

## *The Virgin Mary and the Evangelion*

**W**HILE THERE IS ONE GOD, there may be many by participation in the One. Because Christ Jesus cites the passage in Psalms (82:6), “I have said, ye are gods,” St. John wrote in his gospel that “he called them gods, unto whom the word of God [Christ] came” (10:35), and this was preeminently true of Mary, who, with holy others, actualized, in the words of Peter, “exceeding great and precious promises” whereby they became “partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption of the world” (2 Pet. 1:4).

Russian Orthodox art did not hesitate in portraying Mary as “divine,” as the word *Theotokos* required. In the Eastern Church salvation means deification or divinization, summarized in the patristic formula already in use in the second century, “God became human so that man might become divine.” From a Rosicrucian perspective this statement might be amended as “God became human so that humanity can recover its inherent divinity in willed waking consciousness.”

As iconizing Christ Jesus provided the justification for iconizing His Mother, so her icon supplied the basis for the icons of all other saints. Again, while there may be a tendency for some students on the intellectual path of spiritual development to disdain the practice of reverencing the holy persons of Mary and the saints, many of these same iconoclasts prize and give prominence to photos of their occult leaders, or make mental genuflections

*The reader may refer to the September/October 2000 Rays for the first section of this two part study of the Virgin Mary.*



***The Mother of God of the Passion***

*A later variation of the 16th century Greek prototype, the above image shows the Theotokos (Mother of God) and her Son contemplating the destiny of the Agony and Crucifixion. This depiction is also known as Our Lady of Perpetual Help.*

to their teaching authority. Is there a substantive difference here? Surely the mother of the individuality regarded by Max Heindel as “the highest fruitage of the Earth Period” (2 Q&A, p. 315) warrants the reverence millions of Christians give her, particularly since she was in intimate communion with Christ during and after his earthly ministry. We may also assume that Mary was initiated by Him into the highest Mysteries pertaining to human evolution. We must remember that Mary, a high initiate before her incarnation, was also designated by Christ as the spiritual mother of John, who later became Christian Rose Cross. This may help us to evaluate her stature. Nor should we confuse the gender she chose for her assignment as

defining or limiting her individuality, which is whole-human and had taken many male and female bodies over the course of her prior evolution.

What Protestant reformers and many contemporary Christians object to as Mariolatry and a detraction from a due honoring of the Christ, the sole Mediator, is countered by the terse fact that *He, Christ, chose her to be His mother*, to bear His body, to love Him, to suffer not merely a mother's love for Him, but to share her initiate understanding of His spiritual states and His mission as the world's Savior. While the Rosicrucian student distinguishes between the human Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, and the Christ, the highest initiate of the Sun Period, he might well pause to consider the high esteem he justly confers not only on the Elder Brothers, but also on Max Heindel, an initiate of at least three of the nine Lesser Mysteries. For if Jesus surpasses Christian Rosenkreuz in Earth Period achievement (2 Q&A pp. 315, 319), then surely Mary participated in this achievement. Moreover, Christ conferred on her the singular role of being *mother to an archangel*, of sharing in the mind and embodied life of the world's Redeemer and in the Father's vision for a regenerate humanity through the power of a superhuman sacrifice.

The emancipated intellectual may reply that Mary had little to do with Jesus when, during the "dark years" between age twelve and thirty he absorbed the Mystery teachings of Egypt, Asia Minor and India. But clearly this advanced soul was with her son in spirit during his journeys, as an Elder Brother is with his pupils or fraternal associates at an instant, and closer than hands and feet.

Christ said that a man must leave father and mother and follow Him. Mary did that. No doubt Christ's injunction should be expanded to include those possessive parents who do not release their children. In this instance, her son was also her Savior, her Elder Brother. So she followed him in body and in spirit. As Anne Catherine Emmerich discloses from her visionary experiences, Mary, with a group of women, was often in advance of her adopted son from heaven, preparing for His material needs as he journeyed throughout Palestine introducing people to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus was born of Mary's heart, a heart brim-



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*The transverberation of stigmatist and visionary St. Veronica Giuliani (d. 1727) resulted in the imprint of symbols of Christ's Passion within her heart as revealed by postmortem autopsy. Transverberation is the spiritual wounding of the heart.*

ming with God's grace and love, a heart under which he was carried and by whose blood he was baptized as the foremost representative of the mystic or heart path of initiation.

How could Mary in her dual motherhood role not have been blessed and wounded by the Word of God? There is a term for this experience—transverberation, represented for instance in Bernini's sculpture of an angel directing an arrow at the heart of an ecstatic St. Theresa of Avila. Though technically not applied in this context, many artists have intuited transverberation at the Annunciation as the process of conception by depicting a ray of light from the Father mediated by the Holy Spirit in the form a dove penetrating the mind or breast of the Virgin. Such was Anne Catherine Emmerich's vision. St John of the Cross wrote of his experience: "It will happen that while the soul is inflamed with the love of God it will feel that a seraphim is assailing it by means of an arrow or

dart which is all afire with love....the soul is transpierced by that dart.”

At the presentation of the infant Jesus in the Temple, Simeon prophesied of Mary, “Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine soul, also, that the hearts of many may be revealed.” Here is a direct statement that shows the connection between the suffering of the soft heart (compassion—suffering with) and the supersensible knowledge that comes through the heart center or the soul. Mary was called “Blessed.” She was in two senses. The word “bless” comes from the Anglo Saxon *blod*, blood, in reference to the sprinkling of blood on the horns of the altar in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, as a sacrificial ritual that sanctified and blessed. The French word *blessé* means wounded. The adoption of the image of Eros piercing the heart of the beloved with the arrow of desire is sacramentalized to represent a spiritual wounding of the heart by the mystic’s incendiary love for God. Mary is truly the Bride of Christ because Christ is the embodiment of God’s love. And Love was crucified on Golgotha. This love of the Father first conceives in Mary as the Word made flesh. It imbues her with superabundant mercy and self-giving. It enkindles in her a fire of devotion which incinerates all mere motherly possessiveness and exalts the objective Mother love of God for all humanity’s children, for whom Mary becomes *the* Mother.

For millions who suffer, Mary as *mater dolorosa* is consoler and sympathizer. For expectant and new mothers she is the Madonna who confers dignity and holiness and teaches that each child is a child of God, a son or daughter of the heavenly Father as well as of a biological father.

For many, Mary is more approachable than wholly transcendent God. She is closer to home, this temporary home away from our eternal home. She is sought first by those whose fear envisions an implacable Christ of the Last Judgment, or those whose sense of guilt evokes a retributive Jehovah, or those who cannot comprehend the ineffable mystery of God’s love and mercy. She is *Notre Dame*, *Our Lady*, by whom, as Dante writes in the *Divine Comedy*, the “stern judgment up above is shattered” because she is also *Notre Regina*, *Our Queen*, the archetype of all who *are* saved, and a

spiritual magnet by her very mildness and mercy, for many who *would be* saved, but know they need to come clean and fear such dire honesty before God might damn or demolish their souls.

Mary’s devotion is so total that many intellectuals are offended by her apparent docility. Her faith directs a totally trusting surrender of her mind and person to God. What the intellectual, for whom skepticism is second nature, can’t know, is that heart-based faith can read the mind of God and is fortified with a certitude that no logical proof can provide. It also is steeled by a resolve which the tortures of martyrdom cannot break.

Martin Luther’s protesting of the “abominable idolatry” of medieval Mariology led to ruthless iconoclasm, especially in the Swiss Reformed Church where the church interiors were stripped of all images, including crucifixes, fulfilling Zwingli’s words “Christ is the only Mediator between God and us,” which excludes the intercessory role of all the Church saints and Mary and all “created mediation” (John Henry Newman’s term). Yet even Zwingli called Mary “the highest creature next to her Son” and the “Mother of God,” and Luther taught that Mary was “Ever-Virgin,” *Semper Virgo*.

But the most Mary-affirming of the Reformation slogans was *sola fide*, “by faith alone.” In the theology of the Reformers, Mary was *the* model of faith, as given by Paul’s statement “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17), and the Annunciation is the archetypal instance of these words. Mary hears and she affirms. As Calvin defines the idea, faith is “a knowledge of God’s will toward us, perceived from his Word.” And as far as the conflict over the distinction between justification by faith or justification by works, a fully dynamic faith is an ongoing, life-affecting, literally earth-moving force which serves God in tangible and world-saving ways.

In his post-Romantic years Wordsworth described Mary as “our tainted nature’s solitary boast.” By popular acclamation she has become Queen of heaven, crowned by the divine Trinity. Is this spiritual fact or religious fiction? Many saints and clairvoyants swear to the former. In *Faust*, Goethe introduces Mary as the Grace-full mother of sor-

rows sought by penitents to heal their impurities. At the drama's end Mary is presented in her state of exaltation as the Mother of God as she is invoked by Doctor Marianus: "Virgin, Mother, Queen, Goddess, continue to grant grace." Is this simply uncommon hyperbole from a usually level-headed scientist?

Those who value Max Heindel's discernment might want to reevaluate the merits and status of the Virgin Mary by considering how she is portrayed in *Faust*, which Goethe began in early adulthood but did not complete until late in his life. Heindel quotes Goethe on numerous occasions, favoring passages from *Faust*, and describes him as both "a great initiate" and under Rosicrucian inspiration. The action of *Faust* opens in the setting of Holy Week and ends in Paradise with the vision of Mary and the Eternal Feminine. As Hans Ur von Balthasar writes in *Prometheus, A Study in German Idealism*, Faust (the seeker on the intellectual path) travels "from Gretchen and Helen through Sophia, which brings with it the best of our inner life, higher to Mary, who alone, as the supreme center of humanity, lifts the upward look into the miracle of the mystery." And what is this mystery? Consider the final words of *Faust*, characterized by Max Heindel as "that most mystic of all stanzas found in all literature": "All that is perishable/ Is but a likeness./ The unattainable/ Here is accomplished./ The indescribable,/ Here it is done./ The Eternal Feminine/ Draws us on." Heindel further explains that the Eternal Feminine is "the great Creative Force in Nature, the Mother God" (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*, pp. 45-46). By popular, patristic, and poetic (Dante, Goethe)



#### Our Lady of Grace

*In a reprise of Revelation's Woman Clothed with the Sun, the Virgin, standing on a crescent moon (controlling the lunar forces) and haloed with a corona of twelve stars, represents the divine feminine.*

consensus, Mary is the earth's highest and most perfect manifestation of this Eternal Feminine.

John the Beloved was entrusted with Mary's care after the Crucifixion. His Gospel also records details about her relationship with Christ Jesus not present in the synoptic gospels, including her appeal that the wedding guests at Cana have no more wine. Christ seemingly dismisses her implied request with the words "my hour is not yet come." His words are likewise seemingly ignored by Mary with the confident assurance of a mother who knows her son and at least intuitively his newly acquired Christic powers. She simply instructs the servants to follow Jesus' directions, knowing that he will meet the occasion's needs.

Drawing on the memory of nature, Anne Catherine Emmerich observed that John and the other disciples were in virtual awe of the Virgin because of her profound sanctity, her intuitive understanding of spiritual mysteries, including the state of their own souls, and her unity with the ascended Christ Jesus and the Father.

In view of the foregoing, we understand that in Mary

we must identify a human individuality of surpassing spiritual attainment, and only pride, prejudice, or obtuseness could fail to concede her a richly deserved honor and veneration. Many seekers of the good and the true have read Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*. They would also be well served by imitating Mary. As one does not imitate Christ, per se, but Christ in Jesus, so one may imitate Christ in Mary, for the Word became flesh in her.

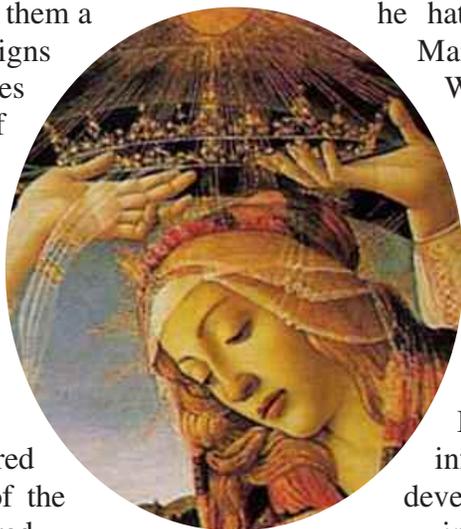
Of the thousands of reported apparitions of the Virgin Mary, the first is the Woman Clothed with

Sun who appeared to the writer and seer of the Apocalypse. This is a vision of the macrocosmic Virgo, but it is also of the ascended Virgin, clothed in the light of the solar Christ, having subdued the lunar generative force infiltrated by the Lucifer spirits, fulfilling the prophecy in Genesis that Eve's seed (Mary) "shall bruise" the head of the serpent. According to René Laurentin, a leading authority on the history of Marian apparitions, "The [Catholic] Church is very prudent with regard to apparitions, and accords them a low status because they are signs which reach us through our senses and are subject to the illusions of subjectivity." In consequence, up to 1962 only ten Marian apparitions had been ecclesiastically acknowledged to be worthy of pious belief, beginning with her appearance to Juan Diego in 1531 at Guadalupe and including Lourdes and Fatima.

While the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce the birth of the Jesus, Mary subsequently appeared on numerous occasions, with the glory of an angel, she who is called the Queen of Angels, and her apparitions also had conceptual consequences—engendering ideas, events, healings, children, and religious conversions. In Guadalupe, Mexico she appeared as a slightly pregnant *mater dolorosa*, from whose mantle cascaded a profusion of roses, to a native Indian, thus vindicating the indigenous peoples over the Spanish colonial domination and promoting the female self-image to counter the patriarchal dominance represented by the Spanish conquistadors. Mexican poet Octavio Paz has called Mary "the Mother of Mexico," and others call her a "Mexican national symbol," citing her as a decisive factor in "the formation of Mexican national consciousness." The sensitive Hispanic-American commentator Richard Rodriguez says that Mary's Guadalupe apparition "symbolizes the entire coherence of Mexico, body and soul," and that this apparition "has become the unofficial, the private flag for Mexicans."

Likewise at Lourdes (1858), appearing in simple

clothes, she could be identified with the poor and humble and her appearance and impact seen as a fulfillment of her proclamation and prophecy recorded by Luke in what has come to be known as the Magnificat, beginning with "My soul doth magnify the Lord" and continuing "he [God] hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away" (1:51-53).



*The Madonna of the Magnificat*

Mary has been invoked by Third World liberation theology to serve as a social as well as a spiritual leaven. At Lourdes she became a unifying symbol to help the French people overcome their class, regional, and local differences. There she identified herself to the peasant girl Bernadette Soubrette not as Mary but as "The Immaculate Conception," thus influencing the Church's doctrinal development. This apparition was so influential in combating French rationalists and atheists that it gave rise to the saying "Rome is the head of the Church but Lourdes is its heart."

The miraculous powers of the Virgin of Lourdes and the Virgin of Fátima, where Mary appeared at the nadir of World War I (1917) to hearten and inspire peace, have received certification at the highest level of authority. When John Paul II was gravely wounded by gunshot in 1981 in St. Peter's Square, he credited his recovery to the Blessed Virgin, who sixty years earlier to the day appeared in Fatima. The Pope confided, "That day...I felt that extraordinary motherly protection, which turned out to be stronger than the deadly bullet."

As a variation on the motto "a picture is worth a thousand words," "it does seem safe to say," writes Jaroslav Pelikan, "that for many millions of people no form of Marian devotion or doctrine has carried more momentous significance than her miraculous apparitions."

The most recent Marian dogma, made obligatory to Roman Catholic belief in 1950, is the doctrine

Detail: Botticelli (1483-1485), Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Planet Art

of the Assumption, by which one understands that Mary's soul and body were raised in glory to the throne of threefold God as "the first fruits of [human] incorruptibility." Many religious sects believe in bodily resurrection, including most fundamentalist denominations and the Mormons. While the Bible implies that both Elijah and Enoch were bodily assumed into heaven, and that many bodies of the saints came out of their graves after Christ's Crucifixion (Matt. 27:52), St. Paul asserts that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Esoteric science describes a third view. Rather than material of the dense physical body being raised, the archetype for Virgin's chemical ether body was not only taken into the higher worlds with her Ego, but facsimiles of this chemical ether body of unparalleled purity and integrity have been generated in the eighth or atomic stratum of the earth and are available to incarnating Egos whose own evolution merits use of this superlative form. Regarding other bodily assumptions, we understand that the vital bodies of the prophets and saints were seen and that the elements of their physical bodies were returned to their original unstructured state.

In his typically dense, verbally tense and cryptic style the Jesuit priest and poet Gerard Manly Hopkins suggests in the poem entitled "The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe" why Mary has figured so prominently in post-Golgotha culture and consciousness:

New Nazareths in us,  
 Where she shall yet conceive  
 Him, morning, noon, and eve,  
 New Bethlems, and he born  
 There, evening, noon, and morn—  
 Bethlem or Nazareth,  
 Men here may draw like breath  
 More Christ and baffle death;  
 Who, born so, comes to be  
 New self and nobler me  
 In each one and each one  
 More makes, when all is done,  
 Both God's and Mary's Son.

An esoteric truth about each of us is given by one of the Virgin Mary's designations, *Theotokos*,



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Associated with this image of the Virgin proffering a rosary, scapular (bearing the initials J-esus and M-ary), and sacred heart are the words: "My Immaculate Heart will be your Refuge and the way that will lead you to God."

or Mother of God. There shall be, we intuit there *must* be, new Nazareths wherein the divine conception shall take place, quietly, amazingly. And Bethlehems shall surely follow, and Christ shall be drawn in like breath, like life, as life, life that is beyond breath, beyond death. Born will be the new Self of us each, our nobler me. We visit Mary and revere her because she shows us how Christ may be born in us. She inspires us to so live that the womb of our soul may be made fruitful for the sowing of the solar Word, that in our hearts may dawn the true Light of this world—and the next.

Origen, regarded as "the Father of Eastern Theology," wrote in the third century, "Every incorrupt and virgin soul, having conceived the Holy Spirit in order to give birth to the will of the

Father, is a Mother of Jesus.”

Mary’s perfect humility was a key to her divine preferment. The low shall be exalted. It is so today. But that humility is undergird and sustained by an essence of self-less power which is confirmed in Mary’s apotheosis, her coronation in heaven. While the mighty are put down from their high worldly seats, those of low degree are elevated because the will of God has been fledged in them through firm obedience, informative suffering, and refining piety. As St. Augustine noted, “All strength is in humility, because all pride is fragile. The humble are like a rock: the rock seems to lie downward, but nevertheless it is firm.”

Mary is for all people. Her virtues are catholic (universal), transracial, archetypal. She was a Jew by birth. She was almost certainly named after the sister of Moses and Aaron, Miriam. She is revered by Muslims and is described in the Qur’an as the Virgin Mother, although the strictly monotheistic Islam objected to the term *Theotokos*: “It does not behoove God to have a son. Too immaculate is

he.” She has been called “multicultural Mary.” The celebrated icon of Mary at Jasna Góra in the Polish city of Czestochwa is the most revered sacred image in Central Europe and the object of countless pilgrimages. And it is a black Madonna (as is the Virgin of Guadalupe), which brings to mind the correct translation of the passage from Song of Songs spoken by the Bride, who is a precursor of Mary, “Black am I and beautiful” (1:5). In these representations Mary becomes a special ambassador to the majority of humanity which is not white. That is one of the many reasons why Mary is given the same title as the Pontiff. For she is called *Pontifex*, the bridge builder to other traditions, cultures, and religions. She is not only the guarantee of the true humanity of the Son of God, she is proof of the inherent divinity of humanity; she, the mother of pure souls who, through purity, obedience, humility, and valor, are fertilized by the Holy Spirit and destined to give birth to the Christ within. □

—C.W.

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