

Mary in the Second Vatican Council and After

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INTRODUCTION

Beginning from the New Testament era one could trace out the existence of Marian devotion in the Church. However, it gained momentum only in the fifth century when Mary was announced as *Theotokos*. From then on, there emerged an excessive Marian devotion. In spite of the reaction by the Protestant brethren to it, from the time of the Council of Trent to the time prior to the Second Vatican Council, there emerged a one-sided Mariology that spoke of Mary in parallel with Christ. It is the Second Vatican Council which cautioned the excessive Marian devotion that arose in the tradition of the Church. With the Second Vatican Council we witness a wave of change in Marian theology and devotions. The Second Vatican Council saw Mary no more in parallel with Christ; rather it saw her as a pre-eminent member of the Church.

THE TENSION BETWEEN LITURGICAL AND MARIAN MOVEMENTS

The teaching of the Second Vatican Council on Mary did not emerge spontaneously. The Council witnessed strong intellectual debates before it came out with the final teaching. Hence before our entry into the teaching

of the Council itself, we will discuss the situation that was prevalent before the Second Vatican Council.

From the end of the First World War to the Second Vatican Council, there were two major spiritual movements: a Marian movement, which grew steadily after the Marian apparitions of the mid-1800s and a liturgical movement that grew during the inter-war years. In course of time, the ecumenical and biblical movements joined with the liturgical movement. These Marian and liturgical movements had opposing attitudes and theological orientations: "The liturgical movement tended to characterise its own piety as "objective" and sacramental, to which the strong emphasis on the subjective and personal in the Marian movement offered a striking contrast."¹ The liturgical movement sought a piety that was intimately connected with the contents of the Bible, or at the least, documents of the ancient Church; whereas the Marian movement sought as its basis, apparitions of Mary, and it was much more heavily influenced by traditions stemming from the Middle Ages to the present time. While the liturgical movement stressed the theocentric character of Christian prayer, addressed "through Christ to the Father", the Marian movement, with its title *per Mariam ad Jesum* (through Mary to Jesus), seems to have emphasized a different idea of mediation, by a kind of lingering with Jesus and Mary, that pushed the classical Trinitarian reference into the background.²

During the time of the Second Vatican Council the tension between these Marian and liturgical movements was apparent, including the issue of the integration of Mariology into ecclesiology. Cardinal Francisci König, Archbishop of Vienna who advocated the integration of the Marian text into the 'Document on the Church' gave priority to liturgical-biblical piety. On the other hand, Cardinal Santos Rufini Archbishop of Manila, representing the Marian movement, advocated the independent Marian document. Thus, during the Second Vatican Council, a large group of Council Fathers belonging

to the Marian movement wanted an entirely new document on Mary more in line with the teaching that emerged in the tradition, which is somewhat distanced from Scripture. They even expected that the Council could produce the definition on the Mediation of Mary and a dogmatic statement on Mary as the Co-redeemer. Others, belonging to the liturgical movement, opposed the move and expressed their intentions to include the reflections on Mary within the Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*). While some spoke of this renewal, as a long overdue and necessary intervention, some opposed it as betrayal of the place of Mary within God's plan of salvation.³

THE DEBATE BETWEEN FRANCISCI KÖNIG AND SANTOS RUFINI

The ante-preparatory period of the Second Vatican Council took place from 17 May 1959 to 14 November 1960. Approximately 2000 episcopal *Vota* received invitation to give their opinions on the different issues to be discussed in the Council. Among them 600 stated that the Council had to say something about Mary – among the 600, slightly more than 400 were in favour of a new Marian definition, and approximately 100 were against any new definition and said that the Council could even keep silence on the issue of Mary. Another 1400 were silent on the issue of Mary.⁴ Based on the reaction of the Bishops, the Theological Commission prepared its text on Mary for discussion. The first draft on Mary that was presented to the bishops at the commencement of the Second Vatican Council was entitled *De beata Maria Virgine, Matre Dei et Matre hominum*. But then the topic on Mary was not discussed in the First Session. When it was presented for discussion in the Second Session, the draft remained the same with a modified title, *De beata Maria Virgine Matre Ecclesiae*.⁵

In the Council on 24 October 1963 Cardinal Santos Rufini spoke in favour of a separate document on Mary. He argued that Mariology couldn't

be reduced to ecclesiology alone as it was related to Christology and soteriology. Besides he wanted to place the chapter on Mary next to the chapter on 'the Church as mystery in the divine plan' so that the role of Mary could easily be associated with that of the Trinity.⁶ Desiring to place Mary at the centre of the Church, Santos opined that the incorporation of the Marian treatise within the schema of the Church would be an incomplete explanation, for it would be impossible to give a full treatment of the doctrines of the Blessed Mary. If the doctrinal statement was to be merely a chapter in the *Constitution on the Church*, it could be "dangerously prolix when compared to the section on the Trinity". The subject matter found in *the Constitution on the Church*, namely the laity, the hierarchical structure of the Church, the call to holiness in the Church and the religious professions of priests, nuns and monks are not parallel to the subject of Mary, as the call to holiness of Mary as well as her belonging to the people of God are different in nature from calls of the laity and the clergy. The faithful could see this incorporation as a reduction and a loss of Mary. Hence he said that the entirety of Catholic doctrines ought to be explained, without reservations, to the Separated Brethren or to the Faithful. Failing to do so would lead to a Mariology that is "ecclesio-typical" rather than "Christo-typical" and this shift might lead to divisiveness in the Church too. In addition, such incorporation would pave the way for the complete revision of the document on the Church, as it deals with only the Pilgrim Church.⁷ Moreover, he placed his argument for the doctrinal recognition of the unique participation of Mary in redemption. Hence, many fathers at the Council from Italy, Spain and Latin-American countries who were led by Cardinal Ottaviani of the Vatican Holy Office and Cardinal Santos circulated that "a vote for insertion (of the schema on Mary into the schema on the Church (rather than a vote for a separate Marian tract) was a vote against the Blessed Virgin".⁸

On the other hand Cardinal Francisci König spoke in favour of treating Mariology in the Council's teaching in *the Constitution on the Church*. He explained the Church as an active instrument in the process of salvation and said "Mary could be presented as the one who in the most sublime way and as a result of His grace cooperates with Christ in bringing about and expanding the work of salvation."⁹ König who advocated the incorporation of the Marian treatise within the *Constitution on the Church* placed four kinds of reasons in his favour. First of all theologically speaking, he said that the central theme of the Second Vatican Council was the Church, and placing Mary in association with the Church, would be very fitting, which would avoid all the Marian excesses of the past and the objections against an excessively institutional conception of the Church. Failing to do so would give the impression that the Council intended to create new Marian doctrines, which was not part of the conciliar agenda. Moreover, he said that this incorporation did not lead to lessening of the veneration of Mary or concealment of the teaching about Mary; rather it would be an explanation that was consistent with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. He also pointed out the address of Paul VI on 11 October 1958, on the occasion of the Marian Congress at Lourdes, where he made clear that the "incorporation did not mean reticence about Mary but rather represented a position" of the Council.¹⁰ Besides, since the Pilgrim Church is united to the Heavenly Church, ecclesiology must be seen as closely related to eschatology. In this regard, by placing Mary in the schema on the Church, we can see her as the pre-eminent member of the People of God in the Heavenly Church too. Moreover, this integration of Mariology with ecclesiology will make clear her role that is distinct from the role of Christ, the sole Mediator of redemption. Thus "Mary would be seen more clearly as the Archetype or most excellent Exemplar of receptive righteousness, as the first fruits of her Son's redemption in the Church."¹¹

Secondly, speaking historically, König said that Mary had attained the doctrinal level solely due to the mediation of the Mother Church. Thirdly, on the pastoral level, König invited the faithful to purify their devotion to Mary and focus on what was essential to it. Finally, reasoning from the ecumenical perspective, he said that an “ecclesio-typical Mariology made possible a convergence with both the Oriental and Protestant traditions”.¹² The German-speaking bishops too, led by Cardinal Frings, said that a chapter could be included on Mary within *Lumen Gentium* rather than writing a separate document on her.¹³ Thus the bishops who proposed to integrate the teaching on Mary into the schema on the Church wanted “to show that Catholic Marian teaching is part of the Good News of salvation and that the special graces accorded to the Blessed Virgin Mary belong to the *mirabilia Dei*, the wonderful works of God, promising redemption and reconciliation of mankind”.¹⁴

Karl Rahner considered that this clash over the document on Mary among the bishops during the time of the Second Vatican Council was due to the “differing methodological approach, as those more enthusiastic for Marian privileges drew heavily on papal teaching as a source, while those who wished a more tempered approach engaged in the return to Scriptural and patristic sources”.¹⁵ On 29 October 1963 by a narrow majority vote of 1,114 against 1,074, the Council Fathers decided to reject the proposal of a separate document on Mary.¹⁶ Hence, between the two groups of men with the highest calibre, the Council Fathers shaped by the biblical and liturgical movements won the battle. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger called this narrow outcome of the vote “an intellectual watershed” decision.¹⁷ In November 1963 a special commission consisting of four bishops was appointed to come out with a new text that would get the approval of all the Council Fathers. They were asked to submit the text before the end of the second session. Nevertheless, that was not possible. During the period between the second

and the third sessions, again the task was entrusted to Mgr G. Philips of Louvain and Fr. C. Balic who made the necessary changes taking into consideration the views of both groups. There were five successive drafts by them until 7 March 1964. Once it was submitted to the Theological Commission, it too made some more amendments and presented the new draft entitled *De beata Maria Virgine Deipara in Mystero Christi et Ecclesiae*. The document was taken up for discussion at the beginning of the third session, on 16 and 17 September 1964. There were thirty-three interventions during the debate on this document, and the Theological Commission made some more amendments based on the debate and presented it to the Council on 29 October 1964. This time when the document went for voting, 1559 gave an approval; 521 gave a qualified approval and 10 rejected the document. Then the document was re-worked taking into consideration the views of those who gave a qualified approval. The present form of Marian teaching in the eighth chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, “*The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church*”, was approved by a vote of 2096 to 23 on 19 November 1964. The Pope promulgated this schema on Mary on 21 November (the memorial of the Presentation of Mary is celebrated on 21 November).¹⁸ Thus the text finally avoided “the Scylla and Charybdis of Marian maximalism and Marian minimalism.”¹⁹ Yves Congar labelled this move of the doctrinal commission on the place of Mary as a “return-to-sources”.²⁰

THE TEACHING OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL ON MARY

The Second Vatican Council’s emphasis in general was on a Christology that started “from below” and it reflected on the Marian teaching too that led to a new conception of the role of Mary. When we analyze the Marian teaching of the Council, we realize that the Marian approach in the documents

of the Second Vatican Council was “essentially biblical, christocentric, ecclesiological, ecumenical and pastoral”.²¹ There was more emphasis on Scripture, namely, 3 references from the Old Testament and 14 from the New Testament. Thus we can say that the teaching of the Second Vatican Council was primarily biblical,²² compared to the previous teaching of the Church on Mary that was largely based on the teachings of the tradition. Secondly, the Council spoke of Mariology as a branch of Christology. The Council has developed the entire treatise on Mary in a broader framework of the history of salvation; it has emphasized the different indispensable functions of Mary in the context of the divine plan of salvation.²³ Here too the Council saw Mary’s predestination to grace as something that rooted in God’s salvific plan, and all her exaltation in the life of the Church as something that was only due to the merits of her Son.

Thirdly, the Council linked Mariology to ecclesiology. Yves Congar, the French ecumenist and ecclesiologist, in his comment on the preposition “in” of the title of chapter 8 in *Lumen Gentium* (The Blessed Virgin Mary, God-Bearer, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church) has pointed out that this preposition explains clearly the Roman Catholic teaching on the role of Mary in our redemption. The preposition ‘in’ “emphasizes that Mary is very much a part of the mystery of the Church as a redeemed communion, as her Son’s Body won by his redemptive activity”.²⁴ In this regard the Council has portrayed Mary as standing with the Church facing Jesus in receiving redemption. This approach paved the way to seeing Mary, as united with us in the body of Christ, the Church, namely the Christian community, rather than apart from it.²⁵ Thus the Council has moved away “from a “privilege-centered” Mariology toward one that is more “sharing-oriented.”²⁶ The Council has affirmed that the doctrine concerning Mary was never about her as an individual, but always as one, who expressed a truth about the whole Church, as uniquely realised in her person. It has placed Mary “on

the human side of the human/divine equation, not as occupying a place *between* Jesus and humankind – not quite divine but somehow more than human.”²⁷ In this way the Second Vatican Council was able to overcome the Post-Tridentine trend in Mariology and mark the beginning of a real integration of Mariology and ecclesiology.²⁸

To portray the close link between Mariology and ecclesiology, the Council also spoke of Mary as the pre-eminent member of the Church, providing us with an outstanding model of discipleship, for she models for us the reception of God’s word in faith. It spoke of Mary as a woman who actively and freely responded to the invitation of God: “... a pre-eminent and altogether singular member of the Church, and as the Church’s model and excellent exemplar in faith and charity” (*Lumen Gentium*, 53). Moreover, as the pre-eminent member of the Church, the Council has seen Mary as a mother to us in the order of grace, who exercises an important role by interceding for us. Nevertheless the Council has made it clear that the divine motherhood²⁹ that Mary exercises towards us is a gift of grace to her, and so the unique role of Mary does not obscure nor detract in any way from the absolute nature of the one mediator, Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, the Second Vatican Council’s teaching on Mary was certainly a milestone in the ecumenical perspective. On 21 November 1964 the Second Vatican Council Documents on *the Church* and on *Ecumenism* were promulgated. The promulgation of these two documents on the same date was not an accidental one, “since we must look to the former for the latter’s theological foundation”.³⁰ The stress on the sacramental communion of the faithful in the document on the Church became a theological foundation for the document on Ecumenism. Besides this reason, we believe that the last chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, namely the teaching on Mary was also written in an ecumenical spirit. In an ecumenical spirit we see the Council recognizing joyfully the due honour given to Mary by the Eastern Orthodox Churches,

“who with ardent devotion and devout mind concur in reverencing the mother of God, ever virgin” (*Lumen Gentium*, 69). Besides, the Council avoided titles such as *Co-redemptrix* or *Dispensatrix* of graces to Mary and retained only the term *Mediatrix*: “The blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of advocate, helper, benefactress and *mediatrix*. This, however, must be understood in such a way that it takes away nothing from the dignity and power of Christ the one mediator, and adds nothing to this” (*Lumen Gentium*, 62). Nevertheless, the teaching of the Council has not solved all the ecumenical differences. The Doctrinal Commission of the Council for some doctrinal, ecumenical and pastoral reasons purposefully discarded the title of Mary as “Mother of the Church” in the document.³¹ Nevertheless, Paul VI, at the end of the third session, in November 1964, announced Mary to be “the Mother of the Church”.³² So a number of the ecumenically oriented theologians, along with some Protestant observers criticized the Pope as they found this announcement to be beyond the teaching of the Council.³³ Hence most of the Protestant observers had to leave the Council “totally disillusioned and dumbfounded”.³⁴

Finally on the pastoral level, the Second Vatican Council admitted the popular Marian devotions: “The Church has endorsed many forms of piety toward the Mother of God. These forms have varied according to the circumstances of time and place and have reflected the diversity of native characteristics and temperament among the faithful” (*Lumen Gentium*, 66). However, the Second Vatican Council also warned the faithful to be moderate in the use of Marian statues. In chapter seven of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* we read that the statues (of Mary and the saints) are to be minimised to more “moderate” quantities and displayed more discreetly (to “reflect right order”) so that they do not “create confusion” among Christians, both Catholics and “separated brethren”.

To sum up the Marian teaching of the Second Vatican Council, we believe that the following parable will be a fitting one. Agnelo Gracias, auxiliary bishop of Mumbai in India, while describing the Conciliar teaching on Mary as the return of Mary to the rightful place in the mystery of Christ and of the Church, narrated the following parable that he came across once. In an ancient shrine, there was a much venerated statue of Our Lady. Over the centuries, Christian piety had covered the statue with a beautiful bell-shaped robe, so much so that the statue was hardly visible. As time went on, jewels and rubies, the gifts of Christian devotees, were affixed to the robe, so that after some years, the robe itself was hardly visible! After the Council, the one in charge of the sanctuary took off the jewels and rubies and sold them so that the money could be used for the poor. They did the same with the robe. Some decried it as a sacrilegious despoliation. But it was really a *restoration of the statue to its pristine beauty*.³⁵

Thus we could say that the Council took a new direction in Marian teaching. DeFiores has pointed out the new direction of the Second Vatican Council as representing “a movement away from a deductive type of Mariology that was centered on Mary and her privileges, (and) had a tendency to foster Marian titles and dogmas, and was close to dialogue with our brothers (and sisters) of the Reform tradition.”³⁶ Similarly, commenting on the outcome of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on Mary, the *Groupe de Dombes* document observed, “The Council thus moved from a Mariology that was autonomous and dangerously cut off from the rest of theology, to a teaching on Mary that was integrated with theology in its entirety and, in this sense, functional.” (*Dombes*. 101)³⁷

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE COUNCIL ON MARIAN TEACHINGS

Though the Marian teaching of the Second Vatican Council was hailed as a major breakthrough, some theologians have underlined some of its limitations. First of all we can say that the Second Vatican Council did not come out with a Marian theology that responds to the challenges of the modern world, namely the problems of daily life and the aspirations of human beings, (especially women) which was one of the prime concerns of the Council.³⁸ Hence this chapter on Mary can be seen as “an exercise in theological abstraction.”³⁹ Secondly, the main concern of the Council was to make Marian devotion subordinate to that of Jesus and to warn the faithful in the context of the prevailing emotional devotion and excessive rationalism (*Lumen Gentium*, 66-67). While the Council was critical of the superstitions on Marian devotions, it did not clearly spell out positively how Marian devotions could be practiced in a constructive way.⁴⁰ Thirdly, the language found in this section on Mary is “not biblical but pseudo-scholastic.”⁴¹ Besides, there was a tendency in the Council to depend more on the “already achieved systematically constructed framework” and “over-valuing of texts.” As a result, we see very little scope for the historical outlook of the texts.⁴² Fourthly, the theme *Maria-Ecclesia*, which was common in the patristic writings, had again found some space in the Second Vatican Council. Nevertheless, this theme had not been given sufficient place as it deserved.⁴³ Fifthly, Hans Urs von Balthasar, in describing the post-Conciliar Church as becoming an apparatus of masculine intellectuality, has remarked thus:

Without Mariology, Christianity is in danger of becoming inhuman. The Church becomes functionalistic, without soul, a hectic enterprise without resting place, alienated by over-planning. Because in this male-masculine world one new ideology replaces another, everything becomes polemical, critical, bitter, humorless, and ultimately boring. People desert such a Church in droves.⁴⁴

Finally, when we look at the teaching on Mary from an ecumenical perspective, even after the meeting of the Council, there has been still some kind of suspicion on the part of Protestant theologians about the Roman Catholic teaching on Mary. They pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church has not fully given up its Marian teaching of the past. For example, Karl Barth, in his interpretation of the Mariology of the Second Vatican Council, has pointed out that it was only “a continuation of the Roman heresy on “cooperating grace””.⁴⁵ Though theologians point out some of these limitations, we need to observe that there were not many new materials to the fathers of the Second Vatican Council to take Mariology into a radically new direction. Nevertheless, with all its limitations, we still believe that the Second Vatican Council moved Marian teaching into a new direction. It was only a beginning, and the Roman Catholic Church needs to march further in the same spirit.

MARY IN THE POST-CONCILIAR PERIOD

It is true that after the Second Vatican Council, many elements affected Mariology positively:

- 1) *liturgical reforms* which reduced a number of Marian feasts;
- 2) *demythologization* which enabled us to distinguish between theological truth and historical truth;
- 3) *renewed pneumatology* which clarifies Mary's role in salvation history;
- 4) *Liberation theology* in which Mary becomes the spokesperson for the poor and oppressed, understanding *Magnificat* from their perspective;
- 5) *Ecumenism* which calls for a more precise understanding of Mary in the sources of revelation, identifying more exactly the theological basis of Marian piety;
- 6) *Feminism and women's place* to which Mariology can bring vision and inspiration.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, we should note that as a consequence of the new direction of the Marian teaching of the Second Vatican Council, in the Post-Conciliar decade (1964-1974) there was also a dearth of theological writing on Mary and reduction of popular devotion to Mary.⁴⁷ Hence DeFiores, a Mariological expert, has termed this decade “the decade without Mary.”⁴⁸ Besides the impact of the Council’s teaching we can point out other reasons for the diminishment of Marian devotions. Heribert Mühlen attributed the crisis of Marian devotion to something to do with the pneumatological crisis. He pointed out that after the Council, people redirected their attention from Mary to the Holy Spirit, which led to the diminishment of Marian devotion.⁴⁹ Another factor that diminished the Marian devotion was a cultural factor. Many Marian teachings and devotions that were very common in the pre-Vatican II period were no more relevant to the new cultural realities, where women sought equality with men in all realms.⁵⁰ Besides, the feminist movement which believed that Marian devotion contributed a lot to the oppression of women, led also to “Mary’s temporary sabbatical from church interest”.⁵¹ In this regard, Karl Rahner, in the light of the decline of devotion to Mary after the Second Vatican Council, has suggested that women theologians should come forward to develop a renewed theology of Mary, while in the previous tradition, the voice of women was conspicuously silent.⁵² The silence on Mary in the Church lasted just for a decade. Thereafter we can find a number of encyclicals emerging from the Church which once again brought Mary into the mainstream of the Church.

All the encyclicals of the Roman Catholic Church that were written after the Second Vatican Council followed the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. They promoted ecumenical dialogue on Marian issues with other Christian Churches, and stressed a Mariology that was Christological and ecclesiological. They painted a biblical portrait of Mary rather than seeking some “proof texts” in explaining the Marian dogmas.⁵³ In 1967 Pope Paul

VI wrote the encyclical *Signum Magnum* in which he spoke of Mary as a “sign of unity ... among all Christians” and as the model for the entire Church. In this encyclical he also spoke of Mary as *Theotokos* and as a “New Eve”.⁵⁴ The exhortation of Paul VI on 2nd February 1974 on *The Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary (Marialis Cultus)* insisted that Mariology ought to be seen as an expression of Christology: ‘in the Virgin Mary everything is relative to Christ and depended upon him’ (*Marialis Cultus* 25). It also offered some “hermeneutical guidelines to prevent abuses and to contribute to a genuine Mariology”.⁵⁵ This encyclical suggested four concrete guidelines for the renewal of Marian devotion⁵⁶: first, Marian devotion, like every other form of worship, should have a ‘biblical imprint’, and Marian devotion should reflect the fundamental Christian message; (*Marialis Cultus* 30) second, Marian devotion in no way should replace or merge with the liturgy, instead it should harmonize with the liturgy; third, avoiding ‘high’ Mariology, Marian devotions should be ecumenically sensitive; fourth, the images of Mary that point to a restricted and passive role for women are no more applicable to women in this changed situation:

The picture of the Blessed Virgin presented in a certain type of devotional literature cannot easily be reconciled with today’s life style, especially with the way women live today. In the home, women’s equality and co-responsibility with man in the running of the family are being justly recognized by laws and the evolutions of customs. In the sphere of politics women have in many countries gained a position in public life equal to that of men. In the social field women are at work in a whole range of different employments, getting further away every day from the restricted surroundings of the home. In the cultural field new possibilities are opening up for women in scientific research and intellectual activities (*Marialis Cultus* 34).

Thus he said that the present status of women, namely the historical and cultural elements of this time, should also reflect in the Marian devotion: "Certain practices of piety that not long ago seemed suitable for expressing the religious sentiment of individuals and of Christian communities seem today inadequate or unsuitable because they are linked with social and cultural patterns of the past." (*Introduction*) In this regard he says that the oppression that women undergo should become the root of Marian devotion today.

Echoing the trend of that time and incorporating feminist concerns of that time, Pope John Paul II wrote on 15 August 1988 in the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*:

The modern woman will note that Mary of Nazareth, while completely devoted to the will of God, was far from being a timidly submissive woman or one whose piety was repellent to others; on the contrary, she was a woman who did not hesitate to proclaim that God vindicates the humble and the oppressed, and removes powerful people of this world from their privileged positions (cf. Lk 1: 51-53). The modern woman will recognise in Mary, who 'stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord', a woman of strength ... (*Mulieris Dignitatem* 37).

In the same encyclical, highlighting Christian unity, he also insisted that the "Marian profile" of the Church was more fundamental for the unity of the Church than the "Petrine principle" (*Mulieris Dignitatem* 55). Again, in the Marian year of 1987-1988, he spoke of the need for an ecumenical dialogue on Mary:

Christians know that their unity will be truly rediscovered, only if it is based on the unity of their faith. They must resolve considerable discrepancies of the doctrine concerning the mystery and ministry of the Church, and sometimes also concerning the role of Mary in the work of salvation (*Redemptoris Mater* 31).⁵⁷

In the encyclical *That All may be One* in the year 1995, he listed five areas that were in need of study in view of attaining true consensus of faith. One among them was “the Virgin Mary, as Mother of God and Icon of the Church, the spiritual mother who intercedes for Christ’s disciples and for all humanity” (*Ut Unum Sint* 79).⁵⁸ Besides, in an ecumenical spirit, in the year 2002, he proposed five new “mysteries of Light” in his encyclical *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*. He explained clearly how the prayer of the rosary is purely a “christocentric prayer” (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae* 1).⁵⁹ In short, all the encyclicals followed up the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. Nevertheless there have also been attempts to restore the Marian piety of the pre-Conciliar time.

CONCLUSION

Though the Second Vatican Council paved a new direction in Marian theology, there still exist two traditions in the contemporary Marian theology: minimalists and maximalists. The minimalists focus their attention on “Mary and her role to (1) what can be said about Miriam of Nazareth historically, (2) what the faith-interpretation of the Scriptures says about her and (3) what the faith tradition draws from the biblical witness”.⁶⁰ The maximalists are of the view that if Mary is seen only from “the historical, cultural accretions” that would be “too reductionistic”. Hence they insist on the need of “going beyond the scriptural sources”.⁶¹ Thus they insist that tradition of the Church ought also to be given importance. Similar to these two trends, we have two kinds of Marian piety too: “professional piety” and “popular piety”. Professional piety involves the scholarly scientific research and popular piety involves all devotional practices, prayers, songs, etc.⁶² Just as there is abundant literature on Mary in recent decades, there are also many popular pieties directed to Mary. For example, it is said that the continent of

Latin America is more “Marian” than “Christian”. Besides the many “white virgins,” there are also many “black virgins” (*Virgenes indias*) – like the *Virgin de Guadalupe* or the *Virgen del Valle*.⁶³ Similarly, in India, one can encounter a variety of popular Marian devotions such as private prayers, novenas, fasts and pilgrimages. These are “personal, familial and communitarian” in nature and emerge from “the expression of a *lived experience*” of the people.⁶⁴ Hence there are many sanctuaries dedicated to Mary in India: Our Lady of Good Health at Vailankanni, Our Lady of Good Health at Bangalore, Our Lady of Good Voyage at Bandel, Mount Mary at Bandra, etc. Besides, Marian apparitions have largely contributed for the increase in popular piety. For example, Medjugorje, a small village in Bosnia-Hercegovina of the reported apparitions of Mary to two boys and three girls in 1981 has become one of the most popular pilgrimage centres in the world.⁶⁵ Besides this place, there are many other Marian pilgrimage centres where people go in thousands.

The people who have been emphasizing more the popular piety, at the beginning of this new millennium, insisted that pope John Paul II should announce, by dogmatic definitions, Mary as *Mediatrix*, *Co-redemptrix*, and *Advocate*.⁶⁶ The Marian movement known as *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici*⁶⁷ (*Voice of the People for Mary the Mediatrix*) made special efforts in this regard. Since the mid-1990s it mobilised from 155 countries around six million Catholics to petition the Vatican to declare the three titles of Mary that emerged in the tradition as “articles of faith”, namely Advocate for the people, Mediator of God, and Co-redeemer (not equal to Christ but uniquely *with* him).⁶⁸ In response, the Holy See established a theological commission of the Pontifical International Marian Academy, consisting of fifteen Mariologists and five more theologians belonging to other Christian Churches – an Anglican, a Lutheran, and three Orthodox – and asked them to explore the possibilities of these three Marian titles. The members of the

Congress were not in favour of the dogmatic definitions, as they might “depart from the theological path followed by the Second Vatican Council”.⁶⁹ The Congress also pointed out the avoidance of the title “*Co-redemptrix*” and the restrained use of the titles “*Mediatrix*” and “*Advocate*” (*Lumen Gentium* 62) in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. It suggested that these titles “are in need of further theological investigations in a new Trinitarian, ecclesiological and anthropological perspective”.⁷⁰ Moreover, the commission pointed out that it would be distasteful to Protestants and Eastern Orthodox.⁷¹ In August 1998 the Pontifical Marianum College in Rome too, organised a discussion on the request of the *Vox Populi* movement. At the end of the meeting they said that the proposed dogmatic definition was unnecessary as the doctrine of the cooperation of Mary in the work of salvation is already taught in the Church.⁷² As a result the Pope made no further dogmatic announcements on Mary.

Reflecting more on the professional piety, in the Marian year 1987-1988, in contrast to the litany, which is being recited for many centuries, *Pax Christi* came out with a new “Litany of Mary of Nazareth” that called Mary “Mother of the homeless – widowed mother – unwed mother – mother of a political prisoner – oppressed woman – liberator of the oppressed – seeker of sanctuary – first disciple ...”⁷³ Hence these two trends are still very common in the Catholic Church, and the discussion with regard to the proper place of Mary in the Roman Catholic Church is still very sensitive in theological discussions and in devotional practices.

(Endnotes)

¹Joseph Ratzinger, “The Place of Marian Doctrine and Piety,” *Communio* 30 (2003), 148.

²Ratzinger, “The Place of Marian Doctrine and Piety,” 148.

³Anthony J. Tambasco, *What Are They Saying about Mary?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 3; Donal Flanagan, “The Church and Our Mary,” in *The Evolving Church*, ed. Donal Flanagan (Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son Ltd, 1966), 144.

⁴Flanagan, "The Church and Our Mary," 150.

⁵George H. Tavard, *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996), 202.

⁶Frederick M. Jelly, "Mary in Theology and Piety since Vatican II," *Dialog* 31 (1992), 245-246; Carl J. Peter, "The Saints and Mary in the Eschatology of the Second Vatican Council," in *The One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VIII*, ed. H. George Anderson, J. Francis Stafford, and Joseph A. Burgess (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1992), 296.

⁷Alberto Melloni, "The Beginning of the Second Period: The Great Debate on the Church," in *History of Vatican II*, ed. Joseph A. Komonchak (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 96.

⁸Robert Faricy, *The Blessed Virgin Mary in Vatican II: Twenty Years Later* (Surrey: The Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1984), 2.

⁹Peter, "The Saints and Mary," 296; Jelly, "Mary in Theology," 245-246.

¹⁰Already in this Marian Congress, which discussed the association of Mary with Christ, one could see the traces of the future Mariological trend. See, Flanagan, "The Church and Our Mary," 148-149.

¹¹Jelly, "Mary in Theology," 246.

¹²Melloni, "The Beginning of the Second Period," 96-97.

¹³Cecily Boulding, "The Treatment of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary in the Documents of Vatican II - Analysis and Reflection," in *Mary for Earth and Heaven: Essays on Mary and Ecumenism*, ed. William M. McLoughlin and Jill Pinnock (Leominster: Gracewing, 2002), 139.

¹⁴Gregory Baum, "The Theology of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Council," in *Ecumenical Theology Today*, ed. Gregory Baum (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1964), 36-37.

¹⁵James Tibbetts, "Vatican II's Developmental Shift in Marian Theology," in *Mary in the Church Today*, ed. Bill McCarthy and James Tibbetts (McKees Rocks, PA: St. Andrew's Productions, 2000), 5.

¹⁶Of the 2, 193 votes casted, 5 votes were spoiled. Frederick M. Jelly, "Mary and the Church," in *The Gift of the Church*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 438.

¹⁷Ratzinger, "The Place of Marian Doctrine and Piety," 149.

¹⁸Flanagan, "The Church and Our Mary," 151-153.

¹⁹Richard P. McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008), 186. Marian minimalism has the tendency to withhold any and all devotion to Mary; in Marian maximalism there is no limitation to any Marian devotion. McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism*, 406.

²⁰As cited in, Frederick M. Bliss, *Anglicans in Rome: A History* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2006), 79.

²¹ Stefano De'Fiores, "Mary in Postconciliar Theology," in *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives Twenty-Five Years After (1962-1987)*, ed. René Latourelle (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988), 471.

²² Flanagan, "The Church and Our Mary," 160.

²³ De'Fiores, "Mary in Postconciliar Theology," 471.

²⁴ As found in, Frederick M. Jelly, "Mariology and Ecumenism - Reflections upon 1965-1990," in *Mater Fidei et Fidelium: Collected Essays to Honor Théodore Koehler on His 80th Birthday* (Marian Library Studies, Vol. 17-23) (Dayton: University of Dayton, 1985-1991), 549; Jelly, "Mary and the Church," 439.

²⁵ Tambasco, *What Are They Saying about Mary?*, 8. Eamon says that the chapter eight of Lumen Gentium must be closely related to the seventh chapter of Lumen Gentium— The eschatological character of the pilgrim church and its union with the heavenly church— so that we can clearly explain the place of Mary within the communion of saints – a long standing problem that needs to be addressed in the ecumenical dialogue on Mary. See, Eamon R. Carroll, "Evolution in Mariology," *Marian Studies* 50 (1999), 139-145.

²⁶ Jelly, "Mary and the Church," 438.

²⁷ Mary E. Hines, "New Perspectives on Mary: Voices of Women," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 16 (2000), 97.

²⁸ Michael Hurley, "Ecumenism and Mariology Today," *One in Christ* 36 (2000), 298.

²⁹ The eighth chapter of Lumen Gentium presents Mary as the "mother of Christ and mother of men" (*matrem Christi et matrem hominum*) (Lumen Gentium, 54). It employs different words to explain the divine maternity of Mary – *Deipara* six times, *Dei Genetrix* three times, *Mater Dei* three times, *Mater Christi* three times and the term *Mater Redemptoris*. See, Charles Balic, *Mariology and Ecumenism in Vatican II* (New York: Graymoor, 1966), 7.

³⁰ Jelly, "Mariology and Ecumenism - Reflections upon 1965-1990," 549.

³¹ Bliss, *Anglicans in Rome*, 78.

³² By incorporating Marian teachings into the document on the Church, there was a division among the bishops. So Paul VI announced this title for Mary as a step to bringing unity among the bishops. By declaring this title that was proposed by the minority group represented by Cardinal Ottaviani, he made a gesture of peace. See, Tavard, *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary*, 207. Even during the debate on the scheme on Mary, Cardinal Wyzinski of Warsaw demanded the inclusion of the title 'Mary, Mother of the Church'. Previously the bishops from Poland requested the pope to declare this title as a definition. See, Flanagan, "The Church and Our Mary," 157.

³³ See, Tavard, *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary*, 204-207. Karl Barth was quite unhappy with this title, and in the later part of his life he even mischievously

spoke of Joseph to be a more appropriate “protector and exemplar of the church” than Mary. He said that the Bible portrayed him very impressively as “obedient and subservient”. See, Paul S. Fiddes, “Mary in the Theology of Karl Barth,” in *Mary in Doctrine and Devotion*, ed. Alberic Stacpoole, Geoffery Pinnock, and Jill Pinnock (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 122.

³⁴See, Bliss, *Anglicans in Rome*, 79.

³⁵ Agnelo Gracias, “Mariology: The Past and the Present,” in *Mary in Our Search for Fullness of Life*, ed. R.K. Samy (Bangalore: NBCLC, 2006), 9-10.

³⁶De’Fiores, “Mary in Postconciliar Theology,” 471.

³⁷Alain Blancy, Maurice Jourjon, and The Dombes Group, *Mary in the Plan of God and in the Communion of Saints: Towards a Common Christian Understanding* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002).

³⁸De’Fiores, “Mary in Postconciliar Theology,” 474.

³⁹Mary E. Hines, “Mary and the Prophetic Mission of the Church,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 28 (1991), 289.

⁴⁰De’Fiores, “Mary in Postconciliar Theology,” 474.

⁴¹Flanagan, “The Church and Our Mary,” 154.

⁴²Flanagan, “The Church and Our Mary,” 154.

⁴³Flanagan, “The Church and Our Mary,” 154.

⁴⁴Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Klarstellungen. Zur Prüfung der Geister (Straight Thinking: For a Testing of Spirits)* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1978), 72.

⁴⁵Jelly, “Mariology and Ecumenism - Reflections upon 1965-1990,” 550.

⁴⁶Paul D. Lee, “Ecumenical Impact of Marian Apparitions,” *Ecumenical Trends* (1999), 13.

⁴⁷De’Fiores, “Mary in Postconciliar Theology,” 474.

⁴⁸De’Fiores, “Mary in Postconciliar Theology,” 474.

⁴⁹McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism*, 332-333.

⁵⁰ Cf. Paul VI, “Apostolic Exhortation: *Marialis Cultus*,” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 66 (1974), no. 34.

⁵¹Hines, “Mary and the Prophetic Mission of the Church,” 289.

⁵² See, Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations: Faith and Ministry*, trans., Edward Quinn, vol. 19 (New York: Cross Road, 1983), 217.

⁵³Jelly, “Mary and the Church,” 455.

⁵⁴ As cited in, Mary Ann DeTrana, “Letters of Paul VI and John Paul II on the Virgin Mary: The Evolution of a Dialogue,” in *Mary is for Everyone*, ed. William McLoughlin and Jill Pinnock (Leominster: Gracewing, 1997), 185.

⁵⁵Jeffrey Gros, Eamon McManus, and Ann Riggs, *Introduction to Ecumenism* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 244.

- ⁵⁶ Paul VI, "Apostolic Exhortation: *Mariialis Cultus*," no. 29-39.
- ⁵⁷ John Paul II, "Encyclical Letter: *Redemptoris Mater*," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 79 (1987), 361-433.
- ⁵⁸ John Paul II, "Encyclical Letter: *Ut Unum Sint*," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 87 (1995), 921-982.
- ⁵⁹ John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002).
- ⁶⁰ John van den Hengel, "Miriam of Nazareth: Between Symbol and History," in *A Feminist Companion to Mariology*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Maria Mayo Robbins (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005), 133.
- ⁶¹ Hengel, "Miriam of Nazareth," 133.
- ⁶² Tibbetts, "Vatican II's Developmental Shift in Marian Theology," 1.
- ⁶³ Marcella Althaus-Reid, *From Feminist Theology to Indecent Theology: Readings on Poverty, Sexual Identity and God* (London: SCM Press, 2004), 32.
- ⁶⁴ Dominic Veliath, "Mary and Inter-religious Dialogue: An Indian Paradigm," in *Mary in Our Search for Fullness of Life*, ed. R. K. Samy (Bangalore: NBCLC, 2006), 120.
- ⁶⁵ Michael O'Carroll, "Apparitions of Our Lady," in *Mary is for Everyone*, ed. William McLoughlin and Jill Pinnock (Leominster: Gracewing, 1997), 290.
- ⁶⁶ Kenneth L. Woodward, "Hail, Mary: A Growing Movement in the Roman Catholic Church Wants the Pope to Proclaim a New, Controversial Dogma: That Mary Is a Co-Redeemer. Will He Do It, May Be in Time for the Millenium?," *Newsweek* 130 (1997), 48-55.
- ⁶⁷ Mark Miravalle of the Franciscan University of Steubenville (Ohio) initiated this movement. It has got nearly 550 bishops and 42 Cardinals (12 of whom are in Rome) and numerous numbers of clergy as its members. Charlene Spretnak, *Missing Mary* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 62-63.
- ⁶⁸ Spretnak, *Missing Mary*, 62.
- ⁶⁹ "Document: On Demands for New Dogmatic Definitions about Mary," *Doctrine and Life* 47 (1997), 437.
- ⁷⁰ "Document: On Demands for New Dogmatic Definitions about Mary," 437.
- ⁷¹ L'Osservatore Romano June 4, 1997.
- ⁷² Spretnak, *Missing Mary*, 68-69.
- ⁷³ "Litany of Mary of Nazareth" distributed by Pax Christi, USA, 348 East Tenth St., Eire, PA, 16503. As referred in, Mary E. Hines, "Mary at the Millennium: Recent Developments in Marian Studies," in *Carmel and Mary: Theology and History of a Devotion*, ed. John F. Welch (Washington, D.C.: The Carmelite Institute, 2002), 11.