

Every true Catholic has devotion to Our Lady. Our Lady is not only honored as Mother of God, admired as immaculately conceived, appreciated as perpetual virgin and sought after as Queen assumed to heaven, but she is considered as our own spiritual Mother. In India, Marian devotion is quite strong. Mary is the Chief Patron of India specially since independence was granted to the country on the feast of her assumption on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August. In India, culturally women are held in high esteem although in practice there may be cases of ill treatments. According to the Hindu mentality, women are loved and revered. The Godhead is conceived as having a female counterpart. God Vishnu has Goddess Lakhmi and God Siva has Parvathi. The Hindus think that by placating these female deities, they can get favors from the powerful male deities. Because of such concept, Mary, Mother of God, gets easily a place in the Hindu mind and heart. It is a fact that many Hindus venerate Mary. Mary has a pride of place in Islam. Catholics have naturally great devotion to Our Lady since they are trained to Marian devotion right from their tender age.

But it is to be remembered that devotion remains in the periphery of ones life and does not enter into ones thinking and way of life, unless one is convinced of its necessity. As regards Our Lady, devotion to her should not just be merely based on her exalted dignity nor on her eminent virtues and qualities. In the devotion to Our Lady there is something beyond personal distinctions. That is, that Mary is very close to us and has something to do with our salvation. The earlier four dogmas portray Our Lady as a person of eminence and intimately connected with Our Lord as Immaculately conceived virgin Mother of God. But is the three proposed dogmas as Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate, that bring into relief her dominant position in our life. If work of redemption and will be impelled to venerate her and love her as a person very much needed in their life and in their salvation. If Our Lady as Advocate that inspires confidence in the people. So it will be of great advantage to the people at large, if these three prerogatives of Our Lady are declared as dogmas of faith.

Why certain theologians find it difficult to understand the position of Our Lady as Coredemptrix, I think, is because they are caught up in the meshes of syllogisms and misunderstandings. It is true that Our Lord is the only Redeemer but we see that in the act of redemption Our Lord deigned to involve others with Him. That He chose to be born from the humble Virgin of Nazareth while He could have accomplished redemption in a different way, makes us understand that Redemption is not exclusive of co-operation from others. Our Lord made use of Mary in His redemptive work to such an attempt that she became the Mother of God. What St. Paul says in 1 Cor. 3:9 is quite revealing “We are God’s co-workers”. It is quite nice to reflect on what St. Luke says in his gospel chapter 11 “as Jesus was speaking, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that fed you”. Our Lord is the sole redeemer of mankind; however, in His divine disposition He made use of in His act of redemption and Mary is the most prominent person. When we say that Our Lady is Coredemptrix we don’t mean that she is independent of Our Lord nor She is on par with Him. We only mean to say that Our Lord made use of Mary in His redemptive work. An example may illustrate this point. Let us suppose that there is a gate to a fortress. In the gate there could be some partitions or ways. The partitions are in the very gate. The partitions have no separate role other than being parts of the gate. It is only an analogy.

In a similar way Mary can be understood as the Coredemptrix. That Our Lady is Mediatrix follows as a corollary from her role as Coredemptrix. So too with the prerogative of Our Lady as Advocate.

By imploring the Holy Father to define the 3 attributes of Our Lady as a dogma, the supporters of the *Vox Populi* Movement are only desiring to get Our Lady placed more centrally in Marian devotion. It is a matter of consolation that many eminent personalities in the upper echelons of the clergy and many distinguished Theologians are now coming to realize the necessity of getting the Fifth Dogma proclaimed by the Holy Father. May Mary our Advocate obtain this favor from the triune God by illuminating the mind and strengthening the heart of the Holy Father towards the declaration of the dogma.

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