

Afterword

None who have carefully pondered the purpose of this study, as explained in its first edition by Msgr. Calkins, will think that this second edition consists merely of minor corrections and additions. It is far more: it is a definitive presentation of Pope St. John Paul II's goals in stressing—not only early in his pontificate, but throughout its entirety—the great importance of total consecration to the Immaculate Heart, i.e., the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart in our hearts and in the Church, so that Jesus can triumph there. The importance of this triumph lies in this, that love of the Immaculate Heart is the condition laid down by Jesus for loving His Sacred Heart as His Mother loves His Heart. Jesus requires such love, not only of a privileged few, but of every member of the Church: every church, every diocese, every bishop and priest and pastor of souls in the work of salvation and renewal of the Church.

In a word, the teaching of Pope John Paul II on this point is not merely sound theological opinion or optional devotion. This consecration to Mary is an indispensable condition for realizing consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and everlasting joy in the company of Jesus. Because this is so, and because so many endanger their salvation and the salvation of others by downplaying or rejecting this truth, he thought it necessary to proclaim this as a truth of the ordinary Magisterium.

Msgr. Calkins has clearly formulated the central question of this study: “Why is the Pope so doggedly persistent in entrusting every local church, country, and the universal Church to the Mother of God? Is there a Christological perspective which justifies such deportment?”

The Holy Father set forth his teaching in numberless documents of all kinds, but especially one: *Redemptoris Mater*. In all of them the answer is a resounding “YES,” an answer given first of all by Jesus Himself as He was about to die on the Cross (cf. Jn 19:25-27). This consecration complements the consecration or sanctification of Jesus’ own self sacrifice, made the night before at the Last Supper (cf. Jn 17:17,19). It reveals how, just as the beginning of Jesus’ saving ministry involves Jesus as Son and Mary as Mother, so the completion of that work of salvation also involves the divine Mother as Coredeptrix, Mother of the mystical Body, and Mediatrix of all graces. The response of the beloved Disciple to the command of Jesus to love His Mother and take her into his heart is a response for us as well, for without that response the Church cannot survive. And so, from its beginning, the Church has always taken Mary into her midst as her principal member: Mother of the Church’s Head and Mother of the members of Christ’s mystical Body.

Msgr. Calkins continues: “Hence, the explicit purpose of this study is to analyze the act of consecration or entrustment to Mary in order to discover its basis in the mystery of Christ the Incarnate Word and in the eternal plan of God—and to do so explicitly in terms of the teaching and practice of one of the Church’s supreme pastors, Pope Saint John Paul II.”

Those readers familiar with the first edition of this study will be aware of the author’s success in accomplishing this objective with the abundant documentation already then available. The eight chapters in that first edition show consistently how the Holy Father links his program and the traditional exposition of this theme in the teaching of the Church, not excluding that of Vatican II, above all in *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 60-62.

This is precisely the passage cited most often, not only a quarter century ago, but now even more subtly, by those who wish to dispense everywhere with any unique Marian maternal mediation on Calvary, to dispense with needed “go-betweens” to

reach Jesus, and to reject such apt terminology as coredemption and joint predestination of Jesus and Mary—a terminology reflecting a union that, once opened, is never to be terminated, even on Calvary (cf. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*; Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 56-59).

It is evident from the teaching of Pope John Paul II that the Pontiff's plan is exactly the opposite: not only do we need Mary for Christ to be present to us; we need Mary to find Jesus and to consecrate ourselves to Him through her. Both of these involvements in the work of salvation by Mary—first as divine Mother at the Annunciation and then as Coredemptrix on Calvary—are, above all, maternal. Christ might have come as Savior in many ways. In fact, however, there is only one way He deigns to come: as the Child conceived by Mary to be our Savior. And He could have completed His saving work on Calvary in far different ways but, in fact, He completes it through the unique maternal mediation of Mary. She is Coredemptrix because she is the divine Mother; and she is the divine Mother because she is the Immaculate Conception. To be wholly hers requires that we cooperate in some way with the graces won for us by Jesus.

We can only be disposed for this as the Father wishes by being born again of Mary and the Holy Spirit, and enjoying her maternal mediation which renders possible our consecration to Christ through her. We can only be happy for all eternity by loving Mary as Jesus does and with Jesus, as Savior of His Mother and of all whom she has begotten spiritually. The old saying goes thus: no Mary, no Jesus. This is true not merely at the first moment of the Incarnation, but at every moment thereafter. For, Mary is active as Coredemptrix on Calvary and, thereafter, as spiritual Mother of the Church and of her members. Unless we love Mary as Jesus does, He will not be pleased with us. Likewise, if we do not love Jesus as Mary does, especially if we go so far as to exclude Mary from our lives, we will not please Jesus or the Father.

But what is still more evident is the manner in which the Holy Father not only reaffirmed the past teaching, but made it possible to see how his position—and not that of his critics of today and yesterday—is the true reading of Vatican II on Marian mediation. No matter who the promoters for changing this terminology from clear to vague might be, what they are doing is sinful. They are rejecting the teaching of the Church and placing themselves in danger of losing the blessings of the Cross. And they are doing so by the use of cheap arguments, such as claiming that cooperation with Jesus under His direction detracts from His glory in saving souls. Quite the opposite is true: the cooperation of men with the Creator in perfecting the world in no way detracts from the perfect glory of that dear Creator, but enables the creature to praise God and share in his glory. Our collaboration in the work of redemption in one way or another—rendered possible by the perfect collaboration of Mary as maternal Mediatrix—is surely the most exalted of ways in which we can and, indeed, are called to cooperate with Jesus through Mary, in union with her and with the Holy Spirit.

A considerable amount of new material available only after 1991 has been added to the first eight chapters of this second edition to show how Pope John Paul II has finalized rather than modified his teaching in the face of these challenges. One new chapter, the ninth, has been added to answer the question of whether or not the persistent practice of total consecration, wherever the Pope found himself, represents an exercise of the ordinary Magisterium of the Church—that is to say, whether the formulation of this doctrine on total consecration to Christ represents not merely a laudable personal position of the Pope, but also one to be accepted as part of the deposit of faith and an indispensable instrument in the renewal of the Church and its members, the baptized, as well as those yet to be converted.

There is no question about the author's position. The ninth chapter in this second edition of *Totus Tuus* is a definitive

chapter, a chapter in which to recognize, not simply the teaching of one document such as *Redemptoris Mater*, but of innumerable documents—pre-pontifical and pontifical—insistently repeating the same great truths in thousands of formulations. This chapter is the confirmation of the very motto, *Totus Tuus*, underscoring the importance of total consecration to the Immaculate Heart in order to know and love Jesus, especially today. John Paul tells us unequivocally and repeatedly that entrustment or consecration to Mary has a Christological foundation as well as finality. It is truly a golden thread running throughout his papal teaching. *Totus Tuus* is truly an appropriate motto, a summation of the convictions of the Pope—and not only of the Pope alone, but of all creatures. We must all be totally Mary's, or we will never know the salvation and love of Jesus and, through and in Jesus, the salvation and love of the Father.

May the Immaculate Virgin be pleased with these efforts to promote her cause. May she deign to use them as instruments for the salvation of souls, for the ever greater incorporation of the mystery of her Immaculate Conception into the fabric of human life: in every person, in every community, for the greater glory of her Son and Savior and for the triumph of His Kingdom.

Fr. Peter Damian M. Fehlner