest joy – over and over again?

2. *The Magnificat on her Lips*

The second feature of this image: *the Magnificat on her lips* (Lk 1,39-56). This feature also illustrates her fundamental relationship to the eternal God, to the infinite God, to God’s plan for the world. What does the Magnificat mean? It is a statement, a jubilant acknowledgment of the guidance that comes from the eternal wisdom of God. The eternal God, the infinite God, has the reins of world affairs in his hands, he stands behind all things. It is therefore more than a rational analysis of individual events by a keen mind. The spirit of faith goes deeper, it perceives behind all things the powerful guidance, the wise guidance, the loving guidance of Eternal Love.

The Magnificat contemplates the great laws of world government. We read in the Catechism: a loving God governs the world. And what is the law of his government? Our Lady studied it in her own life and applied the law to the sum total of world affairs and to her own people. “For the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his name.” “For he has looked with favor on his servant’s lowliness.” This is the great law of world government; a law which she then applies to all world affairs: “He has lifted up the lowly.” “He has sent the rich away empty.” “He has brought down the mighty from their thrones.” An unusual law of world government! Then she pointed out how God’s wisdom also applied this law to her own people.

We could summarize the content of the Magnificat in the simple law, in the simple expression: You constantly accomplish the greatest works through only the smallest instruments. [This is] the Mother of God. It powerfully points to another world, it reveals the strength of leadership, the authority of leadership, the law of leadership of Eternal Wisdom applied to world events and to our own little lives or the history of communities.

3. *The Child in her Arms*

The third feature – *the Child in her arms* (cf Lk 2,6f.22.27). What does the image tell us? We like to call Our Lady the official Christ-bearer, the official Christ-bringer, and the official Christ-server. Three qualities [which define] her fundamental relationship to Christ. Nor does she simply unfold this threefold activity on the one or the other occasion during her historical life, but it is a [permanent] office.

Today too she is and wishes to be recognized and acknowledged (1) as official *Christ-bearer*, just as we find portrayed in the historical events of Scripture. Did we not have at least a taste of this experience at Christmas? (2) As *Christ-bringer*: How quickly after speaking her Fiat, after the great mystery became true, became reality – *et verbum caro factum est* [and the Word became flesh] (Jn 1,14) – did she hasten to the hill country! She wanted to bring Christ. To whom? To her cousin [Elizabeth and to] Zechariah. (3) As *Christ-server*: This is how she characterized herself. We could say that her personal ideal was: *Ecce ancilla Domini* [Behold the handmaid of the Lord] (Lk 1,38). How did she serve Christ? She truly served him! In whose arms did she put Our Lord? We think of the three wise men, we think of the first miracle Christ worked upon her request. Why did she request it? She wanted to serve him and his mission. It is stated explicitly after the miracle took place, “and his disciples believed in him” (Jn 2,11). The Christ-server.

The consequence for us – these are all truths we take for granted – the consequence even today is for me, for my children, in general: She is the Mother of God and it is her office, her role to give birth to Christ; it is her task to bring Christ. Even when she is loved for her own sake, she is never separated from Our Lord; she always carries him in her heart, in her arms. [And it is her task] to serve Christ. It is all so evident! She revolved [around him]. For her it could not be any other way. Her entire being is oriented on Christ. This is the image of the Mary, the biblical image.

4. *The Sword in her Heart*

Further: *the sword in her heart* (cf Lk 2,35.41-50; Jn 19,25ff). What does this want to tell us? We look in Scripture to see how the

story is told. The aged Simeon said, “A sword will pierce your soul,” your heart. In what context did he say that? The message that her Son will be a “sign of contradiction.” Her fundamental relationship, her most vital, most essential fundamental relationship to Our Lord [means sharing in every aspect of] his destiny and the history of his mission. This is why the sevenfold sword will pierce her heart.

What kind of suffering is described here? It is the suffering so typical of woman – suffering of soul, more precisely, the suffering of compassion. And by what standard does one measure the suffering of compassion? The standard of love. Observe practical everyday life. Is it not true? Isn't it always the case, especially when a woman's heart is involved, that wherever there is a deep love, the degree of love determines the degree of compassion and mutual suffering? Applied to Our Lady: how endlessly great is Mary's love for Our Lord! First, he is not only the Child of her womb, but also the God of her heart! Now we can understand why spiritual writers never tire of pointing out that the most ardent prayers and feelings of the Seraphim and Cherubim are but a soft breeze when compared to the fire of endless love for our Lord that burned in the heart of the Blessed Mother¹².

Now, if her love for Our Lord is endlessly great, then we have an idea how endlessly great her compassion is too. In this context we also understand the custom in Christian life and devotion to remember not only the suffering which Our Lord endured physically and psychologically on the way of the cross, but to also look to the Mother of Sorrows at his side.

“Holy Mother, pierce me through.

In my heart each wound renew

Of my Savior crucified.”¹³

Mary as the Mother of Sorrows is simply one of the all-time favorite images of the Catholic faithful.

¹² Cf. Alphonsus of Ligouri, *The Glories of Mary*, p. 58. Also cited in J. Kentenich, *Mary, Our Mother and Educator* (Waukesha, 1987), p. 85.

¹³ Verse from the 13th century hymn by Jacopone da Todi to the Mother of Sorrows, *Stabat Mater* (English: At the Cross her Station Keeping).

5. *The Tongues of Fire Over her Head*

Still more features. The image is described, is drawn for us with *tongues of fire over her head* (Acts 1,14; 2,1-4). When we gave the reasons why Mary may be correctly called Mother of the Church, we noted her creative cooperation in the birth of the Church at the Annunciation, in the birth of the Church at Golgotha and, finally, when the Church was equipped and sent forth into the world at Pentecost. *Omnes erant unanimiter cum Maria matre Jesu perseverantes in oratione* [They were all one heart and soul with Mary the Mother of Jesus, and persevered in prayer] (Act 1,14). Once again, the Blessed Mother is the object of the outpouring of the Spirit, even as she implores the descent of the Spirit in almost perfect fullness on the young Church. This is how the image of the Blessed Mother appears before us, my dear friends.

6. *The Dragon Under her Feet*

Still more features: *the dragon under her feet* (Rev 12,16). The devil is meant here. Just take a look at the Protogospel (Gen 3,15). Here Mary's great mission in relation to the devil is clearly indicated, all the more so when we open Chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation. By and large, we are familiar with calling Mary the great partner of the Redeemer in the entire work of Redemption. But at the same time she is the great opponent of the devil who turns back his power¹⁴. Yes, the devil, the dragon is under her feet; this is how Sacred Scripture depicts her, how she is depicted in Church history and the history of individual communities, as well as in our own lives.

¹⁴ In his view of world history, Fr. Kentenich took especially seriously the role of Mary as the *antidiabolicum* (the opponent of Satan) and "One who crushes the serpent." See especially his writings in Dachau, for instance: *Heavenwards*, p. 17, 58-90, 130, 133; and the Third Founding Document (talk of December 8, 1944), in: *Schoenstatt – The Founding Documents* (Waukesha, 1993), p. 110f. See also letters of December 27, 1947, and August 8, 1948, in: Fr. Jonathan Niehaus, *Visit to America: Father Kentenich's Travels in the United States, June 5-September 6, 1948* (Waukesha, 1999), p. 17f and 170f.

7. *Enveloped by Light*

In the same passage the Book of Revelation points out that Our Lady is permanently *enveloped in light*, clothed with and radiant with the sun (Rev 12, 1). What does this mean? She is immersed completely in the life of our Lord, in the light of our Lord.

What are the Consequences for us?

My dear friends, with just a few strokes we see before us the biblical image of Mary. What are the consequences for us?

Cardinal Faulhaber once wrote two things which we should keep in mind today.

The one is, "Just as Christ and Mary are always united in Sacred Scripture as Mother and Child, so too in the liturgy. From this we must conclude: What the Lord has joined together, let no man rend asunder."¹⁵

It is not by chance that the Holy Father, in his first encyclical on the Church, stresses what a happy sign it is that so much love of Mary is found in the Church today¹⁶. And it seems to us that the controversy at the Council about the position of the Blessed Mother has not diminished this blossoming, but has given an impetus that all the truths be examined still more deeply. And now it should be our task to also courageously promote:

"Mother and Child, united in love..."

If we see to it that in our religious life Mary is never separated from Christ, and that Mary is also always seen in connection with the heavenly Father, then truly:

¹⁵ Cardinal Michael Faulhaber (1869-1952), Archbishop of Munich. In his work *Rufende Stimmen in der Wüste der Gegenwart, Gesammelte Reden, Predigten, Hirtenbriefe* (Freiburg, 1931), p. 106 he writes: "What the Gospel has joined together – 'the Child and his Mother' (Mt 2,11.13f) – may not be separated by the Gospel's disciples. That which is as united to Christ as his Mother, related both by blood and spirit, must not be torn asunder by Christ's religion. The foundations of Marian devotion are laid on the holy mountains of the Gospel."

¹⁶ Pope Paul VI, encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, No. 57: "Hisce nostris temporibus in Ecclesia pietas a cultus Deiparae feliciter florent - Happily, Marian devotion is flourishing in the Church today."

Mother and Child, united in love –
through you alone can our nation be healed¹⁷.

If we want to help redeem the world, and if we ourselves want to set down deeper roots in the grace of redemption, then we have no choice but to see to it that Mother and Child are constantly and tenderly connected in our thinking, living, and loving.

And a second, simple gemstone of a word. The Cardinal says that God in his wisdom did not hang grace up in the sky beyond our reach, nor bury it in the sea like pearls impossible for us to find; no, he has placed them in the hands of a mother, and the hands of a mother are always ready to give – or as he puts it – to give abundantly and superabundantly from a plentitude of graces¹⁸. From this I think it follows that if it is our desire and our duty to orient our active participation in the offertory, the consecration, and communion [of Mass] on the image of our Blessed Mother, then we ought to first strive to beg from her the gift of a warm and tender love for her and to have no rest, as several youthful saints did, until they could repeat the words: Others can outdo me in whatever they like, but never in the warmth and tenderness of my love for Mary¹⁹. Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

¹⁷ Excerpt from prayer by J. Kentenich, 1916. See *Heavenwards*, p. 172f.

¹⁸ Faulhaber, *Rufende Stimmen...*, p. 114: “The Father of mercy did not hang his graces in the heaven like the stars, nor hide them in the depths of the sea like pearls, but has placed them in a mother’s hands, and they are always ready to distribute these graces.”

¹⁹ Cf. J. Kentenich/J. Niehaus (ed.), *Schoenstatt’s Instrument Spirituality* (Waukesha, 1995), p. 201, where Fr. Kentenich attributes this saying to St. Vincent Pallotti.

Sermon of January 17, 1965

Dear friends in Christ!

We have heard in the Catholic press that the Council will resume in September²⁰. It will be the fourth session. And it is announced as the last.

Our Responsibility for the Council

If we look back on everything we have seen thus far in the Council, and if we have the courage to look again into our own hearts – and to listen to those around us and to what our friends and family think of the Council – then, thinking of the future, we may get a little uneasy. On the whole we may feel a growing responsibility for it, so that the whole Council with all its spectacle does not end up “here today and gone tomorrow.” Put differently, all of us without exception – you and I and every one of us – bear a great measure of responsibility for the Council so that it fulfills its purpose:

[to realize] a true, profound religious reform of the entire Church and all her individual members, in such a way that the Church can impress the countenance of Christ on the changing world of today, and ultimately place it – with and in Christ – at the feet of the Eternal Father²¹.

Let me repeat: All of us bear a responsibility for it. Not just the bishops, not just the priests, not just a few of us – no, every single one of us is being seriously called.

We know the effort we have made and how we want to continue

²⁰ On January 4, 1965, Pope Paul VI announced that the fourth and final session of Vatican Council II would open on September 14, 1965.

²¹ This sentence is a particularly concise summary of Fr. Kentenich’s view (as of 1964) of the mission of Vatican II. These elements appear again and again in the final years of his life whenever he speaks about the mission of the Church in the modern world. For a more elaborated view, see his talk in Rome on the day the Council concluded (December 8, 1965), in: J. Niehaus (ed.), *The Exile Legacy Book* (Waukesha, 1994), 106-125.

this effort, to do our share to realize this goal. At this stage we agree on one thing: the importance of doing all we can to participate in a deep spiritual way – interiorly, not just exteriorly – in the [Mass, the] unbloody re-enactment of the bloody sacrifice of the Cross. We want to [work on this] as long as and hard as necessary so that our whole daily life increasingly becomes an ongoing repetition, a profound, comprehensive repetition of the offertory, the consecration, and communion. After all, what is at stake for us is that our whole daily life is ultimately a continuation of Holy Mass. And above all we gladly recall that every consecration²² and every communion with him, that is, every deeper union with him, requires an offertory.

The Key: Deep, Tender Union with Mary

Nor have we stopped there. We have focused on the motto *Cum Maria ad altare* [With Mary to the altar] and wish to continue doing so. What does it mean? In a deep, tender union with our dear Lady and according to her example we want to constantly circle the altar. Constantly! In other words, not only during the half hour we spend here together. Constantly! When we are working, when we are eating, when we are sleeping, when we are playing: constantly circling the altar, in most tender union with and according to the example of our dear Blessed Mother.

What is the key point? It is the little phrase “in most tender union with her,” that is, driven by a warm, deep, tender love for her. After all, we know from experience – all of us without exception, especially the married couples – that love is not only a unitive power, a power which unites souls, but also an assimilative power, a power that makes souls extraordinarily like one another²³.

An assimilative power. If we want to become like the Blessed Mother in how she circles the altar, then it is best to first make sure that we are also deeply and tenderly united with her. Yes, we can

²² German: *Wandlung*, a word which also means transformation.

²³ Cf. J. Kentenich/J. Niehaus (ed.), *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality* (Waukesha, 1992), p. 31-52; J. Kentenich, *Childlikeness before God* (Waukesha, 2001), p. 156.

even make a program of the following point:

Through union with Mary
to Mary's attitude at the altar.

Through union with Mary: the degree that we give the Blessed Mother our hearts and love her with a sincere, heartfelt, tender love, is the degree we become like her in everything, even and especially in the way her life revolves around the bloody and unbloody sacrifice on Golgotha.

Correctly Seeing and Portraying Mary

From this starting point we have come to realize that a great deal depends on correctly seeing and portraying the image of Mary. And the saying probably applies here too: I can't get excited about what I don't know. If I don't know Our Lady, if her image is not alive in me, if she does not shine in my heart, how shall I get to know and love her? And if so very much of the renewed vigor [of the Church] and the fulfillment of the Council depends on this and on all of us being profoundly and interiorly transformed – especially through participation in Holy Mass as the middle point, starting point, and focal point of our entire daily lives – then we understand how important it is that we love Mary with all our hearts.

Last Sunday we began to paint the picture of our dear Blessed Mother, feature for feature. First we opened the Scriptures and examined the biblical image of Mary. And what did this biblical image reveal? Yes, something so plain and simple, the way we children of the people see and hear it – simply the wonderful features of the person of Our Lady. What Sacred Scripture tells us is not lengthy speculation, is not a lot of reflection and thinking. It is just the way she is – then do with it what you will!

And what are her features? May I remind you of them again? I will only repeat one or the other briefly, without elaboration. She stands before us just as the Scriptures show and portray her. Listen again: The Ave in her ear. Our popular, everyday Catholic way of feeling, thinking, and seeing can imagine that wonderfully. The Ave in her ear! The Magnificat on her lips! Her person comes in focus, little by little. The Child in her arms! The sword in her heart! The

tongues of fire on her head! The serpent under her feet! Is this not a stunningly beautiful portrait? And the One who has painted this portrait in Sacred Scripture – and etched it in our hearts – is the Holy Spirit.

If I Love the Blessed Mother, I Will Become Like Her

May I return to something I just said? If we love the Blessed Mother – and as children of Catholic popular piety²⁴ we all love her; after all, this is why we are so happy to hear a sermon about her, and rejoice when we see a picture of her – and if we now consider what it means that we *must* love Our Lady and that, by loving her, become like her – then we can draw the following conclusion: If I have truly etched the image of the Blessed Mother in my head and my heart in the way just described, then it cannot fail that tomorrow I will be like that too.

Like what? For instance, with my children, with my husband or wife, with my colleagues at work. What will I be like? They know my “everyday face,” but behind my everyday face is a face with mysteriously different features. I, too, have – must have! – the Ave in my ear, the Magnificat on my lips, the sword in my heart, the child on my arms, the tongues of fire over my heart, and the serpent under my feet. Is this not a stunningly transformed image? And if I have not taken on the features of our dear Lady in this way, then I must seriously ask myself: Is my love for her genuine? How amazingly we Catholics would be transformed if we truly and constantly attended the school of the Blessed Mother in just this way!

Applied to Holy Mass

May I summarize what I have just said and apply it to Holy Mass?

Isn't it true, dear friends, that the way the person of Mary stands before us as the ideal, is the way we are her images, is the way we totally – or at least to some degree – grow into the otherworldly, the supernatural world? We stand with both feet on the ground of the

²⁴ German: *Kinder des Volkes*, literally “children of the people,” meaning the Catholic faithful and its tradition of popular piety.

supernatural world. It is a world which has become unfamiliar to us modern-day people; a world with which even we Catholics have lost touch, in spite of the many, many helps available to us; a world of which the Apostle Paul speaks when he says, “Your citizenship is not in this world. Your citizenship must be in heaven” (Phil 3, 20), in this supernatural reality.

Of course, the person of our dear Blessed Mother also stands before us with both feet on the ground of everyday life. At least one feature which Sacred Scripture, which the Holy Spirit draws for us, expressly draws our attention to it: the sword in her heart. I therefore stressed at the beginning of the sermon: we can only be transformed in Christ and united with him in communion – which we ought to spiritually renew countless times throughout the day – if we make it our natural habit to live the constant offertory.

In this context read: “a sword in her heart.” After all, this is the masterpiece which all of us must ultimately accomplish: How do I master my crosses and suffering? And who of us has no cross or suffering? And if people today want to create a paradise on earth without crosses and suffering, then anyone familiar with life will know it is a ruse, that it can't be done!

There is a saying which probably originated among Catholics: Protestants live well, Catholics die well. Why do Catholics die well? Because Catholics, if they stay true to their faith, repeat the words of the Apostle, “I die every day” (1 Cor 15,31). I die not only once at the end of my life, I die every day, every hour. “I die every day.” In Holy Mass I join Christ in mounting the Cross. I let him die again in the situations of my life where the cross beams rub my shoulders bloody. Hence, if I want to know to what degree I love Our Lady, to what degree I am a Catholic, I must never forget: the standard is how I carry my cross. “Who carried for us the heavy cross; who was crucified for us²⁵.” Even if we are not physically crucified, then we are, like the Blessed Mother, at least morally crucified. In spirit she constantly hung on the cross.

²⁵ The invocations which the German version of the Rosary adds after “thy womb Jesus” in the Hail Marys of the fourth and fifth sorrowful mysteries.

Why do I say this, dear friends? I am making the application to Holy Mass. Do we not know that Holy Mass is a *mysterium fidei*, a mystery of faith?²⁶ And that is the spirit of faith which can make all of us feel at home in another world, a world which we do not see, which we cannot touch. *Mysterium fidei*. Therefore, whoever grows into the heart of our dear Lady, whoever exchanges his heart with hers, whoever loves her and loves to be near her, should feel more and more at home in the world of faith, in the supernatural world, and therefore have the most excellent disposition to correctly understand the Eucharist. We do not want to overlook that Holy Mass is not only a participation in the glorified life of Christ, but also in his life of suffering. In Holy Mass we are drawn more deeply into the crucified Lord. Again, if I carry the cross like Mary – my cross – how strongly, how deeply I am prepared to understand correctly the attitude of the Mass and to grow into it more deeply!

This is what the image of Mary looks like. This is what the image of Mary looks like in historical form. And this is how the reflection should also look like in [my and our] historical form: how I should look, how we all should look. And to the extent that my face mirrors the face of our dear Blessed Mother, we will be able to grasp the *Cum Maria ad Altare* – we go, in a tender and most tender connection with our dear Lady, to the altar; with her, in her, like her we circle, we circle the altar, circle the unbloody and the bloody sacrifice of the Cross which is made present in our midst on the altar. Isn't it true that this is what we see in the biblical image of Mary?

The Dogmatic Image of Mary

If we now want to borrow from the theologians, to go to school with them, they contribute two things to this [search for the] image of Mary. First, they try to penetrate this image into all its details, and second, they have no rest until they have grasped, recognized, and correctly portrayed Our Lady's place in the plan of salvation.

Someone might ask me: Does it make any sense – and what sense

²⁶ Cf. the memorial acclamation at Mass (after the consecration).

does it make – to research more closely the image portrayed [by Scripture]? I scarcely believe that anyone will ask this question. Why? Because what Sacred Scripture tells us, just as I have repeated for you, essentially stays on the level of Mary's exterior image. We have only looked at her exterior features: how do her ears, her eyes, her hands look, what does she have under her feet and over her head? That is more an exterior image.

Isn't it true, dear friends, that when I ask myself as a married man what my wife looks like, I can describe her exactly: what her nose looks like, what clothes she wears, whether she is plain or pretty? But that is something I have known for a long time! But how long it takes for me to understand my wife, to grasp her right into her inmost being, even though I know her outwardly!

I think we could all ask the same question with regard to our children. Who knows the child better on the outside than his or her mother? She knows every breath. But how long it takes a mother until she interiorly understands her children! How very, very long!

Or we think of the great figures of salvation and world history, especially, as we are so fond of doing, of St. Paul. What might he have looked like? We read how he describes his interior life. And still, when we think about it, when we research the question – and how many studies have been written about the person of St. Paul! – then we must stand in utter amazement at the mental effort that has gone into trying to penetrate him to the deepest depths!

{98} Or from another angle: many years ago there was the so-called “ant priest”²⁷. He had earned a name for himself because he had devoted his whole life to studying nothing other than ants.

What am I trying to say? I think that we can now gradually understand what it means that the theologians have been studying the person of our dear Blessed Mother for years and decades – and I may and must even say for *centuries* – researching more deeply the way Sacred Scripture portrays her. An expression came to be used – I will say it first in Latin and then translate it – that the Blessed Mother is

²⁷ Fr. Erich Wasmann (1859-1931), German Jesuit and oft-published expert on insects.

the *negotium saeculorum* [the occupation (of the thinking) of the ages]²⁸. We may understand a little what this means and how true it is. It tries to say that Our Lady is the object of investigation, of research of the best minds not only for one century, not only for two centuries, not only for twenty centuries. No, all centuries, all millennia will be kept busy – should I say: with studying ants? studying my wife or husband? my children? St. Paul? No! All the things I just mentioned, the persons, are mysteries in their own right. But the Mother of God! One saint called her the *miraculum miraculorum*, the wonder of wonders, and the *mysterium mysteriorum*, the mystery of mysteries!²⁹

What does this tell us? Oh, we understand it very well. It helps us to grasp why we must be grateful to the theologians that they spend so much time and energy researching the person and mission of our dear Lady! I don't think I am off the mark to suppose that those of us who followed the Council's debate about the Blessed Mother often shook our heads: How is such a thing possible among Catholic theologians? How is such a thing possible among bishops and cardinals? Controversies and battles and struggles and quarrels. But we must not look at it that way! They wanted to do serious investigative work!

Negotium saeculorum! Yes, even the present century should and may and wishes to and must make a significant contribution – not so that we understand ants, as we just said, but to correctly understand the marvelous figure of Mary, the masterpiece in the hands of the eternal and infinite God! And truly, our present century has contributed a great deal to this. As an example, we think of the dogmatization of the Assumption of Mary body and soul into heaven³⁰.

²⁸ St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), Second sermon on the works of the Trinity and the threefold grace of the Holy Spirit (PL 183, 328 A; or No. 931). See also *Mary, Our Mother and Educator*, p. 53.

²⁹ Cf. St. John Damascene (c. 690-c. 749), *Or. I de Nativ. B.V.*, also cited in Leo XIII, encyclical *Augustissimae Virginis*, September 12, 1897. St. Louis de Montfort also touches on this theme: *True Devotion to Mary*, No. 12, 35.

³⁰ Formally declared infallible teaching by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950 in the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* (cf. *Papal Teachings:*

How long did it take the Church until she could formally declare this dogma! We think of everything which Pope Pius XII showed us about Our Lady, about this wonderful world. He underscored her queenship: Queen of heaven and earth³¹. *Negotium saeculorum*.

The Image of Mary in the Life of the Church

This may help you appreciate the value of us going to school with the theologians. But that is not enough, dear friends. Alone from what we have just said, it is self-evident to us that the centuries have tried to unveil the figure of our dear Mother more and more perfectly *in the life of the Church*.

We can recall, for instance, the Litany of Loreto. What titles of honor are assigned there to our Blessed Mother! Those who wish can quietly pray it to themselves and ask: How much intellectual work did this cost until all the different characteristics and titles of honor could be assigned to Mary, that is, until it could be proven that this is how Our Lady existed [from all eternity] in the thoughts of God!

Or, in order to draw out a few more details, we think of the jewel of the Immaculate Conception. It was only in the last century, after so-and-so many centuries that the Church could formally declare: the image of Mary is the image of the Immaculate Conception³². How much intellectual work this cost!

Or again, if we think how heated the debate was at the Council about the Blessed Mother, we also know the result. At the end [of the third session] the Holy Father concluded that Our Lady [deserved] a new title. It is not as if the title did not yet already exist, but it was now officially recognized. Mary is the Mother of the Church. Century after century does not tire of shedding more and more light

Our Lady, No. 482-525).

³¹ See especially his encyclical *Fulgens Corona* of September 8, 1953 (cf. *Papal Teachings: Our Lady*, No. 584-616), and his addition (in 1954) of the feast of the Queenship of Mary to the universal calendar of the Church.

³² Formally declared infallible teaching by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1954 in the Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* (cf. *Papal Teachings: Our Lady*, No. 31-65).

on Our Lady.

During these days I was reading the newspaper. It told about a Westphalian farmer³³. (...) He was interviewed on his farm and asked what he thought about the Council. The wisdom of the farmer! His answer: “They can do what they want in Rome, they can fight all they like, but I for one will stay Catholic!” The wisdom of our Catholic people! What does it mean? What do we hear between the lines? My goodness! What all they are saying in high places and how many things they don’t seem to know and, most of all, what do they say about the Blessed Mother! – to my way of thinking that is all foolishness. I, for one, will stay Catholic!

Now after the Holy Father spoke the last word, I think the farmer is quite happy. He does not need to abandon anything of what he knew was Catholic.

Pope Paul VI’s Prayer to the Mother of the Church

I brought with me a newspaper. In it is the prayer prayed by the Holy Father during his closing sermon³⁴. I think that all of us who have remained so genuinely Catholic, who have not let ourselves be upset by all these debates, will find ourselves affirmed by what we hear in the prayer. (...) It is true Catholic ardor, warm Catholic thinking, applied to the title “Mother of the Church.” I will simply read it to you quickly, without commentary. It says:

“O Virgin Mary, Mother of God, most august Mother of the Church, to you do We commend the whole Church and the Ecumenical Council...”

I see the farmer before me. He chuckles and says, “You see, I was right. I was right all along!”

“You are invoked by the sweet title “Help of the Bishops.” Protect the shepherds of the Church in their office and grant them your assistance. Be there also to help all priests, religious, and

³³ German: *Münsteraner Bauer*, a farmer from the Münster region of Westphalia, a strongly Catholic area in northwest Germany.

³⁴ On November 21, 1964, Pope Paul VI presided at the solemn conclusion of the Third Session of Vatican Council II.

the laity who aid them in the labors of their pastoral service.”

After all, the main discussion was the self-understanding of the Church. Our Lady was placed in connection with the being of the Church. And how does she stand before us? Just as we always knew her. “As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen. Amen.”

“The Divine Savior, your Son, as he was dying on the Cross, gave you to the disciple whom he loved to be his loving Mother. Think of the Christian people which entrusts itself to you.

“Think of all your children. Add your power and authority to their pleas. Keep their faith pure and strong, strengthen their hope, enkindle their love.

“Think of those who live in anxiety, need, and danger, especially those who suffer torture and are in chains because of their Christian faith. O Virgin Mother...” – Here we have the ancient title, the core of her whole personality: the Virgin Mother of God – “O Virgin Mother, implore for them an undying fortitude of soul and hasten the longed-for day of justice and freedom.

“Turn your benign eyes to our separated brethren. May it please you that we would soon be reunited, you who gave birth to Christ, the bridge-builder of the unity between God and man.

“O Temple of the pure Light that never goes dark, beg of your firstborn Son, through whom we have received the Father’s reconciliation (cf Rom 5,11), that he look with mercy on our errors, hold far from us all division, and increase in us the joy of fraternal love.

“O Virgin Mother of God, We commend all humanity to your Immaculate Heart. Lead it to recognize its true and only Redeemer Jesus Christ. Drive from it the calamities caused by sin, and grant it the peace which is founded on truth, justice, freedom, and love.

“In conclusion, grant that the whole Church, as it celebrates this great Ecumenical Council, intone to the God of mercies a solemn hymn of praise and thanksgiving, a hymn of joy and exultation; for the One who is Mighty has done great things

through you, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary³⁵.”

The farmer was right. Long live the Westphalian farmer and all who think and feel like him!

Conclusion

I must come to an end again. Dear friends, if we may briefly summarize – it is only a short outline of what we have discussed – then I think we ought to hear, as it were, the words which the angel said to St. Joseph: “Do not refuse to take your bride into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that all this has come about” (Mt 1,20). We do not refuse to give to Mary – as we have previously, so also today, and even more so tomorrow and the day after – the place which the Eternal God has foreseen for her from all eternity according to his divine plan. For everything which is in her and about her, and everything which comes from her, comes from the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

³⁵ Pope Paul VI, prayer of dedication of the Church to Mary, Mother of the Church, November 21, 1964.

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