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MARY AND THE MISSIONS TODAY

Anyone writing a paper on the relation of Mary with the missionary apostolate of the Church soon becomes aware of the magnitude of the undertaking. One is dealing with the mystery who is Mary and the mystery which is the Church. That Church, which by its very nature is missionary, has lived an extraordinary saga in the two thousand years of its mission experience. Even when one adds the limiting word "today,"¹ the task is still enormous. Necessarily, then, we had to limit our parameters. We will, firstly, give the theological roots of the missions. Then, secondly, we will show—in a general way—how Mary relates to the missions, especially as seen in the Church's more recent teachings and activities. Thirdly, we will treat some of the areas that are being stressed in the modern missionary effort and how Mary relates to those. Lastly, we will give a brief sketch of the Marian dimension of the missionary effort of our congregation, the Marists.

I.

MISSIONS²—THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

It is of the very nature of the Church, during its pilgrimage on

¹ "The Church . . . is aware that for her a tremendous missionary work still remains to be done. There are two billion people—and their number is increasing day by day—who have never, or barely, heard the Gospel message." Austin Flannery, O.P., Gen. Ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (2 vols.; Northport, N.Y.: Costello Publishing Co., 1984), 1:824 (*Ad Gentes*, no. 10).

² *Ad Gentes*, nos. 2-10, has a thorough treatment of the doctrinal principles. Cf. the very important "Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World"—*Evangelii Nuntiandi*—of Paul VI, issued after the Synod of 1974; cf. also Donald Senior C.P. and Carroll Stuhlmüller C.P., *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983).

earth, that it be missionary. This flows from the mandate that is the imperative which governs the Church's activity: "Go into the whole world, proclaim the gospel to all creation."³

The roots of the mission of the Church go back to the very heart of the Blessed Trinity. The origins stem from the mission of the Word and of the Holy Spirit, in keeping with the loving designs of God the Father. The missions are the continuation of the process of love in the Trinity whereby the Father generates the Word, and from the love of the Father and the Son proceeds the Holy Spirit. This love emerges and bursts forth in time in the temporal mission of the Word in the Incarnation and in the temporal mission of the Spirit at Pentecost. This love continues, then, in the missionary activity of the Church.

God wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.⁴ He sends His Son into the world to proclaim salvation, mercy and compassion.⁵ In Jesus Christ is revealed God's love for the world and His plan for the world's salvation. In His turn, so that God's work can be continued, Christ sends His Apostles:

—"As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."⁶

—"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations."⁷

In sending His Apostles to continue the mission given Him by the Father, Jesus promises the assistance of the Holy Spirit:

³ Mk. 16:16; Mt. 26:18.

⁴ 1 Tim. 2:4-6.

⁵ Jn. 3:14-17; Gal. 4:4-7; Heb. 1:1-4.

⁶ Jn. 20:21; cf. Jn. 8:42.

⁷ Mt. 28:18-19; cf. Lk. 24:45 sq.

—“And now I am sending upon you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city, then, until you are clothed with the power from on high.”⁸

—“But you will receive the power of the Holy Spirit which will come upon you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judea and Samaria and indeed to the earth’s remotest end.”⁹

The Fathers of Vatican II, basing themselves on the texts of Sacred Scripture, restate the age-old conviction that the Church has the obligation to proclaim the faith and salvation which come from Christ.¹⁰ Consequent to this, men and women have the concomitant right to receive this proclamation and to know what God has done for them in and through Christ.

The history of the missions began when that of Jesus Christ in His human nature was about to end.¹¹ The *Acts of the Apostles* is the first history of the missions. It sketches the early mission and organization of the primitive Church. As they entered into their task, the Apostles had the promise of divine help, as we have seen, and they were instructed on the universal character of the religion they were to preach.

At the center of the group of the first missionaries—the Apostles—we find Mary giving support to them and their great enterprise by her presence, her actions, her prayers, her words. She was not one of the “hierarchy,” not one of the “official” preachers, but she was a dynamic, effective presence in that first ecclesial group, albeit quiet

⁸ Lk. 24:49.

⁹ Acts 1:8.

¹⁰ *Ad Gentes*, no. 5.

¹¹ Acts 1:6-8.

and low-keyed.¹² Indeed, the statement of the "Acts" which speaks of the group gathered in the Cenacle seems to bury her in the midst of that group:

When they reached the city, they went to the upper room where they were staying: there were Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Jude son of James. With one heart all these joined constantly in prayer, together with some women including Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.¹³

Our Lady was carrying out the mandate of her Son who in His last will and testament bade her to accept us as her children in the person of St. John: "Woman, this is your son."¹⁴ Closely associated with her Son during His lifetime, she now takes on the vocation of being associated with His extension, His Church. This association is to continue until its termination in the Parousia. If we look at Mary's history we find that she belongs to all the periods of salvation: the Old Testament, the New Testament, the time of the Church. Scripture shows her playing a pivotal role in the transition from each of these states of salvation to the one following.

"The mission of the Church," as the Fathers of Vatican Council II tell us,

is carried out by means of that activity through which, in obedience to Christ's command and moved by the grace and love of the Holy Spirit, the Church makes itself fully present to all men and peoples in order to lead them to the faith, freedom and peace of Christ by the example of its life and teaching, by the sacraments and other means

¹² As one author puts it: "I vangeli . . . [sono] testimoni dell'opera di silenziosa evangelizzazione compiuta da Maria con la sua vita." T. F. Ossanna, "Evangelizzazione," in *Nuovo Dizionario di Mariologia* (ed. by Stefano DeFiores; Milan: Edizione Paoline, 1986), 544.

¹³ Acts 1:13-14.

¹⁴ Jn. 19:26.

of grace. Its aim is to open up for all men a free and sure path to full participation in the mystery of Christ.¹⁵

The mission task, today, is and must be basically the same as that mandated by Christ and implemented by the Apostles. But it can and will vary in its exercise, depending on circumstances. Changing circumstances will necessitate change in strategy. The way mission work was carried out in the seventeenth century was different from the way it was done in the early Church and different from the way it is done today. Mission activity is different today even from what it was prior to World War II. A better knowledge of the Church and of the world has changed our perspectives. Developments in human sciences such as politics, anthropology, archeology, psychology, history, etc. have given us a different picture of how we are to carry out the mission of evangelization. The political scene and its transformation, due to the fact that what were once colonies have now attained independent status, have given a different focus in the implantation of the Church. The mission, then, is:

. . . that spiritual activity which, originating in the Trinitarian processes, consists in preaching the Gospel to non-Christians and in establishing among them in an indigenous and stable fashion the entire Christian economy for the sake of their own salvation, the full development of the Mystical Body and the glory of the Father through the Son in the Spirit.¹⁶

The purpose of one who takes up the missionary vocation is the solid implantation of the Church, with its essential structures in place and guided by indigenous or local shepherds and pastors. Pius XI, who was known as the "Pope of the Missions" and whose encyclical *Rerum ecclesiae* of February 28, 1926, was considered a

¹⁵ *Ad Gentes*, no. 5.

¹⁶ *Ad Gentes*, no. 6; Louis and André Rétif, *The Church's Mission in the World* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962), 89-90.

milestone in the modern missionary thrust of the Church, said in an earlier allocution: "The Church can only be said to be founded in a given area if she controls her own affairs, has her own churches, her own native clergy, her own means of subsistence; in a word, she must depend on none but herself."¹⁷

The Church at Vatican Council II, voicing the convictions garnered from its long missionary tradition, goes into greater detail on the purpose of the missions for today:

The special undertakings in which preachers of the Gospel, sent by the Church, and going into the whole world, carry out the work of preaching the Gospel and implanting the Church among people who do not yet believe in Christ are generally called "missions." Such undertakings are accomplished by missionary activity and are, for the most part, carried out in defined territories recognized by the Holy See. The special end of this missionary activity is the evangelization and the implanting of the Church among peoples or groups in which it has not yet taken root. All over the world indigenous particular churches ought to grow from the seed of the word of God, churches which would be adequately organized and would possess their own proper strength and maturity. With their own hierarchy and faithful, and sufficiently endowed with means adapted to the living of a full Christian life, they should contribute to the good of the whole Church. The principal instrument in this work of implanting the Church is the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was to announce this Gospel that the Lord sent his disciples into the whole world, that men, having been reborn by the word of God (cf. 1 Pet. 1:23), might through baptism, be joined to the Church which, as the Body of the Word Incarnate, lives and is nourished by the word of God and the Eucharist. (cf. Acts 4:23)¹⁸

¹⁷Pius XI, *Lo sviluppo*, May 30, 1923.

¹⁸ *Ad Gentes*, no. 6.

The Church, whose very nature is to be missionary, carries out the one mission of the unique missionary. If she ceased to do that she would cease to be what her founder intended. In fact, the Church in obedience to Christ has never ceased to send evangelizers, missionaries, to all regions of the earth and to all human situations for the glory of God and the salvation of men.

The duty of evangelization is incumbent first of all on the popes. They bear the permanent and urgent responsibility for the evangelization of the whole world. Our present Holy Father, John Paul II, is very conscious of this obligation, as is witnessed by his many missionary journeys throughout the world.

This responsibility is shared by all the bishops as a collegiate body with the pope and with each other. This collegiate responsibility of the bishops is becoming increasingly clear in pontifical documents, e.g., *Ad Gentes*, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, etc.¹⁹ The basis for this, as stated by the popes, is the ecclesial premise that the bishops are the successors of the Apostles to whom was entrusted the evangelization of the world, and that they possess the fullness of Christ's priesthood which is essentially a missionary priesthood.²⁰

¹⁹ Witness Pius XII in his mission encyclical, *Fidei donum*, of 1957, who reminded his brother bishops that the bishop's "quality as a legitimate successor of the Apostles by divine institution renders him jointly responsible for the Apostolic mission of the Church. This mission which embraces all nations at all times did not cease with the death of the Apostles. It continues in the person of all the bishops in communion with the Vicar of Christ." In the missions, I worked with many diocesan priests on loan from first world dioceses who were called "priests of *Fidei donum*." That they were working in the missions is indicative that their bishops took their obligations to the missions seriously. Cf. also *Christus Dominus*—decree of Vatican II on the pastoral office of bishops—no. 6.

²⁰ A former theology professor of mine, Most Rev. Leo Lemay, S.M., who eventually went to the missions of the North Solomon Islands and in time became the bishop of that territory, always maintained that one had no need of a "special vocation" to be a missionary, that the priestly vocation implied that.

II.

MARY AND THE MISSIONS AS SEEN IN TODAY'S CHURCH

The Church, in that tremendous experience which was the Second Vatican Council, took an inventory of herself and assessed herself. She also looked at the world of today to which she is being sent. This resulted in her considering, in depth, her primary duty of bringing to all the good news of what God has done for all in and through His Son for our salvation.

In this work of self-assessment and self-study the Church encountered, as was to be expected, that reality who is Mary. It repeated a similar experience of the early Church, which grew evermore in the appreciation of the Virgin Mother of God the more she deepened her understanding of Mary's Son, Jesus Christ. John Paul II, in his magnificent encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, writes:

We Christians who know that the providential plan of the Most Holy Trinity is the central reality of Revelation and of faith feel the need to emphasize the *unique presence of the mother of Christ in history*, especially during these last years leading up to the year 2000.²¹

Then the Holy Father goes on to say:

The Second Vatican Council prepares us for this by presenting in its teaching the mother of God in the mystery of Christ and of the Church. If it is true, as the Council itself proclaims, that "only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light," then this principle must be applied in a very particular way to that exceptional "daughter of the human race," that extraordinary "woman" who became the Mother of Christ. *Only in the mystery of Christ is her mystery fully made clear.*²²

²¹ *Redemptoris Mater* (March 25, 1987—Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1987), no. 3 (Vatican translation).

²² *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 4.

In the deepening of her self-knowledge, the Church also gained much by the study of the one whom Pope Paul VI was to proclaim “Mother of the Church.”²³ Reciprocally, the study of the Church helped deepen the understanding of Mary. Again, John Paul II stated:

The Second Vatican Council, by presenting Mary in the mystery of Christ, also finds the path to a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Church. Mary, as the Mother of Christ, is *in a particular way united with the Church*, which the Lord established as his own body. It is significant that the conciliar text places this truth about the Church as the Body of Christ (according to the teaching of the Pauline Letters) in close proximity to the truth that the Son of God “through the power of the Holy Spirit was born of the Virgin Mary.” The reality of the Incarnation finds a sort of extension in *the mystery of the Church—the Body of Christ*. And one cannot think of the reality of the Incarnation without referring to Mary, the Mother of the Incarnate Word.²⁴

Pope John Paul II was but echoing the sentiments of his illustrious predecessor Paul VI who wrote:

The Church’s reflection today on the mystery of Christ and on her own nature has led her to find at the root of the former and as a culmination of the latter the same figure of a woman: the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ and the Mother of the Church. And the increased knowledge of Mary’s mission has become joyful veneration of her and adoring respect for the wise plan of God, who has placed within His family (the Church), as in every home, the figure of a Woman, who in a hidden manner and in a spirit of service watches over that family “and carefully looks after it until the glorious day of the Lord.”²⁵

²³ On 21 November 1964, Paul VI, in his concluding address to the third session of Vatican II, made this proclamation.

²⁴ *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 5.

²⁵ *Marialis Cultus* (February 2, 1974—Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1974), introduction, p. 5 (official Vatican translation).

The Second Vatican Council restated for our times the duty of the Church to evangelize and indicated the way that this is to be carried out in our day and age. In so doing, it presented Mary to us as the God-given Mother and model in the whole life of the Church. Consequently, she cannot be excluded from the work of evangelization.²⁶

Mary, who gave to the world the Life that renews all things as Mother of the Incarnate Word, was the first and best collaborator in the actuation of the Gospel.²⁷ Nothing of salvation is foreign to her. This is very evident as we read the Gospel episodes that were recalled by the Council: Nazareth, Ain-Karim, Cana, Cenacle, Calvary.

1-At Nazareth, in response to the word of God brought to her in the message of the Angel, “she devoted herself totally, as a handmaid of the Lord, to the person and the work of her Son and with Him, serving the mystery of redemption.”²⁸

2-At Ain-Karim, Mary collaborated in the sanctification of John the Baptist—the perfect model of the missionary who brings Christ and allows Him to work the sanctification which He wants all to receive.

3-At Cana, it was her faith in her Son that was at the foundation of the faith of the Apostles. The sign worked at her tactful request confirmed His disciples’ faith in Jesus (cf. Jn. 2:1-12).²⁹

4-At Calvary, she *stood* under the Cross and associated herself with Christ’s sacrifice for the redemption of the world.

²⁶ Ossanna, “Evangelizzazione,” in *Nuovo Dizionario*, 548: “Maria entra nel concilio come nel cenacolo della prima chiesa, ed aiuta la chiesa di oggi ad esaminare dal profondo il problema dell’evangelizzazione.”

²⁷ *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 55-56.

²⁸ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 56.

²⁹ *Marialis Cultus*, no. 18.

5-In the Cenacle, we see Mary, in the midst of the Apostles and others, prayerfully imploring the gift of the Holy Spirit. This was the historical moment when the Church began her journey of faith. From the Upper Room, the Church undertook the pilgrimage that would take her through the history of individuals and peoples.³⁰ Leo XIII maintained that Mary's prayers hastened the descent of the Spirit just as her request hastened Christ's hour at Cana.³¹

We are all well aware of the importance of the Liturgy in the manifestation of the Church's belief and in its use as a vehicle of instruction in the faith.³² It has been said that the liturgical feasts are the most effective form of making religious truths concrete. The age-old axiom *Lex orandi, lex credendi* has been a very valuable theological principle. That this is so has been amply borne out in the development of the Marian doctrines.

One of the truly strong statements on Our Lady to come out from Vatican II is to be found in the first document promulgated: *The*

³⁰ Mary did not directly receive this apostolic mission. She was not among those whom Jesus sent "to the whole world to teach all nations" (Mt. 28:19), when he conferred this mission on them. But she was in the Upper Room, where the Apostles were preparing to take up this mission with the coming of the Spirit of Truth; she was present with them. In their midst, Mary was "devoted to prayer" as the *Mother of Jesus* (Acts 1:13-14), the *Crucified and Risen Christ* (cf. *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 26; cf. also Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi* [Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, 2:711-761], no. 82).

³¹ The Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, *Papal Teachings—Our Lady* (Translated and published by the Daughters of St. Paul, Boston, 1961), Encyclical *Jucunda Semper* (September 8, 1894), no. 153; cf. also *Divinum illud* (May 9, 1987), no. 199.

³² "The liturgy daily builds up those who are in the Church, making of them a holy temple of the Lord, a dwelling-place for God in the Spirit, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ. At the same time it marvelously increases their power to preach Christ and thus show forth the Church, a sign lifted up among the nations to those who are outside, a sign under which the scattered children of God may be gathered together until there is one fold and one shepherd." (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 2)

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. This statement summarizes very well Mary's connection with the work of the Church:

In celebrating this annual cycle of the mysteries of Christ, Holy Church honors the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, with a special love. She is inseparably *linked with her Son's saving work*. In her the Church admires and exalts the most excellent fruit of redemption, and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be.³³

Three points are made in this statement that impact on our theme of Mary and the missions today.

1-The Church honors Mary with a special love. This fact is very much in evidence as one travels the mission lands. Mary is everywhere honored.³⁴

2-She is inseparably linked with her Son's saving work. Where Christ is preached there also is Mary. There also is the statement "to Jesus through Mary."³⁵

³³ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 103.

³⁴ Marian cult or devotion is the Church's response to Mary's role in the economy of salvation. The Church has matured this devotion over long periods of its history. It will go on to the end of time. The devotion to Our Lady translates itself into respect, veneration, love, prayer and emulation. The Church transmits this by her life, her preaching and her prayer: "Popular religion is a reality that must be considered as the point of departure for a realistic evangelization. And among the values of popular devotion we must count a sincere devotion to Our Lady invoked in daily life and venerated in so many sanctuaries. Pastoral work cannot neglect this important fact." Stefano DeFiores, S.M.M., *Marie dans la religion populaire* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1982), 160. See the same author's book: *Maria, presenza viva nel popolo di Dio* (Rome: Edizioni Monfortane, 1980), 184. Cf. also *Marialis Cultus*, no. 56: "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is an intrinsic element of Christian worship."

³⁵ St. Peter Chanel, Marist proto-martyr of Oceania, who died on the island of Futuna on April 28, 1841, before leaving for the missions of the South Pacific

3-Mary is the model of what the Church herself desires and hopes wholly to be. The missions today have before them the image of Mary, the woman of faith, as a norm or model of the Christian life. At the same time the missionary Church, looking to Mary as a teacher of life, sees her as the model and type of the evangelizing Church.

The Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship has issued some new Masses in the second edition of the *Missale Romanum*. Among these Masses is the theologically rich *Mass of Mary, Mother of the Church*.³⁶ In it Mary's relationship to the missions is, to my mind, very clearly spelled out. In it we find summed up all the salient elements of the Marian mystery as it impacts on evangelization. The Opening Prayer begins:

God of Mercies, your only Son, while hanging on the cross, appointed Mary, his Mother, to be our mother also. Like her, and under her loving care, may your Church grow day by day, rejoice in the holiness of its children, and so attract to itself all the peoples of the earth. We ask this . . . etc.

In this prayer the theological foundation for Mary's loving concern for the Church and its missionary task is posited: Christ's last will and testament giving His mother to be ours. Mary's spiritual maternity is coupled with her exemplary causality as means of spreading the kingdom of God. The saying "actions speak louder than words" is applicable in this context. Mary in her sanctity shows by her life and in her life the truth and efficacy of the Word. She teaches us to believe, to receive, to respond humbly, generously in fullness.

gave to his friends and parishoners a holy card on which was written: "Through you, O Virgin Mary, may the name of Jesus be known and adored all over the world."

³⁶ *Missale Romanum* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1985), *Sacramentary*, 1153.

The Prayer over the Gifts reads:

Lord, accept our gifts and make them the sacrament of our salvation. By its power warm our hearts with the love of Mary, Mother of the Church, and join us more closely with her in sharing the redeeming work of her Son. We ask this . . . etc.

Here the Church looks to the Eucharist—Christ Himself—to inflame our hearts with love for His Mother. In proportion as that love grows, the closer will we be united with her in the redeeming work of her Son. Two theological truths are stressed here: 1) Mary's association in the saving mission of the Lord, and 2) the vocation of all to be involved in the mission of the Church. (The call to the laity to undertake their role in evangelization is a point that will be treated further on.)

The Prayer after Communion reads:

Lord, we have received the foretaste and promise of the fullness of redemption. We pray that your Church, through the intercession of the Virgin Mother, may proclaim the Gospel to all nations and by the power of the Spirit reach to the ends of the earth. We ask this . . . etc.

Here is stated, in the clearest of terms, the Church's profound conviction of Mary's power of intercession as it affects the work of evangelization and missionary apostolate. Assumed into heaven, she carries out her mandate of caring for the Church by interceding for her children. This is the Marian counterpart of the Ascension and flows from Mary's association with Christ of whom it is said in Hebrews 7:25: "He lives forever to intercede for them," and in 9:24: "He entered Heaven itself, so that he now appears in the presence of God." Mary now lives immersed in the mystery of the Trinity, praising the glory of God and interceding for all her children. While on earth, she was no stranger to the Holy Spirit. It was under His guidance that she made a total dedication of herself for the mystery of the redemption of all. Now in heaven she is very effec-

tive in obtaining His help in the spread of the Gospel.

Pope Paul VI, in *Marialis Cultus*, speaks of Mary, the prayerful Virgin, and demonstrates this aspect of Our Lady's spiritual personality by following it like a thread in a woven picture as it appears in the pages of the New Testament. He then adds that "having been assumed into heaven, she has not abandoned her mission of intercession and salvation."³⁷ Further along in the same document, Paul VI shows how this is connected with the doctrine of the communion of saints:

The faithful will be able to appreciate more easily Mary's mission in the mystery of the Church and her preeminent place in the communion of saints if attention is drawn to the Second Vatican Council's references to the fundamental concepts of the nature of the Church as the Family of God, the People of God, the Kingdom of God and the Mystical Body of Christ. This will also bring the faithful to a deeper realization of the brotherhood which unites all of them as sons and daughters of the Virgin Mary, "who with a mother's love has cooperated in their rebirth and spiritual formation," and as sons and daughters of the Church, since "we are born from the Church's womb, we are nurtured by the Church's milk, we are given life by the Church's Spirit."³⁸

It is in the Preface of the *Mass of Mary, Mother of the Church* that we find that which, to my mind, is a very solid compendium of the truths underlying our theme, Mary and the missions. It is also a

³⁷ *Marialis Cultus*, no. 18.

³⁸ *Marialis Cultus*, no. 28; cf. *Behold Your Mother*, pastoral letter of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (Washington, D.C.: U.S.C.C., 1973), nos. 5-11, and especially chapter 4: "Mary's Intercession. Her Place in the Communion of Saints"; cf. René Laurentin, *Court Traité sur la Vierge Marie* (Édition post-conciliaire; ed. by P. Lethielleux, Paris, 1968), 139-140, 149-156. R. Laurentin: "Mary in the Communion of Saints," in *Mary in Faith and Life in the New Age of the Church* (Dayton, Ohio/Ndola, Zambia: International Marian Research Institute, 1983), 223.

kind of spiritual *vade mecum* for all missionaries³⁹ in their relationship with the Queen of the Missions.⁴⁰ The Preface declares:

Father, all powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks; we especially praise you and proclaim your glory as we honor the Blessed Virgin Mary.

She received your Word in the purity of her heart, and conceiving in her virgin womb, gave birth to our Savior and so nurtured the Church at its very beginning.

She accepted God's parting gift of love as she stood beneath the cross and so became the mother of all those who were brought to life through the death of her only Son.

She joined her prayers with those of the apostles, as together they awaited the coming of your Spirit, and so became the perfect pattern of the Church at prayer.

Raised to the glory of heaven, she cares for the pilgrim Church with a mother's love, following its progress homeward until the day of the Lord dawns in splendor.

Now with all the angels and saints, we proclaim your glory and join in their unending hymn of praise

This magnificent preface succinctly spells out the Marian principles upon which Mary's relationship with the Church and its primary task of missionary outreach are based:

³⁹ Mary, Mother of the eternal and supreme Priest is Queen of Apostles and protectress of their ministry. Missionaries should always love and venerate her. (Vatican II: *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 18.)

⁴⁰ Cardinal C. Constantini calls her "the Grand Protagonist of the Missions," in *Cum Petro in Christo* (Rome: U.M.d.C., 1957), 48.

1. her divine motherhood—source of the other principles;
2. her spiritual motherhood;⁴¹
3. her association in the redemptive work of her Son;
4. her power of intercession;
5. her role as model, exemplar and type;
6. her position in the communion of saints.⁴²

All the foregoing are not empty figures of speech or pure symbolism. They express reality. They have real substance. The life and teaching of the Church, throughout the ages, are our guarantees that this is so. How often throughout its long history have the prayers, writings and actions of popes, bishops, and people in the Church turned to her “who is our life, our sweetness and our hope.” That the Church, then, turns with confidence to Mary for help and support arises from the divinely implanted conviction of Mary’s effective action in the lives of the peoples and in the mission of the Church. She is rightfully honored as Queen of the Missions because she is Queen of the Universe: “All generations shall call me blessed.”

I have made a survey of sorts of the recent statements of Pope John Paul II, of the Episcopal Conferences of the mission territories, and of individual bishops of these areas also. As was to be expected, given the place of Mary in God’s “new creation,” this survey leaves no doubt as to the belief of the magisterium of the Church in Mary’s great importance in the work of the missions. Since Vatican II—because of that all-important ecclesial event, because of the missionary journeys of Paul VI and John Paul II, because of the

⁴¹ John Paul II dedicates part III of *Redemptoris Mater* to a long treatment of Mary’s maternal mediation.

⁴² *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 41; Pius XII, *Ad caeli Reginam* (October 11, 1954).

emergence of the Churches of the Third World,⁴³ and because of world-wide political and demographic changes—there have been so many more pronouncements than heretofore that speak to us of the central position of Our Lady in the work of the missions.⁴⁴

In these documents, emanating from the different levels of the magisterium, we find the same basic doctrines that are the underpinnings of the role that Mary exercises in the missionary enterprise that are evident in that true portrayer of the Church's belief, the Liturgy. Pope and bishops confide the countries and their peoples to Mary's maternal care. They seek her intercession in the many grave problems facing the countries of the Third World. Many of them recall that their countries have long been dedicated to Mary, that the central churches—the cathedrals, as well as a multitude of others—carry her name. This section will include a sampling which I feel is representative of the mind and teaching of Church leaders.

We begin with Pope John Paul II whose Marian witness has had a major impact on evangelization and also has important ramifications for the missionary effort. His Marian "stance" calls attention to the Mother of God and our devotion to her. "*Totus Tuus*," the motto on his coat of arms, is not a vain phrase, and the great capital "M" emblazoned on it is not an empty symbol; they express his consecration to Mary,⁴⁵ his complete confidence in her and the role she has played in his life. His motto states the program of his spiritual

⁴³ The number of bishops from mission lands attending Vatican II and attending the subsequent Synods of Bishops has been on the increase. They have become a substantial presence at these events and their impact on the Church is quite considerable.

⁴⁴ In our own century prior to Vatican II, there have been landmark pronouncements on the missions from Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII. These popes and those who followed them have been great missionary popes as well as great Marian popes.

⁴⁵ At the end of his pilgrimage to the shrine of Jasna Gora in June of 1979, John Paul II rested in a solemn fashion his personal consecration to Our Lady: "O Mother of the Church, once more I consecrate myself to you in a slavery to your maternal love: *Totus tuus*, I am entirely yours." S. DeFiores maintains that: "We

life and his ministry as pope. He has over and over again given ample proof of his great love and devotion to Mary, the latest example being, of course, his announcement of a Marian Year commencing this June 7, introduced by his encyclical on Mary in the Life of the Pilgrim Church, entitled *Redemptoris Mater*, issued on March 25 of this year.

In his journeys to mission lands—in fact, whenever he travels inside or outside Italy—he makes it a point to visit the Marian shrines. They are always a focal point of his missionary travels and are planned as such. His talks, homilies, discourses—more often than not—have a reference to Our Lady and her role in the life and history of the particular country. In all these journeys, John Paul II is carrying out his official task of “confirming his brethren in the faith” and, therefore, teaching officially.

Here I will quote just three statements from the many possible ones. These, I find, are very representative:

1. On May 2, 1980, in the Kinshasa Cathedral dedicated to “Notre Dame du Zaire,” Pope John Paul II gave this strong and eloquent testimony:

Allow me . . . in this year in which you are giving thanks to God for the centenary of evangelization and the baptism of your country, to refer to the tradition that we find at the beginning of this century, at the beginning of evangelization in the land of Africa.

The missionaries who came to proclaim the Gospel *began their missionary service with an act of consecration to the Mother of Christ.*

They addressed her as follows:

“Here we are, among those who are our brothers and our sisters, and whom your Son, O Virgin Mary, loved to the end. Out of love, He offered His life for them on the cross; out of love He remains in the Eucharist to be the nourishment of souls; out of love, He founded the Church to be the unshakable community in which

discover in John Paul II a charism which provokes reflection and gives a new impetus of devotion to Mary in the Church today” (DeFiores, *Marie dans la religion populaire*, 161).

salvation is found. All this is still unknown to these brothers and these sisters among whom we arrive; they do not know yet the Good News of the Gospel. But we believe deeply that their hearts and their consciences are prepared to accept the Gospel of salvation thanks to the sacrifice of Christ, and *also to your motherly intercession and mediation.*

“We believe that, when Christ from the cross gave you every man as your son, in the person of His disciple St. John, you also accepted as sons and daughters these brothers and sisters to whom His holy Church sends us now, as missionaries.

“Help us to carry out the missionary mandate of your Son in this land; help us to carry out here the salvific mission of the Gospel and of the Church. We consecrate to you all those whom the Spirit of Jesus Christ wishes to illuminate with the light of faith and in whom He wishes to light the fire of His love. We consecrate to you their families, their tribes, the communities and societies they form, their work, their joys and their sufferings, their villages and their cities. We consecrate everything, we consecrate everyone to you. Accept them in this eternal love whose first servant you were, and deign to guide, however unworthy it may be, the apostolic service that we are beginning.”

Continuing, and stressing the fact that he is speaking as pope, he renews the consecration:

Today, a hundred years have passed since these beginnings. At the moment when the Church, in this country of Zaire, thanks God in the Holy Trinity for the waters of holy baptism that gave salvation to so many of its sons and daughters, permit me, O Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, permit me Pope John Paul II . . . to recall and at the same time renew this missionary consecration which took place in this land at the beginning of its evangelization.

To consecrate itself to Christ through you!

To consecrate itself to you for Christ.

Permit me also, O Mother of divine grace, while expressing my thanks for all the light that the Church has received and for all the fruit she has yielded in this country of Zaire in the course of this century, to en-

trust this Church to you again, to place it in your hands again for the years and the centuries to come, to the end of time!

And at the same time, I entrust to you also the whole nation, which is living its own independent life today. I do so in the same spirit of faith and with the same trust as the first missionaries, and I do so at the same time with all the greater joy since the act of consecration and abandonment *that I make now, is made with me at the same time by all the pastors of this Church and also by the whole People of God: this People of God that wishes to assume and continue with its pastors, in love and apostolic courage, the work of the construction of the Body of Christ and the approach of the kingdom of God on this earth.*

Accept, O Mother, this act of trust of ours. Open hearts, and give strength to souls to listen to the word of life and to do what your Son constantly orders and urges us.⁴⁶

2. On his trip to the Far East in February 1981, Pope John Paul addressed a huge crowd on the campus of the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas in Manila. He ended his talk with these words:

I conclude with a loving and grateful remembrance of the Virgin Mary.

She is our Mother, an intimate, discreet and loving mother. Although her affection is for all, it is a fact that the young have special need of her care, particularly today.

She is our teacher, because she is our mother. Students have a wonderful lesson to learn from her attitude of profound reverence before the

⁴⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Africa—Apostolic Pilgrimage* (comp. by the Daughters of St. Paul; Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1980; reprinted with permission from *l'Osservatore Romano* [English Edition]), 39-41, 41-42—emphasis mine. Other books in the series of John Paul II include: *The Far East Journey of Peace and Brotherhood* (1981), *Puebla—A Pilgrimage of Faith* (1979), *Brazil—Journey in the Light of the Eucharist* (1980). Cf. also various issues of *La Documentation Catholique*, bi-monthly publication published in Paris which presents the integral texts of papal pronouncements, as well as the more important statements of individual bishops and episcopal conferences, etc. Cf. also the chapter by W. J. Cole, S.M., “The Marian Teachings of Pope John Paul II,” in *Mary in Faith and Life in the New Age of the Church* (Dayton, Ohio/Ndola, Zambia: International Marian Research Institute, 1983), 187-219.

unfathomable mystery of God, and from her search for truth through contemplation and prayer.

She is *Queen of the Apostles*: of all the apostles, both those of the Church's beginning and those in present-day history. Her presence is as discreet and effective today as it was at Cana of Galilee. May she be with you always. *May she intercede for you* with her divine Son, as she did then in order to prevent a shadow from falling on the happiness of the bride and groom, who were young people just like yourselves—*children of hers*, just like you, each and every one of you.⁴⁷

3. One last quote from Pope John Paul II is taken from his allocution to the Bishops of the Pacific, given in Suva, Fiji on November 20, 1987, whose episcopal conference is known as CEPAC—Episcopal Conference of the Pacific. This one has a special meaning for me because I worked for these bishops; some of them are my confreres, others were co-teachers and all of them friends. The Pope ends his talk with these words:

Dear brother bishops: in this hour of joy and of ecclesial communion, I recommend you to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of the Church. I also confide to her loving care the future of your local churches, and especially your generous efforts so that Our Lord Jesus Christ be better known and loved. I ask her to help the poor and those who are in need, and to protect all the People of God scattered throughout the Pacific. May she be, for all of you, cause of joy and source of strength.⁴⁸

Episcopal conferences as well as individual bishops throughout the mission world have often turned to Mary. Two samples are given here which are representative of the mind and heart of the college of bishops scattered throughout the world as they look to Our Lady and speak of her in their mission as shepherds of their peoples.

The first of these is taken from the *Pastoral Orientations* for

⁴⁷ John Paul II, *The Far East—Journey of Peace in Brotherhood*, 70.

⁴⁸ DC, no. 1931 (Jan. 4, 1987): 9; translation is mine.

1986-1989 of the Episcopal Conference of Chile, entitled *The Church: Servant of Life* (October 1985). This was issued in Santiago at a time when the Bishops foresaw "a time of difficult and painful confrontations." In the second part of the document there is a long section (No. 4) entitled "The Virgin Mary, Mother of Life." In it the Bishops of Chile say:

The pastoral orientations which we propose today find a living model in the person of the Virgin Mary. She is the *Mother of Life*. This is the way that Christian tradition recognizes her which calls her *Mother of God* from the earliest periods of our faith. (No. 91)

The Bishops show how this relationship of Mary and life is seen in the pages of Sacred Scripture. They go on to speak of Mary, the model of the preferential option for the poor; of Mary, the Mother of Reconciliation; and of Mary, Mother of the Church, the model teacher and animatrix. The Bishops end with these words:

The people of Chile and of Latin America are not deceived in invoking Mary. They know very well that *under her protection* life is life anew. With the same faith and with her name on our lips, we wish to undertake the journey of these new *Pastoral Orientations*:

*Holy Mary, Mother of Chile,
Virgin of the North and of the South,
Lady of the sea and of the mountain range,
of the countryside and of the city,
Intercede on our behalf,
so that the Savior will grant us
reconciliation and life. Amen. (no. 96)⁴⁹*

The second example is taken from a pastoral letter of the Bishops of Angola—a country that is very poor and in turmoil. It is, as the

⁴⁹ DC, no. 1918 (May 18, 1986): 511-512. Cf. also the end of the appeal made by the same Bishops on April 7, 1986, *ibid.*, 522.

Bishops said, a country whose people have lived “ten years with arms in our hands.” The pastoral letter was issued on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the independence of their country, February 27, 1986, as reflected in its full title: *Firm in Hope: Pastoral Reflections after Ten Years of Independence*. They end with the following Marian pericope:

In our hearts there still resounds the touching echo of that historical day, the 13th of October 1985, when we proclaimed the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, patroness of Angola under the title of her Immaculate Heart, and when we consecrated ourselves to her in a special way. It was truly “the end of an itinerary and the beginning of a new era,” as our Cardinal said in the homily of the Mass.

This itinerary began with the baptism of the first Angolans five-hundred years ago and the new era began on October 13, as a new milestone of consoling hope.

Far be it from us to think of a hope of liberation without having earned it. Our patroness, the Mother of Angola, repeats to us what she said at the wedding at Cana “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2,5).

That is the message of Lourdes, of Fatima and of LaSalette. It is the message of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the people of Angola.

.....

The message of Mary repeats for us the doctrine of the Gospel that prescribes that we “are to pray continually and without losing heart” (Lc 18,1)

Our prayers will always be efficacious if we rely on the intercession of Mary, our Patroness. Let us pray to her with confidence, so that, just as at Cana she hastened Jesus’ hour, she may hasten the hour of peace among us.

With Mary, Mother of Jesus, we are positive that the work of God will re-commence every day, because we believe and hope: “Come, Lord Jesus” (Ap 22,20).(no. 18)⁵⁰

⁵⁰ DC, no. 1919 (June 1, 1986): 565.

The magisterium of the Church—both papal and episcopal—transmits the *Catholic* conviction, based on Revelation, of the very special place given to Mary by God in the history of salvation. She has a privileged place in the life and work of the Church. It is the Church's age-old belief that there is an intimate bond between the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Church's efforts of evangelization. The humble maid of Nazareth consecrated herself to God's service—"Be it done to me as you say" (Lk. 1:38)—to be used by Him as an instrument of grace. As Mother and Associate of Christ the Redeemer, she is the first and foremost beneficiary of Christ's redemption. But she is also an agent in this redemption whose agency is as broad as her motherhood of men. By her prayers, her example, her sacrifice, her service, her witness, her sufferings—she proclaims Christ's redemption to all.

III.

MARY AND AREAS EMPHASIZED IN THE MODERN MISSIONARY EFFORT

This third part of my paper will treat some very specific aspects of the modern mission apostolate and how Mary, Mother and Queen of the Missions, relates to them. In my opinion, there are five salient features evident in mission work today:⁵¹

1. Inculturation, adaptation, indigenization, localization;
2. Involvement of the laity;
3. Preferential option for the poor;
4. Evangelization by witnessing;
5. Evangelization-and/or-development.

⁵¹ Another very important dimension to be found in mission lands today, especially in Latin America, is the question of *Liberation*. This topic will be professionally treated by Fr. Bernard de Margerie, S.J., in his paper at this convention.

1. *Mary and Inculturation*

Inculturation, adaptation, indigenization, localization—all are terms that mean basically the same thing: the Church must be rooted in the culture; it must be incorporated in the life of a nation, of a people.

The missionary Church, as it enters the lives of people, must adapt itself. The Church must keep intact the doctrines and truths entrusted to her by her Founder, but, guided with caution, she must also try to preserve the natural values that she finds in the traditions and customs of the people, renewing them in Christ. The areas that will be affected are, for example, liturgy, art, architecture, language, mode of apostolate, style of life in the missions, utilization of pre-existing ideas,⁵² clerical formation of missionaries, development of native clergy, the lay-apostolate.⁵³

The doctrinal foundations of inculturation and the principles that guide its processes can be reduced to two:

- 1) The diversity and the multiplicity of created beings—these flow from the intention of God the Creator, Who desires that this vast diversification manifest the innumerable aspects of His goodness.⁵⁴

⁵² Purification and sublimation of non-Christian religions is a principle enunciated by Pius XII in *Evangelii Praecones*.

⁵³ Good treatments on the topic of inculturation are to be found in: 1) Paul Poupard, "Théologie de l'évangélisation des cultures," *EspV* 25 (June 19, 1986): 353-362. The same article with some modifications, because it was given before a different audience in another country, can be found in *DC*, no. 1928 (Nov. 16, 1986): 1040 sq., under the title *Évangile et cultures*. 2) *Thèmes choisis d'écclésiologie*, in *DC*, no. 1909 (Jan. 5, 1986): 62 sq. It is the report of the International Theological Commission on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the closing of Vatican Council II. 3) *Dialogues entres catholiques et évangéliques sur la mission*, in *DC*, no. 1932 (Jan. 18, 1987): 113-115, especially.

⁵⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I. Q. 47, a.1.

2) The Incarnation—this mystery of the Incarnation of the Logos was the most perfect form of adaptation and inculturation: He became “a man like us in all things, except sin.”

Historically, inculturation goes back to the very beginning of the Church. And the effort to indigenize the Church today is very much in continuity with a long, ancient and venerable tradition that can be traced back to Christ, the Word Incarnate Himself. We can say it had its inception when Christ was conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. When the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, He identified Himself fully with us.⁵⁵ He entered a specific people—the Jewish people, having a specific culture—a Semitic-Judaic one. Christ spoke their language, followed their customs and traditions and was involved in the life of their society. In the Incarnation, then, we see God accommodating Himself to the human and the historical as He comes to earth to be our Savior.

The precedent set by Jesus Christ was followed by the Apostles and the Evangelists in their mission of preaching and writing. Their message in the New Testament Scriptures came from the context of the world of the first century, with its own images and vocabulary. They expressed themselves in line with the context of the culture of their world. Then, as the Church entered the Greco-Roman culture, beginning especially with the preaching and mission of St. Paul, it began a new phase of adaptation. This flowed into the post-apostolic times, as witnessed by the writings of the Fathers.

When the Church began to evangelize the world of the Barbarians, the process of inculturation and adaptation demanded much discernment and discretion. Where the evidence of superstition was unequivocal, the attitude of the missionaries towards ancient customs was radical, e.g., the solemn destruction of idols. Where old customs could possibly be taken over, the missionaries were accommodating.

⁵⁵ Phil. 2:6-8. The Church following the lead of Christ empties herself and takes upon herself the condition of the peoples she serves, except for what is evidently evil and sinful.

Pope St. Gregory advised St. Augustine of Canterbury to make use of the pagan temples and to Christianize the feastdays. Saints Cyril and Methodius were outstanding practitioners of the “art” of inculturation. In his fourth encyclical letter, *Slavorum Apostoli*, John Paul II highlighted this facet of the work of the two brothers from Salonika:

The work of evangelization which they carried out—as pioneers in the territory inhabited by Slav peoples—contains both a model of what today is called “inculturation”—the incarnation of the Gospel in native cultures—and also the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church.⁵⁶

Cyril and Methodius translated the Gospels into Slavonic, using an alphabet invented by Cyril. They preached the Good News to the Slavs through the medium of their own language. They introduced the Slavonic liturgy. In general, missionaries approved many old and venerable customs, adapted them, blessed and sanctified them.⁵⁷

In the missionary effort of modern times, i.e., from 1500 to 1900, the long tradition of inculturation and adaptation was forgotten for the most part. Mission activity was intimately bound up with the conquest of the New World and with colonial expansion (e.g., the policy of Patronage in Spain and Portugal). The Catholic governments were eager for the spread of the Gospel and when their colonists stepped on foreign shores, the missionaries accompanied the conquerors. These missionaries were men of great courage, zeal and

⁵⁶ John Paul II, *Slavorum Apostoli*, June 2, 1985 (Washington, D.C.: U.S.C.C.); cf. all of chapter 6 of the document.

⁵⁷ Benedict XV, in *Maximum illud*, November 30, 1919, recalled the missionary exploits of the men who knew how to implant the Gospel in various parts of the world: Gregory in Armenia, Patrick in Ireland, Augustine among the Anglo-Saxons, Columban among the Scots, Willibrod in Holland, Boniface among the Germans, Cyril and Methodius among the Slavs, Bartholomew de Las Casas in Latin America, Francis Xavier in India and Japan.

good will. They truly loved the people among whom they worked, but they tried to make these people to whom they preached the Gospel fit the model of a European and western expression of Catholicism. They were making them into European Catholics, rather than South American, or African or Oceanian Catholics.⁵⁸

Virgil Elizondo puts it so well when, referring to the context of the missionary activity in the Mexican experience, he states:

Even as the [Indian] natives and the mestizos have become Christians, the religious oppression continues because their faith expressions have been labelled and interpreted for them by the Western elites, but they themselves have never been asked to be active partners in the theologising process proper to the new and developing local church.⁵⁹

There is always present in the work of evangelization the tension which Cardinal Gracias of Bombay called a "divided fealty": the necessity for Christians to maintain intact their fidelity to Christianity and also their fidelity to their country and their culture. Christianization is not colonization. A better view has to prevail.

The popes and the Congregation of Propaganda Fide began calling for a saner view. In recent times, especially after World War I, the Church developed greater precision on her views about inculturation. The popes of this twentieth century began insisting with ever greater emphasis that the Church had to assume that which is gen-

⁵⁸ The Bishops of Africa and Madagascar paid tribute to the foreign missionaries in their Pastoral Exhortation of July 15-22, 1984; cf. *DC*, no. 1913 (March 2, 1986): 261. They said: "We wish to give here a vibrant homage to all the generations of missionaries who have courageously cleared the ground of our continent in order to sow the seed of faith in Jesus Christ, liberator and savior of man. We owe them, in large part, our discovery of Jesus Christ and our discovery of man as pictured in the Gospel. They merit our gratitude for the important work that they initiated in the area of development of our different countries." (no. 16)

⁵⁹ Virgil Elizondo, "Mary and the Poor: A Model of Evangelising," in *Mary in the Churches* (Concilium 168; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), 60.

uinely human in the culture, civilization, traditions, thought, etc. of the people to whom she is sent.

Vatican II reaffirmed again the age-old principle of incarnation. As was its policy throughout the time of its sessions, the Council was not teaching a new doctrine or initiating a new tradition. It restated its stand on the process of inculturation and called for a return to the authentic Christian tradition. This is what is now in place in the missionary lands.

One aspect of indigenization with which I was most particularly involved, in my mission assignments, was the training of native clergy. This perhaps is the most important aspect of inculturation. The Church, to be inserted in the native scheme of things, needs to have native clergy in roles of leadership.

The mission world is no longer under colonial regimes. Most colonies have gained their independence. Both countries where I worked—Fiji and Senegal—became independent, at almost the same time, in 1971. In their recovered liberty they have gained new insight into their racial, historical, cultural and religious uniqueness. They want to use their own language in talking to God as well as to men. They want to act, even in religion, in their own distinctive style. It is necessary, therefore, that this diversity be respected without endangering unity. The new nations expect that *their own citizens will play a leading part in their own Church.*

I went to Fiji in 1971, to help in establishing a seminary for native vocations. This seminary, named after St. Peter Chanel, proto-martyr of Oceania, was being set-up at the request of the Bishops of CEPAC. This episcopal conference is perhaps the most extensive in all Christendom. It covers millions of square miles of ocean in the South Pacific. It extends from Tahiti and the Marquesas in the east to New Caledonia and Vanuatu in the west, as far north as the Carolines, Tuvalu and Kiribati and as far south as Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Wallis and Futuna. Three main ethnic groups are represented: Micronesians, Melanesians and Polynesians. The seminarians came to us from these island groups. It was quite a mix. There are four reasons

why the establishing of the seminary, at that particular time, was imperative:

1) The Church could not be said to be firmly established unless it had its own religious leaders, and the seminary was to produce these leaders.

2) Men had to be trained in their own surroundings to avoid estrangement. Up to that point any young man desirous of going on to the priesthood had to be sent overseas; oftentimes he was gone for many years. There was alienation upon his return. He found it very difficult to enter anew into his culture. He had become almost a stranger in his own land and among his own people.

3) There is a shortage of missionary vocations from overseas.

4) New political situations have been brought about by independence; two things especially have resulted from this:

a) Just as the political leaders were taken from among the people, so also were the religious leaders to come from them. These church leaders would have to receive an education that made them equal or better than their counterparts in the political arena.

b) With independence came the push for localization on all levels of society. That meant that foreigners found it more difficult to enter these countries and obtain permanent visas. If a local person could handle a job, an alien was not allowed to take it and was thus denied entry. It became very difficult to obtain permits of entry, unless he or she fulfilled a need that could not be met by a local. The work that missionaries were doing—such as teaching, nursing, etc.—was no longer open to them.

Missionaries are finding it more difficult to remain in some countries. Once they leave they are not allowed to come back. In order that the work of the Church (which has gone on for some 150 years in these areas) would not be lost, it becomes

imperative that local bishops and priests be moved into positions of authority and leadership and that they take over the destiny of the Church in their countries. Another aspect of this localization is the way a missionary has to look at himself. If he is an outsider, then he goes to his mission work as an adjunct, an auxiliary, a support person to the native clergy. He no longer is in charge or in a position of authority. He is there to assist the local priests in their work of building up the Church in their native land. It is reliving the story of John the Baptist "I must decrease while he must increase." It is also the story of Our Lady as her life changed in relation to Christ when he entered into "His Father's business." She who was His mother abdicated, in a sense, her maternal prerogatives when Christ began His public ministry. It is the stress that went from "Mother" to "Woman." Mary, the mother of the first priest, from whom all priesthood takes its origin, has a very important stake in the formation of indigenous priests, and she watches over them and their formation with motherly interest and care.

Today in the region of CEPAC, in the eleven countries represented, seven have their own native bishops, one of whom is a cardinal. The seminary, which started with eighteen students in 1971, now has more than one hundred seminarians, and ordinations have been occurring since 1975. All this bodes well for the Church there.

In Senegal, the episcopal conference has six bishops all of whom are natives and one is a cardinal. When I went to Senegal in 1981, I was soon teaching in the seminary which serves the six bishoprics of the country. The seminary was full—sixty major seminarians—and room was made for ten more. Today, there are seventy seminarians. This is a very fine number when we consider that Senegal—with a population of five million, 87% of whom are Moslem—is only 7% Catholic.

What of Mary's role in the process of inculturation? As we have seen, the Incarnation of the Son of God becoming the Son of Man

is the model for all inculturation. God took His flesh from the flesh of a Woman, the Virgin Mary: "When the fullness of time came, God sent His Son born of a woman."⁶⁰ She is the guarantor of Christ's humanness and of His entry in a certain place, a certain time, a certain people. She aids God to adapt Himself to the human condition. She is His point of insertion into human history and into the human family. She has a stake now, as she had in the past, in the process of indigenization, as she strives to bring Christ to birth anew in the lives of people—her children—of different cultures, ethnic groups, and nations. Mary, living her life of commitment to God, by her love, trust and confidence creates an atmosphere for Christ's entrance into the world. From heaven and by her maternal solicitude, she is still an atmospheric presence aiding Christ's entrance into the world. As Cardinal Danielou states:

The mystery of the Blessed Virgin lies in the fact that she was in the world before Jesus. This brings us to the specifically missionary aspect of the Marian mystery . . . Among pagan peoples the Church does not exist. Hence before pagan nations are converted to Christ, before a local Church becomes viable and established among them, there is a mysterious sense in which Mary is among them preparing for and prefiguring the Church. Her presence is a kind of foreshadowing of what the Church herself will be.⁶¹

Mary is a model of adaptation. She accepted to be put into the service of her Son, she emptied herself of all selfish consideration: "Be it done to me according to your word" (Lk. 1:38). She thereby adapted herself totally to the life and mission of Jesus. The pages of the New Testament tell us of how she modified and changed her life to accommodate herself to the motherhood of Christ as it was to be played out in the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation. She, the New Eve, adapted herself to the new order that God willed to

⁶⁰ Gal. 4:4.

⁶¹ Cited in L. and A. Rétif, *The Church's Mission in the World*, 154, n. 13.

establish in His Son, the New Adam. She remained basically the same person, but she had an openness to God which made her amenable to all the strange demands and changing circumstances of her life with Jesus.

Mary, in her apparitions, manifests this adaptability in some very striking ways. At Lourdes, for example, she speaks to Bernadette in the patois of the Pyrenees. Perhaps even more illustrative is the Virgin's apparition at Tepeyac, Mexico, in 1531, to the Indian Juan Diego—known to us as Our Lady of Guadalupe. Mary appears as a young Indian maiden, clad in the garments of an Aztec princess. She speaks to Juan Diego in Nahuatl, his own tongue. She conveys religious truths about God and about herself in a language that he knows and understands:

My dearest son, I am the eternal Virgin Mary, Mother of the true God, Author of Life, Creator of all, and Lord of the Heavens and of the Earth . . . and it is my desire that a church be built here in this place for me, where, as your most merciful Mother and that of all your people, I may show my loving clemency and the compassion that I bear to the Indians, and to those who love me and seek me . . .⁶²

The Church, the People of God, is not destined to found its own proper civilization apart, but to insert itself into the cultures which gradually enter its orbit. Mary, the *Star of Evangelization*,⁶³ is the one who can guide the Church along the way of inculturation and indigenization.

⁶² "The Guadalupe Story," in *The Marian Era* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1960), 1: 56-57. I have in my possession various statues of Our Lady carved by native craftsmen from the various places in which I served in the South Pacific and in Africa. Each of these statues depicts a Virgin as a native Senegalese, Fijian, Samoan, Tongan, etc. They are carved out of different materials: ivory, ebony, raintree wood, etc. In their variety they portray the Marian mystery: Mary Mother of God and our mother. They are marvelous examples of indigenization.

⁶³ Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, no. 82.

2. *Mary and Lay Involvement*

The "événement" 1987 in the Catholic Church will be the *Synod on the Laity* which will be held at Rome, November 1 to 30. Without doubt this 7th session of the Synod of Bishops will be productive of much good.⁶⁴ Here we simply want to recall the role of the laity in the present teaching of the Church and how Mary relates to that.

In the modern missionary apostolate there is more and more stress on the involvement of the laity in that work. Vatican II, looking at the reality of lay cooperation in the mission of the Church, stressed its great importance and placed it within the profound ecclesiological vision that is found in *Lumen Gentium*:

Gathered together in the the People of God and established in the one Body of Christ under one head, the laity—no matter who they are—have, as living members, the vocation of applying to the building up of the Church and to its continual sanctification all the powers which they have received from the goodness of the Creator and from the grace of the Redeemer.

The apostolate of the laity is a sharing in the salvific mission of the Church. Through Baptism and Confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, and especially by the Eucharist, that love of God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. The laity, however, are given this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth. Thus, every lay person, through those gifts given to him, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself "according to the measure of Christ's bestowal" (Eph. 4:7).

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⁶⁴ Episcopal conferences have been preparing statements and studies on the laity that will be presented at this Synod. Examples of some of these can be found in *DC*, no. 1934 (February 15, 1987) and no. 1938 (April 19, 1987); cf. also *DC*, no. 1933 (February 1, 1987).

All the laity, then, have the exalted duty of working for the ever greater spread of the divine plan of salvation to all men, of every epoch and all over the earth. Therefore may the way be clear for them to share diligently in the salvific work of the Church according to their ability and the needs of the times.⁶⁵

Lay involvement in the mission apostolate prior to Vatican II was mostly to make up for the lack of missionaries. It is true, however, that the whole movement of Catholic Action grew out of the conviction that the laity had a role to play, and that in the past many lay persons were inspired to become involved in missionary apostolate. One thinks of Pauline Jaricot, the foundress of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. She is the one to whom Lyons owes the honor of being today one of the greatest missionary centers of the world. Such apostolic ventures were more or less on a voluntary basis, but now, since Vatican II, the Church stresses ever more insistently the obligation of the laity to become involved, because it is a duty that flows from their Baptism and Confirmation. We have come more and more fully to appreciate the role of the lay person in religious activity, in the external and benevolent activity of the Church and in many properly religious functions. So it is both necessary and desirable to increase the number and responsibilities of active laypersons in the Church.

If the laity are to be involved in the missions, there exists then a concomitant duty incumbent on the religious leaders. They must train good Catholic lay leaders, men and women well-grounded, not only in the faith, but also in the social principles of the Church, and prepared to fight and sacrifice themselves for these principles as times may require.

A word must be said here for those wonderful and dedicated laypersons, the mission catechists. It is true that, because of the

⁶⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 33. Cf. also the Vatican II decree on the apostolate of lay people, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (November 18, 1965), nos. 2 and 3 and the *New Code of Canon Law*, Canon 204.1.

fewness of the missionaries, catechists fill a very important need. They exercise many pastoral functions usually reserved to the priest in Christian countries, such as preaching, leading public prayer, visiting and giving advice, helping the sick and dying and baptizing in cases of necessity. They are effective workers because they are taken from the local people; they know the language, customs, etc. In the South Pacific, where I was stationed for awhile, the nations are scattered islands, lost in millions of square miles of ocean. Fiji, for example, is a nation of over 350 islands, not all of them inhabited. Many of these islands are far from the main island, Viti Leuu, where the capital, Suva, is located; e.g., Rotuma is 400 miles away. There are not sufficient priests to go around. The faith is assured and maintained by the catechists who reside on these isolated outposts and look after the religious needs of their people.⁶⁶

There is also another dimension to the need for catechists, besides the paucity of missionaries. The help of catechists is also essential today because they make up for a lack that is found in the missionary himself. The missionary is usually a stranger and not always fluent in the native language. The catechists become extensions of the missionary as he teaches and preaches the Gospel message. Again allow me to give an example from my own experience. After my stint in Fiji, I was transferred to Senegal in West Africa. At Grand Yoff, a suburb of Dakar, we had a large parish made up of a variety of ethnic groups: Serer, Wolof, Manjacs, Mancagnes, Peuhls. We had about

⁶⁶ It is good to recall the saga of how the laypersons themselves preserved their faith during centuries in such nations as Japan and Korea. The story of the work of the Legion of Mary in China has yet to be told, the story of the courageous efforts of the Catholic Chinese to hold on to their faith. We remember the story of the Japanese Catholics, who had been without priests for such a long period, approaching the missionaries when they were allowed to enter Japan. They asked them three questions: 1) Was their leader the Pope in Rome? 2) Were they celibates? 3) Were they devoted to Mary, the Mother of God? These feats excite our imagination and inspire our hearts. Like Mary at the foot of the cross, these lay people kept the hope alive in a darkened world. *Ad Gentes*, no. 17, gives high praise to the catechists.

300 catechumens under instruction in a three-year catechumenate. We baptized about 100 every year on Holy Saturday. We could never have accomplished this work if it were not for the assistance of our lay catechists. Though French is the official language in Senegal, the vernaculars are still the only language known by most peoples, especially those who have had either very little schooling or none at all. I personally never gained much fluency in Wolof. I only acquired enough knowledge of the language to say Mass, greet people and hear confessions with a minimum of efficiency. We would be badly crippled in our work without the help of these devoted lay helpers.

Both in Fiji and in Senegal my main task was to teach in the seminary. Native vocations in both places are on the increase, but it will take many years before we can hope to have sufficient priests to meet all the needs. And even then, lay involvement will always be part of the missionary scene.

Mary is, once again, the perfect example of lay involvement in the missionary apostolate. Mary is the Mother of God, and it was as a lay person that she collaborated with Jesus in a thoroughly unique way so that the reign of God could come about. We can say that her life is the first apostolic adventure, giving Christ to the world and it is from this that all evangelizing action takes its root and its beginning.

The Church, in the decree *Ad Gentes*,⁶⁷ makes the statement that the primary and most important contribution to the missionary effort, i.e., the spread of the faith, is to lead a profound Christian life. Who did this better than Mary? She was the pilgrim of faith, the model believer,⁶⁸ the true disciple “who heard the word of God and kept it”⁶⁹ in her heart and in her works.

She is the first of a long line of those who accepted Christ and

⁶⁷ *Ad Gentes*, nos. 35-36.

⁶⁸ Lk. 1:45.

⁶⁹ Lk. 8:21, Mk. 3:35, Mt. 12:50.

His Good News. She stands out as the model for all peoples and all times of the total response to the call of God. The Fathers of the Council bid the faithful to turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth as the model of virtues, then they continue:

The Church . . . in her apostolic work . . . , rightly looks to her who gave birth to Christ, . . . in order that through the Church he could be born and increase in the hearts of the faithful. In her life the Virgin has been a model of that motherly love with which all who join in the Church's apostolic mission for the regeneration of mankind should be animated.⁷⁰

3. *Mary and the Preferential Option for the Poor*

The missionary effort of the Church is carried out in what we call mission countries, countries for the most part belonging to the Third World and identified as underdeveloped and poor. We think of the millions of poor in Latin America, of the starving multitudes in the Sahara and Sahel regions of East Africa. I lived in the Sahel and was constantly amazed at the poverty of the people, how they were able to eke out a living out of practically nothing, how it was a daily struggle for people to feed themselves and their families. We think of the extreme poverty found in India. The Church stresses ever more today her preferential option for the poor. Missionary congregations today more and more feel the need for their members to expend their efforts in the service of the poor.

Jesus at the beginning of His public ministry stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth and identified Himself as the one fulfilling the prophecy of Isaia. He came to preach the Good News to the poor:

[Jesus] came to Nazareth . . . and went into the Synagogue He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of Isaia the prophet . . . :

⁷⁰ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 65.

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free"

. . . This day this Scripture is fulfilled in your presence.⁷¹

Jesus came on earth so that we could have life in abundance.⁷² To that end He voluntarily ceded His own, in accordance to the will of the Father. He realized this by assuming solidarity, especially with the poor,⁷³ becoming poor so as to announce from the interior of His own poverty the kingdom of liberation and life.

What is meant by the preferential option for the poor? The Bishops of Chile, in their *Pastoral Orientations* for 1986-1989, answer this question very well:

. . . we wish to invite the Church to opt for the *style of Jesus*. To opt for the poor is not to adopt an option for a social class. It consists of putting into practice the form of preferential love that God has. *It is the innovative and original way by which the Lord calls all men to salvation.*(no. 99)

The Bishops then sketch how God carried this out in the Old Testament; they continue:

To the scandal of many, *the Messiah-King makes himself the most vulnerable of men*. And even though he occupied the first place in creation, he occupies literally the last place in humanity. He makes himself slave and servant. He assumes the wounds of humanity and takes upon himself our failures. And from the infinite weakness of the cross, he raises himself above the world in order to draw to himself all those whom the power of sin has dispersed.(no. 101)

⁷¹ Lk. 4:16-22.

⁷² Jn. 10:10.

⁷³ 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:7.

The Bishops go on to show how this preferential option has three complementary aspects: 1) it is essential for a Christian *to live in the style of life that Jesus followed*; 2) we are called *to serve the poor*, and this implies a call to promote human development which assures food, a roof over one's head, health, dignity and respect for everyone; and 3) it is an invitation *to look at life from the point of view of the poor*, which means to view things as Jesus did in order to bring salvation.⁷⁴

The next question we can ask is "Who are the poor in the world today?" Two good answers were given recently to that question:

1) Pope John Paul II, in a homily (at a Mass in Calcutta on February 4, 1986) entitled "The Voice of the Poor Is the Voice of Christ," said:

The Gospel speaks of the "blind," of "prisoners" and the "oppressed" (Lk. 4,18). The poor comprise all those who live without the bare minimum necessary for physical or spiritual life. In today's world, there are millions of *refugees* exiled from their country, and there are other millions, at times whole tribes or entire peoples, threatened with total extermination because of *drought and famine*. Then there is the *poverty of ignorance* of those who never had the opportunity of an education. Or the absolute impotence of people faced with injustice and underdevelopment. Innumerable numbers are deprived of their religious liberty and suffer because they cannot adore God in accordance to the dictate of a right conscience.(no. 7)

The Pope goes on to speak of moral poverty which menaces the liberty and dignity of the human person. In a world suffering so many forms of poverty, the Church looks to preach the "Good News to the Poor." John Paul says:

⁷⁴ DC, no. 1918 (May 18, 1986): 512 (no. 103a,b,c), translation mine. Cf. also the *Instruction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith*, entitled *Christian Freedom and Liberation*, in DC, no. 1916 (April 20, 1986): 402-404.

[The Church] does this through *the efforts of such people as Mother Theresa* and others like her, whose love for Christ and of service to the poorest of the poor is *profoundly prophetic and profoundly evangelical*. (no. 7)⁷⁵

2) The Bishops of Africa and Madagascar, in their pastoral exhortation *The Church and Human Development in Africa Today*, given at Kinshasa, July 15-22, 1984, declare:

The deaf, mute, blind, crippled, poor, broken hearts, captives, crushed: so many words to indicate the poor and the oppressed. So also, to heal, to restore sight and hearing, to give joy, to restore liberty, to preach deliverance, grace, the Good News: so many ways of working for the total salvation of man.(no. 38)

In bringing the Gospel or the Good News to the poor and the oppressed, Jesus proclaims the advent of the Kingdom of God for them, especially, for those whom our societies have marginalized, those who live in a permanent state of distress and suffering, those who are deprived of their fundamental human rights, the refugees, the handicapped, the victims of under-employment, of exploitation, of discrimination because of race, tongue, religion, sex and opinion.(no. 40)⁷⁶

Mary, the mother of mercy and compassion, is deeply involved in this re-emphasis of the Church's long tradition of service to the poor. The new dimension of today's call is that we must not simply do something for the poor, but that we make community *with* them. Mary did just that and is a model for all. God in His mysterious providence uses the weak to confound the strong, the poor and the humble to overcome the rich and the powerful. In the fullness of time, He turns His eyes and His love on the person of Mary, the humble maiden of Nazareth. He becomes incarnate in her womb so as to be born in the least of places in the environs of Bethlehem.

⁷⁵ DC, no. 1914 (March 16, 1986): 296-297—translation mine.

⁷⁶ DC, no. 1913 (March 2, 1986): 263-264. This whole document needs to be read and pondered.

It is from this locale, that He announces the salvation for His people, freedom for captives and the time of grace of the Lord. Thus it is in Mary that is rooted the immense power of His weakness.

Vatican II tells us that Mary was the first of the “anawim”—the poor of the Lord: “She stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord, who confidently hope for and receive salvation from him.”⁷⁷

Mary is called by the Bishops of Chile the “model of the preferential option for the poor.”⁷⁸ The Gospel account of the life of the Mother of Jesus reveals her as a poor woman who experienced a twofold poverty: poverty in the sociological sense and poverty in the sense of the Kingdom. The Bishops state:

[Mary] understands better than anyone of us because she experienced in her own life what it means to be chosen by God precisely because she was poor. The Lord took her as his spouse in the village of Nazareth and placed her in the heights of heaven so that she can be contemplated by all of creation. However, this did not dispense Mary from following the simple and daily path of all humans: she knew how to go draw water from the wells and to acquit herself of the ordinary chores of the mother of a family. She experienced the insecurity of widowhood and suffered the criticisms directed at Jesus. She had, especially, to undergo the experience of finding herself at the last place near the cross, so as to be carried to the first place of humanity. Thus, in her mouth, the *Magnificat* is not only a prophecy of the action of God, it is the song of the completed experience, the spontaneous praise of the God who sends the rich away empty-handed and exalts the humble.(no. 93)⁷⁹

⁷⁷ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 55.

⁷⁸ DC, no. 1918 (May 18, 1986): 511.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Cf. also: *Marialis Cultus*, no. 37; Pope John Paul II's homily given in the Basilica of Our Lady of Zapopan on January 30, 1979, in *Puebla: A Pilgrimage of Faith*, 167-174; the *Instruction of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith*, especially toward the end, in its splendid conclusion on the *Magnificat* as the song of liberation in the true sense. It makes this fine statement: “It is towards her that the Church of which she is the mother and the model, must turn to understand in its integralness the sense of her mission. It is a truly remarkable fact that the sense

The Church—priests and people—spontaneously and confidently turns to Mary in these times of crisis that cause all those things that make people “poor.” Here I would like to quote one more statement that comes from the Bishops of Venezuela:

. . . May the example of Mary, our Mother, humble spouse of a worker, who knew the anguish of poverty, the exile and the pain of not finding a place where her son could be born, give us the strength necessary to reconquer in man the dignity of a son of God, to construct justice and peace and to restore a society of love.⁸⁰

4. *Mary and Evangelization by Witnessing*

In the opening prayer of the Mass for the fourth week after Easter, we make this petition: “Father, may we whom you renew in baptism bear witness to our faith by the way we live” As we have seen, the work of the missions is to carry out the apostolic task of bearing witness to the Gospel of Christ. This can be done in two ways, by preaching and by presence.

I would say that missionary activity today, particularly in the Moslem world, calls for a witnessing presence. What is said of religious in the Vatican II document on the renewal of religious life is most applicable to today’s missionaries:

All religious, . . . , with undiminished faith, with charity towards God and their neighbor, with love for the cross and with the hope of future glory, should spread the good news of Christ throughout the whole

of faith of the poor, and at the same time their penetrating perception of the mystery of the redeeming cross, leads them to an unshakeable love and confidence in the Mother of the Son of God, venerated in the numerous sanctuaries.” (p. 409) There is also a marvelous treatment on the choice of the poor as it relates to Mary in *Do Whatever He Tells You*, the statement of the 208th General Chapter of the Servites of Mary (Rome: General Curia O.S.M., 1983), 77-82. See also Virgil Elizondo, “Mary in the Struggles of the Poor,” *NCWorld* 229 (November-December 1986): 244.

⁸⁰ DC, no. 1928 (November 16, 1986): 1055.

world, so that their witness will be seen by all men and our Father, who is in heaven, will be glorified (Mt. 5:16).⁸¹

I tend to agree with the assessment made by René Coste who thinks that evangelization at the present time calls for witnessing; he states:

The painful experience of the last twenty years . . . leads us to a reformulation of our pastoral and missionary strategy centered no longer on dialogue (although . . . that is essential) but on the witness given by a Church, communities and Christians living according to the light of the Gospel . . . [In our own day the Church] has to be the Church of the Testimony of Life according to the Gospel (remaining all the while a Church of dialogue).⁸² It is a simple difference of accent, but which has its own importance, because . . . we will be more aware of the conditions of an authentic evangelical life. The pontificate of John Paul II fits into this perspective.⁸³

The history of the missions to the Moslems involved initial attempts by the Mendicant Friars, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. From the outset, mission to the Moslems proved to be discouraging. It was virtually impossible to proselytize successfully, so mission work tended more and more to concentrate on pastoral work among the Christians living in the world of Islam.

The whole Moslem world is still a formidable fortress of resistance to Christianity, even though the Church is present in most Moslem countries with the exception of Afghanistan. The spread of Islam

⁸¹ *Perfectae Caritatis*, no. 25. *Ad Gentes*, nos. 10 and 12, calls for Christian witness in missionary activity.

⁸² He refers to the thought of Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam* (August 6, 1964, N.C.W.C.; Boston: St. Paul Editions): "The Church should enter into dialogue with the world in which it exists and labors. The Church has something to say: the Church has a message to deliver, the Church has a communication to offer."

⁸³ René Coste, "Notes théologico—pastorales pour l'évangélisation du temps présent," *EspV* 11 (March 12, 1987): 159.

in Africa below the Sahara desert is a serious challenge to the advances of Christianity.

Islam permeates every fibre of the lives of its adherents and every aspect of their culture and society. It holds its members by a three-fold bond: political, social and religious. It is a supranational state, a social community and a religious body. One has had to live among them to realize how all-pervasive Islam is. Consequently, in the countries of Islam, direct evangelization is not possible. The Church in these areas can scarcely do more than witness to charity by being active through schools and the medical and social apostolates. The missionaries have to witness by their lives what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. They have to be living witnesses of Christian values, thereby bringing Christ into an environment through their presence, their prayers and the offering of themselves.⁸⁴

As I saw it, our work in Senegal—a country of Black Africa that has 87% of its population adhering to the religion of Islam—consisted of four things: 1) Presence, 2) Witness, 3) Service, 4) Dialogue—and in that order.

Perhaps this can be exemplified by the activity of the mission station to which I was assigned in Senegal. It was a town called Mboro, about seventy miles up the coast from Dakar. The closest big town was Tivaoune, the religious center of one of the Moslem sects, whose influence permeated the area. We had a fair number of Christians who were surrounded by Moslems. The town marched pretty much to the rhythm of Islam. We had the normal pastoral activities among our Christians: church, school, etc. We also had on the station a fine dispensary staffed by the Sisters. At that dispensary, they would care for 150 to 200 sick a day—most of these were Moslems—exemplifying charity and Christ's concern for the sick. To me they were perfect examples of presence, witness and service.

Connected to our mission, but some forty miles away, was a small

⁸⁴ Charles de Foucauld was a prime example of this. His life among the Tauregs was that of Christian presence. He maintained: "We must proclaim the Gospel by our lives. We must be a living Gospel."

town called Mekhe (variant of Mecca) where there were a few Christians. We would visit them every two weeks, say Mass, catechize the children. We asked the bishop if we could establish a permanent mission there with a resident priest. The bishop, a local man and exemplary pastor, refused our request, saying: "Before we can do that, I would rather set up a dispensary, have the Sisters go there. And they would generate enough good will so that a priest could be accepted in their midst."

We did dialogue with the Moslems. The grounds on which we could meet with some form of commonality were:

- the fact that the Moslems are monotheists;
- they are faithful in prayer;
- they are observant of God's law;
- they have great respect for Mary.⁸⁵

Thus, by witness and dialogue, the missionaries try to give an account of the hope that is in them.⁸⁶ And they are buoyed up by the fact that God, in His own good time, will bring about the harvest from their labors. As Pope John Paul II said to the Bishops of North Africa: "You do not know how and when the Lord will fructify your ministry. The seed can remain a long time buried in the soil."⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Concerning Mary in Islam, see *The Koran*, translated by N. J. Dawood (New York: Penguin Books, 1985): Sura 19 on Mary, p.32 sq.; Sura 23, p. 220; Sura 21, p. 297; Sura 3, p. 408; Sura 66, p. 442; Sura 5, p. 386. See also, J.-M. Abd-el-Jalil, O.F.M., "La Vie de Marie selon le Coran et l'Islam," in *Maria* (Du Manoir), 1:3-211 (1949); R. J. McCarthy, S.J., "Mary in Islam," in *Mary's Place in Christian Dialogue* (ed. by A. Stacpoole, O.S.B.; Slough: St. Paul's Publications, 1982), 202-213.

⁸⁶ 1 Pet. 3:15-16.

⁸⁷ DC, no. 1930 (December 21, 1986): 1153. What the Pope said was in response to an address of Archbishop Henri Teissier, co-adjutor of Algeria, who addressed the Holy Father in these words: "The Churches that we serve in the four Moslem countries [Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Western Sahara] are small but international . . . We are all involved in this question and this vocation: how to live a Christian witness in a society which intends to remain Moslem? . . . We

Here, again, Mary is a presence that has an important impact on this aspect of today's missionary effort. Mary was a vital and effective presence in the Church. She influenced the church by her prayer and her charity in the service of others. She exemplified in her life what it means to live a totally Christian life, the life of a perfect disciple. She is for all missionaries, as she is for the Church, "a model in the matter of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ."⁸⁷ She goes before them on their pilgrimage of faith. She was an active and effective presence at the critical stages of Christ's salvific mission, the modern extension of which is today's mission work. Mary has a stake, then, in that work, watches over it with motherly care and her intercessory action before the throne of her son. Who can measure, because it is shrouded in mystery, her influence in the Moslem world? Mary was brought there by the love and devotion of the missionaries, and knowledge of her was transmitted to the people they came to serve, who "from that hour took her into their homes."⁸⁸

5. *Mary and Evangelization-and/or-Development*

Aylward Shorter—a White Father, a missionary of Africa, a professional anthropologist-missilogist and an authority, especially on the missions of East Africa—entitles the first chapter of his book, *Theology of Mission*, with the question "Development, the New Name of Mission?"⁸⁹ In the past missilogists wrestled with the problem of whether the missionary's task was primarily evangelization or development. There is no doubt that the missionaries, in some way, always worked for the material betterment of their peo-

believe, . . . , that the heart of evangelical witness is fraternal charity because, when it is authentic, that is disinterested and universal, it comes from God and leads to God We are happy to live the mission of the Church under this particular modality."(p. 1152)

⁸⁷ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 63.

⁸⁸ Jn. 19:27.

⁸⁹ A. Shorter, *Theology of Mission* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Fides, 1972), 13.

ple, e.g., building aqueducts, bringing in electrification, building hospitals and dispensaries, etc. But they were faced with an either/or situation. It was a repetition of the problem which faced the Church at its very beginning. In Acts 6:1-5, we read of complaints made about neglect in the social ministrations. The Twelve then decided, in a full meeting of the disciples:

It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food; you, brothers, must select, from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom to whom we can hand over this duty. We ourselves will continue to devote ourselves to prayer and the service of the word.(Acts 6:3-5)

Thus, there came into existence the order of deacons. So the Church brought in, in an official way, within the periphery of its activity, the social betterment of people. There is no doubt that today the Church considers the dichotomy between evangelization and development to be a false one. Pope Paul VI was perhaps the one most responsible for cutting this Gordian Knot.⁹⁰ His thoughts on the matter were clearly and forcefully enunciated in his message for Mission Sunday, published on June 5, 1970.⁹¹ He says in part:

⁹⁰ In his first chapter, Fr. Shorter says: "Paul VI landed at Entebbe, Uganda, on the last day of July 1969, the first reigning Pope to set foot on African soil. The speech he made on arrival contained one very striking statement. 'Development,' he said, 'is the new name of Peace.' In fact the subject of development and the Church's co-operation in government programmes of development was a major theme of the Pope's nineteen addresses and speeches during his three day visit to Africa."(p. 13)

⁹¹ *The Teachings of Pope Paul VI, 1970* (Washington, DC.: U.S.C.C., 1971), 238-243. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, he comes back to this topic in a section where he shows that evangelization is necessarily linked to human advancement (no. 31).

A new era has dawned for the missions

This means that missionary activity must be conceived in broad and modern terms

In this re-thinking of the Church's missionary vocation there is one question that stands out in particular, opposing two different concepts of what the general direction of missionary activity should be—concepts which may be summed up in the two words: evangelization and development. By evangelization is meant strictly religious activity, aimed at the preaching of God's kingdom, of the Gospel as a revelation of the plan of salvation in Christ, through the action of the Holy Spirit—activity that has the ministry of the Church as its instrument, the building-up of the Church itself as its aim, and God's glory as its final end: this is the traditional doctrine and to it the Council has given its authoritative support. By development is meant the human, civil, temporal promotion of those peoples who, by contact with modern civilization and with the help that it provides, are becoming more conscious of themselves and are stepping out on the road to higher levels of culture and prosperity. The missionary cannot excuse himself from taking an interest in this promotion (cf. *Ad Gentes*, 11).

The Pope says that we cannot consider the concepts to be mutually exclusive, we must establish a correct relationship between them. There must be no dilemma. There must be a synthesis in which one complements the other. It is a question of priority of ends, of intentions, of duties. He continues:

. . . For us believers it would be unthinkable that missionary activity should make of earthly reality its only or principal end and lose sight of its essential end: namely, to bring all men to the light of faith, to give them new life in baptism, to incorporate them into the Mystical Body of Christ that is the Church, to teach them to live like Christians, and to hold out the expectation of an existence beyond this earthly one. And likewise it would be inadmissible for the Church's missionary activity to neglect the needs and aspirations of developing peoples and, because of its religious orientation, omit the basic duties of human charity. We cannot forget the solemn teaching of the Gospel

on the love of our needy and suffering neighbor (Mt. 25,31-46),. . . , and confirmed by the Church's whole missionary tradition. We Ourselves, in Our encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, have stressed the duty of resolutely and intelligently fostering the growth of economic, cultural, social and spiritual well-being among peoples, and especially among those of the so-called Third World, where missionary activity finds its main scope (cf. *Ad Gentes*, 12).

. . . there is no doubt that missionary activity is concerned primarily with evangelization [It] would be failing in its *raison d'être* if it turned aside from its religious axis; . . .

But, . . . evangelization is helped by activities concerned with the temporal and human development of the peoples being evangelized.

Development work, when linked with that of evangelization, itself sheds a Christian light, bringing out the concept of human dignity, of the rights of man, of freedom, responsibility, duty, work, social harmony. . . .

What of Mary? In this area of the missionary effort Mary is very much part of the picture. Redemption is a new creation, true human advancement brought about by the New Adam, at Whose side was the New Eve. John Paul II in his talks often comes back to the theme that in Mary and by Mary humanity entered a better world because, in her and through her, humanity's and the world's situation was reversed, and they reverted back to their pristine splendor. His thoughts were very clearly expressed in *Redemptor Hominis*:

. . . if the Church lives her life, she does so because she draws it from Christ, and He always wishes but one thing, *namely that we should have life and have it abundantly. This fullness of life in Him is at the same time for man* The aim of any service in the Church, whether the service is *apostolic, pastoral*, priestly or episcopal, is to keep up this dynamic link between the mystery of the Redemption and every man.

If we are aware of this task, then we seem to understand better what it means to say that the Church is a mother and also what it means to say that the Church always, and particularly at our time, has need of a Mother Mary is the Mother of the Church because, on ac-

count of the eternal Father's ineffable choice and due to the Spirit of Love's special action, she gave human life to the Son of God, "for whom and by whom all things exist" and from whom the whole of the People of God receives the grace and dignity of election. Her Son explicitly extended His Mother's maternity in a way that could easily be understood by every soul and every heart by designating, when He was raised on the cross, His beloved disciple as her son. . . . she was thus included in the history of salvation and in the Church's mission from the very beginning, that is from the moment of the Annunciation

. . . if we feel a special need, in this difficult and responsible phase of the history of the Church and of mankind, to turn to Christ, who is Lord of the Church and Lord of man's history on account of the mystery of the Redemption, we believe that nobody else can bring us as Mary can into the divine and human dimension of this mystery. Nobody has been brought into it by God Himself as Mary has. . . . Mary's participation, due to this maternity, in God's plan for man's salvation through the mystery of the Redemption is also unique in profundity and range of action.

We can say that the mystery of the Redemption took shape beneath the heart of the Virgin of Nazareth when she pronounced her "fiat." From then on, under the special influence of the Holy Spirit, this heart . . . has always followed the work of her Son and has gone out to all those whom Christ has embraced and continues to embrace with inexhaustible love *The special characteristic of the motherly love that the Mother of God inserts in the mystery of the Redemption and the life of the Church finds expression in its exceptional closeness to man and all that happens to him*

. . . Mary must be on all the ways of the Church's daily life. Through her maternal presence the Church acquires the certainty that she is truly living the life of her Master and Lord and that she is living the mystery of the Redemption in all its life-giving profundity and fullness. Likewise the Church, which has struck root in many varied fields of the life of the whole of present-day humanity, also acquires the certainty and . . . the experience of being close to man, to each person⁹²

⁹² *Redemptor Hominis*, Section 22, emphasis mine; cf. also *Redemptoris Mater* passim; Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, no. 37.

From this exposé of the Holy Father, the obvious conclusion is this: if we truly believe in Mary's motherly and compassionate care for all her children, i.e., all of humanity—then Mary, in accordance with her style, must be involved in all the areas of human promotion, quietly but effectively.

One area of human advancement which is in the forefront today is the promotion of women. It is a burning and critical issue that cannot be adequately addressed without taking into consideration the "Woman" par excellence. It is an area that is too vast to be treated here. I leave it to others to enlighten us. Many good things have been written on the question.⁹³ Pope Paul VI, in one of the truly fine passages of *Marialis Cultus*, gives a splendid treatment on Mary and the modern woman.⁹⁴ Mary is a model for women: 1) as upgrading their condition and 2) as active workers for the kingdom of God. In Senegal, where Christian women live side by side with Moslem women, it is easy to compare the situation of each. The Christian view of woman, as influenced by the Church's appreciation of Mary, gives to women a more exalted status.

I would like to end this section of the paper by quoting a passage from *The Final Declaration of the IV Plenary Assembly of the Episcopal Conference of Asia* which admirably sets forth the aspirations of women and how they turn to Mary:

A woman is a human person enjoying all the rights due to a human individual regardless of her race, the class to which she belongs, her tribe or her religion. She is created in the image and resemblance of God. To her also was given the divine call to be responsible for the created world (Gn. 1,27). The drama is that that image and resemblance to God have been degraded and trampled under foot, and that women

⁹³ E.g., M.-J. Nicolas, O.P., "La Doctrine mariale et la théologie Chrétienne de la femme," in *Maria* (Du Manoir), 7:341-362 (1964); Maria Xaveria Bertola, "Maria e le istanze del mondo femminile, oggi," in *Il ruolo di Maria nell'oggi della chiesa e del mondo* (Rome: Edizioni "Marianum," 1979), 153-187.

⁹⁴ *Marialis Cultus*, no. 37.

became subjected to various kinds of domination. Thus women with great insistence implore from God their liberation. We ourselves have heard this poignant cry from women. They have enunciated here their deepest aspirations for dignity and for liberty. They have reminded us that Mary is the Mother of God, and it was as a woman that she collaborated, in a unique way, with Jesus so that the Kingdom of the Father could come. It is not only a human necessity, but an imperative of the Gospel, that this half of the world's population which is made up of women be recognized and their dignity restored, and that we permit to the women to play their just role in the world and in the Church. (no. 3.3.3.)⁹⁵

The thought comes to me often as a refrain, the words of the song *Gentle Woman*: "And for woman, shining one. Blessed are you among women, Blest in turn all women, too." Mary, the highly-favored daughter of God, Mother of His Son—to preach that truth among a people and to let it penetrate among them is to inculcate the grandeur of the woman in the plan of creation. The social implication of the Marian truths is tremendous.

IV.

MARY AND THE MARIST MISSIONS

As we have mentioned so often in the course of this paper, Mary is at the very base, the very root of the missionary apostolate of the Church. This conviction comes to us from the Church herself. So it is easy to understand how the great and holy missionaries instinctively placed their efforts and their labors under the very special protection and care of the Mother of Christ. They all had the conviction that Mary was and would be their guide and their constant support in their work. They had a deep belief in the maternal protection of Our Lady.

All religious orders and congregations are Marian, i.e., Mary holds

⁹⁵ Conference was held September 16 to 25, 1986, in Tokyo, Japan; text in DC, no. 1934 (February 15, 1987): 209.

a special place in their history and in their life as directed by their Constitutions and Rules. Who can measure, for example, the impact on the missionary efforts of: the Dominicans and the Rosary, the Jesuits with their Marian sodalities, the Carmelites and the Scapular, the Vincentians and the Miraculous Medal, the Montfortians and the True Devotion? Marian love and devotion accompanied to the New World the missionary activities of the Franciscans, Augustinians, and Recollects. Many of the more modern congregations carry the name of Mary.⁹⁶ Whether they carry Mary's name or are called after one of her titles or prerogatives, they all share the basic conviction that their members must, in some way, model their lives on Mary, giving their lives totally to God and carrying Christ to the men and women in the world.

Our esteemed associate and friend, Eamon Carroll, states:

In the aftermath of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution the newly founded religious congregations and the restored older orders showed a special concern for Mary's role in the apostolate. Apostolic zeal was recognized as an authentic note of Marian dedication (cf. *Lumen gentium* 65). This was especially true of the missionary orders, founded in such numbers in this period, e.g., Marists, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Claretians, and Scheut Fathers.⁹⁷

I have been able to verify this in my own missionary experience. I have worked in the South Seas with the Picpus Fathers, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Vincentians, Columbans, Jesuits, Society of the Divine Word, Marist Brothers of the Schools, Marist Sisters, Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary and Sisters of Nazareth. In Africa I was also privileged to work with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Blessed Sacrament

⁹⁶ A full-blown paper could be written on the missionary thrust of congregations and institutes of men and women who carry Mary's name under some form or other.

⁹⁷ E. R. Carroll, "Mary, Blessed Virgin, Devotion to," NCE 9: 368.

Fathers, Piarists, the Scheut Fathers, the White Fathers, the Fathers of the Holy Ghost, the Sacred Heart Brothers, the Brothers of St. Gabriel, the Benedictines, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, the Marist Sisters, the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny. In all of these groups I found a Marian dynamism and inspiration in their missionary lives.

If I now speak of my own congregation—the Marist Fathers—the Society of Mary,⁹⁸ it is simply to use the example that I know best of a religious institute whose Marian inspiration is a motor force behind its missionary apostolate. The Marists were founded by a group of twelve seminarians of the Major Seminary of Saint Irenée in Lyons. On July 23, 1816, they went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Notre Dame de Fourvière to consecrate themselves to Our Lady and to put their project under her protection.

Fourvière, the center of devotion to Our Lady in Lyons, had been venerated as a Marian Sanctuary at least since the twelfth century. The action of the would-be Marists was, thus, well in keeping with a long-standing tradition which removed any hint of singularity from the pilgrimage. A plaque in the sanctuary chapel commemorates the event. The leader of the group was Jean Claude Colin, who, in time, would be elected the first Superior General.

In 1836, on April 29, Gregory XVI, by the Brief *Omnium Gentium*, gave the Society his official approbation. The approbation coming so soon was in a large part due to the fact that the young congregation had accepted the missions of what was known as the Vicariate of Western Oceania. Cardinal Castracane, writing to Fr. Colin, stressed that it was the acceptance of the mission which had played the chief part in the approbation.

At that time, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda was organizing the missions of the Pacific. It had entrusted the Sandwich Islands to the recently founded Fathers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (Picpus Fathers). Then, the Sacred Congregation added the

⁹⁸ Hereafter we will simply call them Marists, to distinguish them from members of the other esteemed Society of Mary, known as the Marianists.

enormous prefecture of the Marquesas Island, the Society Islands and the Tuamotu Archipelago and gave them to the Picpus. This constituted the Vicariate of Eastern Oceania.

The Congregation was looking for someone to take up the evangelizing of the newly created Vicariate of Western Oceania. It was then that the fledgling Marist Society was asked to accept this task, which it did. So, on December 23, 1835, the Vicariate of Western Oceania, that vast area from Tahiti to Australia, was entrusted to the Marists.

The Brief *Omnium Gentium* authorized the members of the Society to elect a Superior General. Jean Claude Colin was elected on September 24, 1836. There were twenty men who made their religious profession on that day.

After these events, the first missionaries packed their bags, ready for departure. They were seven in number—one-third of the newly approved society; among them was Father Peter Chanel who was to be the proto-martyr of Oceania. On October 15, Fathers Chanel and Bataillon consecrated the mission to the Blessed Virgin in the basilica of Fourvière. But, due to several delays, it was not until December 24 that they were able to sail from LeHavre for Oceania. The Marist missionary epic had begun.

Fr. Colin recommended to his sons to consecrate to Mary every island that they landed upon and to leave on each one a medal or picture of Mary, as a witness to the dominion and consecration to the Blessed Virgin. Peter Chanel heeded the advice of the Superior General and as he landed on the island of Futuna, he dedicated the island to Mary and attached a miraculous medal to one of the trees as a sign of consecration.

Peter Chanel had been a priest of the diocese of Belley. He had a great devotion to Our Lady as well as a desire to go to the foreign missions. At one time he wanted to come to evangelize the United States. Bishop Dubourg of New Orleans had come to Lyons, seeking priests. Fr. Chanel wanted to join him, but his Bishop would not give him permission. His seminary rector, Matthias Loras, was the one who answered the appeal and went to Louisiana. In time

he was named Bishop of Dubuque, Iowa.

After some hesitation, Fr. Chanel's Bishop allowed him to join the Marists, where he could wed his love for Mary with his desire to go to the missions. Peter Chanel landed on Futuna, November 12, 1837, and was martyred on April 28, 1841. He had very little to show for his labors. He was able to baptize only forty-five persons during his less than four years of effort, and these were mostly babies and elderly before their deaths. In baptizing them he gave to each, over and above their baptismal names, the name of Mary. He was remembered as always saying his rosary as he trudged the length of the island on his missionary visitations. The ancients remembered him "as sowing the seeds of the Hail Mary's." Two years after his martyrdom, the whole island had become Catholic: the "blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians." The island is still totally Catholic to this day. It was rather fitting that Peter Chanel was canonized during the Marian year—on June 12, 1954, by Pope Pius XII.

"Live the life of Mary"—this expression of Jean Claude Colin, our founder, condenses all his spirituality which he transmitted to the members of his congregation as the dynamic force in their life and their work. As our Constitution, no. 224, tells us:

Let them learn from the first Marists to find in the presence of Mary at Nazareth, in the early Church, and at the end of time, the secret of their own presence in the Church and the world of today: a presence attentive to God and joined to an active zeal, so that while doing great things for the Lord, they seem to be unknown and hidden in the world. This is Mary's work, as Fr. Colin wrote:

"Let them always bear in mind that they belong by a gracious choice to the family of the blessed Mary, Mother of God, from whose name they are called Marists, and whom they have chosen as their model and as their first and perpetual superior from the beginning. If therefore they are and desire to be true sons of this dear Mother, let them constantly try to breathe her spirit, a spirit of humility, self-denial, close union with God, and the most ardent love for their neighbor. They must think as Mary, judge as Mary, feel and act

as Mary in all things, otherwise they will be unworthy and degenerate sons.”

Our General Chapter of 1970 reminded us:

No. 124. In this work of evangelization, Marists have their place, insofar as they enter into the mystery of Our Lady and rediscover the missionary thrust and enthusiasm of their beginnings. By her free consent, Mary co-operated in the consecration of the world and in the redemption of all human values. Her total dedication to the accomplishment of Jesus' mission is the source of that tradition to which Marists aspire to be faithful: to seek, not their own success, nor that of the Society, but solely to advance Christ; to work in friendly co-operation with others in a co-ordinated ministry; to be interested in the real needs of people, and not just content with theorizing; to be rid of pretence; to work for the poor and the abandoned; to be patient in prayer and serving, even in lowly tasks. None of this is ours alone, it is the spirit of the Gospel and as such is the treasure of the Church and of each Christian. But we endeavor to translate, into our lives, Mary's way of being faithful to the Lord from Nazareth to Pentecost.

We have come to the end of this paper. As we look at the Church today and at the work of evangelization in mission countries, we make ours this wish and this prayer from the Curé of Ars: “Many things would go along better in our lives and in our Apostolate if we gave Mary a greater place, her rightful place.” And so, to Mary, “sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim people of God”⁹⁹ and the “Star of Evangelization,”¹⁰⁰ we commend our journey into the future.

J. ARMAND ROBICHAUD, S.M.
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⁹⁹ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 68.

¹⁰⁰ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 82.