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# Keynote and Presidential Address, 1983: The Immaculate Conception and Recent Ecclesiology: II. Christo-Conformity, Maternity, and Brideship in Mary as Type of the Church

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**THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
AND RECENT ECCLESIOLOGY:  
II. CHRISTO-CONFORMITY, MATERNITY, AND  
BRIDESHIP IN MARY AS TYPE OF THE CHURCH\***

How does the Immaculate Conception, taken in itself as a gift of grace, clarify the "new being" to which all men are called in the Church of Christ? To this initial question, a second is united: How may the Marian privilege serve as a criterion for an adequate ecclesiology?

An answer to these questions was begun in a paper read last year.<sup>1</sup> The questions were seen as a particular aspect of the broader issue of Mary as a type of the Church. But this issue in turn was seen as a particular case of a *very* broad question about the relation between any salvation-historical individual (a *hapax*) and the permanent structures through which salvation comes to each new generation. Three answers to this hyperbroad question were considered, each of which was found to correlate with a meta-theological stance. One of these answers, a position which I have called "ontological correlation," was defended as correct, on the basis that it alone allowed room for the real relations of exemplarity and archetypality which Mariologists, seconded and corroborated by the authority of Vatican II, have determined to obtain between Mary and the Church. A number of recent ecclesiologies were thereby found wanting, since they rely upon one of the rejected answers to the hyperbroad question and hence admit of no serious role for the Blessed Virgin as a type.

The aim of the present article is to take a further step toward answering the initial questions. One cannot say what the ecclesi-

\*Part I appeared in W. H. Marshner, "The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception in Modern Ecclesiology: Prolegomena," *MS*, 33 (1982): 124-146.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

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ological relevance of the Immaculate Conception is, until one has reached some clarity on the welter of respects in which the Marian mystery as a whole is said to be comparable typologically to the Church's mystery.

I propose to grope toward such clarity by the following steps: (1) some preliminary remarks on *types* as products of spiritual understanding and as data for theological reflection; (2) a delineation of the several *senses of "Church"* in which what is called the Church may stand as a term of comparison with Mary, and (3) an elaboration of the *three basic perspectives* or "*prisms*" in which Mary and the Church may be viewed and compared.

A. On Types

That certain biblical realities are "types" of others is a conviction which the Church inherits from the Apostles. St. Paul taught that Adam was a *typos* of Him who was to come (Rom 5:14), and St. Peter declared baptism to be the anti-type of those waters which, in the days of Noah, bore aloft the ark (I Pet 3:21). But such NT examples were very few. What further realities were to be construed as types, and as types of what, was a question left to the acumen of Christian exegetes. They had to divine a principle or procedure of comparison behind the apostolic examples and then extrapolate it. It is vital to understand what kind of procedure this turned out to be.

To interpret one biblical reality as a "type" of another is, quite literally, to *make* something of it. It is a creative decision (but not therefore an arbitrary one). It is not a result of "exegetis" in the standard grammatical or historico-scientific sense of that word. One cannot discover a "type" in the way in which one discovers the reference of a term or the linguistic meaning of a message. Apart from those few cases explicitly mentioned in the NT, typology does not lie on the message level of the biblical text, just as the artistic significance of a poem does not normally lie on the level of its propositional content. In fact, there is an impressive analogy to be drawn between the effort of spiritual understanding, in which typological values are assigned, and the effort of responsible criticism in the arts, in which artistic

and cultural values are assigned to a given work.<sup>2</sup> I shall not pursue that analogy at this time, beyond registering one rather fundamental observation.

Looking for typological significance, as the Fathers and medieval commentators did, presupposes that the record of salvation history, laid out before one in Scripture, is a work of art on God's part. God must be seen not simply as the cause of various historical events but as the dramatist of them—designing situations, moulding characters, elegantly crafting events, so that what comes early in the play will resemble, portend, or foreshadow the dénouement. Given such a presupposition, salvation history emerges as *one* process, unified with infinite artistry.<sup>3</sup> Only within this one process can the spiritual significance of a given reality,  $x$ , be “construed” by going beyond the message-level of the text, by finding another (usually later and textually unrelated) reality,  $y$ , such that when  $x$  is put in proper relation to  $y$ , a maximum of spiritual illumination (i.e., of insight into the divine plan) results.

For present purposes, there are just two lessons which need to be drawn from this observation. The first, which I take to be quite uncontroversial in its essentials, is that types are not prod-

<sup>2</sup> The model of art criticism on the basis of which I allege this analogy is the one provided by Mortimer R. Kadish, *Reason and Controversy in the Arts* (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1968). Sparring with Tate, Wimsatt, Frye, and other masters of the “new criticism,” while conducting a running battle with Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, Kadish produces a full-scale alternative to conventional aesthetic theory, vindicating in the process certain capital insights of T. S. Eliot. A work of substantial theological importance could be produced, I believe, by re-studying the spiritual exegesis of the Fathers and medievals in the light of Kadish’s work.

<sup>3</sup> The same view is expressed by Msgr. Gerard Phillips: “Sur cette continuité de l’histoire sacrée s’appuie le principe de la *typologie*. Dans les données concrètes des événements et des personnages anciens, la Providence prépare les réalisations futures du dessein salvifique” (p. 371). See his “Marie et l’Église, un thème théologique renouvelée,” in Hubert du Manoir, S.J., ed., *Maria. Études sur la sainte vierge*. (Paris: Beauchesne et ses fils, 1964), 8:363-419.

On our specific topic, Congar observes that the continuity between Mary and the Church lies in the divine plan, according to the Fathers, and not in the specific mystery of the divine maternity; see Y. Congar, “Marie et l’Église dans la pensée patristique,” *RSPT*, 38 (1954): 14.

ucts of theology in the analytico-discursive sense in which we have come to understand theology. They are products rather of spiritual understanding and hence data for theology, requiring special handling. It is not appropriate for theology to work with these types, build on them, or reason from them, as though they were revealed data, except precisely in those few cases in which they are revealed data. Rather, it is the job of theology to test the myriad types which abound in patristic and medieval exegesis, to examine the alleged relation of the type to its anti-type, to discover the principles of analogy or continuity upon which this relation is based, to discuss these principles as un-metaphorically as possible, and to hold fast those which are sound. And yet, despite the necessarily "critical" character of this work, it must not result in a wholesale replacement of types by concepts whose "clarity" is achieved by impoverishing the traditional data.<sup>4</sup>

The second lesson is that types and their anti-types are not readily reduced to more familiar kinds of relata. Obviously, there must be something about the one reality which resembles and "suggests" the other, in order for the one to be a type of the other. But it does not follow that the one is therefore a symbol of the other, much less an example or personification of the other. Adam is a type of Christ. I should hardly call him a symbol of Christ, and he certainly does not exemplify or personify Christ. This fluidity, or rather unrestrictability, of the idea of "types" vis-à-vis certain narrower or more precise modes of comparison is reflected already in the polyvalence of "τύπος" in the New Testament. As this point is important, let us pause to review briefly the philological evidence.

Neither in secular Greek usage nor in the NT is "τύπος" a specialized term. Quite the contrary, it covers a fuzzy range of senses, based in one way or another upon the concrete idea of a blow or imprint caused by a blow.<sup>5</sup> In this basic sense, a skepti-

<sup>4</sup> The right balance here is hard to strike. See Lennerz's quite severe review of A. Mueller's book, *Ecclesia-Maria*, in *Gregorianum*, 34 (1953): 535ff.; but see also the observations of G. Philips on that review in "Marie et l'Église . . .," pp. 407f.

<sup>5</sup> See standard lexica, such as Liddell and Scott, *s.v.*

cal Thomas asks to put his finger into the  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\nu$  of the nails (John 20:25).

From there it is a short step to the general ideas of an impression or what makes an impression, a pattern or what is copied from a pattern. Thus the images fashioned for idolatrous worship are  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  (Acts 7:43), and Moses is told to build the tabernacle exactly according to the  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\nu$  he has been shown in his vision (Acts 7:44; Heb 8:5). So, too, an accurate copy of a letter is, or reproduces, its  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\varsigma$  (Acts 23:25). The set form or pattern in which a doctrine is expressed is likewise its  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\varsigma$  (Rom 6:17) or its  $\delta\upsilon\pi\omicron\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omega\varsigma\iota\varsigma$  (2 Tim 1:13).

Next, when the context deals with man's actions or good behavior, a "pattern" becomes an example. Thus, pastors are to be  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\iota$  for their flocks (1 Pet 5:3). Good or bad example is in fact the most common sense of  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\varsigma$  in Paul's letters. In the good way, Titus is to be a  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\nu$  for the younger set (Tit 2:7; cf. 1 Tim 4:12); Paul and his companions are to be taken as a  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\nu$  for their converts (Phil 3:17; 2 Thes 3:9); the Thessalonian congregation as a whole is a  $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\nu$  for other congregations in Greece and Macedonia (1 Thes 1:7). When the "type" is a bad example, by contrast, it serves as a sign of admonition, warning us not to do certain things (1 Cor 10:6, 11). For both kinds of moral example, the good and the bad, " $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\varsigma$ " is replaceable in NT Greek by " $\delta\upsilon\pi\omicron\delta\epsilon\lambda\gamma\mu\alpha$ ," a word which seems to have been the popular, if slightly incorrect, substitute for " $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\lambda\gamma\mu\alpha$ ." Thus, in the good way, Christ's washing their feet is a  $\delta\upsilon\pi\omicron\delta\epsilon\lambda\gamma\mu\alpha$  for the disciples (John 13:15), while, in the bad and admonitory way, the wicked conduct *cum* sorry end of Sodom and Gomorrah is a  $\delta\upsilon\pi\omicron\delta\epsilon\lambda\gamma\mu\alpha$  (2 Pet 2:6; cf. Jude 7 and Heb 4:11).

Now, there is a very interesting difference between "example" in the moral sense and "example" in the non-moral sense of an instance of a kind. The latter bespeaks a two-place relation. "This bowl is an example of pre-Columbian pottery" bespeaks a relation between the bowl and the kind or class of which it is a member (if you are a certain kind of philosopher) or between the bowl and a batch of properties (if you are another kind); in either case, the relata are just two. But moral exemplarity is three-sided. Not only may a person's conduct be an example *for*

others (as in the examples seen above), but it must also be an example of some attitude or value. Thus the prophets are to be a ὑπόδειγμα of patience for us (Jas 5:10), and Paul says that his life has been a ὑποτύπωσις of Christ's patience with sinners (1 Tim 1:16). These texts are quite interesting because they mark a point of transition from exemplarity to personification and symbolism. When a person's life is for us a famous example of some divine policy, of some attitude or value, the person tends to become a symbol of it. Job is a very symbol of patience, its "personification."

Now τύπος can also mean symbol outside the context of moral example; or so it would appear, at least, from 1 Peter 3:21. When we are told that baptism is the ἀντίτυπον of the waters of the Flood, the most likely sense is that baptism is what was symbolized by those waters. If this is correct, then τύπος is sometimes a synonym of παραβολή (Cf. Heb 11:19). Unfortunately, it is not at all clear that "symbol" will translate τύπος in Romans 5:14, where we are told that Adam is a type of Christ—unless, perhaps, we are prepared to take "symbol" in a quite different way. In fact, "symbol" is ambiguous. It does not always bespeak exemplary fullness or exhibition of the thing symbolized but, quite the opposite, may mean non-exhibition or empty representation of the thing symbolized. In this sense, it is a question of "mere symbols" in contrast to the reality. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews wants to tell us that earthly altars and man-made sanctuaries are "mere symbols" of the True Sanctuary, which is in Heaven. The vocabulary through which he expresses this contention is threefold. In one place, he says that earthly altars are ὑποδείγματα of the heavenly (Heb 9:23), using what we have already seen to be a synonym of τύπος in other contexts. In a second place, he says that the earthly altars are a σκιά (shadow) of the heavenly (Heb 8:5). In a third place, we read that the man-made sanctuaries are ἀντίτυπα of the real one (Heb 9:24), a usage which is surely a reversal of the one in 1 Peter 3:21. These facts suggest the possibility that Romans 5:14 wants to make Adam a type of Christ in the sense of a mere symbol or foreshadow. But surely, if Adam was something less than an exemplary exhibition of the Christ who was to come, he was

still much more than an empty symbol of him. In other words, the meaning of "τύπος" in Romans 5:14 is *sui generis*; rather than using other occurrences of this word to see what is being said about Adam and Christ, it is very close to being the case that we must use our knowledge of Adam and Christ to see what is being meant by this word.

Beyond controversy, this flexibility or ambivalence of the type-relation vis-à-vis other, more precise modes of relation continues and increases in the hands of the Fathers. An attempt to reduce all types to some one mode of relation, e.g., to make them all "shadows" or all personifications, would distort patristic exegesis almost beyond recognition. While no one, to my knowledge, commits so wholesale a mistake, still there are certain quarters in which incautious passage from the talk of types to a talk of exemplars, prototypes, or hypostatizations, is all too easily made.

In the case of Mary and the Church, a hasty passage from type to personification has been especially deleterious. Influential theologians have leaped from the fact that Mary is a type of the Church to the conclusion that she must somehow be an answer to the question of *who is the Church*.<sup>6</sup> In order to make the case that this leap is indeed a mistake, permit me a few moments of reflection on this curious question.

Who, indeed, is the Church? Actions, attitudes, and aspirations are ascribed to the Church as to a personal subject. Who is this subject? It is useless, of course, to look for someone of whom *every* predicate of the Church is true. But if we select only those predicates which could be true of an individual person, it is still difficult to find the right test-question to yield a satisfactory answer.<sup>7</sup> It is too vague, for example, to make the test-question this one: Who can say, "I am the Church"? All kinds of people can say this. Every martyr can say, "I am the Church," in

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Wer ist die Kirche?" in his *Sponsa Verbi* (Einsiedeln, 1961), pp. 148-202; separate edition by Herder: Freiburg i. Br., 1965.

<sup>7</sup> Test-question? The reader will see immediately what I have in mind. The procedure of posing such questions has an important methodological rationale; but I prefer here to exhibit its fruitfulness rather than talk about it.



that he represents the Church to his persecutors. Rather better is the question: "What I do, the Church does"? For then it becomes perfectly clear that the answer cannot be Christ (*simpliciter*), even though He is the Head of the Church. Christ cannot say, "What I do, the Church does." Christ died for us on the cross, and the Church did not. Christ will come again, and the Church will not. Christ acts as *principal* agent in all the Sacraments, and the Church does not.

However, our test-question is still ambiguous. It admits of two clear senses; and once they are distinguished, each will be found to yield a sensible answer. The first sense is this: Who can say, "What I do, the Church does officially"? Or, equivalently, Who can say, "My actions, decisions, choices are the ones which commit the Church"? In the sense of this test-question, who the Church is is perfectly clear. Each particular church *is* her bishop; in him she subsists.<sup>8</sup> The Universal Church is also her bishop—that primate whose jurisdiction is universal, immediate, ordinary, and "truly episcopal."<sup>9</sup> In Christ's vicar the Universal Church is one agent, one subject of ascription. That is at least one good reason why the true Church of Jesus Christ "subsists in" the Roman Catholic Church,<sup>10</sup> and can never "subsist" anywhere else.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Henri Cardinal de Lubac makes a very similar point, when he says: "The spiritual head represents his community as the personification and the summation of the body of which he is the head," in *The Motherhood of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), p. 319, note 23.

<sup>9</sup> *D-Sch*, no. 1827.

<sup>10</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, art. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Without pretending to do justice to the exegetical question of what Vatican II may have meant by the language of subsistence at this point, I offer the following philosophical justification for my own usage.

The traditional notion of subsistence (though offering many obscurities, to be sure) is at least clear in this: at its heart it holds the two notions of wholeness and concretion. What subsists is a whole, never a mere part or aspect. And what subsists is concrete, never abstract. If we agree to speak analogously of the Church as "subsisting," we must at least be prepared to carry over these two notions. Let us see how this may be done.

(1) A subsisting Church must be concrete. It must emerge from the abstractness of a merely ideal, projected, or "paper" organization. No doubt there are many ways in which a society or "social entity" achieves this concreteness.

The second sense is very different. This time the question is rather like this: Who can say, "What I do, the Church does interiorly"? That is, Who can say, "My actions are the ones which every member of the Church, as a living member, is called upon to realize, participate, or imitate"? Here it is not a question of the official acts flowing from the powers of order and jurisdiction but rather of those actions which are the actuation of grace itself, of the infused virtues, and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit—the actions which pertain to and comprise that "order of charity" which it is the very purpose of the Church's official acts to protect. In this second sense, it is a question of *whose deed the Church is doing* when she lives divine life under the regulation of her legitimate authorities. One may put it this way: Who am I being when I love my brothers? Who am I being when I suffer in silence? Whose mind do I have when I believe all that the Church believes? These questions again have but one clear answer: I am being Christ—an *alter Christus* to my neighbor. I am putting on the mind of Christ.

Someone may say: am I not also being Mary? Is not all true

In having a particular origin or founding, in adopting particular policies or decisions, in thus making a particular *history* for itself, a social entity emerges as "concrete." But notice that all these ways-to-concretion depend upon a more fundamental one: the filling of roles and offices in the society *by particular persons*. Only through their action is anything founded or decided; only through them is any history made. Therefore, insofar as subsisting is concretion, a social entity subsists through its *personnel*. And if not all its personnel are equally essential to the society's existence, we are led on to face the following point.

(2) A subsisting Church must be a whole. Certainly, no particular church is ever a whole without its bishop. Nor is the Catholic Church a whole without the Roman Pontiff (Indeed, the fact that the episcopal college is not a whole without the Pope is already familiar doctrine.). The bishop as bishop is, therefore, in a very special sense the *completive part* of the Church, and it should not seem excessively strange to say that the Church subsists "in" or, perhaps better, "through" him. Vice-versa, if every other living member of the Universal Church fell away into apostasy, leaving the Pope alone as the last believer, would we not say that the Church still existed in the world? And would we not at least hesitate or even refuse to say that the Church still existed in this world, if (*per impossibile*) the last believer were someone other than Pope or bishop, say, a simple layman?

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imitation of Christ somehow Marian love, Marian faithfulness? Yes, assuredly. But why? It can only be because she is the most conformed to Christ! She is *His* transparency. Through her *His* light comes to me "sifted to suit my sight," as Hopkins put it.<sup>12</sup> She is closest to Him interiorly; *that* is why I cannot draw near to Him without drawing near to her, nor near to her without drawing near to Him. In a word, He is the real *Urbild* (*pace* Semmelroth), and she has her dignity in being His fairest copy.<sup>13</sup> That is part of the meaning of a Christo-typical Mariology, the summit of an also Christo-typical ecclesiology.

To conclude, then: the personification question does admit of certain answers, when asked about certain aspects of the Church. But the answers either converge hierarchically toward the bishop or converge mystically toward Christ, not Mary. This is not the question which leads us, therefore, into Mary's role as type of the Church.

And to conclude this first section: shadows, symbols, signs, examples, exemplars, and personifications are different things — six different things. Any given "type" may be analyzable as one or more of these six, or it may not. The point is that, when Mary is compared to the Church as type thereof, the question of what *kind* of comparison is being made is not thereby closed. It is rather opened. A wide range of possibilities presents itself. I shall argue below, in section (C), that at least three of these possibilities, mutually irreducible, are being realized in the Mary-Church case.

But before we proceed to that discussion, one of the terms of the comparison is in need of clarification.

<sup>12</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, "The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe," lines 110-113.

<sup>13</sup>I concur unreservedly with these words of Msgr. Philips: "Si la Vierge est le modèle idéal de l'Église, c'est précisément parce qu'elle était spirituellement modelée sur son Fils, au point de reproduire parfaitement dans son âme, docile à la grâce, les sentiments qui animaient Jésus. L'*Urbild*, au sens tout à fait strict, n'est autre que le Sauveur lui-même. Mais de lui à l'Église la figuration est articulée sur le membre suréminent de la communauté des rachetés . . . elle fait office de point de jonction entre le Messie et son peuple" (G. Philips, "Marie et l'Église . . . ," p. 405).

B. On the Senses of *Church*

A bewildering variety of senses and divisions of "the Church" is already familiar to theology.<sup>14</sup> To claim that the Blessed Virgin is or is not "above" the Church, is or is not the "pattern" for the Church in some regard, etc., always involves a choice of one or another of these senses—a choice which has not always been made clear or explicit. While I disclaim any ambition to propose new senses, I ask the reader's indulgence to explore some old ones. For not every way of taking "the Church" yields the same basis for typological comparison. There seem to be at least three dimensions in which the scope and sense of *Church* may vary.

The first dimension is vertical, a matter of "altitude," so to speak. At her highest, the Church is taken to include her divine Head; she is then the *Totus Christus*, Head and members. At medium height, the Church is taken without her Head, over-against Him, as Spouse or *Corpus Mysticum* in contrast to the Head, and yet as containing the heavenly Church Triumphant, the souls of the Church Patient (and perhaps also the angels). At lowest "altitude," finally, the Church is taken entirely *in statu viae*, as *Ecclesia militans*, standing in contrast not only to Christ the Head and Bridegroom but also to all her members who have passed beyond this life.

The second dimension is width of temporal horizon, which also involves latitude with respect to institutional identity. At maximum width, the Church enfolds all those who have been justified before God, from the beginning of the world until its consummation; it is the *ecclesia ab Abel*.<sup>15</sup> At a slightly narrower width, the Church is God's historically called "people,"

<sup>14</sup> A good example is I. Salaverri, S.J., *De Ecclesia Christi* in *Patres Societatis Jesu in Hispania Professores, Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, 5th ed. (Madrid: BAC, 1962), 1:542f.

<sup>15</sup> This *sensus latus* is what St. Thomas seems to have in mind in the *Su Th*, III, q. 8, a. 3. Immediately thereafter, a. 4, he seems to acknowledge a still wider sense, in which "Church" embraces all those *ordained* to a supernatural end, angels and men. But this idea seems to define the Church's potential scope rather than any actual scope; I shall have no use, therefore, for the *sensus latissimus*.

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formed in response to His promise: *ecclesia ab Abraham* (Romans 4, Galatians 4:21ff., and Matthew's genealogy show important traces of this idea in the NT.). At a still narrower width, the Church excludes the arrangements of the Old Covenant; she enters history with the first effulgence of the full grace of the NT, an event which occurs in the life of the Theotokos—occurs already in the silence, I believe, of the Immaculate Conception: *ecclesia a Maria*.<sup>16</sup> Then, at narrowest width, the Church is the visible community founded by Christ, drawing life from His sacraments under the regime of His apostles: *ecclesia ex latere Christi*. Empowered at Pentecost, this “width” of the Church is too familiar to require comment.

The third “dimension” in which the sense of “Church” can vary is quite unlike the two we have just reviewed. They are extensional. The third dimension is *intensional*, a matter of analysis, of conceptual emphasis, or of different modes of abstracting. When theologians use the tool of hylomorphic vocabulary to distinguish within the Church an active, formative element from a receptive, informed element, or when they draw a line between the Church as institution and the same Church as community, or when they contrast a hierarchical with a charismatic aspect—not with a view to ruinous separations and negations but to highlight the inner complexity and tension of the Church's *one* mystery—when they mark these and similar distinctions, I repeat, they are working in this third dimension.

<sup>16</sup> The theme of contrast between two virgins, Eve and Mary, dear to a great number of the Fathers from the time of Justin, Tertullian, and Irenaeus, already suggests that Mary marks a new starting point. Gerhoh of Reichersberg was to hail her as “*Ecclesiae sanctae nova inchoatio*” (*De gloria et honore Filii hominis*, 10; PL 194, 1105 AB). A theologically striking rationale for this particular “width” of the Church was given by Godfrey of St. Victor:

Iure igitur etiam *tempore* beata virgo prima mater gratiae et *caput ecclesiae* appellatur. Quamvis enim ante ipsam multae sanctae et electae animae ad quandoque futuram pertinuerint ecclesiam, nulla tamen ante ipsam presentialiter incipientem sic *inchoavit* vel fundavit, sicut ipsa quae *primum* eius *membrum* et *caput* fuit.

Nec obstat quod docente sacra scriptura beatum fructum uteri eius dominum Iesum caput esse ecclesiae didicimus. Aliter namque ista, aliter ille

For our purposes, as we shall see in the next section, at least three such considerations of the Church will prove useful. In order to understand them, it will be helpful to close this section with the development of some preliminary ideas.

First, we may remind ourselves of the difference between ordered and unordered sets. Think of a child's bag of marbles, its contents being of various colors and sizes. If we think of the marbles simply as "belonging to that collection," we are thinking of them as an unordered set; we are leaving aside any distinctions, relations, or gradations which may exist among them. But suppose we think of the same marbles as ordered by size, under the relation "as large or larger than." The result is a (partially) ordered set, in which the largest marble or marbles rank highest, the smallest lowest.<sup>17</sup> Alternatively, we can think of

hoc dicitur: ista *tempore*, ille auctoritate; ista principio, ille principaliter; ista materialiter tanquam prima eius pars et materia, ille causaliter tanquam eius efficiens causa . . . (*In Nativ. B.M.*, cited by H. Barré, C.S.Sp., "Marie et l'Église du Vénérable Bède à Saint Albert le Grand," *Études Marianales*, 9 [1951]: 93; I have taken the liberty of standardizing the Latin spelling.).

To show that this perspective is by no means a defunct oddity, permit me to recall these magisterial lines of a contemporary *peritus*:

Marie est l'aboutissement spirituel du peuple élu de l'ancienne Alliance et en même temps l'aurore et l'amorce de son renouveau dans le christianisme. La lignée des dépositaires de la Promesse se termine en elle; en sa personne leurs aspirations atteignent leur point culminant, point de départ d'un merveilleux retour. Elle inaugure l'Alliance définitive . . . Marie est l'Église en germe, la première croyante de l'Incarnation, "l'Église avant l'Église," c'est-à-dire avant son déploiement dans la foi des disciples et avant son épanouissement dans l'organisation apostolique et hiérarchique. L'Esprit-Saint, Force du Très-Haut, commence son oeuvre en Marie, avant de l'étendre, à partir de la Pentecôte . . .

"Marie n'appartient donc pas simplement à l'ancien Testament, ni non plus sans détermination ultérieure au nouveau Testament: elle est à la lettre le passage personnel du premier au second" (G. Philips, "Marie et l'Église . . .," p. 370).

<sup>17</sup> A totally ordered set is like a chain, in which, for any two elements, one must be higher in rank than the other. A partially ordered set, by contrast, al-

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them as ordered by color, under the relation "as dark or darker than." The result is a different (partially) ordered set, in which the black or dark blue ones rank highest, the yellow or white ones lowest. A third ordered set is obtained by ranking the marbles according to which ones are better liked by the child who owns them; a fourth arises by considering the temporal order in which the marbles were captured in the child's last game; a fifth and more complex kind of order emerges from the same game, if we group the marbles under the relation "x caused y to move"; and so on, and so on.

Despite the humble character of this illustration, the ideas involved are of great generality. They can be applied to a set of persons ordered by degree of sanctity, to the same set of persons ordered by hierarchical status, and to the same set again ordered by causal relations of moral and spiritual influence. What is in any case decisive, and what these general ideas help one to see, is that the Church of God is not simply a set of persons delimited by some selection of criteria, no matter whether those criteria are external-social ones or internal-spiritual ones; nor is the Church some *one* ordering of such persons. In her integral density, the Church is something like the order of all supernaturally structured orderings of persons human, angelic, and divine. That is why no one revealed figure, and no one theological concept, can even capture, much less exhaust, the total mystery of the Church. More to the point, this internal complexity of the Church is the reason why a "type" of the Church—in proportion as it aims to be a profound and illuminating type—will have to contain within itself a plurality of implicit comparisons, a condition which is more than fulfilled in the case of Mary and the Church. Indeed, the number and complexity of traditional comparisons—in virginity, in maternity, in brideship—far from being viewed with suspicion, as a tissue of metaphors to be swept away and replaced by some unitary concept, ought to be

lows for elements which are equal in rank; it even allows for elements which are not comparable under the given relation. An eminently readable introduction to these matters is Charles K. Gordon, Jr., *Introduction to Mathematical Structures* (Belmont, Calif.: Dickenson Publishing Co., 1967).

prized as positive proof of the high theological value of this particular "type."

A second preliminary idea, equally concerned with our "third dimension," concerns the problem of how exactly to draw the distinction between that aspect of the Church of which Mary is *not* a type and the aspect (or rather bundle of aspects) of which she is the type. G. Philips summarizes a "mainstream" of thinking when he puts the matter like this: "In fact, Mary is not the prototype of the hierarchical power in the Church but the model of spiritual receptivity before the influx of grace, which interiorly animates the life of the Mystical Body."<sup>18</sup> This way of speaking is not entirely satisfactory. It puts too much emphasis on the contrast between passive "receptivity" and active "power," which latter it identifies too closely with the hierarchy—as though the *Christifideles inguantum huiusmodi* were in a passive posture, as though ecclesial life found its actuation exclusively through the clergy, or as though hierarchical powers were not themselves "receptivities" vis-à-vis the motions of grace. Neither hierarchy vs. people nor action vs. potency seems to me to provide the right polarity. It is better to begin with the presence and absence of Jesus.

The Lord Jesus both left His Church and never left it. "It is expedient for you that I go," He tells us; yet, "Lo, I am with you always," He tells us. Both are true. As a visible and public leader, He did leave us. As invisible Head and Friend, made present in diverse ways in His Sacraments and in our souls, He never left us. As an absent public leader, therefore, he needs lieutenants—stand-ins to exercise His authority for Him, until He comes again; but as an invisible presence He needs no such things. This dichotomy is what underlies the distinction within the Church between those offices and actions which pertain to jurisdiction/magisterium and those which do not. The jurisdictional-magisterial element (whose service is neither actuation nor animation but the *regulation* of what is already active) is certain-

<sup>18</sup> "Marie, en effet, n'est pas, dans l'Église, le prototype du pouvoir hiérarchique, mais le modèle de la réceptivité spirituelle devant l'influx de grâce qui anime intérieurement la vie du Corps Mystique" (G. Philips, "Marie et l'Église . . .," p. 367).



ly an element of which the Blessed Virgin is *not* a type. On this point, all theologians seem now to agree.

But with jurisdiction and magisterium (and thus Christ's absence) set aside, there remains another interesting dichotomy within the Church, based this time on two modes of Christ's ordinary presence (ordinary, that is, as distinct from extraordinary appearances, miracles, private revelations, etc.). "Lo, I am with you always," means that Christ is present in the interior of souls through His gifts of grace. But it is a grave mistake to think that the promise means only this. For besides His interior presence, Christ offers and guarantees to us a sacramental presence—by which term I mean not only His real presence in the Eucharist but also His *active* presence as principal agent in all the Sacraments. By virtue of this latter, Christ's presence in His Church is not restricted to souls, to their interior life, but includes also a presence in visible *events*, in sacred actions which, under the requisite conditions, carry a guarantee that Christ allows us to be instruments in His own working as Author and Finisher of our salvation, such that by our instrumentality He makes His working enter a new "now" of our time, a new "here" of our space, a new "this" of our senses. Upon this dichotomy between Christ's interior and sacramental presences, there is based a corresponding dichotomy in Christian action. On the one hand, there is Christian man's action as principal agent—his prayer, witness, worship, asceticism—properly creaturely yet elevated to supernatural dignity by interior graces and achieving effects proportionate to our restored nature. On the other hand, there is Christian man's ministerial action—his instrumentality under Christ's agency—properly theandric and achieving effects which transcend even our graced nature.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> This ministerial action is thus quite distinct from jurisdictional or even magisterial action. Granted, we can say that the Church's official teaching so continues the teaching action of Christ that, in a sense, she perpetuates in the world His voice of authority. Yet her teaching, like her jurisdiction, remains the Church's act, not Christ's act through her. Magisterium is not an eighth Sacrament. Vicarious leadership "in loco Christi" and sacramental enactment "in persona Christi" are quite distinct relations to Christ, which His invisibility in both cases should not tempt us to confuse.

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Neither of these modes of action coincides identically with a state-of-life, vocation, or hierarchical office within the Church. Those adorned with Holy Orders and whose regular action is therefore ministerial are also required to pray, witness, worship, and fast, while those devoid of Orders, whose regular action is therefore of the other kind, may nevertheless also be ministers of Christ, in emergency situations, in performing that Sacrament which is the foundation of all the others—baptism.

To equip ourselves with short, handy (but for that very reason less than fully accurate) labels, let us agree to speak of the Church insofar as she acts in the first mode (i.e., as principal agent of non-jurisdictional and non-magisterial acts) as the *ecclesia fidelium*; and let us speak of the Church in her second mode of action (which is instrumental and based largely but not exclusively on the power of Orders) as the *ecclesia ministrans*. My concern is to point out that both offer a basis for comparison to Mary, though differently so. Mary is our example of faith, prayer, obedience, and chastity, the model of the religious life, and *as such* a type of the *ecclesia fidelium*. But Mary is also the Mother of us all in giving birth to our Head, a symbol of the Church's virginal maternity through the womb of baptism, and as such, I suggest, she is a type of the *ecclesia ministrans*.<sup>20</sup> But more of that in the next section.

### C. Three Perspectives on Mary and the Church

When the complexity of comparisons involved in Mary's "typicality" for the Church is recognized, the theologian must grapple with the challenge of reducing this complexity to some sort of order. He must find a way to present the most important of the comparisons in an intelligible series. Most often, this order is

<sup>20</sup> Which is not to say that she is a priest, formally or eminently, any more than a nurse who baptizes a dying newborn is a priest; nor is it to say that the Blessed Virgin was an instrumental cause of the Incarnation (for in fact a mother is a principal cause of her child); it is only to say that, in her divine maternity, Mary symbolizes the Church in her power to "contain" Christ and give Him to us, her ever-new beneficiaries.

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sought through a listing of the basic predicates or titles which are applied to both: one speaks of Mary and the Church as virgin, then of both as mother, then of each as New Eve, etc. This procedure has the merit, of course, of organizing the discussion around the explicit *data* of tradition. But it fails to go deeply enough. It bases the discussion upon a series of analogies rather than upon the underlying structures and continuities of being which support and justify the analogies.

It was the burden of a previous essay (see above, footnote 1) to argue that there is a real continuity between salvation-historical particulars (like Mary) and the on-going structures through which salvation comes to us (like the Church). Thanks to this continuity, the particular events and personages of the NT are not merely historical realities but also archetypal signs of the salvific action which God is still performing for us. At the heart of this continuity, making it real, is the reality of grace, the mysterious entity through which all the just, from the beginning of the world, participate in divine nature and find unity in Christ. "Both the visible, unrepeatable Mary," I observed, "and the visible, ever-repeated Church are sacred *mysteria*, which connect with each other not only visibly but also invisibly, through the structure of the soul-in-grace."<sup>21</sup>

If there is any truth to that observation, we ought to be able to find the foundations of Mary's ecclesiotypicality in the several facets of the mystery of grace. I propose now to follow this clue. I shall present three facets of grace, showing how each yields a distinct perspective on Mary and the Church.

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St. Paul teaches that our justice, our new life towards God, is the life of the Risen Christ in our souls.<sup>22</sup> He has become a

<sup>21</sup> Marshner, "The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception . . . ," pp. 136f.

<sup>22</sup> Rom 6:4-5; Gal 2:20; I Cor 6:17; Col 2:12-13, etc. See the still useful comments of F. Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul*, tr. by J. L. Stoddard from the tenth French edition (Westminster: Newman, 1927), 2:208-211. For more recent scholarship, see J. A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Pauline Theology* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967), pp. 39ff., 66ff.

life-giving *pneuma*, so that we in Him might become *pneumatikoi* (I Cor 15:45). Hence we live, but rather Christ lives in us. This Christic *pneuma* in us is none other than the life of grace — sanctifying grace with its complementary virtues and acts. Thanks to that identification, three facets of the grace-state emerge.

1. In itself and in its cause *ex parte Dei*, grace is our assimilation, conformation, configuration to Christ, the natural Son and Mediator. Because this conformation to Him in spirit is a participation in *His* divine nature, it is not only assimilation *to* Christ but also assimilation *into* Christ. Under the divine causality, we become not merely copies or replicas of Him (other Christs) but also members of Him, like shoots, branches or cells whose life derives from and depends upon a unity with Him. In this perspective, then, we think of grace primarily as Christ-conforming, as the actuation of some (obediential) potency in us, hence as a habitus produced in us by divine causality. In the same perspective, we think of the Church as the set of all beings so actuated and assimilated. At maximum height and width, this is the mystical society of angels and men with God, the Mystical Body in life-giving union with its divine Head, existing among men since righteous Abel, if not, indeed, since the creation. And still in this perspective, since assimilation is a matter of degrees, the Church emerges as an immense ordering of persons by the closeness and intensity of their conformity to God. If we continue to take the Church at maximum height, this ordering has an absolute apex at which “conformity” is identity in being, an apex who is the Incarnate Word, whose capital grace is a *pleroma* from which we have all received. But now the question arises whether, under this active, con-forming *pleroma*, there is also a fullness of reception, a con-formed *pleroma*, so that the Church, ordered by degree of closeness to Christ, has a supreme *created* member. The answer to that question, of course, is affirmative: the all-holy Virgin, who is herself the apex of the Church, if we take the latter at medium height, the *collum mysticum*, if we take it at maximum height. In either case, she, as *principale* or *excellentissimum membrum*, is that received *plenitudo*, by comparison to which and on the model of which, all

the rest of us have received some part.<sup>23</sup> Mary is thus compared to the Church as its archetype in sanctity. More precisely, she stands as the highest and most perfect example of a kind (the kind being “persons conformed to Christ”), and, like any supreme example, she therefore serves as a symbol of the kind, a symbol of the “full” variety, such that what she is a symbol of is exhibited in her in exemplary fullness.

So much for our first perspective: a facet of grace, a view of the Church in three dimensions, a view of Mary, and a specification of how she is compared to the Church as its type. Notice that, from this perspective, Mary is *within* the Church; as highest member, she does not so much transcend the Church as *exceed* all the other members of Christ the Head.<sup>24</sup> Let us pass to the second perspective.

From considering grace in relation to its cause *ex parte Dei*, it would make sense to take a second look which surveys grace in its cause (or better: necessary conditions) *ex parte hominis*. But it will prove more convenient for us to postpone that perspective to third place, taking up in the meanwhile that facet of grace which shows us its immanent dynamism towards completion in charity.

2. In its dynamic unfolding, grace is actuated above all in fervent love for Christ. Grace is aspiration towards Christ; it is impulsion towards ever greater unity with Him, ever fuller possession of Him. This second facet completes the first: grace is not a static configuration, like a stamped image, but a dynamic one demanding ever greater completeness; nor is grace a configura-

<sup>23</sup> Prominent in many authors, this theme receives its classic statement at the hands of Paschasius Radbertus. See his sermon on the Assumption (falsely attributed to St. Ildephonsus in *PL* 96, 256C) and his sermon *Cogitis me* (falsely attributed to St. Jerome in *PL* 30, 127A,C). On the point that Mary stands “between” the Head and the Church, joining and reconciling them together, see the texts cited in G. Philips, “Marie et l’Église . . .,” pp. 391ff.

<sup>24</sup> On Mary’s belonging to the Church which, as an extensive whole is greater than she, St. Augustine was especially insistent: *Sermo Denis* xxv, 7 (ed. G. Morin, p. 163). But this point does not preclude the complementary truth that she, as an intensive whole, is greater.

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tion in "looks," like an icon, but a configuration in immanent actions. Grace is actuated in my knowledge of Christ, so configured to Christ's knowing, that I have the mind of Christ in me. Grace is actuated in my love of Christ, so configured to Christ's loving, that I have His love within me, constraining me. In a grammatical image, one may say that grace is an alchemy in which the objective genitives of knowing and loving become subjective ones. In this second perspective, then, we think of grace primarily as yearning and affection for the Christ whose life in us it is. In the same perspective, we think of the Church as one people, one society, united by a common love, and collectively composing a Spouse. So considered, the Church is best taken at less than maximum height and width. She stands in contrast to her divine Head, overagainst Him, and her unity as a people reaches its full measure only with the breaking in of the New Testament. This new irruption begins with Mary. As the woman loved into sinless existence, espoused at her immaculate conception, loving God with a total and exclusive devotion which waits in eagerness to say *fiat* to His will, she is the type of the Church as spotless Bride, virgin and undefiled, the *ecclesia fidelium* which stands already in this world as an eschatological sign of the next. More precisely, Mary in this second perspective stands to the Church as a moral example and prototype, exemplary in bridal love and chastity. But I say "prototype," because in this perspective Mary, although within the Church, *precedes* the rest of the Church.<sup>23</sup> She precedes us in three ways. She precedes us in her immaculate conception, being the first to be elevated to the full grace of the New Testament; at the foot of the Cross, she precedes us in her cooperation with the redemption; and at the hour of her dormition, she precedes the rest of us by entry into the glorious and bodily Resurrection.

Let us pass now to the third and final perspective.

3. In its necessary conditions *ex parte hominis*, grace is a fruit of human cooperation. Grace is a product or outcome of free decisions, especially the decision to believe and obey God. This

<sup>23</sup> See the texts cited above, note 16.

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third facet completes the first: being conformed to Christ is not an entirely passive affair on man's part; it also completes the second, but more of that in a moment. Recall first that man's active cooperation takes two forms. In the first form, a man's own soul, in free decisions reached under the impulsion of prevenient actual graces, is so disposing *itself* to sanctifying grace that it is cooperating in the very formation of that grace within itself. (Outside the visible frontiers of the Church, this form of cooperation is verified in those extra-sacramentally justified. Within those frontiers, it is verified in those who dispose themselves to receive fruitfully the life-bestowing Sacraments, especially baptism.) In the second form, however, a man's active cooperation is aimed primarily at *other* souls. As a ministerial agent, he decides in faith to perform an external action which *produces* grace in the soul of the one who (suitably) receives that action. In the baptized infant, the reconciled penitent, or anyone else sacramentally justified, grace is the outcome of the Church's free decision in faith to perform the Sacraments of faith. But recall, secondly, that this grace-outcome in us is *Christ living* in us. Hence the decision of faith is not a mere "making ready" for Christ but a spiritual conceiving of Christ. Somewhat as, in the natural order, the father and mother are truly *parents* of the child in the womb, even though the child's soul has come from God alone, so also, in the supernatural order, the Church (like the faithful soul) is, by its free operations, *parent* of Christ-as-grace-in-the-soul, even though God alone is the efficient (or, if you insist, quasi-formal) cause of that grace. More precisely, the Church (like the faithful soul) is *mother* of Christ-as-grace: for the one who parents under the active causality of another—and in such a way that the offspring is begotten *in* her rather than in another—that one is a mother. Through faith the soul is a mother, because grace arises in the soul itself. Through baptism the Church is a mother, because the new Christian is conceived in the Church. It is now possible to say with more clarity how this third facet completes the second: fervent and spousal love for Christ is never a sterile, self-enclosed infatuation; it is a sharing in Christ's love for His brethren, especially for sinners; actuated grace is a charity which seeks to propagate Christ in new souls

and increase Him in our own.<sup>26</sup>

So, in this third perspective, we think of grace primarily as faith-conceived, as Christ-life engendered in the soul by a spiritual maternity under the power of the Holy Spirit. In this same perspective, we think of the Church primarily as the spiritual Virgin-Mother of the faithful. So taken, the Church stands in relative opposition to her Head, as furnishing new members to Him. Indeed, it is most natural to take this Mother Church at lowest height, i.e., as the Church militant reclaiming and nurturing souls *in statu viae*. Moreover, in the dimension of temporal width, this third perspective coheres best with the Church taken at her narrowest, as dating from the founding events of Christ's public life and more especially from Calvary and Pentecost; for it is only after these events that the Church possesses her mystical womb, the font in which her virginity becomes maternal. Finally, in the third dimension, the Mother Church is best identified with the *ecclesia ministrans*, as discussed above.

With those matters clear, we turn to the Blessed Virgin, whose typicality for the Church is richest, of course, in this third perspective. And the first thing to notice is that Mary, in those aspects of her life which are decisive for this perspective (her *fiat* of faith, her virginal conceiving, her divine maternity), stands *outside* the Church, overagainst the Church as it must be defined for this perspective. The *ecclesia ministrans*, baptismally fertile, does not even exist yet, when she believes the angel's word and bears God's Word. Indeed, her action is what makes *this* Church possible.<sup>27</sup> And the second thing to notice is that Mary is not only outside the Church temporally and causally but, in this perspective, transcends the Church in the nature of

<sup>26</sup> Yet, paradoxically, it is not Christ who is multiplied but we who are unified. It is not Christ who is born again in each of us, but we who are born again in Christ. The first facet completes the third. As a result, it is more correct to say that the Church is our mother in Christ rather than Christ's mother in us. There is a certain analogy, of course, between this paradox and the circum-incession of the divine persons. As the Father is "in" the Son, while the Son is "in" the Father, so we are "in Christ" because Christ is "in" us.

<sup>27</sup> It is possible, however, that there is another way of taking "the Church" which would locate Mary within it even in this third perspective. In Galatians



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her mystery. In her, the facet of grace which is now before us, whereby grace is engendered in the soul by free decisions of faith, is at once verified (*prius concipit mente*) and surpassed. For, without abandoning her grace-filled soul, the Word of Life takes flesh in her womb. Her assent to maternity yields not a new member of Christ but the enfleshed Head of all the members, including Mary herself. How, then, shall we say that this singular maternity compares with the Church's maternity? An acceptable answer is delicate: it must neither deny their continuity nor diminish the immensity of their difference. Between Christ's very Person and the grace which is His life in our souls, there is an ontological continuity but not an identity. In the same way, there is continuity but not identity between the divine and spiritual maternities. In order to conceptualize this situation, certain theologians have tried to say that the continuity is a sameness-of-kind, while the disidentity is a difference of degree. When criticized for the conclusions which seem to follow (that Christ and creatures are different "degrees" of the same thing; that every saint but Mary is a deficient Theotokos), they appeal to *gradus essendi* within the *analogia entis* and defang the word "degree" by surrounding it with adjectives like "supreme," "unrepeatable," and "insurpassable." This is not the place to pursue such maneuvers; suffice it to say that they are symptomatic of a failed metaphysics of analogy, usually one in

4:26, Paul speaks of the free Jerusalem "above," which is "our mother," and in Apocalypse 21:2, we see a new Jerusalem descending from Heaven after the final judgment, to be God's ultimate society with men in the new cosmos. Should we understand these two passages as referring to the same entity? Is it possible that this Jerusalem, though obviously not the Church militant, is nevertheless the Church of the NT from a different angle, taken not as it exists in history but as it *shall be*, complete and resplendent, beyond history? And is it therefore possible that the existence "above" of this Mother-Church is its being-intended in the divine plan, in which it is ideated on the foundation of the eternal decree that the Logos should become incarnate? The biblical data are hardly clear enough to support a firm elaboration, but if these suggestions are pointing in the right direction, then Mary must stand with Christ at the predestined core of this Heavenly Mother.

Without in any way discounting this interesting alternative, I shall not return to it. For most theological purposes, surely, the *ecclesia mater* is the Church present with us in history.

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which *esse* has covertly acquired some univocal *Wesen* of its own. For our purposes, the crucial fact is that neither maternity is a “degree” of the other. They are analogates: *as* Christ was conceived in the flesh through the faith of a virgin, so He is conceived in our souls through the faith of the Church. But analogates are not degrees of each other. Mary’s maternity is not a higher degree of anything the Church does; it is therefore not a “supreme example” or “highest instance” of anything the Church does—any more than God’s being is a “supreme example” of what creatures do. But an analogate *can* be an exemplar-cause; created *esse* is patterned on divine *Esse*; hence it is quite possible that the Church’s spiritual maternity is patterned on the divine maternity, so that the latter becomes the “archetype” of the former.

Given this fundamental analogicity between the two maternities, certain secondary comparisons arise in this third perspective. Mary’s motherhood of our Head, because of its redemptive finality, extends into a maternal concern for all of us, His members. Revealed to John by Christ’s remark from the Cross, this spiritual maternity of Mary’s is then either combined with the divine maternity (to yield a vision of Mary as “Mother of the Church”) or else compared directly with the Church’s spiritual maternity (a comparison which tends to change the focus on the Church, so that what is in view is less the *ecclesia ministrans* and more the action of intercessory prayer, which is constitutive for the *ecclesia fidelium*). But let these remarks suffice for the third perspective.

Grace in its causes: engendered by faith under the action of God; grace in its essence: a configuration to Christ, the Image of the invisible Father, which incorporates the configured into Him; grace in its operation: a life of believing love, which sees Christ lovable in all whom He came to save and waits in hope for His return—three facets of grace which yield corresponding parameters for the Church and posit corresponding loci for Mary as type of the Church. In summary form, at least, the exposition of the three perspectives is complete.

To my mind, they impose an important lesson. Futile and misguided was Koester’s historic attempt to force some absolute

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resolution of the question whether, when all is said and done, Mary is within the Church or above it.<sup>28</sup> Whether she is in or above is entirely a matter of the perspective one has chosen. To be sure, these perspectives interconnect; and very often, in their expositions of the great Mary-Church titles (especially "Virgin" and "New Eve"), the Fathers will cross, combine, or confuse them. But when the tangles are straightened out, the fact remains that the several perspectives are irreducible to one another. And hence, the fact remains that Mary is within the Church in one perspective (our first) and above it in another (our third).

This observation, with the precise apparatus of perspectives upon which it rests, is my own attempt to confirm and strengthen a position taken by G. Philips. In rejecting Koester's attempt to force a choice between "ecclesiotypical" and "Christotypical" Mariologies, Philips affirms in passing the sort of perspectivalism which I have tried to work out. "D'après le point de vue auquel s'établit la réflexion du théologien," he says, "il verra la Vierge tantôt plus près du Chef, tantôt plus près de ses membres," and he adjoins an explanation for this variability: "pour la simple raison qu'elle fait office de point de jonction entre le Messie et son peuple."<sup>29</sup> I have tried to show that this "office" is in fact three-fold. By her divine maternity, she "joins" the Word to His people in the communion of human nature; by her plenitude of grace, she "joins" the Holy One to His people in the communion of sanctity; and by the fervor of her immaculate heart, finally, she "joins" the heavenward aspiration of the espoused people to the heart of the heavenly Groom in the communion of love.

Still, something *like* what Koester was after can be pursued. It makes perfectly good sense to ask whether the three perspectives, irreducible as their plural number may be, are entirely co-equal to one another, or whether one of them enjoys an explanatory priority (ultimacy) over the others. When this question is asked about the mystery of grace, it is likely that such priority belongs to the first facet and perspective. For *what* grace is *in*

<sup>28</sup> H.-M. Koester, "Quid iuxta investigationes hucusque peractas tanquam minimum tribuendum sit B. M. Virgini in cooperatione eius ad opus redemptionis," in *Maria et Ecclesia* (Rome, 1959), 2:21-50.

<sup>29</sup> G. Philips, "Marie et l'Église . . .," p. 405.

*actu primo*, its “quiddity” as *imago Dei*, determines what kind of causes it can have and dictates what kind of flowering it must have in operative virtues and supernatural operations. But when the question is asked about Mary’s mystery, the explanatory priority is quite different. She excels in fullness of grace (perspective one) *because*, having been more sublimely redeemed, she is destined to the divine maternity. Her charity is the radiant dawn of a new and bridal covenant (second perspective), because the bride’s very first prayer of “Maran-atha” is in fact Mary’s prayer of “Fiat” in consent to the divine maternity. For her, then, the first two perspectives are made dependent upon the third; it alone explains them. Therefore, in the precise sense of *explanatory* ultimacy (which does not entail reductionism), it turns out that Mary’s transcending the Church is *more ultimate* than her belonging to it.<sup>30</sup> To Koester and the large party of Mariologists more or less sympathetic to his approach, this is hardly the answer desired; but there is no way of altering it without altering the direction of explanation on which it is based, that is, without showing that the divine maternity itself is explained as a consequence of Mary’s grace or charity. Suffice it to say that such efforts as have been made in that direction, from time to time, do not inspire much confidence.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> I owe the distinction between explanatory “reduction” and outright reductionism to the last chapter of Arthur Danto’s *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge, 1965), especially pp. 260f.

<sup>31</sup> These efforts are well catalogued and criticized by Cyril Vollert, S.J., *A Theology of Mary* (New York: Herder, 1965), chapter 2, esp. pp. 82-92. I might point out that the explanatory ultimacy of the divine maternity, and hence of a perspective in which Mary transcends the Church, is not affected in any way by the point that this maternity itself, by virtue of the redemptive nature of the Incarnation, has the Church in view as its end (in some sense of “end”). Perhaps so; perhaps one will be so bold as to say that the Mother of God is a *means* to the Church. That claim, whatever its merits, is irrelevant for two reasons. First, it has nothing to do with typology. A means is not a type of the end. The question at hand is about Mary *as a type* of the Church. The question is whether, among the perspectives in which she *is* a type, there is one in which she transcends the Church, and whether the other such perspectives depend upon that one. It is not helpful to change the subject. Second, nothing prevents a means from transcending its end in some regard. Granted, the

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I shall conclude this essay by putting the three perspectives to work. If they have value for theology, they ought to show it by contributing to the resolution of various outstanding problems in the field. We have just seen their power to resolve a false dilemma, but many and more substantive problems remain. Ultimately, of course, it is the author's project to show their value towards resolving the problem with which this essay began: the relevance of the Immaculate Conception to our understanding of the mystery of the Church. But we must postpone that problem until we have solved an antecedent one. The ecclesiological relevance of the Immaculate Conception involves a particular application of Mary's ecclesiotypicality, and no such application will be secure until at least one remaining (and major) ambiguity of that typicality has been resolved. I refer to the problem of the "bride."

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As we all know, the Fathers often present the Incarnation as Christ's marriage to human nature.<sup>32</sup> In taking to Himself a concrete instance of our nature, Christ "espoused" mankind. In keeping with this image, many of the Fathers make Mary the bridal chamber in which this marriage is consummated.<sup>33</sup> Others, however, followed by St. Thomas Aquinas, make Mary the proxy who gives consent on behalf of mankind.<sup>34</sup>

Both images of Mary are striking, but neither succeeds in putting the mind at rest. Both seem almost to force one to reason further. After all, it is an odd bridal chamber which is of the same nature as the bride! It is surely an odd "proxy" who is *one*

means does not transcend the end formally as means, but in other respects it certainly may. Suppose someone is throwing rocks at me and I, to avoid injury, grab you and use you as a shield. You are my means, but in the dignity of your humanity you certainly "transcend" the rather modest use to which I have put you.

<sup>32</sup> Augustine has abundant texts in this vein, e.g., *Enarr. in Ps.* 90, *PL* 37, 1163.

<sup>33</sup> *Loc. cit.* Even St. Thomas adopts this figure on occasion: *Lect. in Jo.*, c. 2, l. 1.

<sup>34</sup> *Su Tb*, III, q. 30, a. 1.

of the espoused! Mary simply cannot be extricated from the bridal partner, and so it is hardly surprising that a number of medieval writers made of her the bride *par excellence* and the type of the Church in that capacity.<sup>35</sup> Yet it cannot be denied that such a development is subtly unfaithful to the original patristic images. Both those images are so designed that they might almost be said to go out of their way to insist that Mary herself is *not* the bride. She may represent the bride, even prototype the bride, but she does not personify the bride. She is not the bride "in person." This point, if taken seriously, is already fatal to the approach of Scheeben.<sup>36</sup>

Now if Mary is neither the person nor the personification of Christ's bride, we are forced to ask: —who *is* this bride? —how precisely does Mary "represent" her? —and how, in any case, does the espousal of humanity become the espousal of the Church? That makes three questions, and their answers are interestingly linked. The question, who exactly is the bride, is answered very clearly in the NT and repeated by all the Fathers: the bride is the Church.<sup>37</sup>

We have also seen part of the answer already to our second question. How does Mary "represent" this bride? By conformity to Christ. One may say: that seems like an incomplete answer. I may rejoin: it was an incomplete question. "How does Mary represent the bride?" cannot be answered more fully, until one specifies *to whom*. Representation is *to* someone. I represent Christendom College to you but not to my employers in the College administration; they represent the Collegè to me. It is much the same with a model and even an *Urbild*. Both must in some way "depict," and depiction is not only *of* something but also *to* someone.

Now, then, *to whom* does Mary "model," "depict," or "represent" the bride? It is evident at once that there are two sensible

<sup>35</sup> Rupert of Deutz seems to have begun this line of thought. The evidence has been collected by J. H. Crehan, S.J., "Maria Paredros," *TS*, 16 (1955): 414-423.

<sup>36</sup> M. J. Scheeben, *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik* (Freiburg im B., 1882), 3:489ff.

<sup>37</sup> Eph 5:31.

answers at least: to Christ and to the Church.

To begin with the first answer: Mary represents the bridal Church to Christ. Why? Because *in her*. He espouses us all. We were elected in Him, and He in her loves all His elect. Why in her? Because she is *there* at His coming for this very purpose. Chosen from all eternity and made immaculate for this moment, she, when the moment comes at last, bright center of time and silent fulcrum of history, obeys; she consents in humility to the centerpiece of His salvific will. Already *conformed* to Him in first act, at her conception, she *represents* to Him, better than any other of us, what is like Him and lovable to Him in us all. That is her first and basic representation: to Christ. And note that this first and basic representation emerges in, and corresponds to, our first perspective.

Only subsequently, secondarily, once there *is* a bridal Church, does Mary represent the bride to the bride, to us. How does she do this? By letting us see in her the faith which we would like to have, the hope and love which we are called to have. And why do we see these things in her? Because she is like us? No! Because she is like Christ! *Conformed to Him* in second act, she “models” to us what we ought to be. And note that this second representation corresponds to our second perspective.

So we have answered our second question: by one and the same Christoconformity (now in first act, now in second), Mary represents Christlikeness to the bridal Church and represents the Christlikened Church to the Bridegroom. Her typicality is one of exemplarity. She represents the Church to the Church precisely in representing the very basis of her representation, the Christlikeness which is at once her *forte* and the Church’s basis of existence. And at her moment of consent (and at many other moments as well, including, let us not forget, the “moment” of her predestination *in eodem decreto* with the Lord Himself), she represents this Church to Christ as something already begun in her and in *prospect* in the rest of us.

So much for two of our perspectives and two of our questions. I turn now to the left-over question. The Fathers say that in Mary’s womb and through her consent, Christ espoused human

nature itself. Yet it turns out that the Church is the bride and not the whole of mankind. How comes the switch?

It is not germane to say that the Church is potentially the whole of mankind. For *de facto* it is not, has never been, and (*apokatastasis* aside) never will be. It is not germane to say that the Church's bridal graces are offered to all of mankind. Of course they are. But they are often refused by man. A part of mankind has rejected the grace of Christ, and that part is not Church, not espoused. It is not at all helpful to say that the Church represents mankind, "sacramentally" or in any other way. For the bride does not represent the girls who preferred another husband. The bride of Christ does not "stand in" for the paramours of Satan.

Then how is it that Christ espouses human nature and yet has no bride but the Church? There is a beautiful clue, I think, in that first patristic image, the image of Mary as the bridal chamber, the *thalamium*. Where, after all, is the bridal chamber located in the ancient arrangements. It is not in the house of the bride. Nor is it in any neutral territory, such as an inn or hostel. The bridal chamber is *in the house of the groom*, which was usually the house of his father. By this figure, then, Mary is a room in Christ's house, a space in His Father's mansion. Swept clean for these nuptials before all ages, and from the first instant of her existence, Mary is already at Christ's address—not merely preceding us like an early arrival but ready to receive us like a feature of the place, a part of our destination. *In* her He espouses our nature, and that means *in* His own house, *on* His own terms. To say that Mary is the bridal chamber suggests, therefore, that the Bride of Christ is just that part of mankind which has somehow entered into Marian space; and if to enter into Mary is to enter into a new home, to leave the house in which we were born; and if the house of our birth was *this* world and *this* flesh, then entry into Mary is like the passage through a new womb, a birth into a second life. In her *womb* He espouses our nature, and we, therefore, must meet Him in some mystery which prolongs that holy womb. We meet again our third perspective, introduced this time in a context which makes us recall that wonderfully dense word of Irenaeus:



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Purus pure puram aperiens vulvam eam, quae regenerat homines in Deum, quam ipse puram fecit.<sup>38</sup>

Let that stand as our conclusion.

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<sup>38</sup> "Himself pure, He purely opens the pure womb which regenerates men unto God and which He himself made pure." (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV, 33, 11; *PG* 7, 1080; Harvey, 2:266.)