

The Early Mariology of Pope Leo XIV
in Light of
The Classic Mariology of Pope Leo XIII

Since the election of Pope Leo XIV, our new Holy Father has been associated with a number of significant Marian teachings and events, both providential and by his own initiative.

On the day of his election, May 8, 2025, his opening words contained this heartfelt Marian witness: “Today is the day of the Prayer of Supplication to Our Lady of Pompeii. Our Mother Mary always wants to walk at our side, to remain close to us, to help us with her intercession and her love. So I would like to pray together with you. Let us pray together for this new mission, for the whole Church, for peace in the world, and let us ask Mary, our Mother, for this special grace, Hail Mary...”¹

In fact, Pope Leo was elected on May 8, the feast of the Supplication of Our Lady of the Rosary, which stems from the great Marian devotion and evangelization of Blessed Bartolo Longo, to be canonized on October 19, 2025. May 8 has also been celebrated as the feast of Mary, Mediatrix of Graces by several religious communities (i.e., Dominican Missal of 1960), as well as the Feast of Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces in the 1962 Missal issued by Pope St. John XXIII.² Moreover, May 8 has been celebrated perennially as Our Lady of Grace by the Augustinian order, of which Pope Leo is a member.

On May 9, the second day of his papacy, Pope Leo offered the Mass for the College of Cardinals, as is custom. In his homily, the pontiff compares the proper exercise of “a ministry of authority” with Christian martyrdom as exemplified by St. Ignatius of Antioch, and the “indispensable commitment” to “move aside so that Christ may remain, to make oneself small so that he may be made known and glorified, to spend oneself to the utmost so that all may have the opportunity to know and love him.” The Pope then concluded by petitioning for this grace personally through the intercession of Our Lady: “May God grant me this grace, today and always, through the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church.”³

On his third day as pope, Saturday, May 10 (technically his first day off from officially scheduled events), Pope Leo visited not one but two Marian shrines. Along with a visit to St. Mary Major’s Basilica and prayer before the revered *Salus Populi Romani* image, the pontiff travelled some 30 kilometers outside of Rome on personal pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Mother of Good Counsel in Genazzano, one very close to the pope’s heart.

¹ Opening comments of Pope Leo XIV after his election, May 8, 2025, Vatican News, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-05/pope-leo-xiv-peace-be-with-you-first-words.html>.

²Fr. Neil Roy, “Mary and the Liturgical Year, in *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, ed. Mark Miravalle (Queenship Publishing, 2007), 652.

³ Pope Leo XIV, Homily to the College of Cardinals, May 9, 2025, Vatican New Service, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-05/pope-leo-xiv-homily-faith-college-cardinals-sistine-chapel.html>.

Upon entering the Shrine, the Holy Father penned the following personal message into the guestbook, which describes his sense of “duty and deep longing” to come and thank his Mother for her help, and to request her maternal presence for his new mission as pope:

Still in the first days of the pontificate, I felt the duty and a deep longing to approach Genazzano, the shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel, who, throughout my life, has accompanied me with her maternal presence, with her wisdom, and the example of her love for her son who is always the center of my faith. Way, truth and life. Thank you, Mother, for your help - accompany me in this new mission.

Leo PP XIV
May 10, 2025⁴

As he exited the Shrine, numerous locals cheered him, to which he briefly stated, “...As the Mother never abandons her children, you must also be faithful to the Mother.” The people then began chanting, “Viva il Papa!,” to which Pope Leo responded, “Viva Maria!”⁵

On Sunday, May 11, during his first *Regina Caeli* address, Leo again refers to Our Lady: “May the Virgin Mary, whose entire life was a response to the Lord’s call, always accompany us in following Jesus.”⁶ In his comments immediately following the *Regina Caeli*, the Holy Father referred to the grave conflicts between Russia and Ukraine, Israel and Iran, India and Pakistan, and others. He then entrusted these places to Mary, Queen of Peace in order to obtain a “miracle of peace”: “But how many other conflicts there are in the world! I entrust this heartfelt appeal to the Queen of Peace, so that she may present it to the Lord Jesus to obtain for us the miracle of peace.”⁷

On the same day, the Vatican officially released Leo’s new coat of arms. With only minor adjustments from his episcopal coat of arms, the Roman pontiff dedicates half of his papal image to Our Lady, with a Marian blue field on the top left half and the *fleur de lis*, the Marian *flos florum*, symbolic of Our Lady’s purity, virginity, and queenship, in the center of the Marian blue.⁸

In comments following his first General Audience of May 21, 2025, Pope Leo asked both Portuguese and Arab speaking pilgrims not to “close their hearts” to Our Lady of Fatima’s call to “pray the Rosary every day for peace:”

⁴ Pope Leo XIV, Visit to the Mother of Good Counsel Shrine, Genazzano, Italy, May 10, 2025, <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2025/05/leo-xiii-to-lady-of-good-counsel.html>.

⁵ Pope Leo XIV, Comments upon leaving the Mother of Good Counsel Shrine, Genazzano, Italy, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/264037/i-wanted-so-much-to-come-here-pope-leo-visits-marian-shrine-outside-of-rome>.

⁶ Pope Leo XIV, Regina Caeli Address, May 10, 2025, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/angelus/2025/documents/20250511-regina-caeli.html>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Pope Leo XIV, Papal Coat of Arms, May 10, 2025, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-05/pope-leo-xiv-s-motto-and-coat-of-arms.html>.

“In this Marian month, I would like to confirm the invitation of the Virgin of Fatima: ‘Pray the Rosary every day for peace.’ Together with Mary, we ask that peoples do not close themselves to this gift of God and disarm our hearts.”⁹

In his June 9, 2025 homily for the memorial of Mary, Mother of the Church, Pope Leo presents an outstanding Marian tribute, which includes arguably the strongest single line on Marian coredemption since the pontificate of St. John Paul II. He refers to Our Lady as the “New Eve” at Calvary, because her Son “associated her with his redemptive death:”

Mary’s motherhood through the mystery of the Cross took an unimaginable leap: the mother of Jesus became the new Eve, the source of new and eternal life for every person who comes into the world, because her Son associated her with his redemptive death.¹⁰

Rightly attributing the New Eve title and role to Our Lady at Calvary bespeaks her proximate, immediate role with Jesus in the Redemption, rather than merely a remote, mediate interpretation of the New Eve by her fiat at the Annunciation. The pope’s testimony that Jesus “associated her in his redemptive death” can only mean Mary’s direct and secondary causal participation in the Redemption wrought by Christ. This represents *a clear papal teaching of Marian coredemption at Calvary*.

It should be noted that the official English translation slightly strays from the original Italian, which reads, “*La maternità di Maria attraverso il mistero della Croce ha fatto un salto impensabile: la madre di Gesù è diventata la nuova Eva, perché il Figlio l’ha associata alla sua morte redentrice, fonte di vita nuova ed eterna per ogni uomo che viene a questo mondo.*” This is more accurately translated, “The motherhood of Mary through the mystery of the Cross made an unimaginable leap: the Mother of Jesus became the New Eve, because the Son associated her in his redemptive death, the source of new and eternal life who comes into this world.” The word order of the official English translation could suggest that Mary as New Eve is the source of new and eternal life, rather than the redemptive death of Jesus, which does not appear to be intended in the original Italian.

In the same homily, our new Holy Father speaks of how we as the Church manifest our fruitfulness as Mary “in miniature:”

The fruitfulness of the Church is the same fruitfulness as Mary’s; it is realized in the lives of her members to the extent that they relive, “in miniature,” what the Mother lived, namely, they love according to the love of Jesus.¹¹

⁹ Pope Leo XIV, Comments Following General Audience of May 21, 2025 to Portuguese and Arab speaking Pilgrims, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2025/05/21/250521c.html> (Author’s English translation). Original Italian: “In questo mese mariano, vorrei ribadire l’invito della Vergine di Fatima: «pregate il rosario ogni giorno per la pace». Insieme a Maria, chiediamo che gli uomini non si chiudano a questo dono di Dio e disarmino il loro cuore.”

¹⁰ Pope Leo XIV, Homily for the Mass of Mary, Mother of the Church, June 9, 2025, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/homilies/2025/documents/20250609-omelia-giubileo-santa-sede.html>.

¹¹ Ibid.

Note the refreshing distinction between Mary's superior spiritual fecundity, and the Church's participation as Mary, but clearly in miniature. This rightly acknowledges the subordinate way in which the People of God cooperate in the spiritual productivity of Christ compared to that of the Mother. In light of the recent Mariological trend which oftentimes equates the spiritual value of the role of Mary to that of the Church, Pope Leo's appropriate reference to this Marian primacy is appreciated.

Pope Leo then proceeds to confirm Our Lady's maternal mission at Pentecost as an extension of her coredemptive role at Calvary:

In the Upper Room, thanks to the maternal mission she received at the foot of the cross, Mary is at the service of the nascent community: she is the living memory of Jesus and, as such, she is the center of attention that harmonizes differences and ensures the unity of the disciples' prayer.¹²

Further, the Holy Father recognizes Our Lady as the first to support the Petrine office in Peter (which logically bears witness to Leo's belief in the Mother's support for his newly acquired office). Moreover, he acknowledges the primacy of the "Marian pole" to the "Petrine pole" in the Church, with the dependency of the latter on the former for its spiritual efficacy and holiness:

In this text too, the apostles are listed by name and, as always, Peter is the first (cf. v. 13). But he himself, in truth, is the first to be supported by Mary in his ministry. In the same way, Mother Church supports the ministry of Peter's successors with the Marian charism. The Holy See experiences in a very special way the coexistence of the two poles; the Marian and the Petrine. It is precisely the Marian pole, with its motherhood, gift of Christ and of the Spirit, that ensures the fruitfulness and holiness of the Petrine pole.¹³

In Continuity with the Mariology of Pope Leo XIII?

During his May 10 address to the College of Cardinals, Pope Leo explained why he had chosen the name "Leo" as his papal nomenclature. He stated there were "different reasons", along with the principal reason of Leo XIII's battle for human rights during the 19th century Industrial Revolution, and the similar need to advocate for human dignity during the present rise of Artificial Intelligence.¹⁴ Is it also possible that the present pontiff could follow the path of his predecessor's great Mariological teachings? Let us here briefly examine a sampling of Pope Leo XIII's rich Marian doctrine, which possesses a particular accent on Marian coredemption and mediation.

During the time of the grave Church crises of the later part of the nineteenth century and entering into the twentieth, Leo XIII wrote no less than 11 encyclicals directly on the Rosary, wherein we find his principal Mariological instruction. Through this series of inspirational encyclicals, we find not only the consistent doctrinal teaching on the unique role of the Mother in redemption

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Pope Leo XIV, Address to the College of Cardinals, May 9, 2025, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/may/documents/20250510-collegio-cardinalizio.html>.

and her subsequent role as the mediatrix of all graces, but also an unequivocal recognition of her providential role as the God-appointed *remedy* for the ubiquitous onslaught of spiritual, social and moral attacks on the Church, brought on by the likes of the Enlightenment's tragic offspring: Marxism, Darwinism, Liberalism, Communism, Freemasonry, as well as unchecked laissez-faire Capitalism.

Regarding Our Lady's unique cooperation with and under Jesus in the historic redemption of humanity, otherwise known as Marian coredemption, we find significant Leonine references. For example, in his encyclical, *Iucunda Semper* (1894), we see the well-known passage testifying to Our Lady's coredemptive offering of Jesus to the Father, united to her own self-offering, which happens first at the temple where she is already "sharing in the painful atonement" of human redemption, but also ultimately at Calvary where she experiences a "death of heart" in union with her redeeming Son:

When Mary offered herself completely to God together with her Son in the temple, she was already sharing with Him the painful atonement on behalf of the human race... It is certain, therefore, that she suffered in the very depths of her soul with His most bitter sufferings and with His torments. Moreover, it was before the eyes of Mary that was to be finished the Divine Sacrifice for which she had borne and brought up the Victim. As we contemplate Him in the last and most piteous of those Mysteries, there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother, who, in a miracle of charity, so that she might receive us as her sons, offered generously to Divine Justice her own Son, and died in her heart with Him, stabbed with the sword of sorrow.¹⁵

In his encyclical, *Adjutricem Populi* (1895), Leo XIII refers to Our Lady with the title of "*Reparatrix of the whole world*."¹⁶ The Reparatrix title denotes Mary's unique participation with Christ in the repairing of the relationship between God and humanity, the New Eve in union with the New Adam, which has too long been undervalued for its full coredemptive value. Not only does it include Mary's remote cooperation in Redemption at the Annunciation, but also her proximate participation at Calvary. To cooperate in the restoration of the covenant between God and the human race which is *only fully effected at Golgotha*, is to attribute to the Mother an immediate historic role in the objective redemption wrought by Jesus, and not only a distant mediate role at the Annunciation.

In the same encyclical, Leo XIII refers to Mary's role as a "cooperatrix in the sacrament of man's Redemption," which constitutes yet another title of coredemptive status. He then alludes to her unique coredemption as the foundation for her subsequent role in the distribution of all grace:

...She who had been the cooperatrix (*cooperatrice*, Italian) in the sacrament of man's Redemption would be likewise the cooperatrix in the dispensation of graces deriving from it.¹⁷

¹⁵ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Iucunda Semper Expectatione*, 1894, n. 3, Acta Sanctae Sedis (ASS), v. 28, p. 130.

¹⁶ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Adjutricem populi*, 1895, n. 7, ASS, v. 28, pp. 130-131.

¹⁷ Ibid.

In the Leonine encyclical, *Magnae Dei Matris*, (1892), Our Lady receives an unparalleled creaturely glory in virtue of her coredemptive role as Queen of Martyrs, because “she will drink” with the Redeemer “the cup overflowing with sorrow, faithfully through all her life, most faithfully on Calvary:”

Her sacred promise (fiat) was as sacredly kept with a joyous heart; henceforth she leads a life in perpetual union with her son Jesus, sharing with Him His joys and sorrows. It is thus that she will reach a height of glory granted to no other creature, whether human or angelic, because no one will receive a reward for virtue to be compared with hers; it is thus that the crown of the kingdoms of heaven and of earth will await her because she will be the invincible Queen of Martyrs. It is thus that she will be seated in the heavenly city of God by the side of her Son, crowned for all eternity, because she will drink with Him the cup overflowing with sorrow, faithfully through all her life, most faithfully on Calvary.¹⁸

This ordinary Magisterium’s teaching of Mary’s unparalleled eternal reward and glory stems first and foremost from her lifetime sharing with the suffering of her Son, which again reaches its culmination on Golgotha.

Extremely significant is the fact that Leo XIII is the *first pope to grant papal approval to the Marian title, “Co-redemptrix.”* While in audience with the Secretary of the Congregation of Indulgences, Msgr. Francisco Vours, Leo XIII approved the “*Laus Mariae Virginis*,” (Praise of the Virgin Mary) which included a litany of Mary invoking her as “***Co-redemptrix of the world***” [Italian, *Corredentrice del Mondo*, Latin, *Mundo redimendo coadiutrix*].¹⁹

In sum, Leo XIV’s nominal predecessor confidently and repeatedly taught Marian coredemption as a constitutive foundation of his official Marian magisterium.

In terms of Mary’s mediation as it pertains to the distribution of the graces of Christ’s redemption, Leo XIII repeatedly taught Mary as the “Mediatrice of all graces.” In the encyclical, *Octobri Mense* (1891), the 19th century pontiff offers the following classic Marian teaching that “nothing of the immense treasure of every grace...comes to us except through the Mother’s mediation, and connects this truth with the level of assent worthy of “divine faith:”

With equal truth it can 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 (*dell’immenso tesoro di ogni grazia recatoci da Cristo...niente assolutamente [nihil prorsus] viene a noi comunicato...se non per mezzo di Maria*). Thus as no man goes to the Father but by the Son, so, typically, no man goes to Christ but by his Mother...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. All the Christian

¹⁸ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Magnae Dei Matris* (1892), https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_08091892_magnae-dei-matris.html.

¹⁹ Pope Leo XIII in audience with Msgr. Francisco Vours, Secretary of the Congregation of Indulgence, Approval of Indulgence of Litany to Jesus and Mary, *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, (ASS), vol 18, pp. 92-93.

peoples of every age accepted this unanimously... There is no other reason for this than a divine faith (Italian: *fede divina*, Latin: *ex divina fide*).²⁰

In the encyclical, *Supremi Apostolatus* (1883), Leo XIII denotes Our Lady as the “Treasurer of our peace with God and dispensatrix of heavenly graces.”²¹ In *Superiore Anno* (1884), the pope identifies Mary as the maternal means “through whom he [God] has chosen to be dispenser of all heavenly graces.”²² Moreover, in the encyclical, *Jucunda Semper* (1894), Leo quotes St. Bernadine of Siena’s well-known description of the three modalities by which graces flow from the God the Father to humanity, and the providential mediation of the Virgin Mediatrix:

Thus is confirmed that law of merciful mediation of which we have spoken, and which St. Bernadine of Siena thus expresses: “Every grace granted to man has three degrees in order: for by God it is communicated to Christ, from Christ to the Virgin, and from the Virgin it descends to us.”²³

Not only does Leo XIII repeatedly teach the doctrine Our Lady as Mediatrix or Dispensatrix of graces, as witnessed in these texts, but he also officially and emphatically teaches her role as the Mediatrix of *all graces*. True Marian doctrinal development, as guided by the Spirit and pronounced by Peter, cannot regress but only progress. So, too, will this be for the Church’s perennial teaching on the Marian mediation of all graces as a consequence of her coredeemption.

What of our Mother’s role as the universal interceding *Advocate* for the Church and world? Here, too, Leo XIII provided light and truth. Again from his encyclical, *Magnae Dei Matris*, Leo XIII writes:

Throughout the many dreadful events of every kind which the times have brought to pass, always with her have we sought refuge, always to her have we lifted up pleading and confident eyes. And in all the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, that we confided to her, the thought was constantly before us to ask her to assist us at all times as Our gracious Mother...²⁴

Leo XIII, moreover, assisted in establishing the precedent for the global consecration later requested by Our Lady at Fatima through his antecedent consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart in 1899 as promulgated in the papal document, *Annum Sacrum*.²⁵ It was also Leo XIII

²⁰ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Octobri Mense* (1891), ASS, 24, 1891, 195-196 (translation in part by Doheny-Kelly, *Papal Documents on Mary*, Bruce, 1954, quoted by Armand Robichaud, “Mary, Dispensatrix of All Graces,” Carol, ed., *Mariology*, 1957, Bruce, vol 2, p. 430; in union with author’s translation from the Italian).

²¹ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Supremi Apostolatus*, September 1, 1883, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_01091883_supremi-apostolatus-officio.html.

²² Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Superiore Anno*, August 30, 1884, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_30081884_superiore-anno.html.

²³ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical *Jucunda Semper*, 1894, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_08091894_jucunda-semper-expectatione.html cf., St. Bernadine of Siena, *Serm in Nativit, B.V.M.*, n. 6.

²⁴ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Magnae Dei Matris*, 1892, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_08091892_magnae-dei-matris.html.

²⁵ Pope Leo XIII, *Annum Sacrum*, May 25, 1899, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_25051899_annum-sacrum.html.

who, along with preparing the world for the great challenges of the twentieth century by highlighting the Rosary, further received in a mystical experience during Mass the prayer of St. Michael the Archangel, revealed to him on October 13, 1884. This day would later become the same day upon which the renowned Fatima Solar Miracle would take place in 1917.²⁶ Clearly, this pontiff understood the spiritual warfare he was facing as Peter's successor, and that only a spiritual remedy would ultimately be effective in the upcoming twentieth and twenty-first centuries' cosmic battle for souls.

Let us again reference *Adjutricem Populi*, Leo XIII and his testimony of the power of Our Lady's advocacy for the world (noting its obvious relevance to our own present historic situation):

It is impossible to measure the power and scope of her offices since the day she was taken up to that height of heavenly glory in the company of her Son, to which the dignity and luster of her merits entitle her. From her heavenly abode she began, by God's decree, to watch over the Church, to assist and befriend us as our Mother... The power thus put into her hands is all but unlimited. How unerringly right, then, are Christian souls when they turn to Mary for help ...²⁷

In sum, Leo XIII understood that Our Lady is the God-appointed remedy for the ubiquitous woes which face the Church in any given age, nor did he hesitate to identify her Spiritual Maternity as manifest through her powerful maternal roles of Coredemption, Mediation, and Advocacy.

Could it be suggested that a similar Marian path may be historically fruitful by our present Holy Father?

Contemporary Mariological Decline

What has taken place in Mariology between these two Leonine popes? Since the dynamic and full Mariology of Pope Leo XIII, what has affected the notable contemporary minimalization of Mariology and its corresponding devotion?

A full Mariology of Marian coredemption and mediation continued in positive development throughout the first half of the 20th century, as illustrated by the 1958 International Lourdes Mariological Conference, whereby a strong majority of Mariologists present defended the basic doctrine of Marian coredemption and its theological and magisterial integrity.²⁸ It was

²⁶ There are different reports of the mystical experience or vision of Leo XIII that led to his composition of the Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel. Some say the vision occurred during Mass and others say it happened after celebrating Mass. See Kevin Symonds, *Pope Leo and the Prayer to St. Michael* (Boonville, NY: Preserving Christian Publications, 2018).

²⁷ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Adjutricem Populi*, 1895, n. 7, ASS, 28, pp. 130-131); https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_05091895_adjutricem.html

²⁸ Third International Mariological Conference, Lourdes, France, 1958, https://ecommons.udayton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=ml_study.

the aftermath of the controversial debates on these subjects at the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar Mariological tendencies that sought, out of an intended spirit of ecumenism, to minimize these classic Marian doctrines and their respective titles, which was never the explicit directive of the Council itself.²⁹ It is not the task here to offer a substantive treatment on the Mariological discussions during the Council and its effects on the subsequent ten years, the Marian minimalization of which has been acknowledged by theologians such as Avery Dulles, Rene Laurentin, Joseph Ratzinger, and sometimes referred to as a “decade without Mary.”³⁰ Rather, it suffices here to simply delineate some of the reductionist theological tendencies that arose from that post-conciliar period, which to a significant degree, continue in many Mariological circles today:

1. A false understanding of ecumenism, which led not to the prayer and authentic dialogue instructed by the Council’s *Unitatis Redintegratio* (and later magisterial documents like St. John Paul II’s *Ut Unum Sint*), but rather to the minimalization or even the omission of past Mariological magisterial teachings outright.
2. A new and unfortunate biblical hermeneutic on Marian passages, bereft of the patristic and traditional exegesis, which led to conclusions that became similar to Protestant conclusions, for example, the Pauline instruction of 1 Tim 2:5 as newly interpreted to exclude any forms of subordinate and secondary mediation as participations in the one mediation of Jesus, and hence the rejection of Our Lady as “mediatrix” with the one Mediator.
3. The rejection of analogy in theological terms, and its replacement by univocal denotations, for example, that Jesus is the only Redeemer, therefore Mary cannot be called a human Co-redemptrix, nor can Christians be referred to as “co-redeemers in Christ”, as previously done so by Pius XI and later repeated by popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI.³¹
4. The rejection of legitimate Mariological development of doctrine and, in its place, a return to exclusively biblical terminology and initial Christian revelation as forms of a false theological primitivism.
5. A rejection of Benedict XVI’s hermeneutics of continuity³² regarding the transition before and after the Council, which perceived pre-conciliar Mariology as irrelevant (if not dangerous), and thus counterproductive to the Mariological development in the

²⁹ See, for example, Laurie Olsen, *Mary and the Church at Vatican II: The Untold Story of Lumen Gentium VIII*, (Steubenville, Emmaus Road Publishing, 2024).

³⁰ See, Avery Dulles, “Mary Since Vatican II: Decline and Recovery,” *Marian Studies*, 53, (2002), 9-22; https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol53/iss1/5/?utm_source=ecommons.udayton.edu%2Fmarian_studies%2Fvol53%2Fiss1%2F5&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

³¹ For examples of St. John Paul II references to Mary as Co-redemptrix, see Pope St. John Paul II, *Allocution to the Sick at the Hospital of the Brothers of St. John of God, April 5, 1981*, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., April 13, 1981, p. 6; *Address to the Sick following General Audience*, January 13, 1982, Inseg. V/1, 1982, 91; *Address to the Bishops of Uruguay, May 8, 1988*, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., May 30, 1988, p. 4.

³² Pope Benedict XVI *Address to Roman Curia*, December 22, 2005, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia.html.

post-conciliar Church.

6. A hesitance to predicate anything about Our Lady that would not also be immediately predicated about the Church, and hence an exaggerated ecclesio-typical Mariology without its necessary and primary foundation in Christo-typical Mariology.

These and other like shifts in Mariological method after the Council, which, once again was in no explicit way explicitly directed by the Council, were valiantly countered and corrected by the inspired Mariology of St. John Paul II. Nonetheless, the later Mariological doctrine and witness of the Totus Tuus pontiff were not incorporated by a significant number of Mariologists then and even today. Moreover, these minimalist Mariological currents have led to the unfortunate influencing of a significant number of post conciliar bishops, oftentimes unconsciously and without ill-intention, to adapt a similarly compromised Mariological mindset and subsequent theological and pastoral praxes.

Remedy: The Proclamation of Marian Truth Anew

Where there has been a lessening of Marian truth, the obvious remedy is a renewed and authoritative declaration of Marian truth. *Could it be the right time in the life of the Church for a solemn definition of Our Lady's Spiritual Motherhood, inclusive of its three classic maternal components of coredemption, mediation, and advocacy?*

Since the initiation of Desire Cardinal Mercier's international Marian movement for a fifth Marian dogma well over one hundred years ago, numerous potential spiritual and ecclesial benefits have been ascribed to such a papal proclamation, which include the following:

1. the completion of Marian dogma after the four definitions of her personal prerogatives but as yet without a definition of her relation to humanity as Spiritual Mother;
2. a proper culmination to the Mariological development of doctrine revealed in Scripture, contained in the Patristic New Eve, matured through medieval and modern times, and confirmed by contemporary papal magisterium of the last three centuries;
3. a proper dogmatic foundation for classic Marian devotions, such as the Rosary, and Marian Consecration;
4. the renewed dignity of the human being and human freedom, so valued by the Father that he would make the plan of Redemption contingent on one free act of the will by one immaculate human being;
5. accentuating the full and proper role of woman and her role in the Church and the world by proclaiming the true role of the greatest Woman of Scripture, history, and humanity.³³

³³ Cf for example, Fr. Peter Damian Fehlner, *The Time Is Ripe For A Fifth Marian Dogma*, <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/why-the-time-is-ripe-for-the-fifth-marian-dogma-1> M. Miravalle, *Seven Reasons to Declare A new Marian Dogma Now*, <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/7-reasons-to-declare-a-new-marian-dogma-now> .

Here I would like to highlight three potential fruits of a fifth Marian dogma which I believe bear an immediately critical relevance to our present historical moment.

1. A Marian Response to the AI Crisis

We are presently at risk of a catastrophic moral danger: unbridled Artificial Intelligence, which threatens to replace that which defines us as human, our intellect and our will, our independent thoughts and our most important choices, if not threatening to replace God himself as the ultimate source of truth.

Artificial Intelligence is just that: artificial. It is not true human intelligence. It does not abstract. It does not derive the essence of things from external senses, internal senses, active intellect, with the passive intellect bringing forth an idea, as delineated by classic epistemology. Rather, it is programmed by algorithms, rules of data gathering and analysis, which are determined and prioritized by human beings who are oftentimes from a secular mindset that is in direct opposition to things Christian. These programmers determine the priority of information, process, and the “ethics” of what should be prioritized and included, and what should not.

Again, human AI engineers are typically employed by global corporations whose policies are in total variance from Judeo-Christian values. And yet, many Christians are turning to AI for the most important decisions of their lives: marriage counseling between spouses; how to raise their children, and even, what religion is the best. This creeping “AI-dolatry” is gradually replacing prayer, discernment, human moral choices stemming from a Christian formed intellect and will, and even in some cases the replacement of God himself as the ultimate source of truth for human fulfillment. Without being intrinsically evil in itself, this Tower of Babel-like replacement of artificial human knowledge for divinely revealed and humanly acquired knowledge and consequent decision-making demands serious Christian moral evaluation, followed by strict personal and societal boundaries.

To define the truth about Mary is to proclaim what it truly means to be and act as a human being. Our Lady’s example returns us to the best possible exercise of human intelligence and will, one in complete conformity to the Divine will, which is always grateful to the Divine Mind as the ultimate source of truth and love. She returns our focus to Heaven, as was her constant gaze, and to God’s plan of eternal redemption, and how humans are supported to use their intellects and wills in cooperating for human salvation, rather than a neo-gnostic replacement for human answers. St. Augustine’s maxim is best illustrated in the truth of Mary’s free and human cooperation in the Redemption: “God creates us without us, but he does not will to save us

without us.”³⁴ It is little wonder that Pope Leo has, from the start of his papacy, identified AI as one of the greatest technological challenges facing contemporary humanity.³⁵ Moreover, Pope Leo directly refers to Our Lady as remedy to the grave dehumanizing potentials of AI in his August 4, 2025 address to the over 50,000 young people assembled at the Marian shrine of Medjugore. The Holy Father reminds the youth that “no algorithm can ever replace...a true encounter.” In corrective contrast, the Holy Father directs these young people to “think of Mary:”

...Dear friends, you know well that we live in an increasingly digital world, where artificial intelligence and technology offer a thousand opportunities. Remember: no algorithm can ever substitute an embrace, a glance, a true encounter, neither with God, nor our friends, nor our family. Think of Mary. She too set out on an arduous journey to meet her cousin Elizabeth. It was not easy, but she did it, and that encounter gave rise to joy: John the Baptist rejoiced in his mother’s womb, recognizing the living presence of the Lord in the womb of the virgin Mary. Following Mary’s example, I therefore encourage you to seek out true encounters...Dear young people, as I entrust every one of you to Mary, Mother of Christ and our Mother, I accompany you with my prayers. May the Holy Virgin encourage you and guide you along the way, to become proclaimers of peace and hope.³⁶

Beyond the exemplary value of proclaiming Mary to the world as the greatest, most fulfilled human person who exemplified the best proper exercise of human freedom, we would also receive the full exercise of her powerful maternal roles of intercession to combat the present dangers brought about through AI. To acknowledge Mary’s roles is to grant her our permission in the order of human freedom, to fully exercise her saving maternal functions on our behalf. Her titles are her functions, and to have them solemnly recognized by the highest human authority on earth, Christ’s Vicar, is to effectively bring them into full power through human consent. Thus, the Mother would be able, as never before, to fully intercede as the Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate for humanity’s return to God’s divine intelligence and love—the ultimate source of authentic Christian truth, wisdom, and peace.

2. *The Unity of Christians in one Lord through one Mother*

Sixty years have passed since the Second Vatican Council and its rightful call for greater ecumenical efforts in pursuit of Christian unity, a goal obviously willed by the Heart of Jesus (cf. Jn. 17:21). During this time, vast efforts of ecumenical prayer and dialogue on the part of the Church in relation to other Christian communions have affected true progress in mutual

³⁴ St. Augustine, *Sermo* 169,11,13 :P L 38,923.

³⁵ See, for example, *Pope Leo Lays Out Vision for Papacy and Sees AI as Major Challenge for Humanity*, Associated Press, <https://apnews.com/article/pope-leo-vision-papacy-artificial-intelligence-36d29e37a11620b594b9b7c0574cc358>.

³⁶ Pope Leo XIV Address to the 36th Medjugorje Youth Festival, August 4, 2025, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2025/08/04/250804b.html>.

respect, understanding and charity.

Yet, an honest and realistic glance at the present situation between, for example, the Catholic Church and the major Protestant denominations, Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, etc., or even the Orthodox Churches of Russia and Greece (not withstanding Constantinople), reveals that we are neither on the brink of full communion, nor could it realistically be predicated anytime soon.

In this light, is it not time to grant that Christian unity will not be achieved through human efforts alone? However counterintuitive it may be to many in their heartfelt labors for ecumenism, it is time to seek supernatural means in obtaining Christian unity, and this through the fully activated intercession of the Mother of Ecumenism. Mary is the Mother who seeks to unite her Christian children with far greater desire and efficacy than any earthly group or endeavor.

Defining a Marian dogma for the goal of Christian unity takes a courageous act of faith - faith that Our Lady's supernatural intercession will do more to unite Christians than Christians themselves apart from common opinion. Christian unity requires miracles, but miracles, as we saw at Cana, are within her domain. Is it so foreign to our understanding of family that children are best united by the mother, and oftentimes for the sake of the mother? Let us allow the Mother of the Christian family to do what she alone can do: to shower down graces of conversion and understanding that would lead to major conversions and major healings for the Body of Christ. Historic ecumenical progress could be made only through the historic grace it requires. This is within the office, authority, and prerogative of the Mediatrix of all graces and the Mother of all Christians. Only through the Mother, I believe, will Pope Leo XIV's motto, *In Illo uno unum* ("In the One we are one") be fully realized ecclesiastically within the one Church of Christ.

3. *World Peace only through the World's Mother*

In *simili modo*, we now turn to another issue which, by any realistic analysis, will, in fact, require supernatural intervention: the quest for global peace. Again, in his first *Regina Caeli* address of May 11, Pope Leo reiterates that we are presently experiencing a "third world war by piecemeal."³⁷ Yet, recent increases in global hostilities could lead to a more formally declared and enacted World War III. During the same *Regina Caeli* address, Pope Leo, in a similar fashion, invokes Our Lady for what he perceives as the "miracle" required for a true and lasting world peace.³⁸

³⁷ Pope Leo XIV, *Regina Caeli* Address, May 11, 2025, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/angelus/2025/documents/20250511-regina-caeli.html>.

³⁸ Ibid.

Here, too, both humility and realism lead to the certain conclusion that human efforts of political intervention and deterrence alone will simply not be sufficient to establish an end to the present escalating wars, let alone new belligerence. Here again, we must return to the Mother.

Simply stated: Our Lady, and she alone, has the God-given authority and power as the world's spiritual mother to exercise her suppliant omnipotence to bring peace to the world, but we must freely and solemnly acknowledge this Marian authority and power in order to release its full efficacy. World peace through Our Lady's intercession was a predominant intention of Desire Cardinal Mercier when the Belgian prelate began the ecclesial movement for a fifth Marian dogma in 1915 during World War I. How many soldiers, civilians, and souls might have been saved had this solemn Marian recognition happened at the beginning of the 20th century that witnessed such unprecedented loss of life?

Is this not also the message of Fatima, where she promises an era of peace only after the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart? We cannot expect her full intercession without fully acknowledging the roles given her by God for the ends of human salvation and earthly peace—a peace which can only be established and sustained by the spiritual peace of Jesus Christ in human hearts. This is the task of the Immaculate Heart and her Triumph.

As many Marian disciples throughout the world believe, the key that unlocks the graces of the Triumph of her Immaculate Heart is precisely a papal proclamation that universally proclaims that Jesus has given the world a universal and powerful “mother in the order of grace,” to quote the Council.³⁹ She is truly Mother of the Church and the spiritual Mother of all peoples, who possesses the intercessory power to change the course of human history and to bring lasting peace to humanity.

May our new Holy Father be inspired by the great Marian example of Leo XIII. May Pope Leo XIV prayerfully consider the solemn proclamation of Our Lady's salvific roles of Spiritual Motherhood for the great historic good for the Church, the world, and ultimately for global peace. Let him proclaim the *whole truth about Mary*, who through her “yes” at the Annunciation and united with the redeeming Jesus at the Cross, grants each one of us the grace and example to live the “yes” of Jesus, as Pope Leo preached on August 15, 2025 for the Solemnity of the Assumption:

In Mary of Nazareth, we recognize our own history: the history of the Church, immersed in the common lot of humanity. By taking flesh in her, the God of life — the God of freedom — has conquered death...On the Cross, Jesus freely uttered that “yes” which would strip death of its power — the death that still spreads wherever our hands crucify and our hearts remain imprisoned by fear and mistrust...Mary was

³⁹ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, n. 61.

there, united with her Son. In our day, we are like Mary whenever we do not flee, whenever we make Jesus' "yes" our own.⁴⁰

Dr. Mark Miravalle

August 15, 2025

Solemnity of the Assumption

⁴⁰ Pope Leo XIV, Homily on the Assumption, August 15, 2025, Castel Gandolfo, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/homilies/2025/documents/20250815-omelia-castelgandolfo.html> .