

# Fatima: Triumph of Mary Mediatrix

Excerpts of a speech given at *The Fatima Challenge* on May 3, 2010 by Father Verlag, from the Dominican Priory in Avignon, France.

*by Father Raymond Verlag, O.P.*

**T**hank you for your invitation, I'm very glad to meet this congress.

At the request of her cousin Lucy, Jacinta Marto summed up, in a few words, the heart of the Message of Fatima:

“Tell the whole world that God grants us His graces through the means of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; that it is from Her that one must ask for them; that the Heart of Jesus wants us to venerate the Immaculate Heart of Mary with Him; that we must ask for peace from the Immaculate Heart of Mary because it is to Her alone that God has entrusted it.”

She thus echoed the Blessed Virgin Mary, who twice uttered these crucial words of Her Message:

“God wills to establish devotion to My Immaculate Heart throughout the world.” “Establish” means more than

a private devotion. She meant certainly a public and liturgical devotion. Moreover, in a letter to Bishop Manuel Ferreira da Silva, her confessor, dated May 27, 1943, Sister Lucy referred clearly to the expectation of a liturgical office celebrated throughout the entire world.

It is clearer today, more than ever before, that God wants His Mother to be honored along with Him, solemnly and publicly, by nations. Why? In the same letter Sister Lucy explains it and brings in the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ. She says: “They love and They desire this devotion because They use it to draw souls to Them, which aids Their desires to save souls, many souls, all souls.”

“Several days ago,” continues Sister Lucy, “God said to me, ‘I ardently desire the spreading of the devo-

tion and the honoring of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, because this Heart is the magnet which draws souls to Me, the center from which spreads throughout the world the rays of My light and My love, the unending source which pours on the earth the living water of My mercy.”

### **Mary, Mediation of Grace**

This last sentence relates to the doctrine of the mediation of grace by the Blessed Virgin Mary; an ascending mediation in that Our Lady leads souls to God, “the way which leads to God”, to use Her very words, in the promise that She made to Lucy, and a descending mediation in that She distributes the graces among souls. This mediation is the heart of the Message of Fatima.

This doctrine of universal mediation, you are aware, enjoyed a resurgence of interest in the first half of the Twentieth Century; it was the object of in-depth studies, prompted by Cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier (1851 – 1926), Archbishop of Malines in Belgium. In November 1922, Pope Pius XI himself ordered the constitution of three Pontifical commissions to examine the possibility of

a dogmatic definition: one commission in Rome, one commission in Spain, and one commission in Belgium. The great movement towards this definition reached its climax at the Second Vatican Council; three hundred and thirteen bishops asked for it in the pre-council consultations. Unfortunately, far from seeing devotion to Her being commended and strengthened, the Blessed Virgin was to see Herself (almost) excluded from the Council. Her presence upset false ecumenism. The very schema which should have been dedicated to Her was reduced to being a mere chapter in the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*.

Thus, devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, just like the doctrine of Her universal mediation, suffered the same fate; the two were, and remain, linked.

Allow me, in this speech, to set out the various aspects of the universal mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary; this will enable us to see that this devotion is capable of being defined: The Blessed Virgin Mary is the universal Mediatrix, firstly by Her being and, secondly, by Her action.

She is first of all the Mother of God, immaculate and full of grace, which makes Her so very close to God, and of a dignity which is almost infinite. At the same time, She is close to men in Her nature of simple creature. This makes Her Mediatrix according to Her being, as an intermediary between God and us to unite the Word with human nature. By giving birth to the Author of Grace, She, "in a certain manner, dispensed grace to all," says St. Thomas Aquinas.

The *sensus fidelium* unani-

mously affirms this eminence of the Blessed Virgin Mary; these privileges have been defined *de fide*. This first truth is, therefore, capable of being defined.

### Mary United Herself to the Work of Redemption

But She was not content merely to lend Her body to the work of the Holy Ghost at the moment of the Annunciation; She united Herself consciously, voluntarily and intimately to the work of the redemption of men, at the side of Her Son,

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like a new Eve next to a new Adam. This comparison was made, in a general and implicit manner, from the first centuries. The Fathers of the Church, as well as the popes, are unanimous about it.

The Protestants purported to set against the general notion of mediation that there is only "one mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ."

But the *sensus fidelium* does not attribute to Our Lady a mediation equal to that of Her Son. It is a matter, correctly speaking, of a subordinate mediation, that is to say, one which entirely depends upon, and entirely derives from, the merits of Jesus Christ the Universal Redeemer; the Blessed Virgin Mary could not help the work of salvation other than by cooperation.

Neither is this cooperation necessary in itself, for the mediation of Jesus is already so superabundant in obtaining for us all the means of salvation, that it has no need of anything to complete it.

### **The Virgin Mary Takes Nothing Away From Her Son**

A comparison will make us

understand that the Blessed Virgin takes nothing away from Her Son. The child who asks his mother to pick him up in order to embrace his father does not embrace any the less directly his father and does not put its mother between his heart and the object of its filial love. On the contrary, the Blessed Virgin Mary is the means taken by Jesus Christ to ensure that there will be no distance between Him and mankind and to ensure that the human race, in Him, touches God directly. The mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is nothing other than the extension of that of Her Son, an extension willed by Providence, and a very efficacious one.

### **Mary, Coadjatrix of Our Salvation**

Let us now analyze this active association of Our Lady with Our Lord. The new Eve and the coadjutrix of our salvation, the Blessed Virgin Mary, carried out Her tasks, historically, in two stages, just like Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord, as the new Adam, He firstly was made man "*propter nos et propter nostrum salutem*" ["for us and for our salvation"], as we sing in the

Creed; and on the Cross, He was obedient in dying for the salvation of men. Then, He is seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven, where He intercedes for us with His Father as an advocate.

We shall likewise see in the mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary two stages as follows:

First, She co-operated with the Passion on earth by consenting to become the Mother of the Savior and by offering Him up to the death on Calvary. Then, in Heaven, for so long as the Mystical Body of Her Son shall not have reached its completeness, She does not cease, any more than He does, to work, by means of the distribution of graces, for the complete regeneration of the human race.

Certain moderns reduce the mediation of Our Lady to what She does for us now in Heaven. But the notion of mediation includes any operation which works to unite God with man and, therefore, all the other ways in which the Blessed Virgin Mary co-operated with that on earth.

This association with the Redeemer as Coadjutrix is the foundation of Her work now in Heaven. Just as Our

Lord Jesus Christ could not, according to God's plan, exercise fully His right to domination and to the universal kingdom until He had merited it by His Passion, so too, the Blessed Virgin Mary could only fully exercise Her rights after She had merited it by Her co-operation with the entire work of redemption.

Let us explain this element of mediation before looking for its dogmatic value: the Blessed Virgin Mary freely consented to Her mission of Coadjutrix, firstly at the Annunciation, but also at the Presentation in the Temple which we can liken to the Offertory at the Sacrifice of Calvary. When upon the prophecy made by the old man Simeon, She agreed to offer Her Son as a victim, as well as Her own future pains.

By this consent, the principal act of Her co-operation, She became truly the coadjutrix, the conciliatrix and the mediatrix between God and human nature in order to establish a new covenant of grace.

It is indeed for this that the Fathers so marvellously praised Her consent, Her obedience and Her Faith; it is this that we contemplate in the

first mystery of the Rosary. With a spirit of constancy, never going back on Her first purpose, She worked during Her whole life for the mission of Her Son.

### **Consummation of Mary's Cooperation**

The consummation of the Blessed Virgin Mary's cooperation took place on Calvary in two ways: by way of merit and by way of satisfaction.

By way of merit: Just as the Passion of Our Lord has merited for us the gifts of grace and glory, She merited them all with Her Son at the foot of the cross.

It's a case of a *de congruo* merit, that is to say of choice, made according to the 'rights' of friendship and not in strict justice. It is the most common formula among the theologians, confirmed by St. Pius X, who placed no restriction on this doctrine.

Its principal foundation in religion is the title of the 'New Eve' that we have already cited; Mary is the author of our life, just as Eve was the author of our death. Mary has become our spiritual mother according to grace. The various writers are in agreement that these words of Jesus on the Cross to St. John, 'Behold

thy Mother', are to be thus interpreted in the spiritual sense.

The second way of Her cooperation is by way of satisfaction (that is to say, in reparation for the sins of man). Pope Benedict XV wrote that "by uniting Herself to the Passion and death of Her Son, Our Lady suffered to death to appease the Divine Justice and that, as far as She could, She offered up Her Son in such a way that one can say that She redeemed the human race with Him."

Those are the very words of the Pope; we can say that: "one can say that She redeemed the human race with Him." Since She could merit for us, there is nothing to stop Her from having redeemed us with Our Lord, in that "She gave up Her maternal rights over Her Son for the salvation of men", according to Pope Pius XII. In this, She imitated Her Son, Who bore for us, freely and without resistance, the death on the Cross. No other creature was so intimately united to the sacrifice of the Cross than the Blessed Virgin Mary Who, pierced through by a sword of interior suffering, united Herself completely to the will of Her

Son, and was so prompt to suffer all His torments that, says St. Bonaventure,

**“if She (Mary) had been able, She would even more the willingly have suffered them Herself.”**

She has given life to us by the greatest act of faith, hope and charity that She could make in one sole moment. This martyrdom of Her Heart is widely supported by the Fathers and, for a very long time, by the liturgy.

Here also we must speak of the *de congruo* satisfaction according to a certain choice founded upon great charity, and not on strict justice, because, sin having an infinite gravity, a simple creature could not have sufficed to make up for it.

This co-operation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is usually called “co-redemption”. It is not yet a defined dogma. Some of our contemporaries reject the term, not as erroneous, but as somewhat inappropriate in the current (false) ecumenical climate, leaving people to imagine a purported equality between Christ and His Holy Mother in this world. Strictly speaking, it is very clear that the redemp-

tion, in justice, can only be attributed to Our Lord Jesus Christ. What is now the dogmatic value of this doctrine?

### **Mary Co-Redemptrix**

Marian co-redemption has caused difficulties for some gifted theologians, but has not stopped the Sovereign Pontiffs from showing their favor for this devotion more and more clearly. Be that as it may, the co-operation of Our Lady in the Redemption, in a more general sense, is contained implicitly and can be said also to be revealed in the announcing of the new Eve that is to be found in the Protogospel, in Genesis.

This passage has always been understood as announcing the Virgin as the cause of salvation with Her Son, as the cause of the spiritual life, becoming the true mother of the living. Sacred Scripture seems to be sufficiently clear to base definability in this regard.

Let us tackle now the second aspect of the mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has been taken up to Heaven, does not cease to carry out the work of the salvation of men. As head of the Church, He spreads the spiritual

life (of sanctifying grace) through His Mystical Body, by His humanity; as the Redeemer of men He intercedes for us before His Father. This mediation is as a complement of human salvation, the ultimate fulfilment of the Redemption.

### **Mary Mediatrix**

Likewise, the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mediatrix with the unique Mediator, Our Lord Jesus Christ, "*mediatrix ad mediatorem*," says Pope Leo XIII.

We shall study, in order, firstly Her continuing general intercession for obtaining grace, then the universal extension of this intercession and, finally, the way in which She carries it out.

First, Her continuing general intercession: the Blessed Virgin Mary having merited *de congruo* on Calvary all graces, it is logical that She continues in Heaven. By Her prayer and by Her intercession, indissolubly united to those of Jesus, She continues Her work of Mediatrix by His side.

The Jansenists denied this and some objected that the mother of a king was not entitled to deal with all his treasures. However, the Blessed

Virgin Mary is not only the Mother of the Redeemer, as we have seen, She took an active part in the acquisition of the means of salvation; She made satisfaction and She merited with Her Son, according to the "rights" of friendship. It would not be seemly for God to reject such a right; that would be to oppose His Providence. God can not contradict Himself.

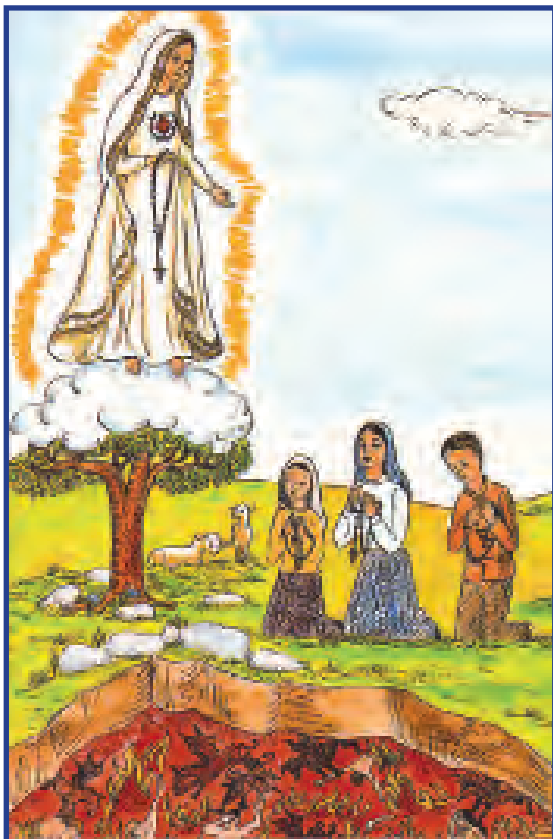
### **Mary Obtains For Us All Graces**

The Blessed Virgin obtains for us all graces, at least in general. This forms part of Catholic doctrine according to the ordinary magisterium and according to the liturgy. This charge is no different from the role of the spiritual Mother which the Church attributes to Her by reason of Her co-redemption.

But we must go further. Must this continuing involvement of Our Lady be understood as being for each and every grace in particular? When replying, we shall distinguish between universality as to graces and universality as to men.

Firstly, universality as to graces: as Mother of our souls, and now that She enjoys the





It is the terrifying vision of Hell which opens the Secret of Fatima. Through it, Our Lady leads us at the outset to the essential, to the only thing that counts, our eternity. That first part of the Secret is of prime importance. Much more yet than the announcement of famines, wars and persecutions, that gripping, agonizing reminder, of the eternal Hell which threatens us, is one of the most essential points of the message of Our Lady. It is one of the major truths of our Catholic Faith that the Virgin Mary of Fatima wishes to recall to our apostate, naturalistic and materialistic century, blindly walled in by its earthly horizons.

Beatific Vision in Heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary must know, and ask for us, each and every grace that we need. Thus She leads every one of Her children to their perfect birth, feeding them, protecting them, strengthening them and educating them, in a word, watching over all their spiritual growth.

### **Mary's Mediation More Powerful Than the Saints**

Her mediation is much

more powerful and effective than that of all the other saints put together, because they can obtain nothing without Her. For that, it is not even necessary, in itself, to pray to Her directly. Because all graces necessarily come through Her hands.

This continuing intercession for the distribution of every grace is theologically certain and expresses perfectly the *sensus fidelium*, based

on Sacred Scripture, which shows us the Blessed Virgin always present beside Our Lord Jesus Christ on earth to distribute graces.

It is based also on tradition and on the teaching of the Popes. Finally, it corresponds perfectly with the conformity of Our Lady with Our Lord Jesus Christ. The institution of the Feast of Mary Mediatrix has ratified and crowned this doctrine. It appears, therefore, to be capable of definition.

Then, universality to all men. Just as for Our Lord Jesus Christ, one needs to note a difference in the mediating action of Our Lady between different people in history. Indeed, even if She is the cause of satisfaction and of merit for all men and for all time, She could not intercede specially for every person of the Old Testament, nor distribute to them the means of salvation, because She did not know them. We have to say that She has only exercised this function perfectly, with full knowledge of all Her children, since Her Glorious Assumption. I might add that we must also believe, for the same reasons, in Her particular intervention in the release

of souls from Purgatory.

Finally, in order to be complete, let us ask ourselves what is the means of influence of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### **Mary is the Cause of Grace**

Which way does She use to distribute the graces? We must hold, with all the theologians, that She is the cause, at least morally, of grace by Her intercession for us with Her Son. This is what we have seen. Is She the physical cause of grace, like an instrument through which God would pass it in order to distribute it to us? Even if the theologians are still divided on this question, it seems more and more probable that, like a good mother, She leaves Her mark on the graces that She obtains for us. It also corresponds better with Her conformity with the mediator, Our Lord, whose Sacred Humanity is the physical instrument by which God distributes graces. Since it remains in doubt, this question cannot, however, be included in a dogmatic definition.

To conclude, it is established that the mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is universal:

- Not only morally but absolutely;
- Not only as to the generality of graces, but for each soul and for each particular grace;
- Not only *de facto*, in fact, but *de jure*, as a right.

This means that God distributes all graces in such a way that He has decreed not to give any of them other than through the prayer of the Blessed Virgin because She was associated with Christ in the work of the Redemption and the dispensing of graces.

The two main elements that make up the universal mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that is to say, Her association with the Redemption and the dispensing of graces, are not simply, certain, theological conclusions. Everything points to show that they are, at least, equally revealed:

- The link with the other privileges of Our Lady, that is to say, the link with Her dignity of Mother of God, with Her participation in the work of Redemption, with Her spiritual motherhood of all men;
- The perpetual association by Tradition of Christ with

His Mother;

- The progress of the traditional doctrine of this subject by formulae that are more and more explicit, which have been believed unanimously for a long time; this is a sign of the work of the Holy Ghost;
- The voice of liturgy;
- The universal sentiment of the faithful.

This doctrine seems to belong to the magisterium of the Church too, judging by the number of Pontifical documents which confirm it. Finally, no serious objection is made to it. Consequently, this universal mediation is understood as follows:

- As subordinated to that of Christ and dependent on His merits;
- Necessary, not absolutely, but by the free will of God, it can be said to be revealed at least implicitly and to be capable of dogmatic definition.

The request for the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is clearly ordered to illustrate this Marian privilege. Father Garrigou-Lagrange, Dominican, affirmed that

consecration to Mary – he was talking here of individual consecration – was “a practical recognition of Her universal mediation.”

To finish, we can ask why Our Lord holds so much today to converting the world explicitly and uniquely by means of the Immaculate Heart, to forcing men and nations to have recourse to Her mediation. Why?

It seems to me that it is to respond adequately to the evil which characterizes modern times: subjectivism, independence, the liberal spirit. Men, who would obtain their beatitude by their own strength or, at least, reach God by themselves, by the means which they choose, without a mediator, without Jesus Christ, must from now on humiliate themselves by having recourse necessarily no longer just to the Word of God Incarnate, but to a simple creature, the Immaculate. Besides, they will recognize implicitly by this that all men are born sullied with Original Sin and fundamentally incapable of producing any supernaturally meritorious action, without supernatural grace.

## Mary Reveals the Depth of Our Hearts

Also, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and we have all had experience – more or less – of this in our apostolate, reveals the depths of hearts. We could even compare Her Immaculate Heart to the parables of Our Lord; these parables veil His mysteries for fear that bad men will profane them, but they reveal them in a wonderfully eloquent way to simple and upright hearts. “To you,” says Our Lord, “it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.” In the same way, Our Lady attracts those of a good will who are, perhaps, afraid of Our Lord Jesus Christ, but She is rejected violently by those hearts that are fundamentally perverse.

Let us pray and work to conquer the whole world, and each soul in particular, for the Immaculate and to obtain the definition of the dogma of the universal mediation, which will be the crowning of Her privileges. **FC**

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