

Mary In The One Economy Of Salvation

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From the earliest times, Mary the mother of Jesus has held a prominent position in Christian Faith. Yet with the Protestant rejection of the traditional Christian framework, Mary became to many a cipher and a distraction. Moreover, with the more recent breakdown of the old synthesis within Catholic theology, Mary has often been relegated to arcane dogmatic formulae or 'consigned' to piety. Yet in order to re-energise Christianity for a new millennium, we must be able to go further. The Holy Father writes in Tertio Millennio Adveniente: "The affirmation of the central place of Christ cannot be separated from the recognition of the role played by his Most Holy Mother".[1] This is precisely something we can demonstrate in a compelling way using the theological vision of the Faith movement through which we can both deepen and draw together traditional teaching on Mary, and powerfully develop our understanding of her role in God's plan. She may in fact prove to be the gateway to a new renaissance, unlocked by the Master-key who is her Son. [2]

A doorway within the blueprint

Foundational to the theology of Edward Holloway, the founder of the Faith movement, is the awareness that the human nature of Christ is decreed even before the moment of the Big Bang. The structure of the cosmos is framed for Jesus: all has evolved relative to the Word-Made-Flesh. He is most definitely not an after-thought because of sin. His appearance amongst us is no way arbitrary, like Zeus whimsically taking on the form of a swan. For although God's gift of His Son to the Universe remains gratuitous, (the world of matter cannot demand it by absolute right of its being), nevertheless from the order of wisdom innate in all physical structures and processes, it can be expected, rather as a sprouting bulb expects the rays of the sun way above it to reach down to it. In other words God in His wisdom is bound to have designed the doorway for His entry and placed it within the blueprint of His Creation. In the natural course of events, two human parents are required to generate human life. At present lawless scientists are mooting the generation of human life sourced from four or five genetic and physical parents. Yet, even within nature there seems to be no absolute necessity for the process of reproduction involving male and female, no axiomatic reason why human beings could not have been unisexual (which possibly included some means of genetic mixing to strengthen the gene pool).[3] Perhaps we have to look for a reason that we are not unisexual beyond the immediate processes of human reproduction.[4]

We have said that God is to make use of the economy of His Creation in order to enter it. God the Word, however, is pre-existent Person; he only needs a human

nature - which is subject to creation and determination. His divine person could not be 'created' by the determining will of other human beings. (Even within the constant laws of the Universe, something cannot be its own cause and its own control; the Divine Control of Creation certainly cannot be caused by it). So God would need to raise up a process in nature that could be tailored immediately to His own coming. "The natural means by which the Creation may co-operate with God in the consummation of the Unity-Law should exist in Physical Nature as the vehicle at once natural and supernaturally aligned through which the Heir of all the Ages may come into His own. The means is there, and the means is the womb of woman." [5] In other words it is only through the design of a womb (and will of the mother) that the pre-existent Son can become a true human son too, making full use of the human reproductive process that his wisdom has planned, without the normally necessary causative will of another human being.

The existence of male and female principles finds, therefore, its ultimate meaning and purpose in the plan of the Incarnation and specifically in the need for Mary. The male principle of prompter and determiner-of-life in fact mirrors God's relationship with Creation in Mary and becomes redundant at the Annunciation. Our Lady is the final dénouement of God's masterpiece which is the provision of the Unity-Law. Without her vocation within creation, we cannot have the Christ.

The One Economy

This breakthrough in perception of Mary's place is in fact indicated powerfully by the vision of the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation. The Woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, crowned with twelve stars, is in labour to bring forth a son. The Woman is first and foremost Planet Earth teeming with life and fruitfulness and fertile ultimately with mankind. It is clothed with the sun which is its principle of life and increase over aeons of evolution. The moon has its place in regulating times and seasons for the planet. The perfect number twelve shows that the summit of achievement has been reached in this cradle of intelligent man. Furthermore, apart from the fact that so many of the images in the Book of Revelation - and in John's Gospel - are many-layered, it also refers to the People of Israel awaiting the Messiah, and the Church in the pangs of bringing Christ into the world in the womb of the Virgin Mary herself. This is because within the Unity-Law in Creation, it is all one economy: cosmos, Earth, human race, Israel, Church and Mary. Within this truly breathtaking interpretation Our Lady is revealed as the great sign of the unity of God's wisdom - and the culminating witness to the Unity-Law and the vocation of matter. The role of Mary is shown to be inscribed in the blueprint of the Universe. We can surely then expect this perception in Mariology to underpin and deepen all that we already know about Our Lady.

Mary in the Scriptures

In recent decades there has admittedly been a flowering of scholarship on Mary's place in God's Word. This new vision, however, provides a synthetic context through which the different areas of study can be directed and focused."How can

this come about since I am a virgin?" (Lk 1:34) The witness to Mary's virginity is manifest from the earliest times despite ridicule and opposition. We have seen that her vocation to provide God with a human nature is written into the very fabric of creation. It is she who unlocks the full meaning of the division of the sexes. It is she who is uppermost in God's mind in His plan for the sexes. For this reason, in no way should we see her virginity as somehow contradicting the laws of nature. God did not step aside from the plan of wisdom in Creation in order to be born from Mary's womb. The Virgin Birth is therefore not a miracle[6]; it is completely natural. It is the template and paradigm for all other sexual ministry. If our intellects had not been obfuscated by sin, then perhaps we should have welcomed and understood this truth more clearly, although our present understanding of nature has come at a certain level of scientific maturity. It is certainly foreshadowed throughout the Old Testament where infertile women such as Sarah and Hannah are made fruitful by God's grace to bear a son of special honour. It is obviously prophesied too by the most famous advent text, Isaiah 7:14 , in the Septuagint if not in the Hebrew.

Archetypal Woman

Traditionally the Woman of the Proto-gospel in Genesis 3:15 has been interpreted as a prophecy of Mary, who is pointedly named 'Woman' by Jesus at the start and close of John's gospel (Jn 2:4; 19:26). The vision of the Book of Revelations chapter 12 very obviously draws these references together: the serpent becomes a dragon and threatens the Woman as she bears the Christ. The historical person of Mary can now be confirmed as the contextual key to the Woman of the Scriptures. Not only does this ascertain the traditional reading, it clearly draws together the gender-related language of both testaments. Such devices as the unfaithful wife and daughter Israel ; Jesus as Bridegroom; the Church as Bride; the wedding feast of the Lamb: these are no longer just handy poetic conceits. All take their meaning from God's plan fulfilled through Mary's womanhood.

Ark of the New Covenant

The story of the Visitation to Elizabeth (Lk 1:39 -58) seems to have been carefully crafted to mirror the taking up of God's Ark by David to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6).[7] This link between Mary and the Ark is more explicit in the Book of Revelations. The sanctuary opens (Rev 11:19) to reveal the Ark of the Covenant - which is the Sign of the Woman (Rev 12). The Ark in the Old Testament was carefully designed and constructed to house and carry God's Commandments. It was the place where Yahweh met His people Israel and revealed His Wisdom. Under this new synthetic vision, Mary is most definitely the Ark of the New Covenant; she was exquisitely fashioned through billions of years of ordered development. It is through her physical nature that God is able to meet His people and where the Sacred Wisdom of the Universe is carried and made present.

Daughter of Zion

This hermeneutic has been particularly drawn out in recent times.[8] The Angel's greeting in Lk 1:27 echoes the prophecies of Zephaniah and Zechariah to the Daughter of Zion (Israel). Mary is placed centrally in the mystery of the covenant relationship between God and mankind. Scott Hahn has recently refocused attention on the covenant - a transference of persons not property (a contract) - as the overall key to the Scriptures: It is Mary's 'yes' as the gift of her person which begins to fulfil God's covenant plan.[9] With the benefit of Holloway's theological perspective we can see how Mary's gift of herself is ultimately cosmic in dimension, fulfilling the vocation of matter to share in divine life. Through the true Daughter Zion, the full dignity of the material universe is revealed as it is swept up via the spiritual nature of man into the life of God. The obedience of Mary is central to this cosmic plan: "It is required that God should act through the freely given love and obedience of the creature, that Mary should say 'behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word'. Once said, the vocation of this woman is to work directly with God to be determined to the divine work that is her unique vocation and her unique dignity in the universe." [10] It is also paradigmatic for the rest of humanity whom she represents in relation to God.[11] It is the ultimate witness to the mysterious nature of the human being: "The order of the co-operation of the spiritual creature with God involves a mystery which can be partly, but never fully unravelled by the human mind, the mystery of free-will. It is an order of free co-operation, the very hallmark of the existence and the presence of the spiritual principle in creation." [12] In fact we can go as far as saying that this deeper understanding of Mary as Daughter Zion unlocks the correct reading of the Scriptures themselves. Jesus the God-man comes to call us into the Covenant of Divinisation. Mary in the Dogmatic Teaching of the Church If it is in the vocation of Mary that we fully understand God's cosmic plan, then we should expect a deeper reflection upon it to nourish the Church as it develops under the Unity-Law. In a sense, the Marian Dogmas complete the Scriptures. Mother of God (431) This was defined to counter the Nestorian refusal to go beyond the title Christotokos - an incipient splitting of Christ into two persons as well as two natures: the dogma was essentially Christological. We can see how utterly appropriate 'Mother of God' is within the broad sweep of the Unity Law and a Christocentric universe. Christ as Lord of the Cosmos can only enter his inheritance by being carried and born of a woman. If the human nature of Christ was not fully united to his divinity, then the cosmic plan would end in farcical frustration (the Divine Cause was not coming truly into contact with that which it planned to control). So the title Theotokos, the most succinct expression of Mary's role, speaks ultimately of a universe of matter called to theosis. It is the natural concomitant to Christ's favourite term of self-reference, 'Son of Man'. God the Word is now and forever one stock with His human creatures.

Ever Virgin (649)

Mary's virginity was necessary for the Incarnation, but her remaining a virgin is the completion of her own unique vocation. The God she was related to in spousal faithfulness, the Principle of human 'envirning', is now present to her as

her Son. Her place in creation is not to bear other human children, but to give total witness to the direct enviroing of human life by God. Even more truly is she now 'the Woman clothed with the sun'. Immaculate Conception (1854) The non-Scotist theologian must inevitably defend the Immaculate Conception as a somewhat arbitrary grace: if God preserved Mary from sin, why not all of us? It was Blessed Duns Scotus who originally provided the groundwork for this dogma. So we can expect the (Scotist) perspective of Holloway to make sense of this grace in God's plan. Christ's coming was decreed before the tragedy of Eden . Even the incursion of sin could in no way alter or determine God's mind or processes. For although God 'respects' the historical consequences of sin within matter, Mary's vocation as Queen of Creation and of the universe was decreed before the Big Bang, let alone the fall of Satan or Eve's disastrous choice. In this sense the Immaculate Conception is not a special provision of God; it is Our Lady's 'right'. Mary is saved and redeemed through her predestined vocation of intimate co-operation with the Saviour. The light of the dawn appears on the horizon before the sun has risen. The Assumption (1950) Because the incursion of sin has tainted the deterministic order of matter, the divine work of restoration, realignment and healing can only be achieved fully by the resurrection of the body. As immaculately conceived, Mary goes on to indicate the natural and supernatural achievement of man from the state of original wholeness. The Assumption is the great sign that in spite of the disaster and sickness of sin, the cosmic sweep of God's plan in the Unity-Law is fulfilled. The Assumption of Mary, body and soul, into the Beatific Vision of Heaven, represents the fruition of the Covenant of Divinisation.

A Final Dogma?

So far, the primary role of Mary in direct relation to God has been explored. But there is more to her vocation.

Example and Exemplary Realisation

Firstly she is proposed to the faithful as the pre-eminent example of discipleship, of holiness of life. As predestined Queen of the cosmos who co-operated in perfect faithfulness with the Lord until taken up in glory, she is the God-given model for Christian discipleship. She is also, in her very being, because of the 'one economy', the great sign, the exemplary realisation or *typus* of the Church as *Lumen Gentium* points out.[13] She is the standard bearer for the whole human race as it is drawn up into God's life. Now it has to be said that there are those who would wish to limit her role for us to this - merely an example and a sign. In this they may originally have rejoiced at Mary's inclusion in *Lumen Gentium* rather than being given her own separate document. Nevertheless, Ratzinger has pointed out that this decision was a 'wassercheide': in placing her within the document on the Church, her role was confirmed as essentially ecclesial, and she was explicitly named 'Mother to us in the order of grace'. Through the new synthesis (the one economy of creation), we can demonstrate that this is most definitely so. Therefore she is not only example and icon, but in a vital sense, the spiritual womb, heart and hands of the Church. Furthermore,

although *Lumen Gentium* refers to it, Mary's role for the Christian believer has never been treated in detail or recognised in dogmatic definition. It seems indisputable that we now have the most solid framework and vision to further any necessary development on this front.

Mediatrice Of All Graces

Fr Holloway writes succinctly about this proposed title of Our Lady: "It is through the offering of her womb to the Father, for the Son, by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, that she gives us the Divine Grace in Person. Therefore the title 'Mediatrice' would seem to be implicit in her other, and defined title of the Godbearer or 'Theotokos'".[14] In other words we must not forget that her vocation and ministry as Mother of God was not merely to work with God, but to work with Him for each and every one of us. Insofar as we can show Jesus to be the true Adam, the ultimate template of human nature, then Mary is prototypical too. She has certainly been called from ancient times the New Eve - or Mother of all the living, a mother who is cause of our salvation:

And even as she, having indeed a husband, Adam, but being nevertheless as yet a virgin...having become disobedient, was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race; so also did Mary, having a man betrothed (to her), and being nevertheless a virgin, by yielding obedience, became the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race.[15]

But from the vantage point of the Unity-Law, we can meaningfully say she is the 'original' (archetypal) Mother-of-all-the-living, prefigured and predestined within all the processes of life. In this we must indeed turn to her to be the 'Cause of our salvation'. She mediates the grace of Christ to "all the rest of her children who obey God's commandments and have in themselves the witness of Jesus" (Rev 12:17). What's more, we can show that as God included the blueprint for Our Lady within the plan of the Universe, so that he could become our Food, then we rightly go as far as saying Mary is Mother of the Holy Eucharist too.

Advocate

It is recognised that the Queen Mother (Gebirah) of the King of Israel occupied a position of precedence over royal consorts, a role of advocacy. Elizabeth effectively names Mary Gebirah at the Visitation (Lk 1:42). We see Our Lady interceding at Cana (Jn 2:3), and for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:14), where she acts as Godmother for the infant Church. It would be strange indeed if the cosmic Gebirah was not granted a unique position of advocacy with the Lord on behalf of the people of her race.

Co-redemptrix

This refers to the unique and God-given role of Mary in co-operating with the one work of the Redeemer. It is indubitably the most controversial title of the three proposed by theologians. It is the only one not explicitly mentioned in *Lumen Gentium*. Pope John Paul, however, named his Marian encyclical *Redemptoris*

Mater, and has used the term Co-redemptrix of Our Lady several times in recent public speeches. There is now a very large body of literature on this subject. Fr Holloway himself professed personal doubts about the title 'Co-redeemer': that it was disquieting, ambiguous, even dangerous.[16] It is worth noting that most of the Marian dogmas have been controversial. Theotokos was violently contested as dangerously ambiguous. St Thomas Aquinas did not accept the reality of the Immaculate Conception, let alone its definition. Holloway's qualms notwithstanding, it seems fair to say that his theology does in fact provide a definite foundation for the title. First-of-all, it is important to note his words about the Old Testament prophets: "In a true sense the servant of God suffers 'vicariously' for God because it is the life of God within him which is the measure both of his achievement and his pain. The great types of Christ in the Old Testament, Moses, Isaiah the 'servant of Yahweh', Jeremiah, and many another, suffered not only because of the perfection of their being in their knowledge and love of God, but also they suffered because of their love of their brethren. Their very pain was wrung of their love of God, and the dishonouring of God in his image, and they were for ever apologising, praying, and asking for mercy for the brethren, for they were of one flesh with them, one spirit with them, and they were committed to them in love, and care and wanting them." [17] It could be argued that these prophets were, however, types specifically of the ministry of the Christ. Nevertheless, what is said of them must bear relevance for Our Lady. Secondly, the prefix 'co' should not present any problems for an adherent of Holloway's perspective. It is in fact a vital piece of Unity-Law jargon: "Matter, of its nature is co-relative, both living and non-living matter, and is not intelligible except as co-relative and co-operative." [18] Mary's life is one of co-relativity to the God-man and co-operation with him. In no way does this place her on an equal footing with him, or derogate from his uniqueness. In a general sense, it is of course indisputable that our brothers and sisters in the family of Christ are able collaborate with God to assist us in our struggles: "...we receive from the Lord...the comradeship of his saints, to co-operate with him against the evil that is within ourselves, and the evil which is the pressure of persecution and temptation from outside." [19]

The strongest argument, however, for Mary being given this title is the understanding the new synthesis provides of redemption: "The essential of the redemption and the satisfaction of Christ is to be found in the total holiness and charity of his being in the nature of God and in the nature of Man." [20] In other words the whole of Christ's life was redemptive from the moment of his conception. Redemption was not a moral or token deliverance, but a work in the dynamic order of being. The crucifixion was but the culmination, the final fruit of his work. If we hold to this much, much deeper understanding of redemption, then of course it brings Mary into the foreground. She was involved every step of the way. She was co-operating in the redemption in a unique manner from the Annunciation onwards. As the life of the Lord of the Cosmos must take on a minor key because of sin, then the life of the Queen of the Cosmos and Mediatrix of All Graces must take on that key too. This is recognised with great insight by

Simeon immediately after he welcomes the Light of the Nations: "and a sword will pierce your soul too - so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare" (Lk 2:35). For in her own singular way, Mary, the Immaculate Conception, is also called to bear witness to the reality of sin. Holloway writes these words about the Church, but in the 'one economy', they are relevant too for Mary: "She bears his character, lives his life, and therefore the wounds of his rejection are upon her body, for the world that hated him, hates her also." [21] It is finally worth noting Fr Holloway's words (often repeated in his talks) about the pain of a devout parent (or priest) who watches a beloved innocent child become corrupted by the forces of sin and sensuality. That parent enters "only from afar upon the pain of Christ". He adds: "... many a deep soul has drunk a little of that chalice." [22] How far above all sips was the draught that the Mother of God took from that chalice, for her son and for us. These words throw a definitive light upon that pointed description of the Woman: "She was pregnant, and in labour, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth" (Rev 12:2) The title Co-redemptrix is, therefore, not only utterly appropriate for Mary, but it must point us towards a more accurate understanding of the nature of sin and the work of our Redeemer for us. It also vindicates the full expression of her work as Mother to us in the order of grace. It seems to me that, beyond any prima facie ambiguity, there can be no other word that describes this reality with such economy.

Conclusion

The theological perspective of Edward Holloway shows us how Mary's vocation was decreed before the Creation. Her very being was framed within the blueprint of the cosmos. Her physical being evolved under the Unity-Law for the Incarnation. The Sign of Revelations chapter 12 can be seen to witness most powerfully to this one economy of God's creative wisdom. This inevitably sheds light on Mary's plan in the Scriptures. Her virginal conception is not in fact 'miraculous', but truly natural. She is the archetypal woman who makes sense of all gender-related language and imagery. She is the New Ark of the Covenant, carefully fashioned to carry the Wisdom of God. She is the Daughter of Zion who witnesses to the dignity of human co-operation with God through her ultimate act of free-will. She thereby opens the door to the mystery of the Covenant - and all the Scriptures - as a relationship of divinisation. As the Marian Dogmas complete the Scriptures, the title 'Theotokos' is proved to be the perfect expression for her role in bestowing a human nature on the Lord within God's plan. She is Ever-Virgin because she witnesses that her Envioner who was her spouse is now her Son. Her Immaculate Conception is no 'special' provision, but hers by right of her vocation. Assumed body and Soul into heaven, she bears witness to the perfect fulfilment of God's Unity-Law.

We can also see how important it is to further define Our Lady's role for us. She is the model for us to follow, the standard-bearer for the human race. But she is Mediatrix because her Son is all grace to his Creation. She is advocate as cosmic Queen-Mother interceding for us. She must even justify the title Co-redemptrix as the Co-operator for us with the One Redeemer's dynamic work.

Mary as Queen of Creation is indeed the Gateway unlocked by her Divine Son, the Master-key. She opens the way for God into His material universe and for us into God's own life. So we truly cannot separate her from the central place of her Son. We can begin to see how beautifully the new synthetic vision will vindicate both Master-key and Gateway for a re-energised Catholic Faith and a renewed culture of Life.

[1] Pope John Paul II, *Tertio Millenio Adveniete*, § 43

[2] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, (Wallington: Faith Keyway Publications, 1976). The essential of the theological perspective of the Faith Movement are spelt out in this work.

[3] Steve Jones, Reith Lecture, 1991: "Why is (sex) there?... Very few animals have given up sex: the odd lizard or fish, but none of our close relatives....The frank answer is that we do not really know what sex is for. It must be important, as it is so expensive. It means that a female must waste her time producing sons, who carry only half her genes. If she gave up sex she might be able to produce just daughters who carry them all. There would be no biological reason to have males at all; and we still do not know what is the point of being a man".

[4] Pope John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, §1: "It is a question of understanding the reason for and the consequences of the Creator's decision that the human being should always and only exist as a woman or a man."

[5] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism*, 149.

[6] In the common usage of the term.

[7] Scott Hahn, *Hail Holy Queen, The Mother of God in the Word of God* (London : Darton, Longman & Todd 2001) 63-65.

[8] Joseph Ratzinger, *Daughter Zion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983); Ignace de la Potterie, *Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant* (New York: Alba House, 1992).

[9] Scott Hahn, *A Father Who Keeps His Promises* (New York: Charis, 1998).

[10] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism*, 149.

[11] John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* §19: "Each and every time that motherhood is repeated in human history, it is always related to the Covenant which God established with the human race through the motherhood of the Mother of God."

[12] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism*, 175.

[13] *Lumen Gentium*, § 53; 63.

[14] Edward Holloway, *Sexual Order and Holy Order* (Wallington: Faith Keyway, 1976) 20.

[15] St Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3, 22, 4.

[16] Edward Holloway, *Sexual Order and Holy Order*, 20.

[17] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism*, 247.

[18] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism*, 168.

[19] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism*, 265.

[20] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism*, 262.

[21] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism*, 272.

[22] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism*, 268.