



**THE IMMACULATA**  
**Mediatrix of all Graces**



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## Mediatrix of all Graces



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It is certain that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mediatrix of all graces.

In addition, it is beyond all doubt that each conversion to Catholicism and every work of sanctification is the work of grace.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
Mugenzai no Sono, 20 March 1935*

# The Mediatrix of all Graces

The Catholic Church honours our Blessed Mother with so many beautiful titles including the Mediatrix of all graces. Mediatrix of all graces is a Marian title that includes the understanding that Our Lady mediates the Divine Grace.

“The Church, in fact, turns to Mary to obtain graces of all kinds, both temporal and spiritual; among these last, from the grace of conversion up to that of final perseverance, to say nothing of those needed by virgins to preserve virginity, by apostles to exercise their apostolate, by martyrs to remain firm in the faith. In the Litany of Loreto, which has been universally recited in the Church for many centuries, Mary is for this reason called: *‘Health of the sick, refuge of sinners, comforter of the afflicted, help of Christians, Queen of apostles, of martyrs, of confessors, of virgins.’* Thus all kinds of graces are distributed by her, even, in a sense, those of the sacraments; for she merited them for us in union with Christ on Calvary. In addition, she disposes us, by her prayer, to approach the sacraments and to receive them well. At times she even sends us a priest, without whom this sacramental help would not be given to us.

**Finally**, not only every kind of grace is distributed to us by Mary, but every grace in particular. Is this not what the faith of the Church says in the words of the Hail Mary: *'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen'*?

This "now" is said every moment in the Church by thousands of Christians who thus ask for the grace of the present moment. This grace is the most individual of graces; it varies with each of us, and for each one of us at every moment. If we are distracted while saying this word, Mary, who is not distracted, knows our spiritual needs of every instant, and prays for us, and obtains for us all the graces that we receive. This teaching, contained in the faith of the Church and expressed by the common prayers (*lex orandi lex credendi*), is based on Scripture and tradition.

Even during her earthly life, Mary truly appears in Scripture as the distributor of graces. Through Mary, Jesus sanctified the Precursor when she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth and sang the Magnificat. Through His mother, Jesus confirmed the faith of the disciples at Cana, by granting the miracle that she asked. Through her, He strengthened the faith of John on Calvary, saying to him: *'Behold thy mother.'*

Lastly, by her the Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles, for she was praying with them in the cenacle on Pentecost day when the Holy Ghost descended in the form of tongues of fire. With even greater reason after the assumption and her entrance into glory, Mary is the distributor of all graces. As a beatified mother knows in Heaven the spiritual needs of her children whom she left on earth, Mary knows the spiritual needs of all men. Since she is an excellent mother, she prays for them and, since she is all powerful over the heart of her Son, she obtains for them all the graces that they receive, all which those receive who do not persist in evil."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *The three ages of the interior life*, volume I, TAN BOOKS AND PUBLISHERS, 1989, pp. 127–128.

When we assert that Our Lady is the Dispensatrix of all graces we mean that she actually obtains them for us, through some true causality on her part. By "all graces" we mean sanctifying grace, the infused theological and moral virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, all actual graces, the charismatic gifts, and even temporal favours having a bearing on our supernatural end. In brief, everything which produces, conserves, increases, or perfects the supernatural life of man. This universally extends likewise to the beneficiaries of Mary's mission, for it affects all human beings of all times, including the souls in Purgatory. Those who lived before Mary's time received their graces in view of her future merits; those living after her, particularly after her Assumption into Heaven, receive all graces through her actual intercession, or even, according to some, through her physical instrumental causality.

The Holy Ghost, the third person in the Blessed Trinity, chose Mary to bring the Word, our Lord, Jesus Christ, into the world. Did He have to use a woman, who at the time was considered a lesser human being? Our God didn't have to use anyone to bring Jesus into this world. He chose her. She was chosen, above all women! She was chosen for the Son!

Upon choosing Mary to be the vessel of the incarnate Word, the Holy Ghost made her His channel through which all graces flow to this world! Jesus was brought to this world to complete the "new covenant" through His passion, death and Resurrection. It was only through grace that He was made in the flesh and walked on this earth. It was only through grace that our Father, God, chose to make a new covenant with us, to open the gates of Heaven. And there was only one vessel in which this grace was bestowed, and that was in our Mother Mary!



Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and humanity; the Immaculata is the only Mediatrix between Jesus and humanity; and we shall be happy mediators between the Immaculata and souls all over the world.

What a beautiful task! Is it not?

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
Nagasaki, 6 April 1934*

# Immaculata Mediatrix in the Spirituality of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Saint Maximilian Kolbe many times wrote and spoke about Immaculata as Mediatrix of all graces.

The Mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary — “It is on this very truth that the Militia Immaculatae bases its work. We resort to the Immaculata and we are instruments in her hands, since she distributes all the graces of conversion and sanctification to the inhabitants of this valley of tears. In addition, we profess this truth clearly in the act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary, included in the M.I. enrolment card: ... because every grace flows through your hands from the most Sacred heart of Jesus to us.’

## *But on what basis?*

Let us look at history. No conversion ever took place in which, in one way or another, the hand of Mary did not play a role. No saint ever existed who was not inflamed with special love toward her.

Fathers and doctors of the Church proclaim that she, the second Eve, repaired what the first had destroyed; that she is the channel of divine graces, our hope and our refuge; that through her we receive graces from God. In addition, Pope Leo XIII, in an encyclical on the Rosary (dated 22 September 1891) asserted: 'It may be said that, by divine disposition, nothing can be conveyed to us from the immense treasure trove of grace... except through Mary'.

Let us pray, then, that our Loving Holy Mother may hasten the moment of the solemn proclamation of her privilege, so that the whole of humanity may come to her feet with full confidence: today we have a great need of her protection."<sup>1</sup>

**During conferences** St. Maximilian said: "The movement of the Militia Immaculatae is founded upon this truth, namely that Mary is the Mediatrix of all graces. If she were not, then our work and our striving would be in vain".<sup>2</sup>

*Why is Mary the Mediatrix of all graces?* To answer this question, Maximilian argued that it is important to understand the roles of the different Persons of the Holy Trinity, in particular the Holy Ghost, and to understand the relationship of the Virgin Mary to the Holy Ghost.

God the Father is the 'Creator' and God the Son is the 'Redeemer', the Holy Ghost is the 'Sanctifier'.

"The work of redemption depends directly on the second Divine Person, Jesus Christ, Who with His own blood reconciled us to the Father, and gave Him reparation for the sin of Adam. He merited for us sanctifying grace, various actual graces and the right to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, *The Mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, "Ry-cerz Niepokalanej", March 1923, pp. 45–46.

<sup>2</sup> Conference in Niepokalanów dated 6 June 1933.

However, the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity also participates in this work, since by virtue of the redemption accomplished by Christ, He transforms the souls of men into temples of God: He makes us adoptive children of God and heirs of the kingdom of Heaven."<sup>3</sup>

**The Holy Ghost's role is to make us holy through Mary.** "(...) as Jesus made Himself Man-God in order to manifest His boundless love toward us, so also the Third Divine Person, God-Love, resolved to manifest with an external sign His own mediation with the Father and the Son. That sign is the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin, as appears from the writings of the saints, especially those who consider Mary the Spouse of the Holy Ghost."<sup>4</sup>

**Mary is the masterpiece of the Holy Ghost.** The Holy Ghost is intimately united with the Blessed Mother, so much so that the Blessed Mother is called the 'Spouse of the Holy Ghost'.

According to the spirituality of St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort, St. Maximilian wrote: "The Holy Ghost, who is infertile within the Trinity, because no divine Person proceeds from Him, became fruitful through Mary, whom He chose as His bride. With her, in her, and through her He realizes His masterpiece, that is to say, the Word incarnate: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee' (Luke 1:35).

That, however, should not be understood to mean that the Blessed Virgin gave the Holy Ghost fruitfulness that He, as God, would have to have, like the Father and the Son, even though in fact

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<sup>3</sup> Fr. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, *The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Relation to the Mediation of all graces*, "Miles Immaculatae", April-June 1938, pp. 25-28.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

He did not put it to fruition, for the simple reason that no divine Person proceeds from Him. Rather, we should understand it in the sense that the Holy Ghost resolved to use the mediation of Mary, while having absolutely no need of it in order to manifest his own fertility, forming through her and with her the human nature of Christ.

Even after Christ's death the Holy Ghost works all things in us through Mary. In fact, what the Creator said to the serpent in reference to the Immaculata: '*She will crush your head*' (Gen 3:15), is, according to the teaching of the theologians, to be understood to have no limitation of time.

It is the task of the Holy Ghost to form the new members of those predestined to the Mystical Body of Christ until the end of the world. But as Blessed Louis Grignion demonstrates, this work is brought to fruition with Mary, in Mary and through Mary.

(...) In fact Mary, as the Spouse of the Holy Ghost and therefore high above every created perfection, thoroughly accomplishes the will of the Holy Ghost who dwells in her, and that from the first moment of her conception."<sup>5</sup>

The Blessed Virgin is the instrument of the Holy Ghost in their one, unified mission of sanctification: that is, in the work of making people holy through the distribution of graces.

**St. Maximilian Kolbe's teachings** on the Immaculate Conception and the Holy Ghost provide perfect insight into how Mary can be Mediatrix of all graces:

"Mary as the Mother of the Saviour Jesus has been made the Co-Redemptrix of the human race, and as the Spouse of the Holy Ghost she participates in the distribution of all the graces. Whence we can say with the theologians: '...as the first Eve worked for our downfall by her truly personal and free actions,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

and truly helped cause it, so Mary by her truly personal actions joined in the reparation ... in this there is already in a most evident way true mediation properly speaking.' In recent times especially we are perceiving the Immaculata, the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, as our Mediatrix.

It was in the year 1830 that the Immaculate Virgin appeared to Sister Catherine Labouré. We learn from the account of this novice that the purpose of the apparition of Mary was to reveal her Immaculate Conception and her astonishing power with God:

The most holy Virgin cast her eyes on me and at the same time I heard a voice say, 'This globe of the world represents all men and each individual person.' And again: 'Behold the symbol of the graces which I pour out on all who invoke me.'

Afterwards an oval figure was formed around the most holy Virgin in which the following invocation was written in golden words: "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.' At the same moment I heard a voice saying: 'Strike a medal according to this exemplar: all who carry it will overflow with graces.'

At Lourdes the Immaculate Virgin urged all men to do penance; finally she recited the "Hail Mary"<sup>6</sup> in order to show it to us as a source of help. From that moment the Immaculata at Lourdes began to act in her capacity as our Mediatrix: she invites the sick to come, she gathers the weak and the lame to cure them, and she reveals our dependence on her even in natural life.

The sick in soul, namely unbelievers and sinners with hardened hearts, she draws sweetly and pours supernatural life into their hearts in order to convince them of her power to grant us supernatural life.

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<sup>6</sup> The visionary of Lourdes, St. Bernadette Soubirous, claimed that the Virgin „passed the beads of her Rosary between her fingers but she said nothing. Only at the end decade did she recite with me: Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto“; cf KW 1316.



The Immaculata is Mediatrix of all graces. It is only to the extent in which we draw near to her that we can also possibly become a channel of grace, mediators of the graces that must flow from the Father, through the Son (who merited them) and the Immaculata (who bestows them), to us and, through us, to souls.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
Nagasaki, 8 February 1934*

Moreover, we should note this above all, that Jesus works miracles in the place (Lourdes) chosen by His Mother.

Everything that the Blessed Virgin Mary does at Lourdes testifies to the truth of the words of St. Peter Damian: 'A curse came upon the earth through a woman; through a woman earth's blessing is restored.' And also the words of St. Augustine: 'In man's deception, poison was served him through a woman; in his redemption, salvation is presented him through a woman.'

Therefore what St. Bernard expresses in words, the Immaculate Virgin confirms by acts: 'Such is the desire of Him who willed that we should have everything through Mary.'<sup>7</sup>

**St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe** wrote also: "The Holy Ghost works through Mary, we are led by the texts of Scripture and by the assertions of the saints, who are the best interpreters of the Holy Scripture."<sup>8</sup>

In his unfinished book about the Immaculata, St. Maximilian wrote: "Every single grace for souls comes from the hands of the Mediatrix of all graces, and there is no moment in which she is not sending fresh graces to every individual soul: graces that illuminate the mind, strengthen the will, encourage good deeds; ordinary and extraordinary graces; graces that pertain to earthly life and graces that sanctify the soul. Only at the last judgment and in Heaven will we learn how much our loving heavenly Mother cares for each soul, for each of her children, in order to transform them according to Jesus, the model."<sup>9</sup>

"The Heart of the Immaculata becomes the mould for our hearts: from her Heart flows an uninterrupted stream of graces,

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<sup>7</sup> Fr. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, *The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Relation to the Mediation of all graces*, "Miles Immaculatae", April-June 1938, pp. 25-28.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Fragment of an unfinished book about the Immaculata, January 1940.

which permeates our thoughts, words and deeds, the innermost recesses of our soul, the most profound insights, the most important decisions, as well as the usual everyday pulse of our life. To her we owe our existence, our baptism, our conversion, our vocation, and all, absolutely all graces, whether known to us or unknown. Her Heart, the treasury of these graces, is really at the centre of our manifold life.

‘Every conversion, every degree of sanctification is a product of grace. Even cooperation is grace. Without God’s grace we can do nothing. The Mediatrix of all graces is the Immaculata. The closer a person draws to her, the more graces he receives from her.’<sup>10</sup>

We see her before us, with us, in us, as she invisibly leads us through the confusion of our time, as she so often keeps us from falling and even more often helps us up again after a fall, as she nourishes us with the Blood of her Son and enlightens, warms, strengthens and encourages us. And if we examine them carefully, then all our good deeds, all our virtues, all perfections in us are more the fruit of her graces and the presence of her Immaculate Heart than the result of our own willing and doing.

Isn’t this the essential message of Fatima, where God gives the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the world as its last great hope of salvation, the sure and swift way to sanctity?

Hence the truth of Mary’s mediation of graces is the theological basis for the statement that the Knight can become an instrument of the Immaculata to such a degree that she prays in him (even more than he prays in her), and that in him she makes sacrifices, speaks, vanquishes all heresies, converts and sanctifies souls and finally crushes the head of the serpent.

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<sup>10</sup> Conference by Fr. Maximilian, dated 28 August 1933.

What, then, does our path of life on earth consist of? What are we to do in this valley of tears? What is the truly meaningful, deep-seated purpose of our existence? The Heart of the Immaculata gives a clear answer to this question as well: “Pray and make sacrifices, for so many souls are lost because there is no one who prays and makes sacrifices for them,” she said on August 19, 1917 in Fatima. All of our pursuits, our actions, the various circumstances, where, when and how something happens, is still only the surface of our life, the external, visible side. The inner reality, though, the meaning of it all, consists in pleasing God, serving the Truth, following the pathway to Heaven and leading others there. In other words: The Mediatrix of all graces wants us to continue, as it were, this mediation in souls, so that we might be channels, instruments, in order to pour out the graces of conversion and sanctification upon as many souls as possible.

‘If Mary is the Mediatrix of all graces, then we can become channels of grace to the extent that we draw close to her. Then, however, we become mediators of the graces that pour into us from the Father through the Son (who won them) and the Immaculata (who is their custodian), and through us into the souls of others.’<sup>11/12</sup>

We, in imitation of Mary, should seek to fulfill, each according to his power, the office of mediator between God and our fellowmen. We may do this, in the first place, by the holiness of our own lives, that our good example may encourage others to turn back to God.

Secondly, we should avail ourselves of the means we have of implanting in the soul of our neighbour the seeds of eternal truth, and of rescuing sinners from the path of perdition.

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<sup>11</sup> Fr. Maximilian Kolbe, Letter to seminarians dated 8 February 1934.

<sup>12</sup> Fr. Karl Stehlin, *The Immaculata — Our Ideal*, Kolbe Publications 2016, pp. 131–132.



The Immaculata is the Mediatrix of all graces, because she belongs to the Holy Ghost, by virtue of a most intimate and vital union with the Holy Ghost. That is why through her we come to Jesus and to the Father.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
Niepokalanów, end of 1937*

# The Title “Mediatrix” in Sacred Scripture

The doctrine of Our Lady’s universal mediation of graces is contained in the Sacred Scripture, from Genesis (Gen 3:15) to the book of Revelation (Rev 12). Let us examine briefly a few of those more frequently invoked by Mariologists.

1. The magisterium of the Church unquestionably favours the opinion which identifies that “woman” with Our Blessed Lady. Our Lady is indissolubly associated with Christ both in the exercise of a perpetual struggle with the devil and in the complete victory over him.

This mission of Christ as Restorer of the supernatural order did not terminate with the cancellation of our debt on Calvary and with the acquisition of graces through His infinite merits, but continues with the communication of those graces to individual souls.

Since Mary was so closely associated with the Saviour in the initial phase of the victory, Mary is associated in the redemption and in the distribution of the acquired graces.

*"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."*  
(Genesis 3:15)

2. God has filled the Virgin Mary with his grace for her to communicate this grace to others who, by their nature, are devoid of them. It was through her fiat, her "yes", that all graces came, and will forever come into this world.

*"And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."* (Luke 1:28)

3. Through her fiat, Mary mediates to the world Jesus Christ, the Mediator, and the Author of all grace. Mary was always free from sin. Mary was always full of grace. Mary was chosen by God. Mary, who was given free will to say "No", chose to say: *"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word."* (Luke 1:38)

4. Mary's physical presence brings the grace of Christ's presence to Elizabeth, who prophesies, and to the Baptist, who exults with joy in his mother's womb. Mary mediates the presence of the Saviour and salvation, and she mediates the working of the Holy Ghost.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the first intercessor and sign of the presence of the invisible God and Saviour-God.

*"And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy."* (Luke 1:43-44)

5. Mary's role as Intercessor and Mediatrix (distributrix of the blessings won on Calvary) is a continuation of her role as Co-Redemptrix outlined in the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Mary, who brought the Incarnate Word into the world, who raised

Him, adored Him, loved Him, taught Him, cradled Him, nursed Him when He was sick, held Him when He was hurt, nourished Him body and soul (as only a mother can do).

*"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that, out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed."* (Luke 2:35)

6. During the wedding in Cana, Mary's physical presence carries with it the physical presence of Christ with His divine power. Jesus made the miracle of transforming water into wine at the request of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This is clearly communicated, that she is Mediatrix between Jesus and humanity.

*"And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: 'They have no wine'. And Jesus saith to her: 'Woman, what is that to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come'. His mother saith to the waiters: 'Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.'" (John 2:3-5)*

7. From the cross Our Blessed Lord, about to consummate His redemptive sacrifice, openly proclaims Mary as the Mother of the redeemed. Obviously, this motherhood of Mary pertains to the supernatural order, the order of divine grace by which we become the children of God.

Mary, who watched our Lord suffer under the weight of the cross, witnessed Him lose more than half of His blood from soldiers scourging, whipping and beating Him, and faced Him hanging on the cross for three excruciating hours never choosing to deliver Himself from such great agony.

John's presence at the feet of the crucified Redeemer engages the mediation of the Mother, from whom John receives the fruit of the redemption. Jesus reveals and proclaims His Mother as maternal Mediatrix between Himself and us: both the entire Church

and each of us personified here in John. Mary is our Mother in the order of grace; her spiritual maternity is the fruit of her love and suffering on Calvary. For as Co-Redemptrix Mary merited to be assumed and gloriously crowned as Queen of Heaven and earth, precisely to act efficaciously on earth as maternal Mediatrix.

*“When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his mother: ‘Woman, behold thy son’. After that, he saith to the disciple: ‘Behold thy mother’. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own.”* (John 19:26–27)

8. After the Resurrection of her Son, the Blessed Virgin Mary is praying with the apostles and the faithful. She is praying in the Cenacle during Pentecost. These facts clearly confirm that Mary brings down upon men the grace of the Holy Ghost through her prayer and her intercession.

*“All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”* (Acts 1:14)

9. The Woman, who is first of all the Mother of the victorious Saviour Jesus, swept up to Heaven.

*“And a great sign appeared in Heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars: And being with child, she cried travailing in birth, and was in pain to be delivered. And there was seen another sign in Heaven: and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns: and on his head seven diadems: And his tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and cast them to the Earth: and the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered; that, when she should be delivered, he might devour her son. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with an iron rod: and her son was taken up to God, and to his throne.”* (Rev. 12:1–5)



Each grace, without exception, is the coming  
of the Mediatrix of all graces.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
"Rycerz Niepokalanej", July 1937*

# The Teachings of the Popes

It is particularly within the past century that the Popes have made repeated and very explicit references to Our Lady's role as Dispensatrix of all graces. However, even in centuries past, we discover occasional indications of an implicit belief in this doctrine as conveyed by titles and expressions such as Mother of grace, *Mother of the Church*, *Mother of men*, *our Mother*, and the like. Thus, for example, **Sixtus IV** (1471–1484) speaks of Our Lady as the “Mother of grace ... sedulous and constant intercessor before the King,” and of her “merits and intercession of divine grace.” Again, **Benedict XIV** (1740–1758) states that Mary is “like a celestial stream through which the flow of all graces and gifts reach the soul of all wretched mortals.” And **Pius VII** (1800–1823) condenses the whole truth in the significant expression “Dispensatrix of all graces.”

With **Pius IX** (1846–1878) a new era begins in the field of Mariology. This is particularly so as regards the Marian prerogative we are now discussing. In his encyclical *Ubi primum* (1849)

the Pope of the Immaculate Conception writes: "The foundation of all our confidence, as you know well, Venerable Brethren, is found in the Blessed Virgin Mary. For God has committed to Mary the treasury of all good things, in order that everyone may know that through her are obtained every hope, every grace, and all salvation. For this is His will, that we obtain everything through Mary."

Again, in his *Ineffabilis Deus* (1854), Pius alludes to our doctrine in these words:

"... since she has been appointed by God to be the Queen of Heaven and earth, and is exalted above the choirs of angels and saints, and even stands at the right hand of her only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, she presents our petitions in a most efficacious manner. What she petitions, she obtains. Her pleas can never be unheard."

In **Leo XIII** (1878–1903), whose contributions to Mariology in general are well known, we find a frequent and vigorous exponent of the thesis that Mary is the channel of absolutely every grace. Our references will be limited to only a few of his most outstanding utterances. In the very first of his memorable Rosary encyclicals, *Supremi apostolatus* (1883), he styles Our Lady "the guardian of our peace and the dispensatrix of heavenly graces." A year later, in his *Superiore anno*, he speaks of the prayers presented to God "through her whom He has chosen to be the dispenser of all heavenly graces." And a little further: "to her we must fly, to her whom the Church rightly and justly calls the dispenser of salvation, the helper and the deliverer..."

But it is in his encyclical *Octobri mense* (1891) that Pope Leo has left us his most striking pronouncement on this subject. Having

recalled that the eternal Son of God did not wish to accomplish the mystical union between Himself and mankind at the time of the Incarnation without first seeking the free consent of Our Lady as representative of the whole human race, the Pope adds:

"With equal truth can it be affirmed that, by the will of God, nothing of the immense treasure of every grace which the Lord has accumulated comes to us except through Mary.... How great are the wisdom and mercy revealed in this design of God.... Mary is our glorious intermediary; she is the powerful Mother of the omnipotent God.... This design of such dear mercy realized by God in Mary and confirmed by the testament of Christ (John 19:26–27) was understood from the beginning and accepted with the utmost joy by the holy Apostles and the earliest believers. It was also the belief and teaching of the venerable Fathers of the Church. All the Christian peoples of every age accepted it unanimously.... There is no other reason for this than a *divine faith*."

In connection with this remarkable passage we would like to make the following observations:

1. The truth proposed by Pope Leo is: the will of God is that we obtain absolutely everything through Mary.

2. The encyclical is addressed to the whole Church.

3. The Pope appeals to the universal belief of the Church from the Apostles to our own day, thereby officially interpreting tradition. This unanimous consensus of the *Ecclesia docens* with the *Ecclesia discens* in a matter that could not be learned except through revelation is a guarantee that God did reveal it.



As the „Mediatrix of all graces,”the Immaculata not only can and wants to bestow the grace of conversion and sanctification at given times in given places, but she also wants to regenerate all souls.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
Mugenzai no Sono, 6 June 1931*

4. Pope Leo gives us to understand that God implied this truth in the *Annunciation pericope* (Luke 1:26-38), and also in the proclamation of Christ from the cross, as narrated in St. John's Gospel (19:26-27). Therefore, the doctrine is based on the written word of God.

Inspired, no doubt, by the teaching of his predecessor, **St. Pius X** (1903–1914) found occasion to add the weight of his own authority to the same belief. It is well known that before writing his encyclical *Ad diem illum* (1904), to commemorate the golden jubilee of the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception, he desired to reread in its entirety the treatise on *The True Devotion* by St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort. Little wonder, then, that his admirable encyclical is thoroughly impregnated with the doctrine of Mary's universal Mediation. For our specific purpose, the most important section of the encyclical reads as follows:

"By this union of will and suffering between Christ and Mary, 'she merited to become in a most worthy manner the Reparatrix of the lost world' and, consequently, the Dispensatrix of all the gifts which Jesus acquired for us through His death and blood. Indeed, we do not deny that the distribution of these gifts belongs by strict and proper right to Christ... Yet ... it was granted to the august Virgin to be together with her Only-begotten Son the most powerful Mediatrix and Conciliatrix of the whole world. So Christ is the source... Mary, however, as St. Bernard justly remarks, is the channel, or she is the neck by which the Body is united to the Head, and the Head sends power and strength through the Body. For she is the neck of our Head, through which all spiritual gifts are communicated to His Body."

While the above passage with its complete context has occasioned endless discussions and a variety of opinions as to its bearing on Mary's role as Co-Redemptrix, nevertheless, its clear enunciation of the dispensatrix thesis has been frankly admitted by all.

**Benedict XV** (1914–1922) continued the trend of his predecessors, and also added contributions of his own to our doctrine. For example, he re-echoes Leo XIII in statements such as:

"...since all the graces that the Author of all good deigns to bestow upon the poor descendants of Adam are, by favourable design of divine Providence, dispensed through the hands of the most holy Virgin..."

In his Apostolic Letter *Inter sodalicia* (1918) the Pope tells us that the reason we receive all graces through Mary is because she had previously redeemed the world together with Christ.

Objections have at times been raised against the universality of Mary's mediation on the grounds that we receive many favours through the intercession of other saints too. Benedict XV made an important pronouncement on this point in an allocution after the solemn reading of the decree approving the two miracles for the canonisation of Joan of Arc. The promoter of the faith had objected that one of the two miracles had been worked at Lourdes, and thus should be attributed to Mary, not to Joan of Arc. To which the Pope answers:

"If in every miracle we must recognise the mediation of Mary, through whom, according to God's will, every grace and blessing comes to us, it must be admitted that in the case of one of these miracles the mediation of the Blessed Virgin manifested itself in a very special way.



The Immaculata must reach everywhere as Mediatrix of all graces and vivify with her maternal affection, purify, and inflame everyone with love for Jesus: all through her.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
Mugenzai no Sono, 23 August 1934*

We believe that God so disposed the matter in order to remind the faithful that the remembrance of Mary must never be excluded, even when it may seem that a miracle is to be attributed to the intercession or the mediation of one of the blessed or one of the saints."

It is also worth mentioning here that it was **Benedict XV** who, upon request of Cardinal Mercier, granted to the dioceses of Belgium, and to all the Ordinaries who might petition it, permission to celebrate the special feast of Mary *Mediatrix of all graces* on May 31<sup>1</sup> of each year.

We conclude our references to Pope Benedict with a quotation from a letter he addressed to the American hierarchy relative to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington:

"... all the Catholics of the United States will have their eyes turned towards that holy church placed under the protection of the Immaculate Virgin, Dispensatrix of all graces ... and will come in great numbers to manifest their religion and their piety."

Pope **Pius XI** (1922–1939) is in perfect harmony with his predecessors on this point. Since it would be repetitious to elaborate on his many pronouncements, we shall select only two passages in which our doctrine is very clearly stated:

"We have nothing more at heart than to promote more and more the piety of the Christian people toward

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<sup>1</sup> After the creation of the new feast of the Queenship of Mary (1954), the feast of Mary Mediatrix was transferred to August 31. In the *proprium aliquibus locis* of the *Roman Missal*, the feast is to be found on May 8.

the Virgin treasurer of all graces at the side of God (*gratiarum omnium apud Deum sequestram*).

Confiding in her intercession with Jesus, "the one Mediator of God and man" (1 Tim. 2:5), who wished to associate His own Mother with Himself as the advocate of sinners, as the dispenser and mediatrix of grace...."

Pope **Pius XII**, may rightly be hailed as the greatest Marian Pope in modern times. Indeed, he has done more than any of his predecessors to make the world more Mary-conscious. He is the Pope of the Assumption, of the first Marian Year in history; he has instituted the liturgical feast honouring Our Lady's Queenship; he has solemnly consecrated the human race to her Immaculate Heart. Hence we would naturally expect his teaching on Mary's mediation to be at least as eloquent as that of his predecessors.

In numerous documents the Pope gives evident proof of his belief when he urges the faithful to ask and expect various graces and blessings from the Mother of God. In some of these, he is particularly explicit on this point. For example, in his letter *Superiore anno* (1940), he writes:

"And since, as St. Bernard declares, 'it is the will of God that we obtain all favours through Mary,' let everyone hasten to have recourse to Mary...."

And again, in *Mediator Dei* (1947):

"She teaches us all virtues; she gives us her Son and with Him all the help we need, for 'God wished us to have everything through Mary.'"

The same thought, expressed in the same words, occurs in the encyclical *Doctor Mellifluus* (1953), commemorating the eighth cen-

tenary of the death of St. Bernard. And in an allocution on April 21, 1940, he reminds a group of pilgrims from Genoa that Our Lady is "the channel of graces which regenerate us to the spiritual life and help us regain the celestial country." Similar references are found also in his encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (1943), where Mary's queenly prerogative is indicated as one of the foundations for her universal mediation. Another basis, Mary's Co-Redemption, is clearly recalled in his memorable broadcast to Fatima in 1946, where he tells us that, because Mary 'had been united as Mother and Minister, with the King of Martyrs in the ineffable work of Redemption, she remains always associated with Him ... in the distribution of graces flowing from the Redemption.'

In closing the testimony of Pius XII we quote from a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites by which the Pope recognises the miracles proposed for the canonisation of Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort. It is important because of its reference to tradition and the teaching of theologians. The opening paragraph reads:

"Gathering together the tradition of the Fathers, the *Doctor Mellifluus* (St. Bernard) teaches that God wants us to have everything through Mary. This pious and salutary doctrine all theologians at the present time hold in common accord."

**Conclusion:** Our consideration of the argument from the magisterium may close with the following observations of Canon Bittremieux, which we summarize and gladly make our own:

1. The doctrine that Our Lady is the Dispensatrix of absolutely every grace is inculcated not only by one Pope, but by a series of them; to be exact, by every Pope in the past one hundred years.

2. The magisterium exercised by the Popes in the present matter is thoroughly assertive and categorical.

3. The doctrine is taught not only in allocutions and private letters, but also in authentic public documents addressed to the whole Church; likewise through the institution of the liturgical feast of Mary *Mediatrix of all graces*.

4. This stand engages the magisterium in a very grave matter which pertains to the domain of faith. Hence these pronouncements require our religious assent.

5. The Popes realise that their authority tends *per se* to strengthen the theologians' conviction that Mary's universal mediation is a revealed truth; nevertheless they encourage and promote this doctrine with ever increasing frequency and clearness.

6. Moreover, we must bear in mind the perpetual and permanent ordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost who overshadows the Popes in their work as pastors and teachers of the faithful in the exercise of their ordinary magisterium.

To these sober conclusions of the renowned Belgian Mariologist, we would add one of our own: It is our considered opinion, *salvo meliori iudicio*, that, even though we do not have as yet a solemn definition on the matter, the doctrine of Our Lady's universal mediation of graces should be classified as *de fide divina ex ordinario magisterio*. This conclusion is based particularly on our previous observations concerning Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Octobri mense*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The text of this chapter was excerpted from J.B. Carol (ed.), *Mariology*, volume 2, Bruce, 1957.



We receive all graces, absolutely all of them, from God through the Immaculata, who is our universal Mediatrix before Jesus.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
"Rycerz Niepokalanej", December 1937*

# The Argument from Tradition

In this section of our study we understand tradition to mean that divine orally revealed doctrine consigned to writing or transmitted by word of mouth under the vigilance of the living magisterium of the Church. The organs of this tradition include preachers, teachers, doctors, writers, artists, and the faithful in general insofar as they treat of revealed religion or profess it. Its monuments are the extant works of the Fathers, theologians, and ecclesiastical writers which deal with things pertaining to revealed religion, and works of Christian art reflecting the faith of the Church.

As with other phases of Mariology, the teaching of tradition concerning the doctrine now under discussion has not always been universal or uniform. The positive data now available point rather to a gradual development which slowly progresses toward a period of maturation. This evolution of the original germ ideas falls into the three following stages:

1. from the beginning until the eighth century;
2. from the eighth to the sixteenth century;
3. from the sixteenth century to the present time. In view of the limited space at our disposal, we shall attempt to give here only a summary of the numerous testimonies available.

**1. From the Beginning to the Eighth Century** — This primitive period is characterized for the most part by general references to Our Lady's share with Christ in the economy of man's salvation. Mary is set forth as the Second Eve, co-operating with her divine Son, the Second Adam, in the process of our supernatural restoration. This corresponds to the share which the first Eve had with the first Adam in our fall. Eve and Mary are the first mothers of the entire race: Eve, mother of men according to the flesh; Mary, their spiritual mother in the supernatural order of grace. These testimonies, which, according to Cardinal Newman, constitute "the rudimentary teaching of antiquity" implicitly point to Mary's co-operation in the distribution of all graces.

**St. Irenaeus of Lyons** († c. 200) may well speak for his contemporaries when, after establishing the Eve-Mary antithesis, he concludes that Our Lady "became the cause of salvation both for herself and for the whole human race." Elsewhere the holy Bishop writes: "Though the one (Eve) disobeyed God, yet the other (Mary) was drawn to obey Him, and thus the Virgin Mary became the virgin Eve's advocate. And just as the human race was bound to death by a virgin, so it was released by a Virgin, and the balance was maintained: a virgin's disobedience by a Virgin's obedience."

Substantially the same ideas recur in such early and important writers as **St. Justin** († c. 165), **St. Epiphanius** († 403), **St. Ambrose**

(† 397), **St. Jerome** († 420), **St. Augustine** († 430), **St. Peter Chrysologus** († c. 450), and many others.

The title “*Mediatrix*,” so frequently applied to Our Lady in subsequent centuries, made its first appearance about this time. The first to use it seems to have been **St. Ephraem** († 373) who addresses Our Lady thus: “I call upon you, *Mediatrix* of the world; I invoke your prompt protection in my necessities.” Others employing the same title, or that of *Sequestra*, are: **St. Epiphanius**, **Theodotus of Ancyra** († 440), one of the more highly regarded Fathers of the Council of Ephesus, **Antipater of Bostra** († after 451), and **Basil of Seleucia** († 499).

**St. Cyril of Alexandria** († 444), “the most noble defender of the Virgin Mother of God,” has left us a significant testimony of his faith in Mary’s intercession in a homily pronounced in the presence of the bishops assembled at Ephesus in 431. In it he hails Our Lady as the one through whom “the devils are put to flight ... through whom the fallen creature is taken up to Heaven; through whom all creation, held fast by the madness of idolatry, has come to the knowledge of truth; through whom holy baptism has come to believers ... through whom nations are brought to repentance ... through whom the only-begotten Son of God has shone forth ... through whom the dead are raised, and kings reign.”

We may close this period with the beautiful words of an *Encomium* attributed to **St. Modestus of Jerusalem** († 634), but probably written at the end of the seventh century: “The human race has been saved in thee (Mary), and through thee it has obtained favours and everlasting blessings from Him (God).”

**2. From the Eighth to the Sixteenth Century** — It is during this period, particularly in the twelfth century, that the evolution of

our doctrine reaches the explicit stage. Thus we hear **St. Germain of Constantinople** († 733) address the Mother of God: “No one obtains salvation except through thee, O most holy One! ... To no one is mercy granted except through thee!” What St. Germain taught in the East, **St. Peter Damian** († 1072) re-echoes in the West: “In thy hands are the treasures of the mercies of God.”

However, it was **St. Bernard of Clairvaux** († 1153) who expressed this teaching in categorical and unmistakable language and who, for this reason, has been styled the “Doctor of Mary’s Mediation.” According to the Saint, “God has willed that we should have nothing which would not pass through the hands of Mary.” And again: “This is the will of Him Who wanted us to have everything through Mary.” These two generic statements, which have become classic in Marian literature, receive more precision when the holy Doctor tells us that “God has placed in Mary the plenitude of every good, in order to have us understand that if there is any trace of hope in us, any trace of grace, any trace of salvation, it flows from her.” Of course, he assures us elsewhere, “God could have dispensed His graces according to His good pleasure, without making use of this aqueduct (Mary); but it was His wish to provide this means whereby grace would reach you.” The tremendous influence of St. Bernard’s teaching in this respect can best be gathered from the fact that numerous Marian writers of subsequent centuries unhesitatingly endorse his position as something already well established.

Thus, for example, the author of the *Mariale* heretofore attributed to **St. Albert the Great**, unequivocally states that “every single grace passes through the hands of Mary.” And **Richard of St. Lawrence** († c. 1245), **St. Bonaventure** († 1274), **James of Varagine** († 1298), and **John Gerson** († 1429) do nothing but repeat the same ideas in a variety of ways. **St. Bernardine of Siena**

(† 1444), who shares with the abbot of Clairvaux the title “Doctor of Mary’s Universal Mediation” trenchantly sums up the matter in the following remarkable passage: “This is the process (in the distribution) of divine graces: from God they flow to Christ, from Christ to His Mother, and from her to the Church. ... I do not hesitate to say that she has received a certain jurisdiction over all graces. ... They are administered through her hands to whom she pleases, when she pleases, as she pleases, and as much as she pleases.”

**3. From the Sixteenth Century** – This third period might be characterized as one of theological progress. In the preceding centuries the teaching concerning Mary’s role as Dispensatrix of all graces had evolved from the implicit to the explicit stage. This prerogative of hers was generally accepted; it was considered part of the Christian thought and cult. The writers of the third era will direct their endeavours to demonstrating, explaining, and elaborating the various phases of the doctrine. They will base their demonstration on the testimonies of the ecclesiastical writers who had previously affirmed the truth, especially since the time of **St. Bernard**. They will now begin to discuss *ex professo* the nature of Mary’s mediatorial office. A more profound study of the sources of revelation will also be undertaken so as to determine its theological note and even the possibility of its definition by the Church. The result of all these efforts will be greater precision in the formulation of the doctrine and likewise a more thorough grasp of Mary’s place in the economy of salvation.

All this vitality manifested in the study of this aspect of Mariology was occasioned chiefly by three historical events: the pseudo-reformation, the rise of Jansenism, and the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception. The first two can be grouped

together as they both attacked accepted Catholic views concerning the Mother of God and her position in the divine plan, particularly her role as Mediatrix, and the consequent filial devotion manifested by Catholics. Their censures naturally compelled not a few Catholic apologists of the era to take up the arms of their profession in defence of their Tower of Ivory.

The pseudo-reformers, attacking from without, under the false plea of reinstating Christ in His rightful position as the centre of Christianity, assailed the very legitimacy of devotion to His Mother. To them it was simply "Mariolatry." The Jansenists, attackers from within, thought that Catholic devotion to Mary, while praiseworthy in itself, was then giving way to excesses and dangerous exaggerations. They accepted the defined dogmas of the Church, but reacted unfavourably toward the evolution of some Marian doctrines and to some manifestations of her cult. Their hypercritical views were codified in the notorious *Monita salutaria* of Adam Widenfeld.

The third event was the promulgation of the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* on December 8, 1854. It is well known that the dogmatic definition of Mary's absolute sinlessness in her conception focused theological attention on her intimate association with her Son in the all-out struggle against the forces of evil. This opened new vistas for the Mariologists and led them to a more profound and assiduous study of Mary's role in the dispensation of graces.

In the **sixteenth century**, when the Protestant pseudo-reform broke out, Mary had her champions. Chief among these was **St. Peter Canisius** († 1597). One of his titles to glory is his Marian apology *De Maria Virgine incomparabili et Dei Genitrice sacrosancta*. Among other things, the holy Doctor stresses the point that St. Bernard did not place Mary on an equal footing with Christ,

as the Protestants claimed. Christ, he explains, is the only source of life; Mary is the “aqueduct” which transmits to us the waters of grace. “Because of her compassion, she merited that the power and merits of Christ’s Passion should be communicated to men through her.” The same teaching was proposed by his contemporaries **St. Thomas of Villanova** († 1555), **John Maldonatus** († 1583), and the renowned theologian of the Council of Trent, **Alphonsus Salmeron** († 1585).

During the course of the **seventeenth century** the doctrine of Mary’s universal mediation of graces was so generally taught and accepted that it would not be difficult to multiply explicit testimonies to that effect. The imposing list would include great Doctors of the Church like **St. Robert Bellarmine** († 1621) and **St. Francis de Sales** († 1622); eminent theologians of the calibre of **Suarez** († 1617), **Petavius** († 1652), and **Contenson** († 1674); preachers of stature like **Bossuet** († 1704) and **Bourdaloue** († 1704); scripture scholars like **Cornelius a Lapide** († 1637) and **de Salazar** († 1646).

Outstanding likewise for their contributions to Mariology were the members of the so-called French School, which flourished at this time. Father Olier († 1657), **St. John Eudes** († 1680), and **St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort** († 1716) are but a few of the leading masters of this School in whose writings we recognize Our Blessed Lady as the Treasurer and the Dispensatrix of all graces. In their perspective, Mary’s right to distribute the fruits of Christ’s Redemption is that which differentiates her intercession from that of the other saints. It is a sequel to her spiritual motherhood and her Queenship. The following passage from St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, re-echoing St. Bernardine of Siena, is remarkable for its lucidity:



The Immaculata is Mediatrix of all graces, therefore the closer one comes to her, the more exuberant one's spiritual life will be.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
Nagasaki, 8 August 1935*

“God the Son has communicated to His Mother all that He acquired by His life and His death, His infinite merits and His admirable virtues; and He has made her the treasurer of all that His Father gave Him for His inheritance. It is by her that He applies His merits to His members, and that He communicates His virtues and distributes His graces. She is His mysterious canal; she is His aqueduct, through which He makes His mercies flow gently and abundantly.

To Mary, His faithful spouse, God the Holy Ghost has communicated His unspeakable gifts; and He has chosen her to be the dispensatrix of all He possesses, in such sort that she distributes to whom she wills, as much as she wills, as she wills and when she wills, all His gifts and graces. The Holy Ghost gives no heavenly gift to men which does not pass through her virginal hands.”

In the **eighteenth century** our doctrine continued to make rapid progress. By this time it was certainly more than just a “pious opinion.” The authors who questioned it or passed over it in silence became the very rare exceptions. Among its numerous supporters we might include **St. Leonard of Port Maurice** († 1751),

All the saints have a great devotion to Our Lady: no grace comes from Heaven without passing through her hands. We cannot go into a house without speaking to the doorkeeper. Well, the Holy Virgin is the doorkeeper of Heaven.

St. John Vianney (†1859)

**Natalis Alexander**, O.P. († 1724), **Benedict Piazza**, S.J. († 1761), and **John B. Scaramelli**, S.J. († 1752). However, towering above all others is the great figure of **St. Alphonsus Liguori** († 1787), whose popular *Glories of Mary* is rightly credited with giving the decisive blow to the few adversaries of Mary's prerogative. His vigorous and masterful reply to the objections of the otherwise learned Muratori has become a classic in Marian literature. Summarized in his own words, the holy Doctor's thesis is this:

“God, who gave us Jesus Christ, wills that all graces that have been, that are and will be dispensed to men to the end of the world through the merits of Jesus Christ, should be dispensed by the hands and through the intercession of Mary.” (...) “I consider it as indubitably true that all graces are dispensed by Mary.”

To establish his thesis, he marshals an imposing array of testimonies from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, from the Sacred Liturgy, Sacred Scripture, and the Christian sense of the faithful.

The innumerable authors who have treated our topic during the period subsequent to St. Alphonsus are all tributaries of his. Suffice to mention Bl. William Chaminade, founder of the Marianists, Cardinals Pie and Dechamps, M. J. Scheeben, P. Jeanjacquot, S.J., and H. Depoix, S.M. Following the encyclicals of Leo XIII, not a few theologians considered that the time was ripe to create a favourable atmosphere with a view to obtaining a dogmatic definition of the doctrine. Among those who have contributed most to this laudable movement, especially within the past five or six decades, the following are particularly deserving of mention: R. de la Broise, S.J., J. V. Bainvel, S.J., Cardinal Mercier,

F. X., Godts, C.Ss.R., Canon J. Bittremieux, Msgr. J. Lebon, and the indefatigable J. M. Bover, S.J.

Not only every kind of grace is distributed to us by Mary, but every grace in particular. Is this not what the faith of the Church says in the words of the Hail Mary: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen'? This 'now' is said every moment in the Church by thousands of Christians who thus ask for the grace of the present moment. This grace is the most individual of graces; it varies with each of us, and for each one of us at every moment.

*Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (†1964)*

At the present time we know of no Catholic theologian who seriously questions the truth of Mary's universal mediation in the sense already explained, and it is safe to say that the vast majority of them consider it sufficiently warranted by the sources to be defined by the Church.

Fortunately, we have sufficient reason to believe that the long-expected definition is approaching. May it be our lot to see that day, and even to assist at an event so glorious for Our Blessed Lady and so consoling for all her children. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The text of this chapter was excerpted from J.B. Carol (ed.), *Mariology*, volume 2, Bruce, 1957.



The Immaculata is the Mediatrix of all graces.  
In addition, it is only through grace that we can  
come closer to God.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
Mugenzai no Sono, 2 August 1934*

# The Title “Mediatrix” in the Sacred Liturgy

Particularly significant as revealing the mind of the Church is the special feast of Mary Mediatrix of all graces approved and commended by Pope Benedict XV in the year 1921, and observed in numerous dioceses on May 31<sup>1</sup>. The central theme of the feast is Our Lady’s role in the actual Mediatrix of all graces. Consequently, the Office and Mass abound in references to this doctrine. A few instances will suffice:

Behold my Lord has entrusted everything to me, and there is nothing which is not in my power, or that He has not given to me.  
(*Antiphon for the Magnificat, First Vespers*)

O Lord Jesus Christ, our Mediator with the Father, who hast deigned to appoint thy most Blessed Virgin Mother to be our

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<sup>1</sup> After the creation of the new feast of the Queenship of Mary (1954), the feast of Mary Mediatrix was transferred to August 31. In the *proprium aliquibus locis* of the *Roman Missal*, the feast is to be found on May 8.

Mother also and our Mediatrix with Thee, mercifully grant that all who shall approach Thee seeking favours, may rejoice having obtained everything through her. (*Oration for Office and Mass*)

Let us come and adore Christ the Redeemer who has willed that we should have all good things through Mary. (*Invitatorium*)

Who will distribute this sacred flow (of grace) to the redeemed? This care is confided to Mary who, as arbiter, directs the course of salvation. Everything which the Redeemer merited for us is dispensed by Mary, His Mother, at whose request the Son willingly diffuses His blessings. (*Hymn at Matins*)

The lessons for the second nocturn are taken from the works of St. Ephraem, St. Germain, and St. Bernard, containing glowing descriptions of Our Lady's mediatorial office.

It may be of interest to note in this connection that long before the present feast of Mary Mediatrix was established, the Holy See had granted the various branches of the Franciscan Order a special Mass and Office for the feast of Our Lady of the Angels (August 2), the Oration of which opens with these significant words: "O God who hast wished to dispense all favours to men through Thy most holy Mother..."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The text of this chapter was excerpted from J.B. Carol (ed.), *Mariology*, volume 2, Bruce, 1957.



We have the Mediatrix of all graces. It is only necessary that we ourselves really want it, and so that we escape from her ever less, that we love her ever more ardently in our temptations, in our difficulties, in our adversities, acknowledging her power, her universal mediation before God, and that we turn to her with all our trust.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
"Rycerz Niepokalanej", October 1937*

# Opposition from the Second Vatican Council to the Title “Mediatrix” for Our Lady

As we read in Mariology, before the Second Vatican Council “we know of no Catholic theologian who seriously questions the truth of Mary’s universal mediation in the sense already explained, and it is safe to say that the vast majority of them consider it sufficiently warranted by the sources to be defined by the Church.”<sup>1</sup>

The Second Vatican Council should have been the occasion to proclaim this doctrine a dogma of the faith, as a great number of bishops and fathers of the Council were requesting it, but the Modernist bishops at the Council prevented it from happening.

The formal definition of Mediatrix of all graces as a dogma was not accepted during the Second Vatican Council — although this was expected (despite requests) and preparations were made for

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<sup>1</sup> J.B. Carol (ed.), *Mariology*, volume 2, Bruce, 1957.

this Marian dogma. The Dogma was not accepted, mainly under the influence of the Protestant "observers" invited to the Council.

"At the outset, the schema on the Blessed Virgin was an independent text and amongst other titles gave Mary the name of Mediatrix of all graces. During a meeting of the Preparatory Commission, Cardinal Lienart had protested against this title, but nevertheless it was kept. In the period between the sessions in 1963, the theologian Karl Rahner thought that this text "would do incalculable harm from an ecumenical point of view"; his opinion was shared by his colleagues Grilemier, Aemmelroth, and Ratzinger. As soon as the second session was opened, it was proposed that the schema on Mary be reduced to a simple chapter in the schema on the Church. References were made to 'an excess of Marian piety'. Thus, on October 27, Bishop Grotti, a Servite and one of the original members of the Coetus, had a refutation of these arguments handed out: 'Does ecumenism consist in professing or hiding the truth?' He developed an argument we saw Archbishop Lefebvre use in Dakar, stating: 'Hiding the truth hurts us because we look like hypocrites. It also harms those who are separated from us because it makes them look weak and liable to be offended by the truth'. Unfortunately, the vote on October 29, 1963 — 1,114 for and 1,097 against — gave victory, albeit a slim one, to the sensitive souls and ecumenists."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bp Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, *The Biography Marcel Lefebvre*, Angelus Press 2004, pp. 304–305.



The union between the Holy Ghost and the Immaculate Virgin is so close that the Holy Ghost, who permeated the soul of the Immaculata profoundly, exerts no influence on souls, except through her. Because of that she has become the Mediatrix of all graces, precisely because of that she is truly the Mother of all God's graces. And also because of that she is also the Queen of angels and saints, the Help of Christians, the Refuge of sinners.

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
"Miles Immaculatae", January–March 1938*

# Conclusion

Jesus did not just come physically through Mary but by means of the consent of her will and her faith. In other words, because of Mary's consent and her faith, the person who is all graces is given to the world. For these two reasons, her faith and consent and her bringing Jesus to the world, Mary is the mediatrix or channel of all graces as embodied in the Person of her Son, Jesus. Without her consent and faith we would not have our Saviour come into the world. Also since Mary received Jesus from the Father, carried Him in her womb and finally at Cana gave Him to the world, she is the dispenser of all graces, Jesus Christ, and therefore she is also the dispenser of every individual grace.

So yes, we as Catholics, rightly so, give our Blessed Mother the title of Mediatrix of all graces!



I invite you, my dear readers, to pray wholeheartedly and with trust to Mary, Mediatrix of all graces and Mother of Christ. Turn to her as an innocent child turns to his mother, and offer her this short and beautiful prayer: “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

*St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe  
Mugenzai no Sono, July 1934*







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