

Reflections on:  
Rev. Cornelio Fabro, CSS' presentation:  
**"An Aspect of the Mariology of  
St. THOMAS AQUINAS"**



*'As the mariners are guided into port by the shining of a star, so  
Christians are guided to heaven by Mary.'*

St. Thomas Aquinas

**By Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS**

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**[For the Private use of the Stigmatines]**

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### St. Thomas Aquinas and the Participation of Mary in the Grace of Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup>

#### Presentation:

[1] The theological 'problem' to which we dedicate these contemplative reflections seems to have become less arduous after the clear definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, which declared that Mary ... *in [intuitu meritorum Christi] virtue of the merits of Christ* was preserved immune from all sin, both original and actual<sup>2</sup>.

[2] As for St. Thomas, his entire doctrine on grace, as has been justly pointed out by the Pastor, Chavannes, is dominated by the biblical-speculative notion of participation. In the light of this there is understood the incomparable position of the Mother of God.

[3] In my opinion, the basic observation that could be made is that H. Chavannes<sup>3</sup> limits himself to consider the mediation of Mary with the understanding here a simple participation as a 'creature', even though she is the most sublime. While this is exact, it is not the full picture –it seems to me - and it is not the most characteristic side of her Marian mediation. For Christians, Mary is above all the *Mother* of Christ, Who is the Man-God, and therefore she is *the Mother of the Mediator, by His very essence*.

[4] This does not mean that Mary does not become 'Mediatrice by her very essence': she is nonetheless the Mother of the Mediator by His very essence, Who is the Savior of the world. And it is on this that there is based and flourishes the Marian devotion of Catholics. It seems to me that it is necessary to plummet the depths of participation, from this aspect, that is, one of relationship: St. Thomas moves more along the lines of this Mother-Son relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Cornelio FABRO, CSS, *Momenti dello Spirito*. Vol. II. Assisi 1983, pp. 153- 175

<sup>2</sup> D-S # 2803[cf. Appendix at the end of the article]

<sup>3</sup> cf. *Eph Mr.* XXIV [1974], pp. 30, ff.

## 1. The Significance of this Problem

a.] Its Biblical Nucleus: the Biblical nucleus of the Thomistic Mariology is centered, as is obvious, on the 'Annunciation made to Mary' by the Angel [cf. Lk 1:26, ff.]. This stands at the very center of the brief treatise of Mariology, which are the five questions that St. Thomas dedicates to the Mother of God in the Life of Christ in the Part III of his *Summa*<sup>4</sup>. The Saint develops his exceptional theological position of Mary completely at the basis and in the service of her Divine Maternity. Therefore, this occupies the primary position in the historical movement, so to speak, of the salvific event of Christ. This leads the believer to consider in the first place the dignity and the privileges of the Mother who conceived Him and gave Him to the world: *Regarding His conception, then, it is necessary first of all to consider the matter of His mother who conceived Him*. The 'onto-theological' status, if it might be so described [or, as might be preferred today the existential status] of the Mother of God is structured on five points, or stages, which correspond to the five questions of his exposition:

- first, concerning her sanctification [q. 27];
- second, her virginity [q. 28];
- third, her espousals [q. 29];
- forth, her annunciation [q. 30];
- fifth, concerning her preparation for conceiving [q. 31].

It is not the task of these notes to offer an analysis of any depth and content regarding these loaded questions – and even less so to bring up the many problems these few texts can arouse in a modern reader. We will limit ourselves to gathering together those principle aspects and angles under which the Angelic Doctor considers the communication, or participation of that totally singular grace of which Mary enjoyed along-side Christ, on that foundation of the privilege of having been chosen the Mother of God.

b.] The theological-formal nucleus: Grace is a real participation of the soul in the divine nature, of which Mary needs a share in order to be pleasing to God. Through sanctifying grace, the soul is indeed elevated to a manner of being, and therefore, of acting, that theologians call deiform. She obtained a divine manner of being and of operating. St. Thomas defines this precisely through the notion of 'participation', which is the ultimate term with which he expresses belonging. It means the profound bond in the sphere of being, of the creature to God, as well as the distance, or the transcendence of the Creator over the creature.

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<sup>4</sup> St. Thomas, III, qq. 27-31.

The definitions following along these lines: *The light of grace which is a participation in the divine nature*<sup>5</sup>. The primary effect of the participation of grace is the assimilation, or that *similarity* which is proper of the soul with God. *Grace is nothing other than a participated similitude of the divine nature, according to the text 2 P 2:4: He has bestowed on us great and precious promises so that we might be consorts of his divine nature*<sup>6</sup>.

Through the medium of grace, then, the soul is admitted into the consortium of the intimate life, or rather becomes by participation the adoptive daughter of God. Therefore, the human soul *becomes a participant in the divine Love and of proceeding Love, so that it might truly know and rightly* so that it remains in one's power, *to enjoy the divine person as its effect*.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the grace that Christ has merited for humanity does not only have the elevating effect, with respect to the capacities of human nature in itself, but also has a healing effect for the wounds of sin.

The *resolving principle* of Mary's participation in grace is therefore two-fold: one that is formal, or the fact that Mary, too, needed to be redeemed by Christ because she has descended from Adam; and one that is existential, in that Mary is the true Mother of God and has toward Christ a relationship of life that is totally unique and incomparable which corresponds to the task for which she is predestined. Here the more mature theological doctrine of the Angelic Doctor observes in this regard a strict parallelism between the Grace of Christ, and that of Mary – different from all the other Saints.

The conclusion is that just as Christ, so also Mary, both have the fullness of Grace: Christ does so as originating font [ as *the Author of Grace* ] and the Mater of God does so in the matter of a derived source [as *Mother of God* ]. Precisely, then, just what is the relationship of the participation of Mary on the one hand in the grace of Christ – and then, on the other hand what is the relationship of all men and women in the Grace of Mary? It seems that this is the fundamental question regarding the participation applied to the singular grace of Mary, chosen, i.e., predestined to be the Mother of God.

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<sup>5</sup> I-II, q. 110, a. 3.

<sup>6</sup> III, q. 62, a. 1. And again: *The Light of Grace which is a participation in the divine nature*. [I-II, q. 110, a. 3]. Cf. C. Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. TURIN 1963, pp. 304, ff.

<sup>7</sup> I, q. 37, a. 1.

## 2. The Fullness of the Fontal Originating Source of Grace in Christ as the Man-God and Savior

Every creature, then, in order to be elevated to the supernatural sphere of the divine life needs the participation of grace. This is true of Christ as well as man, and is obviously so regarding His Blessed Mother – and not only sinful humanity.

However, this does not all take place in one and the same manner. Most singular is the manner in which this true of Christ. Above all else, the human nature of Christ is directly united to the same Person of the Word and this Union with the divine nature is not through participation of some similarity with God. In other words, this is not through the medium of Grace, but more through the [hypostatic] union with the very Person of the Word<sup>8</sup>:

... But by the Incarnation human nature is not said to have participated a likeness of the Divine nature, but is said to be united to the Divine Nature itself in the Person of the Son. Now the thing itself is greater than a participated likeness of it.

A union that would be more intimate and more profound cannot only not be even thought of, but is simply not possible, without tearing down the limits of ontological difference, and to trip head over heels into monism. In this mind-set the pantheistic philosophies of antiquity drowned – and so did Bruno, Spinoza Bohme... and modern idealism, following in their path. The anthropological monism of modern idealism [especially Hegel] is the total over-turning of Christian Christology in so far as the hypostatic union, if it could be termed thus, would have as its subject not one single human individual privileged nature [Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary]. In such a hypothesis it would imply the entire human race as a totality and as the subject of the Absolute in history<sup>9</sup>.

Since the soul of Christ is not divine by its essence, but is a finite and created nature and is really distinct in Christ from the divine nature and Person into which it is assumed, it is also elevated by means of participation: ... *hence, it is necessary that this soul becomes divine by participation*, that is by means of habitual sanctifying grace<sup>10</sup>. This is the habitual grace which is proper to Christ, which is diverse and

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<sup>8</sup> III, q. 2, a. 10, a. 1

<sup>9</sup> In fact this is the expressed idea of Hegel: *Die Gewissheit der Einheit Gottes und des Menschen ist der Begriff Christi, des Gottesmenschen (Philosophie der Geschichte, Lesson II, 735)*. From this, the conclusion is drawn: *Die Wahre Einsicht ist die; das die Gottmensheit der ganzen Menschheit zukommt* [J.A. Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi*. Berlin 1853, Bd II, p. 1110.] The present anthropological theology [and Christology] always seems to be slipping more and more in that bent. [Cf. C. Fabro, *La svolta antropologica di Karl Rahner*, 2 ed, Milano 1974]

<sup>10</sup> III, q. 8, a. 8, ad um ['Whether the Grace of Christ according to which He is the Head of the Church is the same habitual grace as that which is in an individual man?'] This article of the *summa* both in the body of the

distinct from His *grace of Union*. The habitual grace of Christ is a created participation, whereas the Grace of Union is uncreated, as it is identified with the divine nature of the Word assuming it into His proper being acting in his human nature.

Lastly to Christ there is proper that Grace of Union i.e. in so far as grace is found in Him as in the Fontal Principle of salvation for every single human being for these reasons:

- firstly according to the closeness to God, this Grace is more sublime and is prior to the other, even though not in time;
- secondly because such grace enjoys perfection in so far as it provides the fullness of all other graces;
- thirdly, finally because this Grace of Union has that virtue of infusing grace into all the members of the Church. And this is the specific reason of this grace which Christ has merited for us, especially with His Passion and Death.

The Grace of Union therefore is not the 'Personal Grace' – and this would be 'ordained toward being personal and not toward some action. Rather, 'it is the same in its essence as that Personal Grace by which the soul of Christ is justified, and His grace according to which He is the Head of the Church justifying others. It differs from Personal Grace according to reason' – in the sense that the Grace of Union pertains directly to the relationship to God as a creature – where as the Personal Grace indicates precisely Christ as the Savior of humanity, or as He is the Author of Grace'<sup>11</sup>.

One last stage on the proximate efficient cause of Grace by which there be illumined as well the singular situation of the Grace of the Mother of God. Certainly the prime principle of grace, as a proper participation in the divine nature, cannot be other than God Himself. Christ is therefore also '...in so far as He is God authoritatively. The proximate cause therefore of Grace, in the new divine economy which includes the redemption of salvation from sin, is according to St. Thomas still Jesus Christ insofar as He is man, i.e., in so far – and here the Angelic Doctor takes hold of Greek theology, that humanity operated in Christ as the Instrument of His Divinity [*organon tes theiotetos*]<sup>12</sup>. Jesus' human nature acts as a ['con-joined'] instrument united to the Eternal Word, the actions of Christ were both 'divine-human'<sup>13</sup> [*theandric*], and therefore, they were for us the Cause of our Reconciliation

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article as well as in its objections in a practically perfect symmetry as with a 1 ['Whether Christ is the Head of the Church?]

<sup>11</sup> cf. *In Ev. Ioannis*, c. 1, lect. 10, # 201 – this is the so-called 'Grace of Head.

<sup>12</sup> John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*. Lib. 3, c. 19; PG 94, col. 1080 b; cf. *ibid.*, c. 15, col. 1060 a

<sup>13</sup> The expressions comes from Pseudo-Dionysius: *theandrike energeia* – Epist. 4 PG 3,

with the Father, i.e., of Grace In virtue of the Hypostatic Union with the Word. St. Thomas – and this is a characteristic of his Soteriology – calls this efficacy of Christ, in so far as He is man, the Instrumental Causality of our salvation: ...

*Reply to Objection 1:* To give grace or the Holy Ghost belongs to Christ as He is God, authoritatively; but instrumentally it belongs also to Him as man, inasmuch as His manhood is the instrument of His Godhead. And hence by the power of the Godhead His actions were beneficial, i.e. by causing grace in us, both meritoriously and efficiently. But Augustine denies that Christ as man gives the Holy Ghost authoritatively. Even other saints are said to give the Holy Ghost instrumentally, or ministerially, according to Gal. 3:5: "He . . . who giveth to you the Spirit." <sup>14</sup>

From this, there is seen how the human nature, and human flesh itself, are elevated in Christ to the rank of Divine Causality as the Efficient Causality of Grace and salvation.

### 3. The Fontal Fullness Derived from the Grace of Christ in the Mother of God

As a human creature, descended from Adam according to the natural process of generation, Mary on the one hand needed to be redeemed and saved by the Grace of Christ and therefore to participate in grace as every human being who is born from the wasted root of Adam. In Christ, though, Grace flows from within Him, so to speak, i.e., from the Hypostatic Union, or that divinity to which His human nature was assumed. This personal origin of the Salvific Grace assumes the very opposite effect to others' personal origin from the sin of Adam, to which Mary, too, was subject. However, Mary also has with Christ an incomparable Personal Relationship that

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<sup>14</sup> III, q. 8, a. 1, ad 1 um: Treating a bit below of the efficacy of the Passion of Christ, St. Thomas applies the principle of instrumentality to Christ's flesh:

... *I answer that*, Christ's Passion is the proper cause of the forgiveness of sins in three ways. First of all, by way of exciting our charity, because, as the Apostle says (Rm. 5:8): "God commendeth His charity towards us: because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us." But it is by charity that we procure pardon of our sins, according to Lk. 7:47: "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much."

Secondly, Christ's Passion causes forgiveness of sins by way of redemption. For since He is our head, then, by the Passion which He endured from love and obedience, He delivered us as His members from our sins, as by the price of His Passion: in the same way as if a man by the good industry of his hands were to redeem himself from a sin committed with his feet. For, just as the natural body is one though made up of diverse members, so the whole Church, Christ's mystic body, is reckoned as one person with its head, which is Christ.

Thirdly, by way of efficiency, inasmuch as Christ's flesh, wherein He endured the Passion, is the instrument of the Godhead, so that His sufferings and actions operate with Divine power for expelling sin.

*Reply to Objection 1:* Although Christ did not suffer as God, nevertheless His flesh is the instrument of the Godhead; and hence it is that His Passion has a kind of Divine Power of casting out sin, as was said above. [III, q. 49, a. 1; cf. also ad 1 um].



associated her to Christ as a mother to her child. Therefore St. Thomas, despite the limits of his Mariology<sup>15</sup>, he also attributes to Mary the Fontal Fullness of Grace in consonance with the annunciation by the Angel, and with a perfect parallelism to the fullness of Christ.

St. Thomas proceeds in this matter at the same time with both firmness and caution: he remains firm on his principle of the Universal Redemption of Christ:

... And thus, in whatever manner the Blessed Virgin would have been sanctified before animation, she could never have incurred the stain of original sin: and thus she would not have needed redemption and salvation which is by Christ, of whom it is written (Mt. 1:21): "He shall save His people from their sins." But this is unfitting, through implying that Christ is not the "Saviour of all men," as He is called (1 Tim. 4:10). It remains, therefore, that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified after animation...

[III, q. 27, a.2].<sup>16</sup>

Nonetheless, the Angelic Doctor exalted Mary above every other creature, all the while insisting on illuminating and rooting her privileges in the light of the sum of them all, and among these there is also the fact that he clearly understood her to be the Mother of God<sup>17</sup>. The biblical foundation of all this is the greeting from the Angel

<sup>15</sup> No matter how the controverted question is answered whether St. Thomas actually had admitted the substance of her privilege of the Immaculate Conception, a clear residue of his uncertainty regarding this matter, is his statement that in Mary *...at first the sin bound her, this was afterwards lifted from her...* [III, q. 27, a. 3 and ad 1um]

<sup>16</sup> However, in the alternative considered by him regarding her redemption either before or after her animation, there is also posted an intermediary solution: she was redeemed in her animation. It remains unknown why the Angelic Doctor omitted this. However the clear official definition of the Church has cut short all these discussions with its formula: in the first instant of her conception... [D-S, # 2803].

<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the body of that Man was assumed of the Virgin Mary: it has been shown further that the body of that man is indeed the body of the natural Son of God, i.e., of the sword of God. Therefore, it is fittingly stated that the Blessed Virgin is *the Mother of the Word of God*, and also of God, even though the divinity of the Word is not assumed of His Mother: it is further not necessary that the Son would assume all that He is in His substance from His Mother, but only His body [CG IV, c. 24, n. 3708].

This dignity of the Mother of God proceeds according to the Angelic Doctor as does her Virginity: Note, that as Hilary says, the Blessed Virgin Mary before the nativity is called 'spouse', as above I, 5 – but after the nativity she is not so called. And this is because of two reasons: the first is for the commendation of the Virgin; for since she conceived as a virgin, she gave birth as a virgin. Secondly on account of her own dignity: she was the Mother of God, and there were none greater than her dignity, and one's denomination comes from one's greater dignity. [In Ev. Matth. c. II, lect. IV, # 208]. Therefore, she is indeed the authentic Mother of God:

... Consequently, just as any woman is a mother from the fact that her child's body is derived from her, so the Blessed Virgin Mary ought to be called the Mother of God if the body of God is derived from her. But we have to hold that it is the body of God, if it is taken up into the unity of the person of God's Son, who is true God. Therefore all who admit that human nature was assumed by the Son of God into the unity of His person, must admit that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God. But Nestorius, who

– the theological foundation is the official declaration that Mary is the *Theotokos* by the Council of Ephesus [431]<sup>18</sup>:

... the charity of a man is not from himself, but is from the grace of God, which is given to each one according to the measure of the gift of Christ, as is said in Ep 4:7. Furthermore, to each one he gives that proportioned grace according to what each one had been chosen for, just as to the Man Christ, there is bestowed that most excellent grace, because to this He was elected that He might be assumed into the unity of a divine Person. After Him, the Blessed Mary had the greatest plenitude, she who had been chosen for this, that she would become the Mother of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore we can introduce here a distinction: if under the entitative, or the formal aspect, i.e., sanctifying grace that is so great in Christ, then as in the Blessed Virgin, in the Angels and in the Saints, the entitative participation of the divine nature elevating human nature to the supernatural level - under the real-existential aspect, i.e., as far as the manner of having grace, there exist profound differences. So, Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles are above all the other saints:

... Greater dignity was preordained by God to some saints, and hence he infused grace more abundantly into them. For example, he imparted a unique grace to Christ as man when he assumed [the humanity] into the unity of the [Second] Person. He endowed with special graces in both her body and soul, the glorious Virgin Mary whom he chose to be his mother. Similarly, those God called to a unique dignity, the Apostles, were gifted with a corresponding favor of grace. Thus the Apostle states in Romans 8 (23): “ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit.” And a Gloss comments: “their share is first in time and more copious than others.”<sup>20</sup>

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denied that the person of God and of the man Jesus Christ was one, was forced by logical necessity to deny that the Virgin Mary was the Mother of God. [Comp. Theol., c. 222, # 454]

<sup>18</sup> D-S, 251

<sup>19</sup> *In Ep. Ad Rom*, c. VIII, lec. V, # 678. In *De Veritate*, the Blessed Virgin is always associated with Christ, for all that pertains to the life of Grace far above all the Angeles and Saints:

... 2. The gift of grace does not follow the order of nature with necessity. Consequently, although human nature is not nobler than that of an angel, there has nevertheless been conferred upon a human being a grace greater than upon any angel, namely, upon the Blessed Virgin and upon Christ as man. Now confirmation was fitting for the Blessed Virgin because she was the Mother of divine wisdom, into which nothing defiled comes, as is said in the Book of Wisdom (7:25)...[De Ver. 24, a. 9, ad 2 um]

Similarly for the problem of death which only in Christ and in the Virgin is not associated as a consequence, or as a penalty for any sins they would have committed, neither mortal nor venial:

9. The necessity of sinning wither venially or mortally accompanies the necessity of dying except in privileged in privileged persons, Christ and the Blessed Virgin; but the necessity of sinning mortally does not, as is clear in those having grace...[De Ver. 12 ad 9].

<sup>20</sup> *In Ep* c.1, lect. III, # 23

The principle of this derivation is inspired of the neo-Platonic principle of 'grades', or that of 'closeness', or metaphysical contiguity:

*... I answer that, In every genus, the nearer a thing is to the principle, the greater the part which it has in the effect of that principle, whence Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. iv) that angels, being nearer to God, have a greater share than men, in the effects of the Divine goodness. Now Christ is the principle of grace, authoritatively as to His Godhead, instrumentally as to His humanity: whence (Jn. 1:17) it is written: "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." But the Blessed Virgin Mary was nearest to Christ in His humanity: because He received His human nature from her. Therefore it was due to her to receive a greater fullness of grace than others.<sup>21</sup>*

Mary's fullness of grace flows totally from this incomparable bond which she has with Christ generated by her and this makes of her the Mother of God. The Thomistic reflections are all reflecting the victorious confrontations of Mary with Eve, with the Angels and with the Saints: the weave of the severe and measured theological discourse does not succeed in restraining the impetus of a lyricism which succeeds in wonderful establishing the reflection and devotion which the Angelic Doctor had from his youth<sup>22</sup> for the Mother of God.

The characteristic of Mary's grace may be found in that encounter of participation and fullness where one of the terms *seems* to exclude the other, but in this context in reality the one completes the other. As the human nature of Christ remained such in its being assumed with the Divine Person with the Person of the Word, so that of Mary remained a human nature in her elevation to be the Mother of God. The fullness of grace in Christ and Mary latches on therefore to participation, and does not eliminate it: in her, there is fulfilled to the supreme level of the mystery that union and penetration of the divinity into her humanity. However, there is not here complete unity, but distinction remains – there is no confusion of natures here, but rather a transfiguring elevation.

This achieves both in Christ as well as in Mary, the basis and the totality of being and operating: in Christ, in so far as He is the Son of God, and in Mary in so far as Christ is her Son, and she is the genuine Mother of God. The foundation, therefore

<sup>21</sup> III, . 27, a. 5. St. Thomas refers the principle to Pseudo Dionysius: Hence, as the blessed Dennis, says in c. VII of his *Divine Names* that divine wisdom joins the ends of superiors to the principles of inferiors [CG IV, 68, ed. Leon. Minor, p. 167 a]. Dennis wrote: ... *kai aei ta tele ton proteron sunaptousa tais arxais ton deuterion* [PG 3, 872 B]

<sup>22</sup> As is known, William of Tocco recounts about a small piece of paper, containing the *Hail Mary* found by Thomas as a young boy, and the details of this are not forth-coming. The child became so attached to this that '... as many times as the boy for whatever reason began to cry, with no comforting of his baby-sitter would ever quiet him from his tears until the weeping boy would have in his possession that little scrap paper and its writing..

of her absolutely special and incomparable participation in the Divinity, which is the grace proper to Christ and to His Mother, certainly respects that metaphysical canon both of their difference and their metaphysical distinction, as well as of her real dependence as a creature on her Creator. These are the foundational pillars of participation<sup>23</sup>.

At the same time, however, the fullness of grace in Christ and in Mary is based on their supreme existential relationships which are respectively that of Son and His Mother. Christ, above all as the Word and Son of the Father and united to the Word of God cannot be said to be a Participant in Grace, but rather its Font, Source for us of Grace and the Author of Salvation.

Christ, then, as Son of Mary establishes in her the demand of Grace corresponding to her singular dignity, as Mother of God; '...His Mother, i.e., of God. Here her dignity is manifested: to no other creature has this been conceded, neither to any human being, or angel, as would be the Father or the Mother of God; but this is the privilege of that singular grace so that she would be the Mother not only of the Man, but would be the Mother of God. And so in Rv 12:1 it states: The woman, radiant with the sun, was as totally full of the divinity.'<sup>24</sup>

It is this founding title that places Mary along-side Christ:

... *Reply to Objection 1*: The blessed Virgin, who was chosen by God to be His Mother, received a fuller grace of sanctification than John the Baptist and Jeremias, who were chosen to foreshadow in a special way the sanctification effected by Christ ...[III, q. 27, a. 6]

This grace in Mary, which is a creature, certainly proceeds, as every created effect, from God. In another sense, however, as the very same grace as that of Christ – as He, too is a creature [and is born of Mary] – is founded, as has been seen, in that *Grace of Union* so, that grace proceeding to Mary by the Grace of Maternity which is the reason for that fullness of grace proper to Mary.

And here we are at the point of that participation to Grace that is totally incomparable which Mary has toward, since all of this is realized – different from all the Angels and Saints - the very circuit of the divine Trinitarian life, in her quality as Mother of the word Incarnate and Spouse\* of the Holy Sprit, and as the beloved Daughter of the Father. Therefore it must be said that as Christ is saint from His origins through His Grace of Union, which is not a participation of the divinity of the Word, but flows back in the presence of Christ, and from it flows in Christ as Habitual

<sup>23</sup> cf. in this regard: C. Fabro, *Elements for a Thomistic Doctrine of Participation*, in: *Divinitas* 1967, pp. 559, ff. [ristr. In the vol.: *Thomistic Exegesis*. Rome 1969, pp. 421, ff.

<sup>24</sup> *In Ev. Matth* c.1, Lect. IV, # 108.

Grace. To Christ there pertains that Grace by essence i.e., totally according to His fontal primary fullness<sup>25</sup>.

Similarly, but not equally this pertains to Mary in so far as she is the Mother of God there permeates her the fullness of grace according to her fontal fullness which with regard to Christ, that is not primary but derived. However, with regard to us it can be said to be 'primary' as regards the means to obtain the communication of grace [sacraments, prayers, good works ...].

Thus, in the sphere of the existential relationship in which her maternity precedes filiation, one can and should speak of a temporal precedence of the grace of Mary over that of Christ, since she is already holy even before Christ comes to birth and has been sanctified precisely so that He might be born holy. For this reason the Angel salutes her as Full of Grace, even before Mary gave her consent to the Incarnation and to His conception in her of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

It remains clear, therefore, that in Mary there is a form of participation according to a relationship that is totally original and incommensurate, just as there is in her the original and incommensurable service of the divine maternity. The theological consequence of such a relationship is that the grace in Mary – as also the Habitual Grace of Christ, a participation of the divine nature, while obeying the laws of the transcendental participation [causal dependence, real composition...] – transcends the predicamental participation, and is closely associated with the grace of Christ. Mary enters therefore into the orbit of her Son's dignity:

... The Blessed Virgin Mary became the mother of God's Son by conceiving of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it was fitting that she should be adorned with the highest degree of purity, that she might be made conformable to such a Son. And so we are to believe that she was free from every stain of actual sin—not only of mortal sin but of venial sin. Such freedom from sin can pertain to none of the saints after Christ, as we know from 1 John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But what is said in the Canticle of Canticles 4:7, "You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you," can well be understood of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God...<sup>26</sup>

It is also certain that the grace of Mary is transcendently founded on that of Christ – beginning with her preservation from original sin, or from her immaculate conception, *in virtue of the merits of Christ [intuitu meritorum Christi]*. However, let us repeat, similarly to the grace of Christ, as hers expresses that fontal fullness which

<sup>25</sup> Therefore, 'Christ is naturally holy, in Whose participation all others are called holy.' [*In Ep I ad Cor*, c. II, lect. II, # 95]; 'Since [Christ] is the Principal End, from Whom we participate in His filiation, He is the principal Heir in Whose inheritance we are joined.' [*In Ep. ad Rm.*, c. VIII lect. III, 649].

<sup>26</sup> *Comp. Theol.*, c. 224, # 457.

together with Christ becomes and is considered an active principle – and not only moral – of communication of grace to all the other participants.

Now it is only right to admit, St. Thomas adverted and present with clarity and firmness the logical coherence of this situation, and has developed it in an analytical manner above all in his *Exposition of the Angelic Salutation*<sup>27</sup>, but the principles of this teaching are also in the preceding writings and especially in his *Summa Theologiae* and elsewhere, as we will indicate here.

#### **4. The Transcendental Super-Abundance of Grace in Mary**

We can therefore speak of a transcendental super-abundance of Grace in Mary, whose theological richness had made its confirmation of two Marian Dogmas, that of the Immaculate Conception [1854] and that of the Assumption [1950, the Holy Year]. Even with these honors, this doctrine of the Angelic Doctor is far from 'exhausted.'

The first indication of the transcendency of Mary St. Thomas sees in the fact that the while in the OT human beings always venerate the Angels, as being totally superior to them in their celestial being [as in the Case of Abraham – Gn 18, 2, ff.]. However, with Mary for the first time a human being is placed above the Angels and an [Arch-] Angel comes from heaven in order to offer reverence to her and he says to her: Ave!

The superiority of the Angels over humanity is exposed by St. Thomas in three stages:

- 'First with regard to dignity of nature. For the Angel is of a spiritual nature...Humanity however, is of a corporal nature.
- Then, with regard to familiarity with God. For the Angel is familiar to God, as assisting Him. Humanity, though is as it were extraneous and distant from God due to sin.
- Thirdly, the Angel is pre-eminent on account of the fullness of the splendor of the divine grace. The Angels participate in the very light of divine grace in supreme plenitude. And Angels always appear shrouded in light. However, human beings, even though they participate somewhat in the very light of grace, nonetheless this does not suffice as they are also in a certain obscurity] 26:27; 27].

<sup>27</sup> We follow here the critical edition of G. F. Rissi [2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Piacenza 1931]. In agreement with Fr. Mandonnet, he assigns as its date of composition, the Lent of 1273, at Naples [p. 20]

St. Thomas in his writing style, shows himself to be a lover of 'three's and in contrast to the three instances of angelic superiority indicated just above, there are three levels of Mary's superiority: let us follow attentively the text that is particularly full, integrating for the occasion, certain paralleled texts over that of his brief *Angelical Salutation*.

a.] The first point of her superiority is the fullness of Mary's Grace, as the Angel himself greets her: *Hail, full of grace!* The great Doctor's commentary is both precise and deferential. 'And in the first place [the Blessed Virgin exceeded the Angels] in the fullness of grace, which was greater in the Blessed Virgin than in any Angel. And, as a result in order to treat about this, the Angel exhibited reverence to her, saying to her that she was 'full of grace', as though he were saying: Therefore, I manifest reverence to you, because you exceed me in the fullness of Grace [28:6-10]. There is a limitation in the existential condition of the Virgin, while she was still on earth, and therefore received the Angel's Annunciation:

*Reply to Objection 1:* The Mother of God was above the angels as regards the dignity to which she was chosen by God. But as regards the present state of life, she was beneath the angels. For even Christ Himself, by reason of His passible life, "was made a little lower than the angels," according to Heb. 2:9. But because Christ was both wayfarer and comprehensor, He did not need to be instructed by angels, as regards knowledge of Divine things. The Mother of God, however, was not yet in the state of comprehension: and therefore she had to be instructed by angels concerning the Divine Conception.<sup>28</sup>

To this point which is of primary importance on the doctrinal perspective, we will shortly return.

b.] The second aspect of her superiority over the Angels is her familiarity with God, both with her own Son and with the entire Trinity. St. Thomas' style here becomes direct: '... Secondly, and therefore as designating this, the Angel states: The Lord be with you! This was said as though he were to say: '... as a result, I manifest to you reverence because you are more familiar to God than I am, for The Lord is indeed with you. [31:12-15]. Now the Trinitarian amplitude of the celestial dimensions of this divine familiarity of Mary is here:

The Lord is with you. The Lord, in so far as He is the Father in the same Son which no angel nor any other creature had. [Lk 1:35]. *The Holy One which will be born of you shall be called the Son of God.* The Lord, as Son, is in her womb. Is 12:6: Rejoice and praise, O thou habitation of Sion: for great is he that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel. The Lord is one way toward the Blessed

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<sup>28</sup> III, 30, 2 ad 1 um

*Virgin than with the Angel, because He interacts with her as Son, but as the Lord of the Angel The Lord as the Holy Spirit is in His Temple: hence, it is stated: The Temple of God is the sacrament of the Holy Spirit. This is because she conceived of the Holy Spirit: Lk 1:35: The Holy Spirit will come upon you [31, 15-32, 3].*

As a result the familiarity of the Mother of the Lord with the Most Holy Trinity, called to mind in the greeting: The Lord is with you renders her the Mistress, *par excellence*. So, the Blessed Virgin is more familiar with God than the Angel is because with her is the Lord as Father, the Lord as Son, the Lord as Holy Spirit, sc., the entire Trinity. And so it is sung of her: *Noble Chamber of the entire Trinity!* For this expression: The Lord is with you is the most noble accolade that could ever be said of anyone. As is only right, the Angel showed reverence to the Blessed Virgin because she was also the Mother of the Lord and therefore, Queen of all As a result the name 'Mary' is befitting to her for in the Syrian language this is interpreted as 'Mistress' [32:3-10].

c.] The third aspect of Mary's excellence over the Angel, which is illumined by the other two, is Mary's absolute and fecund purity. She was indeed free from all sin and from all fault: ... [Thirdly], because the Blessed Virgin was not only pure in herself, but also procured purity in others. She indeed was most pure both as regards sin, in that she had incurred no sin neither original or mortal, not even venial sin. And the same holds regarding penalty [32, 11].<sup>29</sup> Regarding the universal mediation of Mary's grace according to the Angelic Doctor, we will return to the first point.

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Let us return, then, to the first point which is the crucial aspect of the fullness of Mary's grace to which the Mother of God is placed along-side her Son beyond all predicamental participation. The property of this participation is that of operating a certain *discretio*, or *divisio*, within the formality or the perfection which is shared in according to the general principle: ... since whatever is participated is determined to the mode of that which is participated and is thus possessed in a partial way and not according to every mode of perfection<sup>30</sup>. This principle holds also for the Grace

<sup>29</sup> Here St. Thomas develops the three principal maledictions that befell humanity because of the very sin from which Mary was exempted: a) for women ... who would conceive without corruption and bear her infant and in suffering bring their children to birth; b) for men who would harvest their bread in the sweat of their brow. From this the Blessed Virgin was immune, because as the Apostle says, I Co 7 – in that virgins are absolved from the care of this world, that they might give themselves over to God; c) men and women together, that they would return to dust. And from this the Blessed Virgin was immune because she was assumed bodily into heaven. For indeed we believe that after death she resurrected and was borne into heaven, Ps 131:8: Arise, O Lord into your resting place: you and the ark, which you sanctified...

<sup>30</sup> CG I, 32. Amplius 2. cf. the explicit text in this context regarding the predicamental participation that is read in the rather late commentary of the Saint, entitled, De Coelo et mundo :For the single individuals of natural



granted by God to creatures in order to save them: it does not apply, however, to Mary, as it obviously does not apply to Christ. These enjoy Grace, *according to its plenitude*: even though, as has been said, they have this by right and in a different manner – since Christ has it as redeemer, and Mary has it as the Mother of the Redeemer – Mary also enjoys it in its fullness and not according to participation, i.e., she does not have it according to some ‘division’ of perfection – as is proper to predicamental participation – but precisely *according to plenitude*.

1. Above all, the plenitude with respect to her soul, which is the proper subject of Grace, and this under two aspects: the negative aspect, that of avoiding evil [= purity] and the positive aspect, that of doing good, ore the exercise of virtues [= holiness]: And as far as these two aspects go, Mary had the most perfect grace. In fact:

- [exemption from all sins] For she avoided all sin more than any person other than Christ. For sin is either original and from this Mary was cleansed in the womb; then sin is mortal or venial and from these, she was free’ [28, 14]<sup>31</sup>:

Further, ... [8] *In the same way, that she as a virgin conceived and gave birth diminishes not at all the dignity of the Mother of Christ—without her being considered the true and natural mother of the Son of God. For, while the divine power worked, she supplied the natural matter for the generation of the body of Christ—and this alone is required on the part of the mother; but the things which in other mothers contribute to the loss of virginity belong not to the process of being a mother...*<sup>32</sup> Similarly: ... The Blessed Virgin Mary, however, was sanctified with such a wealth of grace that thenceforth she was preserved free from all sin, and not only from mortal sin, but also from venial sin.<sup>33</sup>

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realities which are here are all imperfect, because none of them comprehends in itself all that pertains to its own species.’ [In lib. *De Coelo et Mundo*. I, 19, p. xix,, 52 a] For a development of this important metaphysical doctrine, let us go back to our study: Cornelio FABRO, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Section [ed. cit., pp.145, ff.] – and to the article *Elements for a doctrine on participation*.

<sup>31</sup> After the citation from Ct 4:7 [Thou art all beautiful, my beloved, etc.] and also after a hint of a text from St. Augustine [*De Natura et gratia*, c. 36: *If all the men saints and all the women saints were to congregate*, etc.], the Angelic Doctor offers his clarification, in that with regard to original sin, the difference between Christ and the Blessed Virgin, His Mother, is as follows in his words: *But Christ excelled over the Blessed Virgin in this that without original Jesus was both conceived and born. The Blessed Virgin however, was conceived in original sin, but not born in sin* [!!!] [29, 1-3]. Below the editor, Rossi, at the Third Comment already cited, defends the reading of the original text of St. Thomas offered by some important codices: neither original sin, as has been reported. However, this question is still controversial in some circles, whether the Angelic Doctor had indeed defended the infallible teaching on the Immaculate Conception according to the quite clear formal definition, exults in the intention of this note which attempted to clarify the under-lying ‘metaphysical situation’ concerning the fullness of Mary’s grace of which both the dogmas of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary as well as her Immaculate Conception are presented as corollaries.

<sup>32</sup> CG IV, c. 45, # 3823

<sup>33</sup> *Comp. Theo.*, c. 224, # 461

- [*the practice of all the virtues* ]: she indeed exercised the actions of all the virtues; other saints, specialized in certain virtues, as some might be humble, another chaste, still others, merciful: and therefore as an example of special virtues, like blessed Nicholas offered an example of mercy, and so on. However, the Blessed Virgin Mary provides an example of all the virtues, as in her you will discover the example of humility: Lk 1:48: *The Looked on His lowly handmaid*; there is the example of virginity: *how can this be, as I do not know man*, 34; and so on in example of all the virtues, as it quite clear. And so the Blessed Virgin is full of grace, both as regards purity, and of virtue [29, 3-12].

2. Then, the fullness of grace through a certain refluence, with respect to the very body of Mary which was pervaded by grace since from her flesh the Son of God was destined to be born: 'Secondly, she was full of grace as through a certain refluence of her soul on her body. For it is already great in saints for them to have that amount of grace that would suffice to sanctify their soul; but the soul of the blessed Virgin Mary was so full, that from this fullness her grace flowed into her flesh, so that from this she would conceive the Son of God. And therefore, Hugh of St. Victor states: 'Because in her heart the love of the Holy Spirit burned in such a singular manner, that therefore on her flesh He performed in her to such an extent that from her would be born God and man ' Mt 1:20: *For what is born in her is of the Holy Spirit* [30:1-8].

3. Lastly, her fullness of grace with regard to its influencing other human beings: the universal mediation of Mary's mission as Co-Redemptrix along-side Christ the Redeemer: 'For it is great in any saint when he/she has that amount of grace that would suffice for each his/ her salvation; but it would be all the greater if one would once have so much grace that this suffice for the salvation of many. But, when one would have so much grace that it would suffice for the salvation of every human being of this world, this is the maximum, and this is found in Christ and in the Blessed Virgin. For in every danger you can obtain salvation from this glorious Virgin herself. So, as it says in Ct 4:4: 'A thousand bucklers [i.e., remedies against dangers] *hang from her*.

Likewise, in every work of virtue you can have her for your assistance. And therefore she herself says: *In me is all hope of life and of virtue* [Si 24:25]. So, she is indeed full of grace, and she exceeds the Angels in the plenitude of grace. And on account of this she is fittingly called 'Mary', which is interpreted: *Illumined in herself*. Thus, Is 58:11 says: *The Lord will fill your soul with brightness*; she is therefore, the *Illuminatrix* in others; with regard to the entire world, and therefore she is assimilated to both the sun and the moon [39, 9-31, 11].

There are other texts which seem even more explicit:

... Again, there is a fullness of superabundance, by which the Blessed Virgin excels all the saints because of the eminence and abundance of her merits. Further, there is a fullness of efficiency and overflow, which belongs only to the man Christ as the author of grace. For although the Blessed Virgin super-abounds her grace into us, it is never as authoress of grace. But grace flowed over from her soul into her body: for through the grace of the Holy Spirit, not only was the mind of the Virgin perfectly united to God by love, but her womb was supernaturally impregnated by the Holy Spirit...<sup>34</sup>

The foundation of all this is always the same:

... *Reply to Objection 1: God gives to each one according to the purpose for which He has chosen him*. And since Christ as man was predestinated and chosen to be "predestinated the Son of God in power . . . of sanctification" (Rm. 1:4), it was proper to Him to have such a fullness of grace that it overflowed from Him into all, according to Jn. 1:16: "Of His fullness we have all received." Whereas the Blessed Virgin Mary received such a fullness of grace that she was nearest of all to the Author of grace; so that she received within her Him Who is full of all grace; and by bringing Him forth, she, in a manner, dispensed grace to all..

Is there not clearly affirmed here Mary's universal mediation?

## 5. The Participation of the Grace in Christ and Mary

The doctrine of Divine Grace in Mary should satisfy those principles which seem opposed: on the one hand, the fact that Mary derives her humanity like all human beings from the sinner, Adam, and then on the other hand she was specially chosen as Mother of God, and therefore, in union with Christ her Son, transcends the sphere of direct relationships with the most Holy Trinity. The Thomistic treatment of these matters here, as has been seen, is strictly theological:

Christ is God and man at one and the same time, and as man, or as a creature, He stands under the sign of limitation, but this pertains only to His physical traits and His natural psychic powers. In the exercise of His spiritual potencies, and even prior to the relationship of His soul to God, Christ, thanks to the hypostatic union knows no limits but enjoys the perfect fullness in divine communications, and therefore, also of grace.<sup>35</sup> This is a magisterial text that clarifies this matter on the three levels of grace granted to Christ with respect to which one must consider the grace of Mary.

<sup>34</sup> *In Ev. Io.*, c. 1, Lect. X, # 201

<sup>35</sup> *in Ev. Io.*, c. III, ## 543-544; ed. R. Cai, Torino 1952, pp. 102, f.; cf. also *Comp. Theol.* C. 215. The two texts present exactly the same structure and identical content: at least for this latter part of the *Compendium*, there fall therefore, the recent hypotheses on the youthful composition of this work.

Prologue: Christ, as God and as man, receives, has, the fullness of the Holy Spirit. In fact, through His eternal generation, the Father gives to His Son '...Therefore, both as God and as man, Christ has the Holy Spirit beyond measure. For God the Father is said to give the Holy Spirit without measure to Christ as God, because he gives to Christ the power and might to bring forth (*spirandi*) the Holy Spirit, who, since he is infinite, was infinitely given to him by the Father: for the Father gives it just as he<sup>36</sup> himself has it, so that the Holy Spirit proceeds from him as much as from the Son.' [n. 543].

But also as man Christ had the Holy Spirit [i.e., Grace] - beyond measure, different from all other human beings. Here we can immediately observe, in the first parallel with Mary, that the Blessed Virgin, in so far as she is a creature cannot have the faculty of spirating with the Father, the Holy Spirit: however, as the predestined Mother of God, she has received the Holy Spirit as the principle of life in itself, of the Incarnate Word, but free-existential as the Mother of the Incarnate Word proceeding from His Father: in fact:

... 'Reply to Objection 4: The humanity of Christ, from the fact that it is united to the Godhead; and created happiness from the fact that it is the fruition of God; and the Blessed Virgin from the fact that she is the mother of God; have all a certain infinite dignity from the infinite good, which is God...' <sup>37</sup>

And it is stated poetically: '...in the Blessed Virgin Mary there first appeared the illumination of the sun, i.e., of Christ, through an abundance of grace...' <sup>38</sup>

The measure of the participation of grace follows in Mary strictly from her relationship to Christ. Now in Christ there is distinct a three-fold grace: the Grace of Union, the singular Grace of Person which is habitual, and the Grace of the Head which is that of influence... [# 544].

In fact, there becomes clear here the dialectic of the participation of grace in the two-fold foundation, both divine and human, and in the two-fold movement of ascent and descent of Grace from its divine origin to the soul of Christ and Mary.

**a. The Grace of Union** is infinite by its essence. The stage of the Grace of Union ], as has been said, is proper to Christ, and here St. Thomas returns to insist anew that this grace is neither a participation nor is it through participation, but through the personal union with the Word which does not consent of limits. This is the supreme Grace even though it is supremely gratuitous in Christ's humanity, even though it does not have the hypo hypostatic union, but rather one may speak in a

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<sup>37</sup> I, 25, 6, ad 4 um.

<sup>38</sup> I-II, 103, a. [??], ad 4 um.

certain sense of the Grace of Union in the sense that it is both from His singular and unique relationship of the Mother of the Incarnate Word Who is her Son, as well as from the consequent relationship to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, and therefore, to the entire Most Holy Trinity, as is exposed in the Commentary on the *Hail Mary*. Could one then not say for Mary, in this sense, that she would be endowed with a derived Grace of Union? This coincides really with the grace of the divine maternity which does not re-enter into a finite category since its object and term is God Himself: Mary is the *Theotokos* – *the Mother of God*, through that grace which corresponds to the Son of God.

**b. The Habitual Grace** of Christ is finite according to its essence, but infinite as a participation in grace. In fact, such grace, even in Christ, is a created gift and therefore a finite reality which has a finite essence: by reason of its entity in the real formal order, divinity is infinite. But, in the real, existential order St. Thomas finds it to be infinite under three aspects:

a.] First on the Part of the Recipient: or with respect to the subject which is the soul of Christ. In fact, the soul of Christ receives grace without any measure or limitation, as a vase that is filled to the very brim:

... So, then the habitual grace of Christ, is finite according to its essence, but infinitely, and not according to any measure it is said to be given – because as much is given to Him, to the extent that His human nature can grasp... [# 544].

Therefore, the entire capacity of God of the created nature is in Christ completely, i.e., totally satisfied. And what about the Blessed Virgin? For her, St. Thomas puts forward some restriction:

*Reply to Objection 1:* The Blessed Virgin is said to be full of grace, not on the part of grace itself---since she had not grace in its greatest possible excellence---nor for all the effects of grace; but she is said to be full of grace in reference to herself, i.e. inasmuch as she had sufficient grace for the state to which God had chosen her, i.e. to be the mother of His Only-begotten. So, too, Stephen is said to be full of grace, since he had sufficient grace to be a fit minister and witness of God, to which office he had been called. And the same must be said of others. Of these fulnesses one is greater than another, according as one is divinely pre-ordained to a higher or lower state.<sup>39</sup>

This is all true: but the relationship of Mary to Christ is that of the true Mother of Christ as the Author of Grace, and this places her in an absolutely diverse situation from all the other saints. Therefore, St. Thomas himself affirms that also Mary, in so far as she is the Mother of God, has received –with respect to all other creatures –

<sup>39</sup> III, 7, 10, ad 1 um.

the divine grace beyond measure. Therefore, '... the Blessed Virgin from the very fact that she is the Mother of God, has a certain infinite dignity from that infinite good which God is.'<sup>40</sup> And this is the plenitude of redundance, as has been seen.

b.] Secondly, from the part of the gift received, which is Grace: St. Thomas has placed as a principle of his metaphysics the absolute priority of act, and therefore, the infinite of every act and form as such and therefore God, Who is pure and infinite Act by His essence: the supreme being, being by His own essence.

All other beings, acts are such and therefore are finite according to their essence – they are Entities by participation – and composed of essence and the act of being, which is the constitutive characteristic of every creature. Here the proper infinity of being, as an act, is 'taken' from limitation that involves every finite essence in so far as the perfection of the act comes to be limited by the part of the subject which is always such. However, if one were to consider, St. Thomas continues, a special form or elevating as grace which is indeed entitatively finite, but has received according to the entire fullness of its actuality and virtuality [as virtues, gifts...], then it can be said that Grace '... is had as perfectly as it can be, such, i.e., that the manner of having is adequate to the real that is had, power.

Such is grace in Christ: '...So, therefore, the habitual grace of Christ, which is indeed finite in accord with its essence; but nonetheless it is said to be beyond all measure, because whatever might pertain to the reason of Grace, Christ accepts in full.' It is different from all the other Saints: '... Others, however, do not accept totally, but one in one way, and another in a different way' [# 544]<sup>41</sup>.

And what about Mary? Surely the divine Maternity draws her on high towards the infinity of the grace of Christ her Son, and in dependence upon Him and in a way, as has been said, that is termed 'fontal.' This is in so far as in a certain sense Mary's grace precedes [in time] the grace of Christ as the Mother does her Son: '... Just as the plenitude of grace indeed was perfectly in Christ, and yet a certain beginning preceded in His Mother: so also is the observance of the counsels, what by the grace of God occurs, while indeed these perfectly begin in Christ, yet in a certain manner, this was begun in His Mother'.<sup>42</sup>

Above all the grace of Mary is infinite because there cannot be conceived a dignity of any measure higher than that granted to the Blessed Virgin: ...for the Blessed Virgin Mary was divinely chosen to be the Mother of God And therefore, it is not to be doubted that God through His grace rendered her suited for this: as the Angel made clear to her: *You have found grace with God: behold, you will conceive ...'*

<sup>40</sup> I, 25, 6 ad 4 um.

<sup>41</sup> *In Ev. Io.*, ed. cit. P. 103 b

<sup>42</sup> III, 28, 4, ad 2um.

Then also because she had a singular affinity to Christ, because He received flesh from her.<sup>43</sup> For this reason to Mary there is due that special worship of *hyperdulia* i.e., one that is more eminent than that shown to the other Saints. This is all *in so far as she is the Mother of God*, and therefore, by a certain *redundance*, since '... the honor of the Mother is referred to the Son because the Mother is to be honored because of the Son'<sup>44</sup>.

c.] Thirdly, from the part of the Cause, or His efficacy and the fullness of inspiring grace. Christ in in so far as He is united hypostatically to the Word, has in Himself the very infinite font of grace of which therefore, he is able to dispense without limit, or infinitely: thus, the soul of Christ has in himself infinite grace without measure, and from this fact that He has the Word united to Himself, which is the infinite and inexhaustible principle of all emanation.' Hence, the conclusion:

'... because the Grace of Christ Himself, which is said to be Capital, in so far as Christ is the Head of the Church, it is infinite according to his *influence*.' The conclusion is illuminated by the analogy of the Font: Just think, if one had a fountain, which could handle an infinite amount of flowing water, it would be said to have water infinitely and without measure.' The final conclusion is that the infinity of Christ's efficacy of grace, it has the universal transcendency for humanity in general, i.e., not only of this present world but over all possible worlds<sup>45</sup>.

Similarly, this is Mary's condition in the unlimited efficacy of the *impetration* for grace which has procured for the Madonna recently the title: *Mother of the Church*. Surely, the Madonna is not the Font of Grace with respect to Christ, the Author of Salvation, and the Font of Grace and the fullness of Mary's grace – for she, too, has been redeemed *in the virtue of the merits of Christ*.

Her fullness is derived and specified:

... *Reply to Objection 1*: The Blessed Virgin is said to be full of grace, not on the part of grace itself---since she had not grace in its greatest possible excellence---nor for all the effects of grace; but she is said to be full of grace in reference to herself, i.e. inasmuch as she had sufficient grace for the state to which God had chosen her, i.e. to be the mother of His Only-begotten. So, too, Stephen is said

<sup>43</sup> III, 27, 4.

<sup>44</sup> III, 25, 5 ad 2 um

<sup>45</sup> From the fact that this Font has the wherewithal to pour out without measure the Gifts of the Spirit, it accepts the virtue of out-pouring beyond measure, as the Grace of Christ not only would suffice for the salvation of some human beings, but of all the human beings of this world, according to this phrase in 1 Jn 2:2: *...And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also those of the whole world...* and even of many world, if such exist. [l.c. ed. cit. p. 103 b].

to be full of grace, since he had sufficient grace to be a fit minister and witness of God, to which office he had been called. And the same must be said of others. Of these fullnesses one is greater than another, according as one is divinely pre-ordained to a higher or lower state....<sup>46</sup>

A bit further on, it is stated that: ...the plenitude of grace was derived from Christ for His Mother<sup>47</sup>. The limitation of which St. Thomas spoke however in the receding text does not apply to the entity of the supernatural gifts [and therefore, not to grace itself] in Mary, but only of their use, as has been seen:

*... Reply to Objection 3:* There is no doubt that the Blessed Virgin received in a high degree both the gift of wisdom and the grace of miracles and even of prophecy, just as Christ had them. But she did not so receive them, as to put them and such like graces to every use, as did Christ: but accordingly as it befitted her condition of life.<sup>48</sup>

Such seems to be the fundamental terms of this entire matter.

### SUMMARY

[1] It remains firmly established that the humanity of Christ, as was the humanity of Mary created, and so both needed divine grace in order to participate in the divine life. Participation was different for each and together, in intimate solidarity in the quality and quantity of grace.<sup>49</sup>

[2] Christ, as hypostatically united to the Word, Mary as united to the Person of the Word, is related genetically to His Mother as is united to Him and by this very fact, at the same time to the Father and to the Holy Spirit.

[3] Christ, the Man-God, as the Eternal Word proceeds from all eternity from the Father, but as man He proceeds in time of the Virgin Mary, through the intervention of the Holy Spirit. This real virginal maternity is in Mary a participation which is at the same time the fullness of grace received in a manner that has never occurred to any other creature: to her there pertains, then, a fullness of the Holy Spirit and of that Fontal Grace derived in a manner that was never granted before or since, and never will it be possible for anyone else ever to have this, since there is no greater dignity than being that of the Mother of God.

<sup>46</sup> III, 7, 10 ad 1um.

<sup>47</sup> III, 37, 4.

<sup>48</sup> III, 27, 5 ad 3um.

<sup>49</sup> ... To 'participate' means to take hold of a part. Only Christ had the Spirit in fullness. Other other Saints received of His plenitude and were made participants, not indeed of their substance but of their distributions [*In Ep ad Hebr.* C.6, lect.1, # 289], this surely does not apply to Mary. The grace conferred on other Saints is in fact that Adoptive Filiation in so far as this itself is a *participated similitude of His natural Filiation*. [III, 24, 3; q. 3,a. 5, ad 2um].



[4] Therefore, Mary's plenitude in the grace of Christ flows into her not only with that fullness of the divine maternity, and therefore in a manner incomparably superior to that of any other creature, angelic or human.

[5] From her dignity as the Mother of the Author of Grace flows into Mary not only as the fullness of grace, but also its Fountal Character derived from Christ, who is the Mediator, *per essentiam*. Thus, from her, as the *Mediatrix* by participation, divine grace is derived to as many as seek it, in this valley of tears, as they yearn to pass over to the life of the eternal Sabbath in God.

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## APPENDIX

### Definition of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.

[From the Bull "*Ineffabilis Deus*", Dec. 8, 1854]

1641 . . . To the honor of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, to the glory and adornment of the Virgin Mother of God, to the exaltation of the Catholic Faith and the increase of the Christian religion, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and by Our own, We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine, which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary at the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Christ Jesus, the Savior of the human race, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and on this account must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful. Wherefore, if any should presume to think in their hearts otherwise than as it has been defined by Us, which God avert, let them know and understand that they are condemned by their own judgment; that they have suffered shipwreck in regard to faith, and have revolted from the unity of the Church; and what is more, that by their own act they subject themselves to the penalties established by law, if, what they think in their heart, they should to signify by word or writing or any other external means.

**TEXTS of St. THOMAS STUDIED BY Fr. FABRO'S STUDY ON BVM:****The Works of St. Thomas Aquinas****A. [Summa III, Q. 27 – Sanctification of Mary]****Article 1. Whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before her birth from the womb?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before her birth from the womb. For the Apostle says (1 Corinthians 15:46): "That was not first which is spiritual but that which is natural; afterwards that which is spiritual." But by sanctifying grace man is born spiritually into a son of God according to John 1:13: "(who) are born of God." But birth from the womb is a natural birth. Therefore the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before her birth from the womb.

**Objection 2.** Further, Augustine says (Ep. ad Dardan.): "The sanctification, by which we become temples of God, is only of those who are born again." But no one is born again, who was not born previously. Therefore the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before her birth from the womb.

**Objection 3.** Further, whoever is sanctified by grace is cleansed from sin, both original and actual. If, therefore, the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before her birth from the womb, it follows that she was then cleansed from original sin. Now nothing but original sin could hinder her from entering the heavenly kingdom. If therefore she had died then, it seems that she would have entered the gates of heaven. But this was not possible before the Passion of Christ, according to the Apostle (Hebrews 10:19): "We have [Vulgate: 'having'] therefore a confidence in the entering into the Holies by His blood." It seems therefore that the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before her birth from the womb.

**Objection 4.** Further, original sin is contracted through the origin, just as actual sin is contracted through an act. But as long as one is in the act of sinning, one cannot be cleansed from actual sin. Therefore neither could the Blessed Virgin be cleansed from original sin as long as she was in the act of origin, by existence in her mother's womb.

**On the contrary,** The Church celebrates the feast of our Lady's Nativity. Now the Church does not celebrate feasts except of those who are holy. Therefore even in her birth the Blessed Virgin was holy. Therefore she was sanctified in the womb.

**I answer that,** Nothing is handed down in the canonical Scriptures concerning the sanctification of the Blessed Mary as to her being sanctified in the womb; indeed, they do not even mention her birth. But as Augustine, in his tractate on the Assumption of the Virgin, argues with reason, since her body was assumed into heaven, and yet Scripture does not relate this; so it may be reasonably argued that she was sanctified in the womb. For it is reasonable to believe that she, who brought forth "the Only-Begotten of the Father full of grace and truth," received greater privileges of grace than all others: hence we read (Luke 1:28) that the angel addressed her in the words: "Hail full of grace!"

Moreover, it is to be observed that it was granted, by way of privilege, to others, to be sanctified in the womb; for instance, to Jeremias, to whom it was said (Jeremiah 1:5): "Before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee"; and again, to John the Baptist, of whom it is written (Luke 1:15): "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb." It is therefore with reason that we believe the Blessed Virgin to have been sanctified before her birth from the womb.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Even in the Blessed Virgin, first was that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual: for she was first conceived in the flesh, and afterwards sanctified in the spirit.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Augustine speaks according to the common law, by reason of which no one is regenerated by the sacraments, save those who are previously born. But God did not so limit His power to the law of the sacraments, but that He can bestow His grace, by special privilege, on some before they are born from the womb.

**Reply to Objection 3.** The Blessed Virgin was sanctified in the womb from original sin, as to the personal stain; but she was not freed from the guilt to which the whole nature is subject, so as to enter into Paradise otherwise than through the Sacrifice of Christ; the same also is to be said of the Holy Fathers who lived before Christ.

**Reply to Objection 4.** Original sin is transmitted through the origin, inasmuch as through the origin the human nature is transmitted, and original sin, properly speaking, affects the nature. And this takes place when the off-spring conceived is animated. Wherefore nothing hinders the offspring conceived from being sanctified after animation: for after this it remains in the mother's womb not for the purpose of receiving human nature, but for a certain perfecting of that which it has already received.

## Article 2. Whether the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before animation?

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before animation. Because, as we have stated (1), more grace was bestowed on the Virgin Mother of God than on any saint. Now it seems to have been granted to some, to be sanctified before animation. For it is written (Jeremiah 1:5): "Before I formed thee in the bowels of thy mother, I knew thee": and the soul is not infused before the formation of the body. Likewise Ambrose says of John the Baptist (Comment. in Luc. i, 15): "As yet the spirit of life was not in him and already he possessed the Spirit of grace." Much more therefore could the Blessed Virgin be sanctified before animation.

**Objection 2.** Further, as Anselm says (De Concep. Virg. xviii), "it was fitting that this Virgin should shine with such a purity that under God none greater can be imagined": wherefore it is written (Canticles 4:7): "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee." But the purity of the Blessed Virgin would have been greater, if she had never been stained by the contagion of original sin. Therefore it was granted to her to be sanctified before her flesh was animated.

**Objection 3.** Further, as it has been stated above, no feast is celebrated except of some saint. But some keep the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin. Therefore it seems that in her very Conception she was holy; and hence that she was sanctified before animation.

**Objection 4.** Further, the Apostle says (Romans 11:16): "If the root be holy, so are the branches." Now the root of the children is their parents. Therefore the Blessed Virgin could be sanctified even in her parents, before animation.

**On the contrary,** The things of the Old Testament were figures of the New, according to 1 Corinthians 10:11: "All things happened to them in figure." Now the sanctification of the tabernacle, of which it is written (Psalms 45:5): "The most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle," seems to signify the sanctification of the Mother of God, who is called "God's Tabernacle," according to Psalms 18:6: "He hath set His tabernacle in the sun." But of the tabernacle it is written (Exodus 40:31-32): "After all things were perfected, the cloud covered the tabernacle of the testimony, and the glory of the Lord filled it." Therefore also the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified until after all in her was perfected, viz. her body and soul.

**I answer that,** The sanctification of the Blessed Virgin cannot be understood as having taken place before animation, for two reasons. First, because the sanctification of which we are speaking, is nothing but the cleansing from original

sin: for sanctification is a "perfect cleansing," as Dionysius says (Div. Nom. xii). Now sin cannot be taken away except by grace, the subject of which is the rational creature alone. Therefore before the infusion of the rational soul, the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified.

Secondly, because, since the rational creature alone can be the subject of sin; before the infusion of the rational soul, the offspring conceived is not liable to sin. And thus, in whatever manner the Blessed Virgin would have been sanctified before animation, she could never have incurred the stain of original sin: and thus she would not have needed redemption and salvation which is by Christ, of whom it is written (Matthew 1:21): "He shall save His people from their sins." But this is unfitting, through implying that Christ is not the "Saviour of all men," as He is called (1 Timothy 4:10). It remains, therefore, that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified after animation.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The Lord says that He "knew" Jeremias before he was formed in the womb, by knowledge, that is to say, of predestination: but He says that He "sanctified" him, not before formation, but before he "came forth out of the womb," etc. As to what Ambrose says, viz. that in John the Baptist there was not the spirit of life when there was already the Spirit of grace, by spirit of life we are not to understand the life-giving soul, but the air which we breathe out [respiratus]. Or it may be said that in him as yet there was not the spirit of life, that is the soul, as to its manifest and complete operations.

**Reply to Objection 2.** If the soul of the Blessed Virgin had never incurred the stain of original sin, this would be derogatory to the dignity of Christ, by reason of His being the universal Saviour of all. Consequently after Christ, who, as the universal Saviour of all, needed not to be saved, the purity of the Blessed Virgin holds the highest place. For Christ did not contract original sin in any way whatever, but was holy in His very Conception, according to Luke 1:35: "The Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." But the Blessed Virgin did indeed contract original sin, but was cleansed therefrom before her birth from the womb. This is what is signified (Job 3:9) where it is written of the night of original sin: "Let it expect light," i.e. Christ, "and not see it"--(because "no defiled thing cometh into her," as is written in Wisdom 7:25), "nor the rising of the dawning of the day," that is of the Blessed Virgin, who in her birth was immune from original sin.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Although the Church of Rome does not celebrate the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, yet it tolerates the custom of certain churches that do keep that feast, wherefore this is not to be entirely reprobated. Nevertheless the celebration of this feast does not give us to understand that she

was holy in her conception. But since it is not known when she was sanctified, the feast of her Sanctification, rather than the feast of her Conception, is kept on the day of her conception.

**Reply to Objection 4.** Sanctification is twofold. One is that of the whole nature: inasmuch as the whole human nature is freed from all corruption of sin and punishment. This will take place at the resurrection. The other is personal sanctification. This is not transmitted to the children begotten of the flesh: because it does not regard the flesh but the mind. Consequently, though the parents of the Blessed Virgin were cleansed from original sin, nevertheless she contracted original sin, since she was conceived by way of fleshly concupiscence and the intercourse of man and woman: for Augustine says (De Nup. et Concup. i): "All flesh born of carnal intercourse is sinful."

### **Article 3. Whether the Blessed Virgin was cleansed from the infection of the Fomes?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the Blessed Virgin was not cleansed from the infection of the fomes. For just as the fomes, consisting in the rebellion of the lower powers against the reason, is a punishment of original sin; so also are death and other corporeal penalties. Therefore the fomes was not entirely removed from her.

**Objection 2.** Further, it is written (2 Corinthians 12:9): "Power is made perfect in infirmity," which refers to the weakness of the fomes, by reason of which he (the Apostle) felt the "sting of the flesh." But it was not fitting that anything should be taken away from the Blessed Virgin, pertaining to the perfection of virtue. Therefore it was unfitting that the fomes should be entirely taken away from her.

**Objection 3.** Further, Damascene says (De Fide Orth. iii) that "the Holy Ghost came upon" the Blessed Virgin, "purifying her," before she conceived the Son of God. But this can only be understood of purification from the fomes: for she committed no sin, as Augustine says (De Nat. et Grat. xxvi). Therefore by the sanctification in the womb she was not absolutely cleansed from the fomes.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Canticles 4:7): "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee!" But the fomes implies a blemish, at any rate in the flesh. Therefore the fomes was not in the Blessed Virgin.

**I answer that,** on this point there are various opinions. For some have held that the fomes was entirely taken away in that sanctification whereby the Blessed Virgin was sanctified in the womb. Others say that it remained as far as it causes

a difficulty in doing good, but was taken away as far as it causes a proneness to evil. Others again, that it was taken away as to the personal corruption, by which it makes us quick to do evil and slow to do good: but that it remained as to the corruption of nature, inasmuch as it is the cause of transmitting original sin to the offspring. Lastly, others say that, in her first sanctification, the fomes remained essentially, but was fettered; and that, when she conceived the Son of God, it was entirely taken away. In order to understand the question at issue, it must be observed that the fomes is nothing but a certain inordinate, but habitual, concupiscence of the sensitive appetite, for actual concupiscence is a sinful motion. Now sensual concupiscence is said to be inordinate, in so far as it rebels against reason; and this it does by inclining to evil, or hindering from good. Consequently it is essential to the fomes to incline to evil, or hinder from good. Wherefore, to say that the fomes was in the Blessed Virgin without an inclination to evil is to combine two contradictory statements.

In like manner it seems to imply a contradiction to say that the fomes remained as to the corruption of nature, but not as to the personal corruption. For, according to Augustine (De Nup. et Concup. i.), it is lust that transmits original sin to the offspring. Now lust implies inordinate concupiscence, not entirely subject to reason: and therefore, if the fomes were entirely taken away as to personal corruption, it could not remain as to the corruption of nature.

It remains, therefore, for us to say, either that the fomes was entirely taken away from her by her first sanctification or that it was fettered. Now that the fomes was entirely taken away, might be understood in this way, that, by the abundance of grace bestowed on the Blessed Virgin, such a disposition of the soul's powers was granted to her, that the lower powers were never moved without the command of her reason: just as we have stated to have been the case with Christ (15, 2), who certainly did not have the fomes of sin; as also was the case with Adam, before he sinned, by reason of original justice: so that, in this respect, the grace of sanctification in the Virgin had the force of original justice. And although this appears to be part of the dignity of the Virgin Mother, yet it is somewhat derogatory to the dignity of Christ, without whose power no one had been freed from the first sentence of condemnation. And though, through faith in Christ, some were freed from that condemnation, according to the spirit, before Christ's Incarnation, yet it does not seem fitting that any one should be freed from that condemnation, according to the flesh, except after His Incarnation, for it was then that immunity from condemnation was first to appear. Consequently, just as before the immortality of the flesh of Christ rising again, none obtained immortality of the flesh, so it seems unfitting to say that before Christ appeared in sinless flesh, His Virgin Mother's or anyone else's flesh



should be without the fomes, which is called "the law of the flesh" or "of the members" (Romans 7:23-25).

Therefore it seems better to say that by the sanctification in the womb, the Virgin was not freed from the fomes in its essence, but that it remained fettered: not indeed by an act of her reason, as in holy men, since she had not the use of reason from the very first moment of her existence in her mother's womb, for this was the singular privilege of Christ: but by reason of the abundant grace bestowed on her in her sanctification, and still more perfectly by Divine Providence preserving her sensitive soul, in a singular manner, from any inordinate movement. Afterwards, however, at the conception of Christ's flesh, in which for the first time immunity from sin was to be conspicuous, it is to be believed that entire freedom from the fomes redounded from the Child to the Mother. This indeed is signified (Ezekiel 43:2): "Behold the glory of the God of Israel came in by the way of the east," i.e. by the Blessed Virgin, "and the earth," i.e. her flesh, "shone with His," i.e. Christ's, "majesty."

**Reply to Objection 1.** Death and such like penalties do not of themselves incline us to sin. Wherefore though Christ assumed them, He did not assume the fomes. Consequently in order that the Blessed Virgin might be conformed to her Son, from "whose fullness" her grace was derived, the fomes was at first fettered and afterwards taken away: while she was not freed from death and other such penalties.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The "infirmity" of the flesh, that pertains to the fomes, is indeed to holy men an occasional cause of perfect virtue: but not the "sine qua non" of perfection: and it is quite enough to ascribe to the Blessed Virgin perfect virtue and abundant grace: nor is there any need to attribute to her every occasional cause of perfection.

**Reply to Objection 3.** The Holy Ghost effected a twofold purification in the Blessed Virgin. The first was, as it were, preparatory to Christ's conception: which did not cleanse her from the stain of sin or fomes, but rather gave her mind a unity of purpose and disengaged it from a multiplicity of things (Cf. Dionysius, Div. Nom. iv), since even the angels are said to be purified, in whom there is no stain, as Dionysius says (Eccl. Hier. vi). The second purification effected in her by the Holy Ghost was by means of the conception of Christ which was the operation of the Holy Ghost. And in respect of this, it may be said that He purified her entirely from the fomes.

#### **Article 4. Whether by being sanctified in the womb the Blessed Virgin was preserved from all actual sin?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that by being sanctified in the womb the Blessed Virgin was not preserved from all actual sin. For, as we have already stated (3), after her first sanctification the fomes remained in the Virgin. Now the motion of the fomes, even if it precede the act of the reason, is a venial sin, albeit extremely slight, as Augustine says in his work De Trinitate [Cf. Sent. ii, D, 24]. Therefore there was some venial sin in the Blessed Virgin.

**Objection 2.** Further, Augustine (Qq. Nov. et Vet. Test. lxxiii on Luke 2:35: "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce") says that the Blessed Virgin "was troubled with wondering doubt at the death of our Lord." But doubt in matters of faith is a sin. Therefore the Blessed Virgin was not preserved from all actual sin.

**Objection 3.** Further, Chrysostom (Hom. xlv in Matth.) expounding the text: "Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee," says: "It is clear that they did this from mere vain glory." Again, on John 2:3: "They have no wine," the same Chrysostom says that "she wished to do them a favor, and raise herself in their esteem, by means of her Son: and perchance she succumbed to human frailty, just as did His brethren when they said: 'Manifest Thyself to the world.'" And a little further on he says: "For as yet she did not believe in Him as she ought." Now it is quite clear that all this was sinful. Therefore the Blessed Virgin was not preserved from all sin.

**On the contrary,** Augustine says (De Nat. et Grat. xxxvi): "In the matter of sin, it is my wish to exclude absolutely all questions concerning the holy Virgin Mary, on account of the honor due to Christ. For since she conceived and brought forth Him who most certainly was guilty of no sin, we know that an abundance of grace was given her that she might be in every way the conqueror of sin."

**I answer that,** God so prepares and endows those, whom He chooses for some particular office, that they are rendered capable of fulfilling it, according to 2 Corinthians 3:6: "(Who) hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament." Now the Blessed Virgin was chosen by God to be His Mother. Therefore there can be no doubt that God, by His grace, made her worthy of that office, according to the words spoken to her by the angel (Luke 1:30-31): "Thou hast found grace with God: behold thou shalt conceive," etc. But she would not have been worthy to be the Mother of God, if she had ever sinned. First, because the honor of the parents reflects on the child, according to Proverbs 17:6: "The glory of children is their fathers": and consequently, on the other hand, the Mother's shame would have reflected on her Son. Secondly, because of the singular affinity between her

and Christ, who took flesh from her: and it is written (2 Corinthians 6:15): "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" Thirdly, because of the singular manner in which the Son of God, who is the "Divine Wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:24) dwelt in her, not only in her soul but in her womb. And it is written (Wisdom 1:4): "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins."

We must therefore confess simply that the Blessed Virgin committed no actual sin, neither mortal nor venial; so that what is written (Canticles 4:7) is fulfilled: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee," etc.

**Reply to Objection 1.** After her sanctification the fomes remained in the Blessed Virgin, but fettered; lest she should be surprised by some sudden inordinate act, antecedent to the act of reason. And although the grace of her sanctification contributed to this effect, yet it did not suffice; for otherwise the result of her sanctification would have been to render impossible in her any sensual movement not preceded by an act of reason, and thus she would not have had the fomes, which is contrary to what we have said above (Article 3). We must therefore say that the above mentioned fettering (of the fomes) was perfected by divine providence not permitting any inordinate motion to result from the fomes.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Origen (Hom. xvii in Luc.) and certain other doctors expound these words of Simeon as referring to the sorrow which she suffered at the time of our Lord's Passion. Ambrose (in Luc. 2:35) says that the sword signifies "Mary's prudence which took note of the heavenly mystery. For the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12).

Others again take the sword to signify doubt. But this is to be understood of the doubt, not of unbelief, but of wonder and discussion. Thus Basil says (Ep. ad Optim.) that "the Blessed Virgin while standing by the cross, and observing every detail, after the message of Gabriel, and the ineffable knowledge of the Divine Conception, after that wondrous manifestation of miracles, was troubled in mind": that is to say, on the one side seeing Him suffer such humiliation, and on the other considering His marvelous works.

**Reply to Objection 3.** In those words Chrysostom goes too far. They may, however, be explained as meaning that our Lord corrected in her, not the inordinate motion of vain glory in regard to herself, but that which might be in the thoughts of others.

## **Article 5. Whether, by her sanctification in the womb, the Blessed Virgin received the fullness of grace?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that, by her sanctification in the womb, the Blessed Virgin did not receive the fullness or perfection of grace. For this seems to be Christ's privilege, according to John 1:14: "We saw Him [Vulgate: 'His glory'] as the Only-Begotten [Vulgate: 'as it were of the Only-Begotten'] full of grace and truth." But what is proper to Christ ought not to be ascribed to some one else. Therefore the Blessed Virgin did not receive the fullness of grace at the time of her sanctification.

**Objection 2.** Further, nothing remains to be added to that which is full and perfect: for "the perfect is that which lacks nothing," as is said Phys. iii. But the Blessed Virgin received additional grace afterwards when she conceived Christ; for to her was it said (Luke 1:35): "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee: and again, when she was assumed into glory." Therefore it seems that she did not receive the fullness of grace at the time of her first sanctification.

**Objection 3.** Further, "God does nothing useless," as is said De Coelo et Mundo i. But it would have been useless for her to have certain graces, for she would never have put them to use: since we do not read that she taught which is the act of wisdom; or that she worked miracles, which is the act of one of the gratuitous graces. Therefore she had not the fullness of grace.

**On the contrary,** The angel said to her: "Hail, full of grace" (Luke 1:28); which words Jerome expounds as follows, in a sermon on the Assumption (cf. Ep. ad Paul. et Eustoch.): "Full indeed of grace: for to others it is given in portions; whereas on Mary the fullness of grace was showered all at once."

**I answer that,** In every genus, the nearer a thing is to the principle, the greater the part which it has in the effect of that principle, whence Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. iv) that angels, being nearer to God, have a greater share than men, in the effects of the Divine goodness. Now Christ is the principle of grace, authoritatively as to His Godhead, instrumentally as to His humanity: whence (John 1:17) it is written: "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." But the Blessed Virgin Mary was nearest to Christ in His humanity: because He received His human nature from her. Therefore it was due to her to receive a greater fullness of grace than others.

**Reply to Objection 1.** God gives to each one according to the purpose for which He has chosen him. And since Christ as man was predestinated and chosen to be "predestinated the Son of God in power . . . of sanctification" (Romans 1:4), it

was proper to Him to have such a fullness of grace that it overflowed from Him into all, according to John 1:16: "Of His fullness we have all received." Whereas the Blessed Virgin Mary received such a fullness of grace that she was nearest of all to the Author of grace; so that she received within her Him Who is full of all grace; and by bringing Him forth, she, in a manner, dispensed grace to all.

**Reply to Objection 2.** In natural things at first there is perfection of disposition, for instance when matter is perfectly disposed for the form. Secondly, there is the perfection of the form; and this is the more excellent, for the heat that proceeds from the form of fire is more perfect than that which disposed to the form of fire. Thirdly, there is the perfection of the end: for instance when fire has its qualities in the most perfect degree, having mounted to its own place.

In like manner there was a threefold perfection of grace in the Blessed Virgin. The first was a kind of disposition, by which she was made worthy to be the mother of Christ: and this was the perfection of her sanctification. The second perfection of grace in the Blessed Virgin was through the presence of the Son of God Incarnate in her womb. The third perfection of the end is that which she has in glory.

That the second perfection excels the first, and the third the second, appears (1) from the point of view of deliverance from evil. For at first in her sanctification she was delivered from original sin: afterwards, in the conception of the Son of God, she was entirely cleansed from the fomes: lastly, in her glorification she was also delivered from all afflictions whatever. It appears (2) from the point of view of ordering to good. For at first in her sanctification she received grace inclining her to good: in the conception of the Son of God she received consummate grace confirming her in good; and in her glorification her grace was further consummated so as to perfect her in the enjoyment of all good.

**Reply to Objection 3.** There is no doubt that the Blessed Virgin received in a high degree both the gift of wisdom and the grace of miracles and even of prophecy, just as Christ had them. But she did not so receive them, as to put them and such like graces to every use, as did Christ: but accordingly as it befitted her condition of life. For she had the use of wisdom in contemplation, according to Luke 2:19: "But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." But she had not the use of wisdom as to teaching: since this befitted not the female sex, according to 1 Timothy 2:12: "But I suffer not a woman to teach." The use of miracles did not become her while she lived: because at that time the Teaching of Christ was to be confirmed by miracles, and therefore it was befitting that Christ alone, and His disciples who were the bearers of His doctrine, should work miracles. Hence of John the Baptist it is written (John 10:41) that he "did no

sign"; that is, in order that all might fix their attention on Christ. As to the use of prophecy, it is clear that she had it, from the canticle spoken by her: "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Luke 1:46, etc.).

**Article 6. Whether after Christ, it was proper to the Blessed Virgin to be sanctified in the womb?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that it was proper for the Blessed Virgin, after Christ, to be sanctified in the womb. For it has been said (4) that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified in the womb, in order that she might be worthy to be the mother of God. But this is proper to her. Therefore she alone was sanctified in the womb.

**Objection 2.** Further, some men seem to have been more closely connected with Christ than Jeremias and John the Baptist, who are said to have been sanctified in the womb. For Christ is specially called the Son of David and of Abraham, by reason of the promise specially made to them concerning Christ. Isaias also prophesied of Christ in the most express terms. And the apostles were in converse with Christ Himself. And yet these are not mentioned as having been sanctified in the womb. Therefore it was not befitting that either Jeremias or John the Baptist should be sanctified in the womb.

**Objection 3.** Further, Job says of himself (Job 31:18): "From my infancy mercy grew up with me; and it came out with me from [my mother's] womb." Nevertheless we do not for this reason say that he was sanctified in the womb. Neither therefore are we bound to say that Jeremias and John the Baptist were sanctified in the womb.

**On the contrary,** It is written of Jeremias (Jeremiah 1:5): "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee." And of John the Baptist it is written (Luke 1:15): "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."

**I answer that,** Augustine (Ep. ad Dardan.) seems to speak dubiously of their (Jeremias' and John the Baptist's) sanctification in the womb. For the leaping of John in the womb "might," as he says, "signify the great truth," viz. that the woman was the mother of God, "which was to be made known to his elders, though as yet unknown to the infant. Hence in the Gospel it is written, not that the infant in her womb believed, but that it 'leaped': and our eyes are witness that not only infants leap but also cattle. But this was unwonted because it was in the womb. And, therefore, just as other miracles are wont to be done, this was done divinely in the infant; not humanly by the infant. Perhaps also in this child the use of reason and will was so far accelerated that while yet in his mother's

womb he was able to acknowledge, believe, and consent, whereas in other children we have to wait for these things till they grow older: this again I count as a miraculous result of the divine power."

But since it is expressly said (of John) in the Gospel that "he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb"; and of Jeremias, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee"; it seems that we must needs assert that they were sanctified in the womb, although, while in the womb, they had not the use of reason (which is the point discussed by Augustine); just as neither do children enjoy the use of free will as soon as they are sanctified by baptism.

Nor are we to believe that any others, not mentioned by Scripture, were sanctified in the womb. For such privileges of grace, which are bestowed on some, outside the common law, are ordered for the salvation of others, according to 1 Corinthians 12:7: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit," which would not result from the sanctification of anyone unless it were made known to the Church.

And although it is not possible to assign a reason for God's judgments, for instance, why He bestows such a grace on one and not on another, yet there seems to be a certain fittingness in both of these being sanctified in the womb, by their foreshadowing the sanctification which was to be effected through Christ. First, as to His Passion, according to Hebrews 13:12: "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered without the gate": which Passion Jeremias foretold openly by words and by symbols, and most clearly foreshadowed by his own sufferings. Secondly, as to His Baptism (1 Corinthians 6:11): "But you are washed, but you are sanctified"; to which Baptism John prepared men by his baptism.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The blessed Virgin, who was chosen by God to be His Mother, received a fuller grace of sanctification than John the Baptist and Jeremias, who were chosen to foreshadow in a special way the sanctification effected by Christ. A sign of this is that it was granted to the Blessed Virgin thence-forward never to sin either mortally or venially: whereas to the others who were thus sanctified it was granted thenceforward not to sin mortally, through the protection of God's grace.

**Reply to Objection 2.** In other respects these saints might be more closely united to Christ than Jeremias and John the Baptist. But the latter were most closely united to Him by clearly foreshadowing His sanctification, as explained above.

### Summa III, q. 28 - Virginity

1. Was she a virgin in conceiving?
2. Was she a virgin in His Birth?
3. Did she remain a virgin after His Birth?
4. Did she take a vow of virginity?

#### Article 1. Whether the Mother of God was a virgin in conceiving Christ?

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the Mother of God was not a virgin in conceiving Christ. For no child having father and mother is conceived by a virgin mother. But Christ is said to have had not only a mother, but also a father, according to Luke 2:33: "His father and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning Him": and further on (Luke 2:48) in the same chapter she says: "Behold I and Thy father [Vulgate: 'Thy father and I'] have **sought Thee sorrowing.**" Therefore Christ was not conceived of a virgin mother.

**Objection 2.** Further (Matthew 1) it is proved that Christ was the Son of Abraham and David, through Joseph being descended from David. But this proof would have availed nothing if Joseph were not the father of Christ. Therefore it seems that Christ's Mother conceived Him of the seed of Joseph; and consequently that she was not a virgin in conceiving Him.

**Objection 3.** Further, it is written (Galatians 4:4): "God sent His Son, made of a woman." But according to the customary mode of speaking, the term "woman" applies to one who is known of a man. Therefore Christ was not conceived by a virgin mother.

**Objection 4.** Further, things of the same species have the same mode of generation: since generation is specified by its terminus just as are other motions. But Christ belonged to the same species as other men, according to Philippians 2:7: "Being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man." Since therefore other men are begotten of the mingling of male and female, it seems that Christ was begotten in the same manner; and that consequently He was not conceived of a virgin mother.

**Objection 5.** Further, every natural form has its determinate matter, outside which it cannot be. But the matter of human form appears to be the semen of male and female. If therefore Christ's body was not conceived of the semen of



male and female, it would not have been truly a human body; which cannot be asserted. It seems therefore that He was not conceived of a virgin mother.

On the contrary, It is written (Isaiah 7:14): "Behold a virgin shall conceive."

I answer that, We must confess simply that the Mother of Christ was a virgin in conceiving for to deny this belongs to the heresy of the Ebionites and Cerinthus, who held Christ to be a mere man, and maintained that He was born of both sexes.

It is fitting for four reasons that Christ should be born of a virgin. First, in order to maintain the dignity of the Father Who sent Him. For since Christ is the true and natural Son of God, it was not fitting that He should have another father than God: lest the dignity belonging to God be transferred to another.

Secondly, this was befitting to a property of the Son Himself, Who is sent. For He is the Word of God: and the word is conceived without any interior corruption: indeed, interior corruption is incompatible with perfect conception of the word. Since therefore flesh was so assumed by the Word of God, as to be the flesh of the Word of God, it was fitting that it also should be conceived without corruption of the mother.

Thirdly, this was befitting to the dignity of Christ's humanity in which there could be no sin, since by it the sin of the world was taken away, according to John 1:29: "Behold the Lamb of God" (i.e. the Lamb without stain) "who taketh away the sin of the world." Now it was not possible in a nature already corrupt, for flesh to be born from sexual intercourse without incurring the infection of original sin. Whence Augustine says (De Nup. et Concup. i): "In that union," viz. the marriage of Mary and Joseph, "the nuptial intercourse alone was lacking: because in sinful flesh this could not be without fleshly concupiscence which arises from sin, and without which He wished to be conceived, Who was to be without sin."

Fourthly, on account of the very end of Incarnation of Christ, which was that men might be born again as sons of God, "not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13), i.e. of the power of God, of which fact the very conception of Christ was to appear as an exemplar. Whence Augustine says (De Sanct. Virg.): "It behooved that our Head, by a notable miracle, should be born, after the flesh, of a virgin, that He might thereby signify that His members would be born, after the Spirit, of a virgin Church."

**Reply to Objection 1.** As Bede says on Luke 1:33: Joseph is called the father of the Saviour, not that he really was His father, as the Photinians pretended: but

that he was considered by men to be so, for the safeguarding of Mary's good name. Wherefore Luke adds (Luke 3:23): "Being, as it was supposed, the son of Joseph."

Or, according to Augustine (De Cons. Evang. ii), Joseph is called the father of Christ just as "he is called the husband of Mary, without fleshly mingling, by the mere bond of marriage: being thereby united to Him much more closely than if he were adopted from another family. Consequently that Christ was not begotten of Joseph by fleshly union is no reason why Joseph should not be called His father; since he would be the father even of an adopted son not born of his wife."

**Reply to Objection 2.** As Jerome says on Matthew 1:18: "Though Joseph was not the father of our Lord and Saviour, the order of His genealogy is traced down to Joseph"--first, because "the Scriptures are not wont to trace the female line in genealogies": secondly, "Mary and Joseph were of the same tribe"; wherefore by law he was bound to take her as being of his kin. Likewise, as Augustine says (De Nup. et Concup. i), "it was befitting to trace the genealogy down to Joseph, lest in that marriage any slight should be offered to the male sex, which is indeed the stronger: for truth suffered nothing thereby, since both Joseph and Mary were of the family of David."

**Reply to Objection 3.** As the gloss says on this passage, the word "mulier," is here used instead of 'femina,' according to the custom of the Hebrew tongue: which applies the term signifying woman to those of the female sex who are virgins."

**Reply to Objection 4.** This argument is true of those things which come into existence by the way of nature: since nature, just as it is fixed to one particular effect, so it is determinate to one mode of producing that effect. But as the supernatural power of God extends to the infinite: just as it is not determinate to one effect, so neither is it determinate to one mode of producing any effect whatever. Consequently, just as it was possible for the first man to be produced, by the Divine power, "from the slime of the earth," so too was it possible for Christ's body to be made, by Divine power, from a virgin without the seed of the male.

Reply to Objection 5. According to the Philosopher (De Gener. Animal. i, ii, iv), in conception the seed of the male is not by way of matter, but by way of agent: and the female alone supplies the matter. Wherefore though the seed of the male was lacking in Christ's conception, it does not follow that due matter was lacking.

But if the seed of the male were the matter of the fetus in animal conception, it is nevertheless manifest that it is not a matter remaining under one form, but subject to transformation. And though the natural power cannot transmute other than determinate matter to a determinate form; nevertheless the Divine power, which is infinite, can transmute all matter to any form whatsoever. Consequently, just as it transmuted the slime of the earth into Adam's body, so could it transmute the matter supplied by His Mother into Christ's body, even though it were not the sufficient matter for a natural conception.

## **Article 2. Whether Christ's Mother was a virgin in His birth?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that Christ's Mother was not a virgin in His Birth. For Ambrose says on Luke 2:23: "He who sanctified a strange womb, for the birth of a prophet, He it is who opened His Mother's womb, that He might go forth unspotted." But opening of the womb excludes virginity. Therefore Christ's Mother was not a virgin in His Birth.

**Objection 2.** Further, nothing should have taken place in the mystery of Christ, which would make His body to seem unreal. Now it seems to pertain not to a true but to an unreal body, to be able to go through a closed passage; since two bodies cannot be in one place at the same time. It was therefore unfitting that Christ's body should come forth from His Mother's closed womb: and consequently that she should remain a virgin in giving birth to Him.

**Objection 3.** Further, as Gregory says in the Homily for the octave of Easter [xxvi in Evang., that by entering after His Resurrection where the disciples were gathered, the doors being shut, our Lord "showed that His body was the same in nature but differed in glory": so that it seems that to go through a closed passage pertains to a glorified body. But Christ's body was not glorified in its conception, but was passible, having "the likeness of sinful flesh," as the Apostle says (Romans 8:3). Therefore He did not come forth through the closed womb of the Virgin.

On the contrary, In a sermon of the Council of Ephesus (P. III, Cap. ix) it is said: "After giving birth, nature knows not a virgin: but grace enhances her fruitfulness, and effects her motherhood, while in no way does it injure her virginity." Therefore Christ's Mother was a virgin also in giving birth to Him.

I answer that, Without any doubt whatever we must assert that the Mother of Christ was a virgin even in His Birth: for the prophet says not only: "Behold a virgin shall conceive," but adds: "and shall bear a son." This indeed was befitting for three reasons. First, because this was in keeping with a property of Him

whose Birth is in question, for He is the Word of God. For the word is not only conceived in the mind without corruption, but also proceeds from the mind without corruption. Wherefore in order to show that body to be the body of the very Word of God, it was fitting that it should be born of a virgin incorrupt. Whence in the sermon of the Council of Ephesus (quoted above) we read: "Whosoever brings forth mere flesh, ceases to be a virgin. But since she gave birth to the Word made flesh, God safeguarded her virginity so as to manifest His Word, by which Word He thus manifested Himself: for neither does our word, when brought forth, corrupt the mind; nor does God, the substantial Word, deigning to be born, destroy virginity."

Secondly, this is fitting as regards the effect of Christ's Incarnation: since He came for this purpose, that He might take away our corruption. Wherefore it is unfitting that in His Birth He should corrupt His Mother's virginity. Thus Augustine says in a sermon on the Nativity of Our Lord: "It was not right that He who came to heal corruption, should by His advent violate integrity."

Thirdly, it was fitting that He Who commanded us to honor our father and mother should not in His Birth lessen the honor due to His Mother.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Ambrose says this in expounding the evangelist's quotation from the Law: "Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord." This, says Bede, "is said in regard to the wonted manner of birth; not that we are to believe that our Lord in coming forth violated the abode of her sacred womb, which His entrance therein had hallowed." Wherefore the opening here spoken of does not imply the unlocking of the enclosure of virginal purity; but the mere coming forth of the infant from the maternal womb.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Christ wished so to show the reality of His body, as to manifest His Godhead at the same time. For this reason He mingled wondrous with lowly things. Wherefore, to show that His body was real, He was born of a woman. But in order to manifest His Godhead, He was born of a virgin, for "such a Birth befits a God," as Ambrose says in the Christmas hymn.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Some have held that Christ, in His Birth, assumed the gift of "subtlety," when He came forth from the closed womb of a virgin; and that He assumed the gift of "agility" when with dry feet He walked on the sea. But this is not consistent with what has been decided above (Article 14). For these gifts of a glorified body result from an overflow of the soul's glory on to the body, as we shall explain further on, in treating of glorified bodies (XP, 82): and it has been said above (13, 3, ad 1; 16, 1, ad 2) that before His Passion Christ "allowed His

flesh to do and to suffer what was proper to it" (Damascene, De Fide Orth. iii): nor was there such an overflow of glory from His soul on to His body.

We must therefore say that all these things took place miraculously by Divine power. Whence Augustine says (Sup. Joan. Tract. 121): "To the substance of a body in which was the Godhead, closed doors were no obstacle. For truly He had power to enter in by doors not open, in Whose Birth His Mother's virginity remained inviolate." And Dionysius says in an epistle (Ad Caium iv) that "Christ excelled man in doing that which is proper to man: this is shown in His supernatural conception, of a virgin, and in the unstable waters bearing the weight of earthly feet."

### **Article 3. Whether Christ's Mother remained a virgin after His birth?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that Christ's Mother did not remain a virgin after His Birth. For it is written (Matthew 1:18): "Before Joseph and Mary came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Now the Evangelist would not have said this--"before they came together"--unless he were certain of their subsequent coming together; for no one says of one who does not eventually dine "before he dines" (cf. Jerome, Contra Helvid.). It seems, therefore, that the Blessed Virgin subsequently had intercourse with Joseph; and consequently that she did not remain a virgin after (Christ's) Birth.

**Objection 2.** Further, in the same passage (Matthew 1:20) are related the words of the angel to Joseph: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife." But marriage is consummated by carnal intercourse. Therefore it seems that this must have at some time taken place between Mary and Joseph; and that, consequently she did not remain a virgin after (Christ's) Birth.

**Objection 3.** Further, again in the same passage a little further on (Matthew 1:24-25) we read: "And" (Joseph) "took unto him his wife; and he knew her not till she brought forth her first-born Son." Now this conjunction "till" is wont to designate a fixed time, on the completion of which that takes place which previously had not taken place. And the verb "knew" refers here to knowledge by intercourse (cf. Jerome, Contra Helvid.); just as (Genesis 4:1) it is said that "Adam knew his wife." Therefore it seems that after (Christ's) Birth, the Blessed Virgin was known by Joseph; and, consequently, that she did not remain a virgin after the Birth (of Christ).

**Objection 4.** Further, "first-born" can only be said of one who has brothers afterwards: wherefore (Romans 8:29): "Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be

the first-born among many brethren." But the evangelist calls Christ the first-born by His Mother. Therefore she had other children after Christ. And therefore it seems that Christ's Mother did not remain a virgin after His Birth.

**Objection 5.** Further, it is written (John 2:12): "After this He went down to Capharnaum, He"--that is, Christ--"and His Mother and His brethren." But brethren are those who are begotten of the same parent. Therefore it seems that the Blessed Virgin had other sons after Christ.

**Objection 6.** Further, it is written (Matthew 27:55-56): "There were there"--that is, by the cross of Christ--"many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him; among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee." Now this Mary who is called "the mother of James and Joseph" seems to have been also the Mother of Christ; for it is written (John 19:25) that "there stood by the cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother." Therefore it seems that Christ's Mother did not remain a virgin after His Birth.

On the contrary, It is written (Ezekiel 44:2): "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it; because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it." Expounding these words, Augustine says in a sermon (De Annunt. Dom. iii): "What means this closed gate in the House of the Lord, except that Mary is to be ever inviolate? What does it mean that 'no man shall pass through it,' save that Joseph shall not know her? And what is this--'The Lord alone enters in and goeth out by it'--except that the Holy Ghost shall impregnate her, and that the Lord of angels shall be born of her? And what means this--'it shall be shut for evermore'--but that Mary is a virgin before His Birth, a virgin in His Birth, and a virgin after His Birth?"

I answer that, without any hesitation we must abhor the error of Helvidius, who dared to assert that Christ's Mother, after His Birth, was carnally known by Joseph, and bore other children. For, in the first place, this is derogatory to Christ's perfection: for as He is in His Godhead the Only-Begotten of the Father, being thus His Son in every respect perfect, so it was becoming that He should be the Only-begotten son of His Mother, as being her perfect offspring.

Secondly, this error is an insult to the Holy Ghost, whose "shrine" was the virginal womb ["Sacrarium Spiritus Sancti" (Office of B. M. V., Ant. ad Benedictus, T. P.), wherein He had formed the flesh of Christ: wherefore it was unbecoming that it should be desecrated by intercourse with man.

Thirdly, this is derogatory to the dignity and holiness of God's Mother: for thus she would seem to be most ungrateful, were she not content with such a Son; and were she, of her own accord, by carnal intercourse to forfeit that virginity which had been miraculously preserved in her.

Fourthly, it would be tantamount to an imputation of extreme presumption in Joseph, to assume that he attempted to violate her whom by the angel's revelation he knew to have conceived by the Holy Ghost.

We must therefore simply assert that the Mother of God, as she was a virgin in conceiving Him and a virgin in giving Him birth, did she remain a virgin ever afterwards.

**Reply to Objection 1.** As Jerome says (Contra Helvid. i): "Although this particle 'before' often indicates a subsequent event, yet we must observe that it not infrequently points merely to some thing previously in the mind: nor is there need that what was in the mind take place eventually, since something may occur to prevent its happening. Thus if a man say: 'Before I dined in the port, I set sail,' we do not understand him to have dined in port after he set sail: but that his mind was set on dining in port." In like manner the evangelist says: "Before they came together" Mary "was found with child, of the Holy Ghost," not that they came together afterwards: but that, when it seemed that they would come together, this was forestalled through her conceiving by the Holy Ghost, the result being that afterwards they did not come together.

**Reply to Objection 2.** As Augustine says (De Nup. et Concup. i): "The Mother of God is called (Joseph's) wife from the first promise of her espousals, whom he had not known nor ever was to know by carnal intercourse." For, as Ambrose says on Luke 1:27: "The fact of her marriage is declared, not to insinuate the loss of virginity, but to witness to the reality of the union."

**Reply to Objection 3.** Some have said that this is not to be understood of carnal knowledge, but of acquaintance. Thus Chrysostom says [Opus Imperf. in Matth., Hom. 1: among the spurious works ascribed to Chrysostom] that "Joseph did not know her, until she gave birth, being unaware of her dignity: but after she had given birth, then did he know her. Because by reason of her child she surpassed the whole world in beauty and dignity: since she alone in the narrow abode of her womb received Him Whom the world cannot contain."

Others again refer this to knowledge by sight. For as, while Moses was speaking with God, his face was so bright "that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold it"; so Mary, while being "overshadowed" by the brightness of

the "power of the Most High," could not be gazed on by Joseph, until she gave birth. But afterwards she is acknowledged by Joseph, by looking on her face, not by lustful contact.

Jerome, however, grants that this is to be understood of knowledge by intercourse; but he observes that "before" or "until" has a twofold sense in Scripture. For sometimes it indicates a fixed time, as Galatians 3:19: The law "was set because of transgressions, until the seed should come, to whom He made the promise." On the other hand, it sometimes indicates an indefinite time, as in Psalms 122:2: "Our eyes are unto the Lord our God, until He have mercy on us"; from which it is not to be gathered that our eyes are turned from God as soon as His mercy has been obtained. In this sense those things are indicated "of which we might doubt if they had not been written down: while others are left out to be supplied by our understanding. Thus the evangelist says that the Mother of God was not known by her husband until she gave birth, that we may be given to understand that still less did he know her afterwards" (Adversus Helvid. v).

**Reply to Objection 4.** The Scriptures are wont to designate as the first-born, not only a child who is followed by others, but also the one that is born first. "Otherwise, if a child were not first-born unless followed by others, the first-fruits would not be due as long as there was no further produce" [ Jerome, Adversus Helvid. x]: which is clearly false, since according to the law the first-fruits had to be redeemed within a month (Numbers 18:16).

**Reply to Objection 5.** Some, as Jerome says on Matthew 12:49-50, "suppose that the brethren of the Lord were Joseph's sons by another wife. But we understand the brethren of the Lord to be not sons of Joseph, but cousins of the Saviour, the sons of Mary, His Mother's sister." For "Scripture speaks of brethren in four senses; namely, those who are united by being of the same parents, of the same nation, of the same family, by common affection." Wherefore the brethren of the Lord are so called, not by birth, as being born of the same mother; but by relationship, as being blood-relations of His. But Joseph, as Jerome says (Contra Helvid. ix), is rather to be believed to have remained a virgin, "since he is not said to have had another wife," and "a holy man does not live otherwise than chastely."

**Reply to Objection 6.** Mary who is called "the mother of James and Joseph" is not to be taken for the Mother of our Lord, who is not wont to be named in the Gospels save under this designation of her dignity--"the Mother of Jesus." This Mary is to be taken for the wife of Alphaeus, whose son was James the less, known as the "brother of the Lord" (Galatians 1:19).



#### Article 4. Whether the Mother of God took a vow of virginity?

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the Mother of God did not take a vow of virginity. For it is written (Deuteronomy 7:14): "No one shall be barren among you of either sex." But sterility is a consequence of virginity. Therefore the keeping of virginity was contrary to the commandment of the Old Law. But before Christ was born the old law was still in force. Therefore at that time the Blessed Virgin could not lawfully take a vow of virginity.

**Objection 2.** Further, the Apostle says (1 Corinthians 7:25): "Concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give counsel." But the perfection of the counsels was to take its beginning from Christ, who is the "end of the Law," as the Apostle says (Romans 10:4). It was not therefore becoming that the Virgin should take a vow of virginity.

**Objection 3.** Further, the gloss of Jerome says on 1 Timothy 5:12, that "for those who are vowed to virginity, it is reprehensible not only to marry, but also to desire to be married." But the Mother of Christ committed no sin for which she could be reprehended, as stated above (Question 27, Article 4). Since therefore she was "espoused," as related by Luke 1:27 it seems that she did not take a vow of virginity.

On the contrary, Augustine says (De Sanct. Virg. iv): "Mary answered the announcing angel: 'How shall this be done, because I know not man?' She would not have said this unless she had already vowed her virginity to God."

I answer that, As we have stated in the II-II, 88, 6, works of perfection are more praiseworthy when performed in fulfillment of a vow. Now it is clear that for reasons already given (1,2,3) virginity had a special place in the Mother of God. It was therefore fitting that her virginity should be consecrated to God by vow. Nevertheless because, while the Law was in force both men and women were bound to attend to the duty of begetting, since the worship of God was spread according to carnal origin, until Christ was born of that people; the Mother of God is not believed to have taken an absolute vow of virginity, before being espoused to Joseph, although she desired to do so, yet yielding her own will to God's judgment. Afterwards, however, having taken a husband, according as the custom of the time required, together with him she took a vow of virginity.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Because it seemed to be forbidden by the law not to take the necessary steps for leaving a posterity on earth, therefore the Mother of God did not vow virginity absolutely, but under the condition that it were pleasing to

God. When, however, she knew that it was acceptable to God, she made the vow absolute, before the angel's Annunciation.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Just as the fullness of grace was in Christ perfectly, yet some beginning of the fullness preceded in His Mother; so also the observance of the counsels, which is an effect of God's grace, began its perfection in Christ, but was begun after a fashion in His Virgin Mother.

**Reply to Objection 3.** These words of the Apostle are to be understood of those who vow chastity absolutely. Christ's Mother did not do this until she was espoused to Joseph. After her espousals, however, by their common consent she took a vow of virginity together with her spouse.

### Summa III, q. 30: The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin

1. Was it befitting that announcement should be made to her of that which was to be begotten of her?
2. By whom should this announcement be made?
3. In what manner should this announcement be made?
4. The order observed in the Annunciation

**Article 1. Whether it was necessary to announce to the Blessed Virgin that which was to be done in her?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that it was unnecessary to announce to the Blessed Virgin that which was to be done in her. For there seems to have been no need of the Annunciation except for the purpose of receiving the Virgin's consent. But her consent seems to have been unnecessary: because the Virginal Conception was foretold by a prophecy of "predestination," which is "fulfilled without our consent," as a gloss says on Matthew 1:22. There was no need, therefore, for this Annunciation.

**Objection 2.** Further, the Blessed Virgin believed in Incarnation, for to disbelieve therein excludes man from the way of salvation; because, as the Apostle says (Romans 3:22): "The justice of God (is) by faith of Jesus Christ." But one needs no further instruction concerning what one believes without doubt. Therefore the Blessed Virgin had no need for the Incarnation of her Son to be announced to her.

**Objection 3.** Further, just as the Blessed Virgin conceived Christ in her body, so every pious soul conceives Him spiritually. Thus the Apostle says (Galatians 4:19):

"My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you." But to those who conceive Him spiritually no announcement is made of this conception. Therefore neither should it have been announced to the Blessed Virgin that she was to conceive the Son of God in her womb.

### **Summa III, q. 30 - Annunciation**

On the contrary, It is related (Luke 1:31) that the angel said to her: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son."

I answer that, It was reasonable that it should be announced to the Blessed Virgin that she was to conceive Christ. First, in order to maintain a becoming order in the union of the Son of God with the Virgin--namely, that she should be informed in mind concerning Him, before conceiving Him in the flesh. Thus Augustine says (*De Sancta Virgin.* iii): "Mary is more blessed in receiving the faith of Christ, than in conceiving the flesh of Christ"; and further on he adds: "Her nearness as a Mother would have been of no profit to Mary, had she not borne Christ in her heart after a more blessed manner than in her flesh."

Secondly, that she might be a more certain witness of this mystery, being instructed therein by God.

Thirdly, that she might offer to God the free gift of her obedience: which she proved herself right ready to do, saying: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

Fourthly, in order to show that there is a certain spiritual wedlock between the Son of God and human nature. Wherefore in the Annunciation the Virgin's consent was besought in lieu of that of the entire human nature.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The prophecy of predestination is fulfilled without the causality of our will; not without its consent.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The Blessed Virgin did indeed believe explicitly in the future Incarnation; but, being humble, she did not think such high things of herself. Consequently she required instruction in this matter.

**Reply to Objection 3.** The spiritual conception of Christ through faith is preceded by the preaching of the faith, for as much as "faith is by hearing" (Romans 10:17). Yet man does not know for certain thereby that he has grace; but he does know that the faith, which he has received, is true.

**Article 2.** Whether the annunciation should have been made by an angel to the Blessed Virgin?

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the Annunciation should not have been made by an angel to our Blessed Lady. For revelations to the highest angels are made immediately by God, as Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. vii). But the Mother of God is exalted above all the angels. Therefore it seems that the mystery of Incarnation should have been announced to her by God immediately, and not by an angel.

**Objection 2.** Further, if in this matter it behooved the common order to be observed, by which Divine things are announced to men by angels; in like manner Divine things are announced to a woman by a man: wherefore the Apostle says (1 Corinthians 14:34-35): "Let women keep silence in the churches . . . but if they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home." Therefore it seems that the mystery of Incarnation should have been announced to the Blessed Virgin by some man: especially seeing that Joseph, her husband, was instructed thereupon by an angel, as is related (Matthew 1:20-21)

**Objection 3.** Further, none can becomingly announce what he knows not. But the highest angels did not fully know the mystery of Incarnation: wherefore Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. vii) that the question, "Who is this that cometh from Edom?" (Isaiah 63:1) is to be understood as made by them. Therefore it seems that the announcement of Incarnation could not be made becomingly by any angel.

**Objection 4.** Further, greater things should be announced by messengers of greater dignity. But the mystery of Incarnation is the greatest of all things announced by angels to men. It seems, therefore, if it behooved to be announced by an angel at all, that this should have been done by an angel of the highest order. But Gabriel is not of the highest order, but of the order of archangels, which is the last but one: wherefore the Church sings: "We know that the archangel Gabriel brought thee a message from God" [Feast of Purification, B.V.M. ix Resp. Brev. O.P.]. Therefore this announcement was not becomingly made by the archangel Gabriel.

On the contrary, It is written (Luke 1:26): "The angel Gabriel was sent by God," etc.

I answer that, It was fitting for the mystery of Incarnation to be announced to the Mother of God by an angel, for three reasons. First, that in this also might be maintained the order established by God, by which Divine things are brought to men by means of the angels. Wherefore Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. iv) that "the angels were the first to be taught the Divine mystery of the loving kindness of Jesus: afterwards the grace of knowledge was imparted to us through them. Thus, then, the most god-like Gabriel made known to Zachary that a prophet son

would be born to him; and, to Mary, how the Divine mystery of the ineffable conception of God would be realized in her."

Secondly, this was becoming to the restoration of human nature which was to be effected by Christ. Wherefore Bede says in a homily (in Annunt.): "It was an apt beginning of man's restoration that an angel should be sent by God to the Virgin who was to be hallowed by the Divine Birth: since the first cause of man's ruin was through the serpent being sent by the devil to cajole the woman by the spirit of pride."

Thirdly, because this was becoming to the virginity of the Mother of God. Wherefore Jerome says in a sermon on the Assumption [Ascribed to St. Jerome but not his work]: "It is well that an angel be sent to the Virgin; because virginity is ever akin to the angelic nature. Surely to live in the flesh and not according to the flesh is not an earthly but a heavenly life."

**Reply to Objection 1.** The Mother of God was above the angels as regards the dignity to which she was chosen by God. But as regards the present state of life, she was beneath the angels. For even Christ Himself, by reason of His passible life, "was made a little lower than the angels," according to Hebrews 2:9. But because Christ was both wayfarer and comprehensor, He did not need to be instructed by angels, as regards knowledge of Divine things. The Mother of God, however, was not yet in the state of comprehension: and therefore she had to be instructed by angels concerning the Divine Conception.

**Reply to Objection 2.** As Augustine says in a sermon on the Assumption (De Assump. B.V.M. [Work of another author: among the works of St. Augustine]) a true estimation of the Blessed Virgin excludes her from certain general rules. For "neither did she 'multiply her conceptions' nor was she 'under man's, i.e. her husband's,' power (Genesis 3:16), who in her spotless womb conceived Christ of the Holy Ghost." Therefore it was fitting that she should be informed of the mystery of Incarnation by means not of a man, but of an angel. For this reason it was made known to her before Joseph: since the message was brought to her before she conceived, but to Joseph after she had conceived.

**Reply to Objection 3.** As may be gathered from the passage quoted from Dionysius, the angels were acquainted with the mystery of Incarnation: and yet they put this question, being desirous that Christ should give them more perfect knowledge of the details of this mystery, which are incomprehensible to any created intellect. Thus Maximus [Maximus of Constantinople] says that "there can be no question that the angels knew that Incarnation was to take place. But it was not given to them to trace the manner of our Lord's conception, nor how it

was that He remained whole in the Father, whole throughout the universe, and was whole in the narrow abode of the Virgin."

**Reply to Objection 4.** Some say that Gabriel was of the highest order; because Gregory says (Hom. de Centum Ovibus [34 in Evang.): "It was right that one of the highest angels should come, since his message was most sublime." But this does not imply that he was of the highest order of all, but in regard to the angels: since he was an archangel. Thus the Church calls him an archangel, and Gregory himself in a homily (De Centum Ovibus 34) says that "those are called archangels who announce sublime things." It is therefore sufficiently credible that he was the highest of the archangels. And, as Gregory says (De Centum Ovibus 34), this name agrees with his office: for "Gabriel means 'Power of God.' This message therefore was fittingly brought by the 'Power of God,' because the Lord of hosts and mighty in battle was coming to overcome the powers of the air."

### **Article 3. Whether the angel of annunciation should have appeared to the Virgin in a bodily vision?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the angel of the Annunciation should not have appeared to the Virgin in a bodily vision. For "intellectual vision is more excellent than bodily vision," as Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. xii), and especially more becoming to an angel: since by intellectual vision an angel is seen in his substance; whereas in a bodily vision he is seen in the bodily shape which he assumes. Now since it behooved a sublime messenger to come to announce the Divine Conception, so, seemingly, he should have appeared in the most excellent kind of vision. Therefore it seems that the angel of the Annunciation appeared to the Virgin in an intellectual vision.

**Objection 2.** Further, imaginary vision also seems to excel bodily vision: just as the imagination is a higher power than the senses. But "the angel . . . appeared to Joseph in his sleep" (Matthew 1:20), which was clearly an imaginary vision. Therefore it seems that he should have appeared to the Blessed Virgin also in an imaginary vision.

**Objection 3.** Further, the bodily vision of a spiritual substance stupefies the beholder; thus we sing of the Virgin herself: "And the Virgin seeing the light was filled with fear" [Feast of Annunciation, B.V.M. ii Resp. Brev. O.P.]. But it was better that her mind should be preserved from being thus troubled. Therefore it was not fitting that this announcement should be made in a bodily vision.

On the contrary, Augustine in a sermon (De Annunt. iii) pictures the Blessed Virgin as speaking thus: "To me came the archangel Gabriel with glowing

countenance, gleaming robe, and wondrous step." But these cannot pertain to other than bodily vision. Therefore the angel of the Annunciation appeared in a bodily vision to the Blessed Virgin.

I answer that, The angel of the Annunciation appeared in a bodily vision to the Blessed Virgin. And this indeed was fitting, first in regard to that which was announced. For the angel came to announce Incarnation of the invisible God. Wherefore it was becoming that, in order to make this known, an invisible creature should assume a form in which to appear visibly: forasmuch as all the apparitions of the Old Testament are ordered to that apparition in which the Son of God appeared in the flesh.

Secondly, it was fitting as regards the dignity of the Mother of God, who was to receive the Son of God not only in her mind, but in her bodily womb. Therefore it behooved not only her mind, but also her bodily senses to be refreshed by the angelic vision.

Thirdly, it is in keeping with the certainty of that which was announced. For we apprehend with greater certainty that which is before our eyes, than what is in our imagination. Thus Chrysostom says (Hom. iv in Matth.) that the angel "came to the Virgin not in her sleep, but visibly. For since she was receiving from the angel a message exceeding great, before such an event she needed a vision of great solemnity."

**Reply to Objection 1.** Intellectual vision excels merely imaginary and merely bodily vision. But Augustine himself says (De Annunt. iii) that prophecy is more excellent if accompanied by intellectual and imaginary vision, than if accompanied by only one of them. Now the Blessed Virgin perceived not only the bodily vision, but also the intellectual illumination. Wherefore this was a more excellent vision. Yet it would have been more excellent if she had perceived the angel himself in his substance by her intellectual vision. But it was incompatible with her state of wayfarer that she should see an angel in his essence.

**Reply to Objection 2.** The imagination is indeed a higher power than the exterior sense: but because the senses are the principle of human knowledge, the greatest certainty is in them, for the principles of knowledge must needs always be most certain. Consequently Joseph, to whom the angel appeared in his sleep, did not have so excellent a vision as the Blessed Virgin.

**Reply to Objection 3.** As Ambrose says on Luke 1:11: "We are disturbed, and lose our presence of mind, when we are confronted by the presence of a superior power." And this happens not only in bodily, but also in imaginary vision.

Wherefore it is written (Genesis 15:12) that "when the sun was setting, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a great and darksome horror seized upon him." But by being thus disturbed man is not harmed to such an extent that therefore he ought to forego the vision of an angel. First because from the very fact that man is raised above himself, in which matter his dignity is concerned, his inferior powers are weakened; and from this results the aforesaid disturbance: thus, also, when the natural heat is drawn within a body, the exterior parts tremble. Secondly, because, as Origen says (Hom. iv in Luc.): "The angel who appeared, knowing hers was a human nature, first sought to remedy the disturbance of mind to which a man is subject." Wherefore both to Zachary and to Mary, as soon as they were disturbed, he said: "Fear not." For this reason, as we read in the life of Anthony, "it is difficult to discern good from evil spirits. For if joy succeed fear, we should know that the help is from the Lord: because security of soul is a sign of present majesty. But if the fear with which we are stricken persevere, it is an enemy that we see."

Moreover it was becoming to virginal modesty that the Virgin should be troubled. Because, as Ambrose says on Luke 1:20: "It is the part of a virgin to be timid, to fear the advances of men, and to shrink from men's addresses."

But others says that as the Blessed Virgin was accustomed to angelic visions, she was not troubled at seeing this angel, but with wonder at hearing what the angel said to her, for she did not think so highly of herself. Wherefore the evangelist does not say that she was troubled at seeing the angel, but "at his saying."

#### **Article 4. Whether the Annunciation took place in becoming order?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the Annunciation did not take place in becoming order. For the dignity of the Mother of God results from the child she conceived. But the cause should be made known before the effect. Therefore the angel should have announced to the Virgin the conception of her child before acknowledging her dignity in greeting her.

**Objection 2.** Further, proof should be omitted in things which admit of no doubt; and premised where doubt is possible. But the angel seems first to have announced what the virgin might doubt, and which, because of her doubt, would make her ask: "How shall this be done?" and afterwards to have given the proof, alleging both the instance of Elizabeth and the omnipotence of God. Therefore the Annunciation was made by the angel in unbecoming order.

**Objection 3.** Further, the greater cannot be adequately proved by the less. But it was a greater wonder for a virgin than for an old woman to be with child.



Therefore the angel's proof was insufficient to demonstrate the conception of a virgin from that of an old woman.

On the contrary, it is written (Romans 13:1): "Those that are of God, are well ordered [Vulgate: 'Those that are, are ordained of God']". Now the angel was "sent by God" to announce unto the Virgin, as is related Luke 1:26. Therefore the Annunciation was made by the angel in the most perfect order.

I answer that, The Annunciation was made by the angel in a becoming manner. For the angel had a threefold purpose in regard to the Virgin. First, to draw her attention to the consideration of a matter of such moment. This he did by greeting her by a new and unwonted salutation. Wherefore Origen says, commenting on Luke (Hom. vi), that if "she had known that similar words had been addressed to anyone else, she, who had knowledge of the Law, would never have been astonished at the seeming strangeness of the salutation." In which salutation he began by asserting her worthiness of the conception, by saying, "Full of grace"; then he announced the conception in the words, "The Lord is with thee"; and then foretold the honor which would result to her therefrom, by saying, "Blessed art thou among women."

Secondly, he purposed to instruct her about the mystery of the Incarnation, which was to be fulfilled in her. This he did by foretelling the conception and birth, saying: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb," etc.; and by declaring the dignity of the child conceived, saying: "He shall be great"; and further, by making known the mode of conception, when he said: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee."

Thirdly, he purposed to lead her mind to consent. This he did by the instance of Elizabeth, and by the argument from Divine omnipotence.

**Reply to Objection 1.** To a humble mind nothing is more astonishing than to hear its own excellence. Now, wonder is most effective in drawing the mind's attention. Therefore the angel, desirous of drawing the Virgin's attention to the hearing of so great a mystery, began by praising her.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Ambrose says explicitly on Luke 1:34, that the Blessed Virgin did not doubt the angel's words. For he says: "Mary's answer is more temperate than the words of the priest. She says: How shall this be? He replies: Whereby shall I know this? He denies that he believes, since he denies that he knows this. She does not doubt fulfillment when she asks how it shall be done."

Augustine, however, seems to assert that she doubted. For he says (De Qq. Vet. et Nov. Test. qu. li): "To Mary, in doubt about the conception, the angel declares the possibility thereof." But such a doubt is one of wonder rather than of unbelief. And so the angel adduces a proof, not as a cure for unbelief, but in order to remove her astonishment.

Reply to Objection 3. As Ambrose says (Hexaemeron v): "For this reason had many barren women borne children, that the virginal birth might be credible."

The conception of the sterile Elizabeth is therefore adduced, not as a sufficient argument, but as a kind of figurative example: consequently in support of this instance, the convincing argument is added taken from the Divine omnipotence.

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### **Summa III, q. 31 - The matter from which the Saviour's body was conceived**

1. Was the flesh of Christ derived from Adam?
2. Was it derived from David?
3. The genealogy of Christ which is given in the Gospels
4. Was it fitting for Christ to be born of a woman?
5. Was His body formed from the purest blood of the Virgin?
6. Was the flesh of Christ in the patriarchs as to something signate?
7. Was the flesh of Christ in the patriarchs subject to sin?
8. Did Christ pay tithes in the loins of Abraham?

### **Article 1. Whether the flesh of Christ was derived from Adam?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that Christ's flesh was not derived from Adam. For the Apostle says (1 Corinthians 15:47): "The first man was of the earth, earthly: the second man, from heaven, heavenly." Now, the first man is Adam: and the second man is Christ. Therefore Christ is not derived from Adam, but has an origin distinct from him.

**Objection 2.** Further, the conception of Christ should have been most miraculous. But it is a greater miracle to form man's body from the slime of the earth, than from human matter derived from Adam. It seems therefore unfitting that Christ should take flesh from Adam. Therefore the body of Christ should not

have been formed from the mass of the human race derived from Adam, but of some other matter.

**Objection 3.** Further, by "one man sin entered into this world," i.e. by Adam, because in him all nations sinned originally, as is clear from Romans 5:12. But if Christ's body was derived from Adam, He would have been in Adam originally when he sinned: therefore he would have contracted original sin; which is unbecoming in His purity. Therefore the body of Christ was not formed of matter derived from Adam.

On the contrary, The Apostle says (Hebrews 2:16): "Nowhere doth He"--that is, the Son of God--"take hold of the angels: but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold." But the seed of Abraham was derived from Adam. Therefore Christ's body was formed of matter derived from Adam.

I answer that, Christ assumed human nature in order to cleanse it of corruption. But human nature did not need to be cleansed save in as far as it was soiled in its tainted origin whereby it was descended from Adam. Therefore it was becoming that He should assume flesh of matter derived from Adam, that the nature itself might be healed by the assumption.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The second man, i.e. Christ, is said to be of heaven, not indeed as to the matter from which His body was formed, but either as to the virtue whereby it was formed; or even as to His very Godhead. But as to matter, Christ's body was earthly, as Adam's body was.

**Reply to Objection 2.** As stated above (29, 1, ad 2) the mystery of Christ's Incarnation is miraculous, not as ordained to strengthen faith, but as an article of faith. And therefore in the mystery of Incarnation we do not seek that which is most miraculous, as in those miracles that are wrought for the confirmation of faith but what is most becoming to Divine wisdom, and most expedient to the salvation of man, since this is what we seek in all matters of faith.

It may also be said that in the mystery of Incarnation the miracle is not only in reference to the matter of the conception, but rather in respect of the manner of the conception and birth; inasmuch as a virgin conceived and gave birth to God.

**Reply to Objection 3.** As stated above (15, 1, ad 2), Christ's body was in Adam in respect of a bodily substance--that is to say, that the corporeal matter of Christ's body was derived from Adam: but it was not there by reason of seminal virtue, because it was not conceived from the seed of man. Thus it did not contract original sin, as others who are descended from Adam by man's seed.

## Article 2. Whether Christ took flesh of the seed of David?

**Objection 1.** It would seem that Christ did not take flesh of the seed of David. For Matthew, in tracing the genealogy of Christ, brings it down to Joseph. But Joseph was not Christ's father, as shown above (28, 1, ad 1, 2). Therefore it seems that Christ was not descended from David.

**Objection 2.** Further, Aaron was of the tribe of Levi, as related Exodus 6. Now Mary the Mother of Christ is called the cousin of Elizabeth, who was a daughter of Aaron, as is clear from Luke 1:5-36. Therefore, since David was of the tribe of Juda, as is shown Matthew 1, it seems that Christ was not descended from David.

**Objection 3.** Further, it is written of Jechonias (Jeremiah 22:30): "Write this man barren . . . for there shall not be a man of his seed that shall sit upon the throne of David." Whereas of Christ it is written (Isaiah 9:7): "He shall sit upon the throne of David." Therefore Christ was not of the seed of Jechonias: nor, consequently, of the family of David, since Matthew traces the genealogy from David through Jechonias.

On the contrary, It is written (Romans 1:3): "Who was made to him of the seed of David according to the flesh."

I answer that, Christ is said to have been the son especially of two of the patriarchs, Abraham and David, as is clear from Matthew 1:1. There are many reasons for this. First to these especially was the promise made concerning Christ. For it was said to Abraham (Genesis 22:18): "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed": which words the Apostle expounds of Christ (Galatians 3:16): "To Abraham were the promises made and to his seed. He saith not, 'And to his seeds' as of many; but as of one, 'And to thy seed,' which is Christ." And to David it was said (Psalms 131:11): "Of the fruit of thy womb I will set upon thy throne." Wherefore the Jewish people, receiving Him with kingly honor, said (Matthew 21:9): "Hosanna to the Son of David."

A second reason is because Christ was to be king, prophet, and priest. Now Abraham was a priest; which is clear from the Lord saying unto him (Genesis 15:9): "Take thee [Vulgate: 'Me'] a cow of three years old," etc. He was also a prophet, according to Genesis 20:7: "He is a prophet; and he shall pray for thee." Lastly David was both king and prophet.

A third reason is because circumcision had its beginning in Abraham: while in David God's election was most clearly made manifest, according to 1 Samuel 13:14: "The Lord hath sought Him a man according to His own heart." And

consequently Christ is called in a most special way the Son of both, in order to show that He came for the salvation both of the circumcised and of the elect among the Gentiles.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Faustus the Manichean argued thus, in the desire to prove that Christ is not the Son of David, because He was not conceived of Joseph, in whom Matthew's genealogy terminates. Augustine answered this argument thus (Contra Faust. xxii): "Since the same evangelist affirms that Joseph was Mary's husband and that Christ's mother was a virgin, and that Christ was of the seed of Abraham, what must we believe, but that Mary was not a stranger to the family of David: and that it is not without reason that she was called the wife of Joseph, by reason of the close alliance of their hearts, although not mingled in the flesh; and that the genealogy is traced down to Joseph rather than to her by reason of the dignity of the husband? So therefore we believe that Mary was also of the family of David: because we believe the Scriptures, which assert both that Christ was of the seed of David according to the flesh, and that Mary was His Mother, not by sexual intercourse but retaining her virginity." For as Jerome says on Matthew 1:18: "Joseph and Mary were of the same tribe: wherefore he was bound by law to marry her as she was his kinswoman. Hence it was that they were enrolled together at Bethlehem, as being descended from the same stock."

**Reply to Objection 2.** Gregory of Nazianzum answers this objection by saying that it happened by God's will, that the royal family was united to the priestly race, so that Christ, who is both king and priest, should be born of both according to the flesh. Wherefore Aaron, who was the first priest according to the Law, married a wife of the tribe of Juda, Elizabeth, daughter of Aminadab. It is therefore possible that Elizabeth's father married a wife of the family of David, through whom the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was of the family of David, would be a cousin of Elizabeth. or conversely, and with greater likelihood, that the Blessed Mary's father, who was of the family of David, married a wife of the family of Aaron.

Again, it may be said with Augustine (Contra Faust. xxii) that if Joachim, Mary's father, was of the family of Aaron (as the heretic Faustus pretended to prove from certain apocryphal writings), then we must believe that Joachim's mother, or else his wife, was of the family of David, so long as we say that Mary was in some way descended from David.

**Reply to Objection 3.** As Ambrose says on Luke 3:25, this prophetic passage does not deny that a posterity will be born of the seed of Jechonias. And so Christ is of his seed. Neither is the fact that Christ reigned contrary to prophecy, for He

did not reign with worldly honor; since He declared: "My kingdom is not of this world."

### **Article 3. Whether Christ's genealogy is suitably traced by the evangelists?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that Christ's genealogy is not suitably traced by the Evangelists. For it is written (Isaiah 53:8): "Who shall declare His generation?" Therefore Christ's genealogy should not have been set down.

**Objection 2.** Further, one man cannot possibly have two fathers. But Matthew says that "Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary": whereas Luke says that Joseph was the son of Heli. Therefore they contradict one another.

**Objection 3.** Further, there seem to be divergences between them on several points. For Matthew, at the commencement of his book, beginning from Abraham and coming down to Joseph, enumerates forty-two generations. Whereas Luke sets down Christ's genealogy after His Baptism, and beginning from Christ traces the series of generations back to God, counting in all seventy-seven generations, the first and last included. It seems therefore that their accounts of Christ's genealogy do not agree.

**Objection 4.** Further, we read (2 Kings 8:24) that Joram begot Ochozias, who was succeeded by his son Joas: who was succeeded by his son Amasius: after whom reigned his son Azarias, called Ozias; who was succeeded by his son Jonathan. But Matthew says that Joram begot Ozias. Therefore it seems that his account of Christ's genealogy is unsuitable, since he omits three kings in the middle thereof.

**Objection 5.** Further, all those who are mentioned in Christ's genealogy had both a father and a mother, and many of them had brothers also. Now in Christ's genealogy Matthew mentions only three mothers--namely, Tamar, Ruth, and the wife of Urias. He also mentions the brothers of Judas and Jechonias, and also Phares and Zara. But Luke mentions none of these. Therefore the evangelists seem to have described the genealogy of Christ in an unsuitable manner.

On the contrary, **the authority of Scripture suffices.**

I answer that, As is written (2 Timothy 3:16), "All Holy Scripture is inspired of God [Vulgate: 'All scripture inspired of God is profitable', etc. Now what is done by God is done in perfect order, according to Romans 13:1: "Those that are of God are ordained [Vulgate: 'Those that are, are ordained of God']". Therefore Christ's genealogy is set down by the evangelists in a suitable order.

**Reply to Objection 1.** As Jerome says on Matthew 1, Isaias speaks of the generation of Christ's Godhead. Whereas Matthew relates the generation of Christ in His humanity; not indeed by explaining the manner of Incarnation, which is also unspeakable; but by enumerating Christ's forefathers from whom He was descended according to the flesh.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Various answers have been made by certain writers to this objection which was raised by Julian the Apostate; for some, as Gregory of Nazianzum, say that the people mentioned by the two evangelists are the same, but under different names, as though they each had two. But this will not stand: because Matthew mentions one of David's sons--namely, Solomon; whereas Luke mentions another--namely, Nathan, who according to the history of the kings (2 Samuel 5:14) were clearly brothers.

Wherefore others said that Matthew gave the true genealogy of Christ: while Luke gave the supposititious genealogy; hence he began: "Being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph." For among the Jews there were some who believed that, on account of the crimes of the kings of Juda, Christ would be born of the family of David, not through the kings, but through some other line of private individuals.

Others again have supposed that Matthew gave the forefathers according to the flesh: whereas Luke gave these according to the spirit, that is, righteous men, who are called (Christ's) forefathers by likeness of virtue.

But an answer is given in the Qq. Vet. et Nov. Test. [Part i, qu. lvi; part 2, qu. vi] to the effect that we are not to understand that Joseph is said by Luke to be the son of Heli: but that at the time of Christ, Heli and Joseph were differently descended from David. Hence Christ is said to have been supposed to be the son of Joseph, and also to have been the son of Heli as though (the Evangelist) were to say that Christ, from the fact that He was the son of Joseph, could be called the son of Heli and of all those who were descended from David; as the Apostle says (Romans 9:5): "Of whom" (viz. the Jews) "is Christ according to the flesh."

Augustine again gives three solutions (De Qq. Evang. ii), saying: "There are three motives by one or other of which the evangelist was guided. For either one evangelist mentions Joseph's father of whom he was begotten; whilst the other gives either his maternal grandfather or some other of his later forefathers; or one was Joseph's natural father: the other is father by adoption. Or, according to the Jewish custom, one of those having died without children, a near relation of his married his wife, the son born of the latter union being reckoned as the son

of the former": which is a kind of legal adoption, as Augustine himself says (De Consensu Evang. ii, Cf. Retract. ii).

This last motive is the truest: Jerome also gives it commenting on Matthew 1:16; and Eusebius of Caesarea in his Church history (I, vii), says that it is given by Africanus the historian. For these writers says that Mathan and Melchi, at different times, each begot a son of one and the same wife, named Estha. For Mathan, who traced his descent through Solomon, had married her first, and died, leaving one son, whose name was Jacob: and after his death, as the law did not forbid his widow to remarry, Melchi, who traced his descent through Mathan, being of the same tribe though not of the same family as Mathan, married his widow, who bore him a son, called Heli; so that Jacob and Heli were uterine brothers born to different fathers. Now one of these, Jacob, on his brother Heli dying without issue, married the latter's widow, according to the prescription of the law, of whom he had a son, Joseph, who by nature was his own son, but by law was accounted the son of Heli. Wherefore Matthew says "Jacob begot Joseph": whereas Luke, who was giving the legal genealogy, speaks of no one as begetting.

And although Damascene (De Fide Orth. iv) says that the Blessed Virgin Mary was connected with Joseph in as far as Heli was accounted as his father, for he says that she was descended from Melchi: yet must we also believe that she was in some way descended from Solomon through those patriarchs enumerated by Matthew, who is said to have set down Christ's genealogy according to the flesh; and all the more since Ambrose states that Christ was of the seed of Jechonias.

**Reply to Objection 3.** According to Augustine (De Consensu Evang. ii) "Matthew purposed to delineate the royal personality of Christ; Luke the priestly personality: so that in Matthew's genealogy is signified the assumption of our sins by our Lord Jesus Christ": inasmuch as by his carnal origin "He assumed 'the likeness of sinful flesh.' But in Luke's genealogy the washing away of our sins is signified," which is effected by Christ's sacrifice. "For which reason Matthew traces the generations downwards, Luke upwards." For the same reason too "Matthew descends from David through Solomon, in whose mother David sinned; whereas Luke ascends to David through Nathan, through whose namesake, the prophet, God expiated his sin." And hence it is also that, because "Matthew wished to signify that Christ had condescended to our mortal nature, he set down the genealogy of Christ at the very outset of his Gospel, beginning with Abraham and descending to Joseph and the birth of Christ Himself. Luke, on the contrary, sets forth Christ's genealogy not at the outset, but after Christ's Baptism, and not in the descending but in the ascending order: as though giving prominence to the office of the priest in expiating our sins, to which John bore



witness, saying: 'Behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world.' And in the ascending order, he passes Abraham and continues up to God, to whom we are reconciled by cleansing and expiating. With reason too he follows the origin of adoption; because by adoption we become children of God: whereas by carnal generation the Son of God became the Son of Man. Moreover he shows sufficiently that he does not say that Joseph was the son of Heli as though begotten by him, but because he was adopted by him, since he says that Adam was the son of God, inasmuch as he was created by God."

Again, the number forty pertains to the time of our present life: because of the four parts of the world in which we pass this mortal life under the rule of Christ. And forty is the product of four multiplied by ten: while ten is the sum of the numbers from one to four. The number ten may also refer to the declogue; and the number four to the present life; or again to the four Gospels, according to which Christ reigns in us. And thus "Matthew, putting forward the royal personality of Christ, enumerates forty persons not counting Him" (cf. Augustine, De Consensu Evang. ii). But this is to be taken on the supposition that it be the same Jechonias at the end of the second, and at the commencement of the third series of fourteen, as Augustine understands it. According to him this was done in order to signify "that under Jechonias there was a certain defection to strange nations during the Babylonian captivity; which also foreshadowed the fact that Christ would pass from the Jews to the Gentiles."

On the other hand, Jerome (on Matthew 1:12-15) says that there were two Joachims - that is, Jechonias, father and son: both of whom are mentioned in Christ's genealogy, so as to make clear the distinction of the generations, which the evangelist divides into three series of fourteen; which amounts in all to forty-two persons. Which number may also be applied to the Holy Church: for it is the product of six, which signifies the labor of the present life, and seven, which signifies the rest of the life to come: for six times seven are forty-two. The number fourteen, which is the sum of ten and four, can also be given the same signification as that given to the number forty, which is the product of the same numbers by multiplication.

But the number used by Luke in Christ's genealogy signifies the generality of sins. "For the number ten is shown in the ten precepts of the Law to be the number of righteousness. Now, to sin is to go beyond the restriction of the Law. And eleven is the number beyond ten." And seven signifies universality: because "universal time is involved in seven days." Now seven times eleven are seventy-seven: so that this number signifies the generality of sins which are taken away by Christ.

**Reply to Objection 4.** As Jerome says on Matthew 1:8-11: "Because Joram allied himself with the family of the most wicked Jezabel, therefore his memory is omitted down to the third generation, lest it should be inserted among the holy predecessors of the Nativity." Hence as Chrysostom [Cf. Opus Imperf. in Matth. Hom. i, falsely ascribed to Chrysostom] says: "Just as great was the blessing conferred on Jehu, who wrought vengeance on the house of Achab and Jezabel, so also great was the curse on the house of Joram, through the wicked daughter of Achab and Jezabel, so that until the fourth generation his posterity is cut off from the number of kings, according to Exodus 20:5: I shall visit [Vulgate: 'Visiting'] the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations."

It must also be observed that there were other kings who sinned and are mentioned in Christ's genealogy: but their impiety was not continuous. For, as it is stated in the book De Qq. Vet. et Nov. Test. qu. lxxxv: "Solomon through his father's merits is included in the series of kings; and Roboam . . . through the merits of Asa," who was son of his (Roboam's) son, Abiam. "But the impiety of those three [i.e. Ochozias, Joas, and Amasias, of whom St. Augustine asks in this question lxxxv, why they were omitted by St. Matthew] was continuous."

**Reply to Objection 5.** As Jerome says on Matthew 1:3: "None of the holy women are mentioned in the Saviour's genealogy, but only those whom Scripture censures, so that He who came for the sake of sinners, by being born of sinners, might blot out all sin." Thus Tamar is mentioned, who is censured for her sin with her father-in-law; Rahab who was a whore; Ruth who was a foreigner; and Bethsabee, the wife of Urias, who was an adulteress. The last, however, is not mentioned by name, but is designated through her husband; both on account of his sin, for he was cognizant of the adultery and murder; and further in order that, by mentioning the husband by name, David's sin might be recalled. And because Luke purposes to delineate Christ as the expiator of our sins, he makes no mention of these women. But he does mention Juda's brethren, in order to show that they belong to God's people: whereas Ismael, the brother of Isaac, and Esau, Jacob's brother, were cut off from God's people, and for this reason are not mentioned in Christ's genealogy. Another motive was to show the emptiness of pride of birth: for many of Juda's brethren were born of hand-maidens, and yet all were patriarchs and heads of tribes. Phares and Zara are mentioned together, because, as Ambrose says on Luke 3:23, "they are the type of the twofold life of man: one, according to the Law," signified by Zara; "the other by Faith," of which Phares is the type. The brethren of Jechonias are included, because they all reigned at various times: which was not the case with other kings: or, again, because they were alike in wickedness and misfortune.

#### **Article 4. Whether the matter of Christ's body should have been taken from a woman?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the matter of Christ's body should not have been taken from a woman. For the male sex is more noble than the female. But it was most suitable that Christ should assume that which is perfect in human nature. Therefore it seems that He should not have taken flesh from a woman but rather from man: just as Eve was formed from the rib of a man.

**Objection 2.** Further, whoever is conceived of a woman is shut up in her womb. But it ill becomes God, Who fills heaven and earth, as is written Jeremiah 23:24, to be shut up within the narrow limits of the womb. Therefore it seems that He should not have been conceived of a woman.

**Objection 3.** Further, those who are conceived of a woman contract a certain uncleanness: as it is written (Job 25:4): "Can man be justified compared with God? Or he that is born of a woman appear clean?" But it was unbecoming that any uncleanness should be in Christ: for He is the Wisdom of God, of whom it is written (Wisdom 7:25) that "no defiled thing cometh into her." Therefore it does not seem right that He should have taken flesh from a woman.

On the contrary, It is written (Galatians 4:4): "God sent His Son, made of a woman."

I answer that, Although the Son of God could have taken flesh from whatever matter He willed, it was nevertheless most becoming that He should take flesh from a woman. First because in this way the entire human nature was ennobled. Hence Augustine says (QQ. lxxxiii, qu. 11): "It was suitable that man's liberation should be made manifest in both sexes. Consequently, since it behooved a man, being of the nobler sex, to assume, it was becoming that the liberation of the female sex should be manifested in that man being born of a woman."

Secondly, because thus the truth of Incarnation is made evident. Wherefore Ambrose says (De Incarn. vi): "Thou shalt find in Christ many things both natural, and supernatural. In accordance with nature He was within the womb," viz. of a woman's body: "but it was above nature that a virgin should conceive and give birth: that thou mightest believe that He was God, who was renewing nature; and that He was man who, according to nature, was being born of a man." And Augustine says (Ep. ad Volus. cxxxvii): "If Almighty God had created a man formed otherwise than in a mother's womb, and had suddenly produced him to sight . . . would He not have strengthened an erroneous opinion, and made it impossible for us to believe that He had become a true man? And whilst He is

doing all things wondrously, would He have taken away that which He accomplished in mercy? But now, He, the mediator between God and man, has so shown Himself, that, uniting both natures in the unity of one Person, He has given a dignity to ordinary by extraordinary things, and tempered the extraordinary by the ordinary."

Thirdly, because in this fashion the begetting of man is accomplished in every variety of manner. For the first man was made from the "slime of the earth," without the concurrence of man or woman: Eve was made of man but not of woman: and other men are made from both man and woman. So that this fourth manner remained as it were proper to Christ, that He should be made of a woman without the concurrence of a man.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The male sex is more noble than the female, and for this reason He took human nature in the male sex. But lest the female sex should be despised, it was fitting that He should take flesh of a woman. Hence Augustine says (De Agone Christ. xi): "Men, despise not yourselves: the Son of God became a man: despise not yourselves, women; the Son of God was born of a woman."

**Reply to Objection 2.** Augustine thus (Contra Faust. xxiii) replies to Faustus, who urged this objection; "By no means," says he, "does the Catholic Faith, which believes that Christ the Son of God was born of a virgin, according to the flesh, suppose that the same Son of God was so shut up in His Mother's womb, as to cease to be elsewhere, as though He no longer continued to govern heaven and earth, and as though He had withdrawn Himself from the Father. But you, Manicheans, being of a mind that admits of nought but material images, are utterly unable to grasp these things." For, as he again says (Ep. ad Volus. cxxxvii), "it belongs to the sense of man to form conceptions only through tangible bodies, none of which can be entire everywhere, because they must of necessity be diffused through their innumerable parts in various places . . . Far otherwise is the nature of the soul from that of the body: how much more the nature of God, the Creator of soul and body! . . . He is able to be entire everywhere, and to be contained in no place. He is able to come without moving from the place where He was; and to go without leaving the spot whence He came."

**Reply to Objection 3.** There is no uncleanness in the conception of man from a woman, as far as this is the work of God: wherefore it is written (Acts 10:15): "That which God hath cleansed do not thou call common," i.e. unclean. There is, however, a certain uncleanness therein, resulting from sin, as far as lustful desire accompanies conception by sexual union. But this was not the case with Christ, as shown above (Question 28, Article 1). But if there were any uncleanness therein, the Word of God would not have been sullied thereby, for He is utterly

unchangeable. Wherefore Augustine says (Contra Quinque Haereses v): "God saith, the Creator of man: What is it that troubles thee in My Birth? I was not conceived by lustful desire. I made Myself a mother of whom to be born. If the sun's rays can dry up the filth in the drain, and yet not be defiled: much more can the Splendor of eternal light cleanse whatever It shines upon, but Itself cannot be sullied."

## **Article 5. Whether the flesh of Christ was conceived of the Virgin's purest blood?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that the flesh of Christ was not conceived of the Virgin's purest blood: For it is said in the collect (Feast of the Annunciation) that God "willed that His Word should take flesh from a Virgin." But flesh differs from blood. Therefore Christ's body was not taken from the Virgin's blood.

**Objection 2.** Further, as the woman was miraculously formed from the man, so Christ's body was formed miraculously from the Virgin. But the woman is not said to have been formed from the man's blood, but rather from his flesh and bones, according to Genesis 2:23: "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." It seems therefore that neither should Christ's body have been formed from the Virgin's blood, but from her flesh and bones.

**Objection 3.** Further, Christ's body was of the same species as other men's bodies. But other men's bodies are not formed from the purest blood but from the semen and the menstrual blood. Therefore it seems that neither was Christ's body conceived of the purest blood of the Virgin.

On the contrary, Damascene says (De Fide Orth. iii) that "the Son of God, from the Virgin's purest blood, formed Himself flesh, animated with a rational soul."

I answer that, As stated above (Article 4), in Christ's conception His being born of a woman was in accordance with the laws of nature, but that He was born of a virgin was above the laws of nature. Now, such is the law of nature that in the generation of an animal the female supplies the matter, while the male is the active principle of generation; as the Philosopher proves (De Gener. Animal. i). But a woman who conceives of a man is not a virgin. And consequently it belongs to the supernatural mode of Christ's generation, that the active principle of generation was the supernatural power of God: but it belongs to the natural mode of His generation, that the matter from which His body was conceived is similar to the matter which other women supply for the conception of their offspring. Now, this matter, according to the Philosopher (De Gener. Animal.), is the woman's blood, not any of her blood, but brought to a more perfect stage of

secretion by the mother's generative power, so as to be apt for conception. And therefore of such matter was Christ's body conceived.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Since the Blessed Virgin was of the same nature as other women, it follows that she had flesh and bones of the same nature as theirs. Now, flesh and bones in other women are actual parts of the body, the integrity of which results therefrom: and consequently they cannot be taken from the body without its being corrupted or diminished. But as Christ came to heal what was corrupt, it was not fitting that He should bring corruption or diminution to the integrity of His Mother. Therefore it was becoming that Christ's body should be formed not from the flesh or bones of the Virgin, but from her blood, which as yet is not actually a part, but is potentially the whole, as stated in De Gener. Animal. i. Hence He is said to have taken flesh from the Virgin, not that the matter from which His body was formed was actual flesh, but blood, which is flesh potentially.

**Reply to Objection 2.** As stated in I, 92, 3, ad 2, Adam, through being established as a kind of principle of human nature, had in his body a certain proportion of flesh and bone, which belonged to him, not as an integral part of his personality, but in regard to his state as a principle of human nature. And from this was the woman formed, without detriment to the man. But in the Virgin's body there was nothing of this sort, from which Christ's body could be formed without detriment to His Mother's body.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Woman's semen is not apt for generation, but is something imperfect in the seminal order, which, on account of the imperfection of the female power, it has not been possible to bring to complete seminal perfection. Consequently this semen is not the necessary matter of conception; as the Philosopher says (De Gener. Animal. i): wherefore there was none such in Christ's conception: all the more since, though it is imperfect in the seminal order, a certain concupiscence accompanies its emission, as also that of the male semen: whereas in that virginal conception there could be no concupiscence. Wherefore Damascene says (De Fide Orth. iii) that Christ's body was not conceived "seminally." But the menstrual blood, the flow of which is subject to monthly periods, has a certain natural impurity of corruption: like other superfluities, which nature does not heed, and therefore expels. Of such menstrual blood infected with corruption and repudiated by nature, the conception is not formed; but from a certain secretion of the pure blood which by a process of elimination is prepared for conception, being, as it were, more pure and more perfect than the rest of the blood. Nevertheless, it is tainted with the impurity of lust in the conception of other men: inasmuch as by sexual intercourse this blood is drawn to a place apt for conception. This, however, did not take place in Christ's

conception: because this blood was brought together in the Virgin's womb and fashioned into a child by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Therefore is Christ's body said to be "formed of the most chaste and purest blood of the Virgin."

**Article 6. Whether Christ's body was in Adam and the other patriarchs, as to something signate?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that Christ's body was in Adam and the patriarchs as to something signate. For Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. x) that the flesh of Christ was in Adam and Abraham "by way of a bodily substance." But bodily substance is something signate. Therefore Christ's flesh was in Adam, Abraham, and the other patriarchs, according to something signate.

**Objection 2.** Further, it is said (Romans 1:3) that Christ "was made . . . of the seed of David according to the flesh." But the seed of David was something signate in him. Therefore Christ was in David, according to something signate, and for the same reason in the other patriarchs.

**Objection 3.** Further, the human race is Christ's kindred, inasmuch as He took flesh therefrom. But if that flesh were not something signate in Adam, the human race, which is descended from Adam, would seem to have no kindred with Christ: but rather with those other things from which the matter of His flesh was taken. Therefore it seems that Christ's flesh was in Adam and the other patriarchs according to something signate.

On the contrary, Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. x) that in whatever way Christ was in Adam and Abraham, other men were there also; but not conversely. But other men were not in Adam and Abraham by way of some signate matter, but only according to origin, as stated in I, 119, 1, 2, ad 4. Therefore neither was Christ in Adam and Abraham according to something signate; and, for the same reason, neither was He in the other patriarchs.

I answer that, As stated above (5, ad 1), the matter of Christ's body was not the flesh and bones of the Blessed Virgin, nor anything that was actually a part of her body, but her blood which was her flesh potentially. Now, whatever was in the Blessed Virgin, as received from her parents, was actually a part of her body. Consequently that which the Blessed Virgin received from her parents was not the matter of Christ's body. Therefore we must say that Christ's body was not in Adam and the other patriarchs according to something signate, in the sense that some part of Adam's or of anyone else's body could be singled out and designated as the very matter from which Christ's body was to be formed: but it was there according to origin, just as was the flesh of other men. For Christ's

body is related to Adam and the other patriarchs through the medium of His Mother's body. Consequently Christ's body was in the patriarchs, in no other way than was His Mother's body, which was not in the patriarchs according to signate matter: as neither were the bodies of other men, as stated in I, 119, 1, 2, ad 4.

**Reply to Objection 1.** The expression "Christ was in Adam according to bodily substance," does not mean that Christ's body was a bodily substance in Adam: but that the bodily substance of Christ's body, i.e. the matter which He took from the Virgin, was in Adam as in its active principle, but not as in its material principle: in other words, by the generative power of Adam and his descendants down to the Blessed Virgin, this matter was prepared for Christ's conception. But this matter was not fashioned into Christ's body by the seminal power derived from Adam. Therefore Christ is said to have been in Adam by way of origin, according to bodily substance: but not according to seminal virtue.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Although Christ's body was not in Adam and the other patriarchs, according to seminal virtue, yet the Blessed Virgin's body was thus in them, through her being conceived from the seed of a man. For this reason, through the medium of the Blessed Virgin, Christ is said to be of the seed of David, according to the flesh, by way of origin.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Christ and the human race are kindred, through the likeness of species. Now, specific likeness results not from remote but from proximate matter, and from the active principle which begets its like in species. Thus, then, the kinship of Christ and the human race is sufficiently preserved by His body being formed from the Virgin's blood, derived in its origin from Adam and the other patriarchs. Nor is this kinship affected by the matter whence this blood is taken, as neither is it in the generation of other men, as stated in I, 119, 2, ad 3.

## **Article 7. Whether Christ's flesh in the patriarchs was infected by sin?**

**Objection 1.** It would seem that Christ's flesh was not infected by sin in the patriarchs. For it is written (Wisdom 7:25) that "no defiled thing cometh into" Divine Wisdom. But Christ is the Wisdom of God according to 1 Corinthians 1:24. Therefore Christ's flesh was never defiled by sin.

**Objection 2.** Further, Damascene says (De Fide Orth. iii) that Christ "assumed the first-fruits of our nature." But in the primitive state human flesh was not infected by sin. Therefore Christ's flesh was not infected either in Adam or in the other patriarchs.



**Objection 3.** Further, Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. x) that "human nature ever had, together with the wound, the balm with which to heal it." But that which is infected cannot heal a wound; rather does it need to be healed itself. Therefore in human nature there was ever something preserved from infection, from which afterwards Christ's body was formed.

On the contrary, Christ's body is not related to Adam and the other patriarchs, save through the medium of the Blessed Virgin's body, of whom He took flesh. But the body of the Blessed Virgin was wholly conceived in original sin, as stated above (14, 3, ad 1), and thus, as far as it was in the patriarchs, it was subject to sin. Therefore the flesh of Christ, as far as it was in the patriarchs, was subject to sin.

I answer that, When we say that Christ or His flesh was in Adam and the other patriarchs, we compare Him, or His flesh, to Adam and the other patriarchs. Now, it is manifest that the condition of the patriarchs differed from that of Christ: for the patriarchs were subject to sin, whereas Christ was absolutely free from sin. Consequently a twofold error may occur on this point. First, by attributing to Christ, or to His flesh, that condition which was in the patriarchs; by saying, for instance, that Christ sinned in Adam, since after some fashion He was in him. But this is false; because Christ was not in Adam in such a way that Adam's sin belonged to Christ: forasmuch as He is not descended from him according to the law of concupiscence, or according to seminal virtue; as stated above (1, ad 3, 6, ad 1; 15, 1, ad 2).

Secondly, error may occur by attributing the condition of Christ or of His flesh to that which was actually in the patriarchs: by saying, for instance, that, because Christ's flesh, as existing in Christ, was not subject to sin, therefore in Adam also and in the patriarchs there was some part of his body that was not subject to sin, and from which afterwards Christ's body was formed; as some indeed held. For this is quite impossible. First, because Christ's flesh was not in Adam and in the other patriarchs, according to something signate, distinguishable from the rest of his flesh, as pure from impure; as already stated (6). Secondly, because since human flesh is infected by sin, through being conceived in lust, just as the entire flesh of a man is conceived through lust, so also is it entirely defiled by sin. Consequently we must say that the entire flesh of the patriarchs was subjected to sin, nor was there anything in them that was free from sin, and from which afterwards Christ's body could be formed.

**Reply to Objection 1.** Christ did not assume the flesh of the human race subject to sin, but cleansed from all infection of sin. Thus it is that "no defiled thing cometh into the Wisdom of God."

**Reply to Objection 2.** Christ is said to have assumed the first-fruits of our nature, as to the likeness of condition; forasmuch as He assumed flesh not infected by sin, like unto the flesh of man before sin. But this is not to be understood to imply a continuation of that primitive purity, as though the flesh of innocent man was preserved in its freedom from sin until the formation of Christ's body.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Before Christ, there was actually in human nature a wound, i.e. the infection of original sin. But the balm to heal the wound was not there actually, but only by a certain virtue of origin, forasmuch as from those patriarchs the flesh of Christ was to be propagated.

### Article 8. Whether Christ paid tithes in Abraham's loins?

**Objection 1.** It would seem that Christ "paid tithes" in Abraham's loins. For the Apostle says (Hebrews 7:6-9) that Levi, the great-grandson of Abraham, "paid tithes in Abraham," because, when the latter paid tithes to Melchisedech, "he was yet in his loins." In like manner Christ was in Abraham's loins when the latter paid tithes. Therefore Christ Himself also paid tithes in Abraham.

**Objection 2.** Further, Christ is of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh which He received from His Mother. But His Mother paid tithes in Abraham. Therefore for a like reason did Christ.

**Objection 3.** Further, "in Abraham tithe was levied on that which needed healing," as Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. x). But all flesh subject to sin needed healing. Since therefore Christ's flesh was the subject of sin, as stated above (Article 7), it seems that Christ's flesh paid tithes in Abraham.

**Objection 4.** Further, this does not seem to be at all derogatory to Christ's dignity. For the fact that the father of a bishop pays tithes to a priest does not hinder his son, the bishop, from being of higher rank than an ordinary priest. Consequently, although we may say that Christ paid tithes when Abraham paid them to Melchisedech, it does not follow that Christ was not greater than Melchisedech.

On the contrary, Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. x) that "Christ did not pay tithes there," i.e. in Abraham, "for His flesh derived from him, not the heat of the wound, but the matter of the antidote."

I answer that, It behooves us to say that the sense of the passage quoted from the Apostle is that Christ did not pay tithes in Abraham. For the Apostle proves that the priesthood according to the order of Melchisedech is greater than the

Levitical priesthood, from the fact that Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedech, while Levi, from whom the legal priesthood was derived, was yet in his loins. Now, if Christ had also paid tithes in Abraham, His priesthood would not have been according to the order of Melchisedech, but of a lower order. Consequently we must say that Christ did not pay tithes in Abraham's loins, as Levi did.

For since he who pays a tithe keeps nine parts to himself, and surrenders the tenth to another, inasmuch as the number ten is the sign of perfection, as being, in a sort, the terminus of all numbers which mount from one to ten, it follows that he who pays a tithe bears witness to his own imperfection and to the perfection of another. Now, to sin is due the imperfection of the human race, which needs to be perfected by Him who cleanses from sin. But to heal from sin belongs to Christ alone, for He is the "Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), whose figure was Melchisedech, as the Apostle proves (Hebrews 7). Therefore by giving tithes to Melchisedech, Abraham foreshadowed that he, as being conceived in sin, and all who were to be his descendants in contracting original sin, needed that healing which is through Christ. And Isaac, Jacob, and Levi, and all the others were in Abraham in such a way so as to be descended from him, not only as to bodily substance, but also as to seminal virtue, by which original sin is transmitted. Consequently, they all paid tithes in Abraham, i.e. foreshadowed as needing to be healed by Christ. And Christ alone was in Abraham in such a manner as to descend from him, not by seminal virtue, but according to bodily substance. Therefore He was not in Abraham so as to need to be healed, but rather "as the balm with which the wound was to be healed." Therefore He did not pay tithes in Abraham's loins.

Thus the answer to the first objection is made manifest.

**Reply to Objection 2.** Because the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin, she was in Abraham as needing to be healed. Therefore she paid tithes in him, as descending from him according to seminal virtue. But this is not true of Christ's body, as stated above.

**Reply to Objection 3.** Christ's flesh is said to have been subject to sin, according as it was in the patriarchs, by reason of the condition in which it was in His forefathers, who paid the tithes: but not by reason of its condition as actually in Christ, who did not pay the tithes.

**Reply to Objection 4.** The levitical priesthood was handed down through carnal origin: wherefore it was not less in Abraham than in Levi. Consequently, since Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedech as to one greater than he, it follows that the priesthood of Melchisedech, inasmuch as he was a figure of Christ, was

greater than that of Levi. But the priesthood of Christ does not result from carnal origin, but from spiritual grace. Therefore it is possible that a father pay tithes to a priest, as the less to the greater, and yet his son, if he be a bishop, is greater than that priest, not through carnal origin, but through the spiritual grace which he has received from Christ.

## B. *COMPENDIUM THEOLOGIAE*

### Chapter 215 Infinitude of Christ's Grace

The possession of infinite grace is restricted to Christ. According to the testimony of John the Baptist, "God doth not give the Spirit by measure" to the man Christ (John 3:34). But to others the Spirit is given in measure, as we read in Ephesians 4:7: "To everyone of us is given grace 'according to the measure of the giving of Christ.'" If this refers to the grace of union, no doubt can arise about what is here stated. To other saints is given the grace of being gods or sons of God by participation, through the infusion of some gift. Such a gift, being created, must itself be finite, just as all other creatures are. To Christ, on the contrary, is given, in His human nature, the grace to be the Son of God not by participation, but by nature. But natural divinity is infinite. Through that union, therefore, He received an infinite gift. Hence beyond all doubt the grace of union is infinite.

Concerning habitual grace, however, a doubt can be raised as to whether it is infinite. Since such grace is a created gift, we have to acknowledge that it has a finite essence. Yet it can be said to be infinite for three reasons.

First, on the part of the recipient. The capacity of any created nature is evidently finite. Even though it is able to receive an infinite good by way of knowledge and fruition, it does not receive that good infinitely. Each creature has a definite measure of capacity in keeping with its species and nature. This does not prevent the divine power from being able to make another creature with a greater capacity; but such a creature would no longer be of the same nature with regard to species. Thus if one is added to three, a different species of number will result. Consequently, when the divine goodness that is bestowed on anyone does not completely exhaust the natural capacity of his nature, we judge that what is given to him has been apportioned according to some measure. But when the whole of his natural capacity is filled up, We conclude that what he receives is not parceled out to him according to measure. For although there is a measure on the part of the recipient, there is no measure on the part of the giver, who is ready to give all; if a person, for instance, takes a pitcher down to the river, he finds water at hand without measure, although he himself receives with measure because of the limited size of the vessel. In this way Christ's habitual grace is finite in its essence, but may be said to be given infinitely and not according to measure, because as much is given as created nature is able to receive.

Secondly, grace may be said to be infinite on the part of the gift itself that is received. Surely we realize that there is nothing to prevent a thing that is finite in its essence, from being infinite by reason of some, form. Infinite according to essence is that which possesses the whole fullness of being; this, of course, is proper to God alone, who is being itself. But if we suppose that there is some particular form not existing in a subject, such as whiteness or heat, it would not, indeed, have an infinite essence, for its essence would be confined to a genus or species; but it would possess the entire fullness of that species. With respect to the species in question, it would be without limit or measure, because it

would have whatever could pertain to that species. But if whiteness or heat is received into some subject, the latter does not always possess everything that necessarily and invariably pertains to the nature of that form, but does so only when the form is possessed as perfectly as it can be possessed, that is, when the manner of possessing is equal to the thing's capacity for being possessed. In this way, then, Christ's habitual grace was finite in its essence; but it is said to have been without limit and measure because Christ received all that could pertain to the nature of grace. Other men do not receive the whole: one man receives grace in this measure, another in that. "There are diversities of graces," as we learn from 1 Corinthians 12:4.

In the third place, grace may be called infinite on the part of its cause. For in a cause is contained, in some way, its effect. Therefore, if a cause with infinite power to influence is at hand, it is able to influence without measure and, in a certain sense, infinitely; for example, if a person had a fountain capable of pouring forth water infinitely, he could be said to possess water without measure and, in a sense, infinitely. In this way Christ's soul has grace that is infinite and without measure, owing to the fact that it possesses, as united to itself, the Word who is the inexhaustible and infinite principle of every emanation of creatures.

From the fact that the singular grace of Christ's soul is infinite in the ways described, we readily infer that the grace which is His as head of the Church is likewise infinite. For the very reason that He possesses it, He pours it forth. And since He has received the gifts of the Spirit without measure, He has the power of pouring forth without measure all that pertains to the grace of the head, so that His grace is sufficient for the salvation, not of some men only, but of the whole world, according to 1 John 2:2: "And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world"; and, we may add, of many worlds, if such existed.

## CHAPTER 220

### EXPLANATION OF THE ARTICLE IN THE CREED ON THE CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF CHRIST

To exclude the error of Ebion and Cerinthus, who taught that Christ's body was formed from male seed, the Apostles' Creed states: "Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit." In place of this, the Creed of the Nicene Fathers has: "He was made flesh by the Holy Spirit," so that we may believe that He assumed true flesh and not a phantastic body, as the Manichaeans claimed. And the Creed of the Fathers adds: "For us men," to exclude the error of Origen, who alleged that by the power of Christ's passion even the devils were to be set free. In the same Creed the phrase, "for our salvation," is appended, to show that the mystery of Christ's incarnation suffices for men's salvation, against the heresy of the Nazarenes, who thought that faith was not enough for human salvation apart from the works of the Law. The words, "He came down from heaven" were added to exclude the error of Photinus, who asserted that Christ was no more than a man and that He took His origin from Mary. In this heresy the false teaching that Christ had an earthly beginning and later ascended to heaven by the merit of a good life, replaces the truth that He had a heavenly origin and descended to earth by assuming flesh. Lastly, the words, "And He was made man," were added to exclude the error of Nestorius, according to whose contention

the Son of God, of whom the Creed speaks, would be said rather to dwell in man than to be man.

#### CHAPTER 221 CHRIST'S BIRTH FROM A VIRGIN

Since, as we have shown, the Son of God was to take flesh from matter supplied by human nature, and since in human generation the woman provides matter, Christ appropriately took flesh from a woman. This is taught by the Apostle in Galatians 4:4: "God sent His Son, made of a woman." A woman needs the cooperation of a man in order that the matter she supplies may be fashioned into a human body. But the formation of Christ's body ought not to have been effected through the power of the male seed, as we said above. Hence that woman from whom the Son of God assumed flesh conceived without the admixture of male seed. Now the more anyone is detached from the things of the flesh, the more such a person is filled with spiritual gifts. For man is raised up by spiritual goods, whereas he is dragged down by carnal attractions. Accordingly, since the formation of Christ's body was to be accomplished by the Holy Spirit, it behooved that woman from whom Christ took His body to be filled to repletion with spiritual gifts, so that not only her soul would be endowed with virtues by the Holy Spirit, but also her womb would be made fruitful with divine offspring. Therefore her soul had to be free from sin, and her body had to be far removed from every taint of carnal concupiscence. And so she had no association with a man at the conception of Christ; nor did she ever have such experience, either before or after.

This was also due to Him who was born of her. The Son of God assumed flesh and came into the world for the purpose of raising us to the state of resurrection, in which men "shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. 22:30). This is why He inculcated the doctrine of continence and of virginal integrity, that an image of the glory that is to come might, in some degree, shine forth in the lives of the faithful. Consequently He did well to extol purity of life at His very birth, by being born of a virgin; and so the Apostles' Creed says that He was "born of the Virgin Mary." In the Creed of the Fathers He is said to have been made flesh of the Virgin Mary. This excludes the error of Valentinus and others, who taught that the body of Christ was either phantastic or was of another nature and was not taken and formed from the body of the Virgin.

#### CHAPTER 222 THE MOTHER OF CHRIST

The error of Nestorius, who refused to acknowledge that Blessed Mary is the Mother of God, is likewise excluded. Both Creeds assert that the Son of God was born or was made flesh of the Virgin Mary. The woman of whom any person is born is called his mother, for the reason that she supplies the matter for human conception. Hence the Blessed Virgin Mary, who provided the matter for the conception of the Son of God, should be called the true mother of the Son of God. As far as the essence of motherhood is concerned, the energy whereby the matter furnished by a woman is formed does not enter into the question. She who supplied matter to be formed by the Holy Spirit is no less a mother than a woman who supplies matter that is to be formed by the energy latent in male seed. If

anyone insists on maintaining that the Blessed Virgin ought not to be called the Mother of God because flesh alone and not divinity was derived from her, as Nestorius contended, he clearly is not aware of what he is saying. A woman is not called a mother for the reason that everything that is in her child is derived from her. Man is made up of body and soul; and a man is what he is in virtue of his soul rather than in virtue of his body. But no man's soul is derived from his mother. The soul is either created by God directly, as the true doctrine has it, or, if it were produced by transplanting, as some have fancied, it would be derived from the father rather than from the mother. For in the generation of other animals, according to the teaching of philosophers, the male gives the soul, the female gives the body.

Consequently, just as any woman is a mother from the fact that her child's body is derived from her, so the Blessed Virgin Mary ought to be called the Mother of God if the body of God is derived from her. But we have to hold that it is the body of God, if it is taken up into the unity of the person of God's Son, who is true God. Therefore all who admit that human nature was assumed by the Son of God into the unity of His person, must admit that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God. But Nestorius, who denied that the person of God and of the man Jesus Christ was one, was forced by logical necessity to deny that the Virgin Mary was the Mother of God.

## CHAPTER 223

### THE HOLY SPIRIT NOT THE FATHER OF CHRIST

Although the Son of God is said to have been made flesh and to have been conceived by the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, we are not to conclude that the Holy Spirit is the father of the man Christ, even though the Blessed Virgin is called His mother.

The first reason for this is that everything pertaining to the idea of mother is verified in the Blessed Virgin Mary. She furnished the matter to be formed by the Holy Spirit for the conception of Christ, as the idea of motherhood requires. But not all the elements required for the idea of fatherhood are found on the part of the Holy Spirit. The idea of fatherhood requires that the father produce from his nature a son who is of like nature with himself. Therefore if some agent would make a thing that is not derived from its own substance, and would not produce such a thing unto the likeness of its own nature, that agent could not be called the thing's father. We do not say that a man is the father of things he makes by plying an art, unless perhaps in a metaphorical sense. The Holy Spirit is, indeed, connatural with Christ as regards the divine nature; in this respect, however, He is not the father of Christ, but rather proceeds from Him. With respect to the human nature, the Holy Spirit is not connatural with Christ. For the human nature in Christ is other than the divine nature, as we said above. Nor is anything of the divine nature changed into human nature, as we also said above. Consequently the Holy Spirit cannot be called the father of the man Christ.

Moreover, that which is of greater moment in any son comes from his father, and what is secondary comes from his mother. Thus in other animals the soul is from the father, and the body from the mother. In man, of course, the rational soul does not come from the father, but is created by God; yet the power of the paternal seed operates dispositively toward the form. But that which is the greater in Christ, is the person of the Word, who is



in no way derived from the Holy Spirit. We conclude, therefore, that the Holy Spirit cannot be called the father of Christ.

## CHAPTER 224 SANCTIFICATION OF CHRIST'S MOTHER

As appears from the foregoing exposition, the Blessed Virgin Mary became the mother of God's Son by conceiving of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it was fitting that she should be adorned with the highest degree of purity, that she might be made conformable to such a Son. And so we are to believe that she was free from every stain of actual sin—not only of mortal sin but of venial sin. Such freedom from sin can pertain to none of the saints after Christ, as we know from 1 John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth.

Mary was not only free from actual sin, but she was also, by a special privilege, cleansed from original sin. She had, indeed, to be conceived with original sin, inasmuch as her conception resulted from the commingling of both sexes. For the privilege of conceiving without impairment of virginity was reserved exclusively to her who as a virgin conceived the Son of God. But the commingling of the sexes which, after the sin of our first parent, cannot take place without lust, transmits original sin to the offspring. Likewise, if Mary had been conceived without original sin, she would not have had to be redeemed by Christ, and so Christ would not be the universal redeemer of men, which detracts from His dignity. Accordingly we must hold that she was conceived with original sin, but was cleansed from it in some special way.

Some men are cleansed from original sin after their birth from the womb, as is the case with those who are sanctified in baptism. Others are reported to have been sanctified in the wombs of their mothers, in virtue of an extraordinary privilege of grace. Thus we are told with regard to Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb of you mother I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you" (Jer. 1:5). And in Luke 1:15 the angel says of John the Baptist: "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb." We cannot suppose that the favor granted to the precursor of Christ and to the prophet was denied to Christ's own mother. Therefore we believe that she was sanctified in her mother's womb, that is, before she was born.

Yet such sanctification did not precede the infusion of her soul. In that case she would never have been subject to original sin, and so would have had no need of redemption. For only a rational creature can be the subject of sin. Furthermore, the grace of sanctification is rooted primarily in the soul, and cannot extend to the body except through the soul. Hence we must believe that Mary was sanctified after the infusion of her soul.

But her sanctification was more ample than that of others who were sanctified in the wombs of their mothers. Others thus sanctified in the womb were, it is true, cleansed from original sin; but the grace of being unable to sin later on, even venially, was not granted to them. The Blessed Virgin Mary, however, was sanctified with such a wealth of grace that

thenceforth she was preserved free from all sin, and not only from mortal sin, but also from venial sin. Moreover venial sin sometimes creeps up on us unawares, owing to the fact that an inordinate motion of concupiscence or of some other passion arises prior to the advertence of the mind, yet in such a way that the first motions are called sins. Hence we conclude that the Blessed Virgin Mary never committed a venial sin, for she did not experience such inordinate motions of passion. Inordinate motions of this kind arise because the sensitive appetite, which is the subject of these passions, is not so obedient to reason as not sometimes to move toward an object outside the order of reason, or even, occasionally, against reason; and this is what engenders the sinful impulse. In the Blessed Virgin, accordingly, the sensitive appetite was rendered so subject to reason by the power of the grace which sanctified it, that it was never aroused against reason, but was always in conformity with the order of reason. Nevertheless she could experience some spontaneous movements not ordered by reason.

In our Lord Jesus Christ there was something more. In Him the lower appetite was so perfectly subject to reason that it did not move in the direction of any object except in accord with the order of reason, that is, so far as reason regulated the lower appetite or permitted it to go into action of its own accord. So far as we can judge, a characteristic pertaining to the integrity of the original state was the complete subjection of the lower powers to reason. This subjection was destroyed by the sin of our first parent, not only in himself, but in all the others who contract original sin from him. In all of these the rebellion or disobedience of the lower powers to reason, which is called concupiscence (*fomes peccati*), remains even after they have been cleansed from sin by the sacrament of grace. But such was by no means the case with Christ, according to the explanation given above.

In the Blessed Virgin Mary, however, the lower powers were not so completely subject to reason as never to experience any movement not preordained by reason. Yet they were so restrained by the power of grace that they were at no time aroused contrary to reason. Because of this we usually say that after the Blessed Virgin was sanctified concupiscence remained in her according to its substance, but that it was shackled.

## CHAPTER 225

### PERPETUAL VIRGINITY OF CHRIST'S MOTHER

If Mary was thus strengthened against every movement of sin by her first sanctification, much more did grace grow in her and much more was concupiscence weakened or even completely uprooted in her, when the Holy Spirit came upon her, according to the angel's word, to form of her the body of Christ. After she had been made the shrine of the Holy Spirit and the tabernacle of the Son of God, we may not believe that there was ever any inclination to sin in her, or that she ever experienced any pleasurable feeling of carnal concupiscence. And so we must view with revulsion the error of Helvidius who, while admitting that Christ was conceived and born of the Virgin, asserted that she later bore other sons to Joseph.

Certainly this error finds no support in Matthew's statement that Joseph "knew her not" namely, Mary, "till she brought forth her first-born Son" (Matt. 1:25); as though he knew her after she gave birth to Christ. The word "till" in this text does not signify definite time but indicates indeterminate time. Sacred Scripture frequently asserts with emphasis that something was done or not done up to a certain time, as long as the issue could remain in doubt. Thus we read in Psalm 109:1: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." There could be some doubt whether Christ would sit at the right hand of God as long as His enemies did not seem to be subject to Him; but once we know that they are, no room for doubt could remain. Similarly there could be some doubt as to whether Joseph knew Mary before the birth of God's Son. The Evangelist took pains to remove this doubt, thus giving us to understand beyond all question that she was not known after giving birth.

Nor does the fact that Christ is called Mary's first-born give any support to the error, as though she bore other sons after Him. For in scriptural usage the son before whom no other is born is called the first-born, even though no other should follow him. This is clear from the case of the first-born sons who according to the Law were consecrated to the Lord and offered to the priests.

Again, the error of Helvidius receives no support from the Gospel narrative that certain individuals are called the brethren of Christ, as though His mother had other sons. Scripture is accustomed to apply the name brethren to all who belong to the same relationship. For example, Abraham called Lot his brother, although Lot was his nephew. In the same way Mary's nephews and other relatives are called Christ's brethren, as also are the relatives of Joseph, who was reputed to be the father of Christ.

Accordingly the Creed states: "Who was born of the Virgin Mary." And, indeed, she is called a virgin without any qualification, for she remained a virgin before the birth, at the birth, and after the birth of Christ. That there was no impairment of her virginity, before and after Christ's birth, is clear from what has been said. More than that: her virginity was not violated even in the act of giving birth. Christ's body, which appeared to the disciples when the doors were closed, could by the same power come forth from the closed womb of His mother. It was not seemly that He, who was born for the purpose of restoring what was corrupt to its pristine integrity, should destroy integrity in being born.

**C. *CONTRA GENTILES*****Book IV****Chapter 45****THAT IT BECAME CHRIST TO BE BORN OF A VIRGIN**

[1] It is, of course, now plain that of necessity that man was born from a Virgin Mother without natural seed.

[2] For the seed of the man is required in human generation as an active principle by reason of the active power in it. But the active power in the generation of the body of Christ could not be a natural power, in the light of the points we have seen. For the natural power does not of a sudden bring about the entire formation of the body, it requires time for this, but the body of Christ was in the first moment of conception formed and organized as was shown. Therefore, one concludes that the generation of Christ was without natural seed.

[3] Again, the male seed, in the generation of any animal at all, attracts to itself the matter supplied by the mother, as though the power which is in the male seed intends its own fulfillment as the end of the entire generation; hence, also, when the generation is completed, the seed itself, unchanged and fulfilled, is the offspring which is born. But the human generation of Christ had as ultimate term union with the divine Person, and not the establishment of a human person or hypostasis, as is clear from the foregoing. In this generation, therefore, the active principle could not be the seed of the man; it could only be the divine power. Just as the seed of the man in the common generation of men attracts to its subsistence the matter supplied by the mother, so this same matter in the generation the Word of God has assumed into union with Himself.

[4] In like manner, of course, it was manifestly suitable that, even in the human generation of the Word of God, some spiritual property of the generation of a word should shine out. Now, a word as it proceeds from a speaker—whether conceived within or expressed without—brings no corruption to the speaker, rather, the word marks the plenitude of perfection in the speaker. It was in harmony with this that in His human generation the Word of God should be so conceived and born that the wholeness of His Mother was not impaired. And this, too, is clear: It became the Word of God, by whom all things are established and by whom all things are preserved in His wholeness, to be born so as to preserve His Mother's wholeness in every way. Therefore, suitably this generation was from a virgin.

[5] And for all that, this mode of generation detracts in nothing from the true and natural humanity of Christ, even though He was generated differently from other men. For clearly, since the divine power is infinite, as has been proved, and since through it all causes are granted the power to produce an effect, every effect whatever produced by every cause whatever can be produced by God without the assistance of that cause of the same species and nature. Then, just as the natural power which is in the human seed produces a true man who has the human species and nature, so the divine power, which gave such power to the seed, can without its power produce that effect by constituting a true man who has the human species and nature.

[6] But let someone object: a naturally generated man has a body naturally constituted from the seed of the male and what the female supplies—be that what it may; therefore, the body of Christ was not the same in nature as ours if it was not generated from the seed

of a male. To this an answer may be made in accordance with a position of Aristotle, he says that the seed of the male does not enter materially into the constitution of what is conceived; it is an active principle only, whereas the entire matter of the body is supplied by the mother. Taken thus, in respect of matter the body of Christ does not differ from ours; for our bodies also are constituted materially of that which is taken from the mother. [7] But, if one rejects the position of Aristotle just described, then the objection just described has no efficacy. For the likeness or unlikeness of things in matter is not marked off by the state of the matter in the principle of generation, but by the state of the matter already prepared as it is in the term of the generation. There is no difference in matter between air generated from earth and that from water, because, although water and earth are different in the principle of generation, they are nonetheless reduced by the generating action to one disposition. Thus, then, by the divine power, the matter taken from the woman alone can be reduced at the end of the generation to a disposition identical with that which matter has if taken simultaneously from the male and female. Hence, there will be no unlikeness by reason of diversity of matter between the body of Christ which was formed by the divine power out of matter taken from the mother alone, and our bodies which are formed by the natural power from matter, even though they are taken from both parents. Surely this is clear; the matter taken simultaneously from a man and a woman and that “slime of the earth” (Gen. 2:7) of which God formed the first man (very certainly a true man and like us in everything) differ more from one another than from the matter taken solely from the female from which the body of Christ was formed. Hence, the birth of Christ from the Virgin does not at all diminish either the truth of His humanity or His likeness to us. For, although a natural power requires a determined matter for the production of a determined effect therefrom, the divine power, the power able to produce all things from nothing, is not in its activity circumscribed within determinate matter.

[8] In the same way, that she as a virgin conceived and gave birth diminishes not at all the dignity of the Mother of Christ—so that she be not the true and natural mother of the Son of God. For, while the divine power worked, she supplied the natural matter for the generation of the body of Christ—and this alone is required on the part of the mother; but the things which in other mothers contribute to the loss of virginity belong not to the process of being a mother, but to that of being a father, in order to have the male seed arrive at the place of generation.

D. *In 1 Joannis*c. I, X, # 201

201] He says first of all: We know from our own experience that we have seen him full of grace and truth, because of his fullness we have all received. Now onefullness is that of sufficiency, by which one is able to perform acts that are meritorious and excellent, as in the case of Stephen. Again, there is a fullness of superabundance, by which the Blessed Virgin excels all the saints because of the eminence and abundance of her merits. Further, there is a fullness of efficiency and overflow, which belongs only to the man Christ as the author of grace. For although the Blessed Virgin superabounds her grace into us, it is never as authoress of grace. But grace flowed over from her soul into her body: for through the grace of the Holy Spirit, not only was the mind of the Virgin perfectly united to God by love, but her womb was supernaturally impregnated by the Holy Spirit. And so after Gabriel said, “Hail, full of grace,” he refers at once to the fullness of her womb, adding, “the Lord is with you” (Lk 1:28). And so the Evangelist, in order to show this unique fullness of efficiency and overflow in Christ, said, Of his fullness we have all received, i.e., all the apostles and patriarchs and prophets and just men who have existed, do now exist, and will exist, and even all the angels.

## 543-544

543 We should note that we can understand in two ways what is said here, namely, that God the Father did not give the Spirit to Christ in a partial way. We can understand it as applying to Christ as God, and, in another way, as applying to Christ as man. Something is given to someone in order that he may have it: and it is appropriate to Christ to have the Spirit, both as God and as man. And so he has the Holy Spirit with respect to both. As man, Christ has the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me” (Is 6 1:1), namely, as man. But as God, he has the Holy Spirit only as manifesting himself, inasmuch as the Spirit proceeds from him: “He will give glory to me,” that is, make known, “because he will have received from me,” as is said below (16:14).

Therefore, both as God and as man, Christ has the Holy Spirit beyond measure. For God the Father is said to give the Holy Spirit without measure to Christ as God, because he gives to Christ the power and might to bring forth (*spirandi*) the Holy Spirit, who, since he is infinite, was infinitely given to him by the Father: for the Father gives it just as he himself has it, so that the Holy Spirit proceeds from him as much as from the Son. And he gave him this by an everlasting generation. Similarly, Christ as man has the Holy Spirit without measure, for the Holy Spirit is given to different men in differing degrees, because grace is given to each “by measure” [cf., e.g., Mk 4:24; Mt 7:2]. But Christ as man did not receive a certain amount of grace; and so he did not receive the Holy Spirit in any limited degree.

544 It should be noted, however, that there are three kinds of grace in Christ: the grace of [the hypostatic] union, the grace of a singular person, which is habitual, and the grace of

headship, which animates all the members. And Christ received each of these graces without measure.

The grace of union, which is not habitual grace, but a certain gratuitous gift, is given to Christ in order that in his human nature he be the true Son of God, not by participation, but by nature, insofar as the human nature of Christ is united to the Son of God in person. This union is called a grace because he had it without any preceding merits. Now the divine nature is infinite; hence from that union he received an infinite gift. Thus it was not by degree or measure that he received the Holy Spirit, i.e., the gift and grace of union which, as gratuitous, is attributed to the Holy Spirit.

His grace is termed habitual insofar as the soul of Christ was full of grace and wisdom: “the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (above 1:14). We might wonder if Christ did receive this grace without measure. For since such grace is a created gift, we must admit that it has a finite essence. Therefore, as far as its essence is concerned, since it is something created, this habitual grace was finite. Yet Christ is not said to have received this in a limited degree for three reasons.

First, because of the one who is receiving the grace. For it is plain that each thing’s nature has a finite capacity, because even though one might receive an infinite good by knowing, loving and enjoying it, nevertheless one receives it by enjoying it in a finite way. Further, each creature has, according to its species and nature, a finite amount of capacity. But this does not make it impossible for the divine power to make another creature possessing a greater capacity; but then such a creature would not be of a nature which is specifically the same, just as when one is added to three, there is another species of number. Therefore, when some nature is not given as much of the divine goodness as its natural capacity is able to contain, then it is seen to be given to it by measure; but when its total natural capacity is filled, it is not given to it by measure, because even though there is a measure on the part of the one receiving, there is none on the part of the one giving, who is prepared to give all. Thus, if someone takes a pail to a river, he sees water present without measure, although he takes the water by measure on account of the limited dimensions of the pail. Thus, the habitual grace of Christ is indeed finite according to its essence, but it is said to be given in an infinite way and not by measure or partially, because as much was given to him as created nature was able to hold.

Secondly, Christ did not receive habitual grace in a limited way by considering the gift which is received. For every form or act, considered in its very nature, is not finite in the way in which it is made finite by the subject in which it is received. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent it from being finite in its essence, insofar as its existence (*esse*) is received in some subject. For that is infinite according to its essence which has the entire fullness of being (*essendi*): and this is true of God alone, who is the supreme *esse*. But if we consider some “spiritual” form as not existing in a subject, for example, whiteness or color, it would not be infinite in essence, because its essence would be confined to some genus or species; nevertheless it would still possess the entire fullness of that species. Thus, considering the nature of the species, it would be without limit or measure, since it would have everything that can pertain to that species. But if whiteness or color should be

received into some subject, it does not always have everything that pertains necessarily and always to the nature of this form, but only when the subject has it as perfectly as it is capable of being possessed, i.e., when the way the subject possesses it is equivalent to the power of the thing possessed. Thus, Christ's habitual grace was finite according to its essence; yet it is said to have been in him without a limit or measure because he received everything that could pertain to the nature of grace. Others, however, do not receive all this, but one receives in one way, and another in another way: "There are different graces"

The third reason for saying that the habitual grace of Christ was not received in a limited way is based on its cause. For an effect is in some way present in its cause. Therefore, if someone has an infinite power to produce something, he is said to have what can be produced without measure and, in a way, infinitely. For example, if someone has a fountain which could produce an infinite amount of water, he would be said to have water in an infinite way and without measure. Thus, the soul of Christ has infinite grace and grace without measure from the fact that he has united to himself the Word, which is the infinite and unfailing source of the entire emanation of all created things.

From what has been said, it is clear that the grace of Christ which is called capital grace, insofar as he is head of the Church, is infinite in its influence. For from the fact that he possessed that from which the gifts of the Spirit could flow out without measure, he received the power to pour them out without measure, so that the grace of Christ is sufficient not merely for the salvation of some men, but for all the people of the entire world: "He is the offering for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the entire world" ( 1 Jn 2:2), and even for many worlds, if they existed.

545 Christ also had the ability appropriate for declaring divine truth, because all things are in his power; hence he says, The Father loves the Son, and has put everything into his hands. This can refer to Christ both as man and as God, but in different ways. If it refers to Christ according to his divine nature, then loves does not indicate a principle but a sign: for we cannot say that the Father gives all things to the Son because he loves him. There are two reasons for this. First, because to love is an act of the will; but to give a nature to the Son is to generate him. Therefore, if the Father gave a nature to the Son by his will, the will of the Father would be the principle of the generation of the Son; and then it would follow that the Father generated the Son by will, and not by nature; and this is the Arian heresy.

Secondly, because the love of the Father for the Son is the Holy Spirit. So, if the love of the Father for the Son were the reason why the Father put everything into his hands, it would follow that the Holy Spirit would be the principle of the generation of the Son; and this is not acceptable. Therefore, we should say that loves implies only a sign. As if to say: The perfect love with which the Father loves the Son, is a sign that the Father has put everything into his hands, i.e., everything which the Father has: "All things have been given to me by my Father (Mt 11:27); "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands" (below 13:3).

But if loves refers to Christ as man, then it implies the notion of a principle, so that the Father is said to have put everything into the hands of the Son, everything, that is, that is in heaven and on earth: "All authority has been given to me, in heaven and on earth," as



he says in Matthew (28:18); “He has appointed him [the Son] the heir of all things” (Heb 1:2). And the reason why the Father gives to the Son is because he loves the Son; hence he says, The Father loves the Son, for the Father’s love is the reason for creating each creature: “You love everything which exists, and hate nothing which you have made” (Wis 11:25). Concerning his love for the Son we read in Matthew (3:17): “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”; “He has brought us into the kingdom of the Son of his love,” that is, i.e., of his beloved Son (Col 1:13).

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