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Mary Mediatrix: Exemplar of All Graces

© Fr. Paul Hinnebusch, OP.

"WHAT may be known about God is manifest. . . . For God has manifested it. . . For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen: His everlasting power also and divinity *being understood through the things that are made."* [1]

If the lesser things that God has made, manifest His divine attributes, even more is God manifested by Mary, the masterpiece of His creation, His greatest and most glorious work after Jesus Christ. Consequently, the better Mary is known, the more almighty God is known. As St. Louis de Montfort often said, "Jesus is not known, because Mary is not known."

In his Apostolic Constitution defining the dogma of the Assumption, Pope Pius XII points out how, in the providence of God, Mary's glories shine forth in ever greater radiance, and how the Church has daily studied them more and more throughout the course of the centuries.

God has providentially made Mary ever more clearly known to the world because, through a knowledge of her, He wishes to bring us to an ever clearer knowledge of Himself and the "Mystery of Christ." [2]

Perhaps that is why, in the new Mass for the feast of the Assumption, the key words are *"Signum magnum":* "A great sign appeared." [3] A sign is something that leads to the knowledge of something else. Our ever increasing knowledge of Mary, intensified by the dogmatic definition of the Assumption, lifts our thoughts again to God, manifests Him to us in a new light.

This providential shining forth of Mary in these days reminds us of a phase of Mary's mediation of all graces which is often overlooked by theologians: **her mediation of graces by her function as exemplar of grace**. Modern theologians in treating of Mary, mediatrix of grace, have treated in detail how she mediates grace through her merits and intercession, but for the most part they have overlooked her function as exemplar. St. Albert the Great, however, did not overlook this phase of her work. "Through the mediation of the Most Blessed Virgin," he says, "the human race is called back through the sea of this world to the port of heaven, by example, intercession, and merit."[4]

Mary is mediatrix of all graces because she was the helper of Christ in every phase of His work as Mediator. She is the "New Eve" the helpmate of the *"New* Adam." The first Adam could not pass on his natural life to the human race without the help of Eve. Christ, the second Adam, chose not to pass on supernatural life except through Mary, "whom He admitted to the work of human salvation." [5]

In a sentence St. Thomas Aquinas sums up the four functions of Christ the Mediator: "It belongs to Him as man, to unite men to God, by communicating to men both precepts and gifts of God, and by offering satisfactions and prayers to God for men." [6]

Mary was the helper of Jesus in each of these four functions.

Thus she was associated with the one Mediator when He "offered satisfaction to God for men," for she stood at His cross as Coredemptrix. In doing this, she "merited for us with the merit of fittingness whatever Christ merited for us with the merit of justice." [7]

Since she was the associate of Jesus in winning all graces for us, she is also His helper in distributing these graces to mankind. Jesus is in heaven "always living to make intercession for us." [8] With Him in heaven, Mary intercedes for us, "offering prayers to God for men."

In this way, through her merits and her intercession, with Jesus, Mary "communicates to men all God's gifts of grace."

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1 Rom. 1:19 f.
2 Col. 4:3.
3 Apoc. 12:1.
4 Mariale, 29
5 Blessed Pius X, Encycl. *Ad diem illum*, February 2, 1904; A.A.S. XXXVI (1904), 454.
6 *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 26, a. 2.
7 Blessed Pius, *op. cit*.
8 Heb. 7:25

There is one other function of the Mediator in which she is also His associate; that is His very important task of bringing truth from God to mankind, "communicating to men the precepts of God."[9]

Mary shares in this teaching function of the Mediator, not as an official preacher of the Church, but as the Mirror of Justice, the perfect model for every Christian. God's truth is manifested to us in Mary by all that she is and did: by all that God did for her, by all that she did for Him, all that she does for us. Thus she is universal mediatrix, teaching everyone by example.

"Through the mediation of the Most Blessed Virgin, the human race is called back through the sea of this world to the port of heaven by example, intercession, and merit." [10]

THE MEDIATOR'S TASK OF BRINGING TRUTH

Christ the one Mediator came to reconcile mankind to almighty God and to restore the damage done by sin. Though the grace and merits and satisfactions of Jesus Christ are infinite in value, they are not meant to replace the merits and good works of mankind, but rather to make possible our meritorious living. His good works, though of infinite merit, do not make our good works superfluous, but rather give value to our works and inspire our works. Our works are rendered meritorious through His merits.

Thus in restoring our fallen and wounded nature, the Mediator made it possible for human beings to operate once more in the way God meant them to operate. Through His grace it is once more possible for our actions to measure up to God's plans for us.

Since one of the effects of sin was ignorance, the Mediator in restoring our nature had to restore also the knowledge of God's patterns for human activity. The Mediator had to be a teacher.

"God made man from the beginning and left him in the hand of his own counsel." [11] Man through his operations was free to work out his own destiny, in keeping, however, with the patterns set by God: "He added His commandments and precepts." [12] God made known His plans to mankind, for the free-will creature, acting according to reason, must have his exemplar to follow. Reason must have its idea to execute, its goal to attain.

God Himself is the exemplar, the model that man is to imitate in his free-will activity. For God made man in the image and likeness of God. In his actions man must therefore imitate the activity of God whose image he is.

It is not surprising that God Himself is the pattern for human activity, since all things in creation are patterned after something in almighty God. Each thing in some way manifests God. Therefore man, the highest creature on earth, must be especially like God, and his activities must be in some way like those of God Himself. Man's perfections in a special way manifest the perfections of God. The more perfectly a man conforms his activities to the activities of God, the more he manifests to others the attributes of God Himself. Man reaches his perfection as he more and more measures up to the pattern or exemplar he finds in God Himself.

That is why Jesus commands us, "Be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect." [13] Grow in the likeness of God; become ever more like Him. "Be you therefore, imitators of God, as very dear children."[14]

Like God, after whom he is patterned, man is free; he is "in the hand of his own counsel," [15] free to measure up or not to measure up to God, who is his exemplar. An exemplar, however, must be manifest if it is to attain its purpose. It must be easily seen, for the exemplar is something to be imitated.

Since man through sin became ignorant of God his exemplar, He who came to restore mankind had to restore the knowledge of God. Man's nature and activities could not be restored unless the Mediator restored knowledge of right patterns of action.

Therefore one of the functions of the Mediator is teaching, "delivering to men the precepts of God." [16] "This is why I was born, and why I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth." [17]

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[9] *Summa theol*., IIIa, q. 26, a. 2.
[10] *Mariale*, 29.
[11] Ecclus. 15:14.
[12] *Ibid*., 15:15.
[13] Matt. 5:48.
[14] Eph. 5:1.
[15] Ecclus. 15:`14.
[16] *Summa theol*., IIIa, q. 26, a. 2.
[17] John 18:37.

But Christ teaches not only by word, but even more forcibly by example, by all that He was, and all that He did. "He who sees Me," said Jesus, "sees the Father." [18] God our exemplar is made known to us in Jesus. He who imitates Jesus, imitates the Father and becomes perfect even as He is perfect. Nothing less than divinity is our norm for action.

There are two reasons why Jesus had to teach us by example as well as by word: the weakness of our intellect, and the weakness of our will.

Because of the limited power of our intellects, which are weak indeed in the face of tremendous divine truths, Jesus made extensive use of parables to illustrate His truths. But more powerful than these word pictures were His parables in action: things He did to illustrate a point, e.g., being born in a stable, to teach detachment from worldly riches; teaching from Peter's ship, and saving that same ship from the wind and waves, to teach the infallibility and indestructibility of His Church. But His greatest parable in action is His own life: what He was, what He did, the example of virtue He set.

Even when the intellect grasps a truth, often the will in its weakness does not live that truth. The truth presented seems so arduous that the will does not attempt to live it.

Therefore the will must be strengthened and persuaded by example. The will is inspired by the example of Christ who practiced what He preached, thus arguing that His doctrine was not too difficult for weak humanity. It is possible for human beings to live in a divine way. God became a man to show men how to live like God.

Thus there are two functions of the exemplar of human conduct. Inasmuch as he instructs the weak intellect, his function is informative. When he inspires the weak will, his function is provocative. As we shall see, Christ is not the only exemplar. The perfect Christian is one in his own degree.

The informative exemplar enlightens the intellect concerning divine truth in three ways: he informs our faith, teaching what we must believe; he informs our morals, teaching what we must do; thirdly, contemplation of the exemplar brings us to a deeper penetration into the mysteries of faith.

To illustrate the first kind of informative example: When Jesus spoke these words about our future resurrection, "Whoever beholds the Son, and believes in Him, shall have everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day," [19] His words were not sufficient instruction about our resurrection. Our faith needed the further instruction afforded by the example of the resurrection of Jesus Himself. The resurrection of Jesus is the exemplar which informs our faith that we are to hope for a similar resurrection. [20]

The second function of the informative exemplar is to give instruction in morals, that is, in the way we are to live. Thus Jesus' many examples of humility instruct us more convincingly than His words, "he who humbles himself shall be exalted." [21] "For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you should also do. . . . If you know these things, blessed shall you be if you do them." [22]

The third function of informative exemplar is to bring us to a deeper penetration into the mysteries of faith. When we know what truths we are to believe and have given firm assent to them, there remains a certain unrest of the intellect in spite of the firm assent of faith. For the knowledge of faith is "not perfect through manifest vision inasmuch as we do not fully grasp through the intellect the things which are of faith." [23] The intellect in its natural desire to know will not rest till it knows clearly, and so wishes to penetrate ever more deeply into the truths believed.

This seeking to penetrate deeper into the mysteries of faith is not a sign of unbelief, but is rather a sign of great love for the truth believed, and is very meritorious. "For when a man has a prompt will for believing, he loves the truth believed, and thinks about it, and embraces any reasons for it which he can find; and in this case human reason does not exclude the merit of faith, but is a sign of greater merit." [24]

Undoubtedly that is why "Mary kept in mind all these words, pondering them in her heart."[25] Though her faith was unwavering in its firmness, her intellect could not fully grasp the great mystery of the Incarnation in

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[18] John 14:9.
[19] John 6:40.
[20] St. Thomas says: "Through His predestination and grace, our predestination is manifested; which seems to pertain to the notion of exemplar." (*Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 24, a. 3, *sed contra*).
[21] Luke 14:11; 18:14.
[22] John 13:15, 17.
[23] *Summa theol*., IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 1; q. 4, a. 8 ad 1.
[24] *Ibid.*, a. 10.
[25] Luke 2:19.

which she herself had a part. In great love for the truth she believed, her intellect in its unrest sought to penetrate ever more deeply into the truths. Pondering all the details and circumstances of His birth helped her faith to penetrate more deeply into the significance of the Incarnation.

Thus we understand the third function of informative example. The example of Jesus, the details of His life, afford much *food* for meditation. In our love for the truth that we believe, we are eager to penetrate its meaning more deeply. Our intellect, too weak to fully grasp these things, is helped by pondering over the details in the life of Christ, and the gift of understanding brings a deeper penetration into the mysteries believed.

Thus, though we firmly believe in the incarnation of Jesus, the more we ponder over the details concerning His birth (the poverty of his surroundings, the virginity of His mother, the visit of the Magi, the adoration of the shepherds, the angels who sang in the skies), so much the more do we penetrate into the deeper meaning of these things for our own lives.

Informative example is usually also provocative or inspiring. Thus, the resurrection of Jesus, exemplar of our resurrection, instructs our faith; it also inspires our hope and encourages us to take the necessary arduous steps to attain that resurrection. "1 have . . . become like to Him in death, in the hope that somehow I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." [26]

Or as we ponder the example of Christ and penetrate into the meaning it has in our lives, we arc provoked to imitate the virtues of Jesus, and thus attain the things He promised us; as we say in the prayer after the Rosary, ''Grant that while we meditate on these mysteries, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise.''

Thus we see how the mediator of grace, Jesus Christ, brings us grace not only through His merits and intercession, but also through the example He set for us.

His example is important in the working of His grace, because it disposes us for the proper use of His grace. It helps our weak intellect to understand what we must do and the way we should do it, in order to obtain the benefits of the grace of the Mediator; and it helps our weak will to undertake the arduous task of living a supernatural life far above our natural powers: a divine life in the image of the only-begotten Son of God.

Jesus came "full of grace and truth" "and of His fullness we have all received." [27] His grace in us is supernatural life; His truth shows us how to live that life. His life in us will not reach its full growth unless it is lived according to His truth. It is not enough to have the fullness of Christ's grace at our disposal; we must be informed on how to use His grace in restoring our life and actions to the patterns of divinity.

Thus, as far as we are concerned, the infinite merits and satisfactions and graces of Jesus are in vain if Jesus is not made known to us, and made known to us in such a way as effectively to inspire our imitation. The sacraments we receive, though they infallibly bring us grace, do not always produce the full effects of that grace because we fail to live the life of that grace according to the pattern set by Christ. We do not imitate Christ closely enough because He has not been preached to us, or we ourselves have failed to meditate sufficiently upon Him.

THE NEED OF OTHER EXEMPLARS

Owing to the weakness of our intellect and will, we need Christ our exemplar to manifest the heavenly Father to us. Because of these same weaknesses, we need other exemplars to manifest Christ to us.

So sublime, so divine is Jesus the model we are to follow, that at times our weak minds do not fully understand Him, or our weak wills waver in following Him. The light of our exemplar is so brilliant that it must be mirrored to us by the Mirror of Justice and the other saints, as the blinding light of the sun is mirrored to us by the moon. And if the pattern set by the God-man Christ seems too high for human attainment, too arduous for the human will to follow, exemplars like Mary and the saints show us that mere man, as well as the Son of God, can live these sublime patterns of virtue.

St. Paul says to the Corinthians: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." [28] The Apostle made Christ known by example as well as by word. This is in keeping with our Lord's command: "So let your light

[26] Phil. 3:10 f.
[27] John 1:14, 16.
[28] See 1Cor. 4:16.

shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." [29]

This privilege of manifesting Christ by one's good life is not limited to the saints; it is the privilege and duty of every Christian. We Christians must continually strengthen one another by good example, lest we lose sight of Christ or waver in the arduous task of following Him in all things.

If all Christians have this duty, Mary, the greatest of Christians, fulfilled the duty exceedingly well, and is universal exemplar of all virtues.

Each creature of God, patterned after some perfection of the Creator, makes God known in some way so that, knowing God through these things, we will "glorify Him as God and give thanks" [30] and will be inspired to imitate the God who is thus made known to us. If everything in nature thus manifests God, how much more does the Christian, who is of the higher supernature of the Redemption! "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." The Christian, "a new creation," manifests Christ, for on Him he is patterned.

As all creatures in nature single out and make known to us different perfections of God, so each Christian in the supernature established in Christ, singles out and mirrors to us one or more of the virtues of Christ. One saint is especially noted for humility, another for poverty, another for mercy, and so on. In nature, the higher the creature the more of God's perfections it manifests. Stones and other inanimate things manifest the being of God; plants show forth His being and His life; animals testify to God's being, life, and knowledge; men, with their intellectual as well as sense knowledge, show that God is intellectual. The purely spiritual, and consequently immortal angels, reflect the immortality of God. In the hierarchy of God's creation, the higher creatures have the perfections of the lower ones in a more perfect way, and thus they show forth the glory of God more perfectly.

So too, in the supernatural order, the higher a Christian is, and the closer to Christ, the source of all virtues, so much the more perfectly and universally does he have and manifest the virtues of Christ, so much the more brilliantly do these virtues shine forth to others that they may glorify the Father in heaven.

Mary the Mother of Jesus, closest of all to Christ, supremely high in both the natural and the supernatural order, manifests the power, the goodness, the wisdom of God, and all the virtues of Christ in a supremely perfect way.

Thus, after Christ, Mary is universal exemplar, showing forth not one or two virtues more predominantly than the others, as is the case in the lower saints, but manifesting <u>all</u> the virtues in a most sublime and perfect harmony. She is an exemplar to be imitated by everyone without exception. That is why the better Mary is known, the better Jesus is known, the better almighty God is known.

Mary is universal mediatrix of all graces. Even the graces given to the saints of the Old Testament were granted in anticipation of her merits, for as co-redemptrix she merited for all by the merit of fittingness whatever Christ merited by the merit of justice.

But she is also mediatrix for all by example, even for the saints of the Old Testament. For though she was not an actual model before their eyes, enlightening and inducing them to sanctity, still she is their exemplar. St. Thomas says: "That which is most perfect is always the exemplar of that which is less perfect." [31] Just as all the saints are predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son, so they are predestined to be conformed to Him after the manner of Mary, who is most perfectly like Him. She is queen of all: patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, of all the saints, "having the properties of all in a more excellent way." [32]

"The Most Blessed Virgin is not surpassed in anything by any one of the illustrious," says St. Albert the Great. [33] Closest of all to God, she is example for saint and sinner alike. Meditation or pondering the life of Mary most directly brings us to Christ since her life is so intimately bound up with His, and her actions in relation to Him are so perfect.

MARY, UNIVERSAL EXEMPLAR

Everything we know about Mary, all that she is and does, is included in her function as universal

[29] Matt. 5:16.
[30] Rom. 1:21.
[31] *Summa theol*., IIIa, q. 56, a. 1 ad 3.
[32] *Mariale, Prooemium*.
[33] *Ibid.*

exemplar (for whatever we know about her induces us to use grace, either by instructing our faith and morals, or by inspiring our virtue): all that God did for her, everything she is by the grace of God; all that she did for herself, cooperating with the fullness of grace; and all that she has done and does for us.

Thus knowledge of the divine maternity throws a brilliant light upon the mystery of the Incarnation. The more we know about Mary's virginal maternity, the better we can understand the mystery of God made man, which in fact cannot be understood without a knowledge of Mary. The Christological heresies were destroyed in great part by a fuller knowledge of Mary's divine motherhood.

Likewise, a knowledge of Mary's fullness of grace instructs us in what the grace of God can do for us. He that is mighty will do great things for us, as He has done for Mary. As the supremely perfect Christian and exemplar of all, she teaches us what we are to hope for from the grace of God, and inspires us to aspire to these things. Moreover, all that Mary did for herself, cooperating with the fullness of grace (her spiritual life, her virtues), teaches and inspires our life of grace.

There is one thing that Jesus Himself could not exemplify: how to cooperate with Jesus; how to act toward Him, how to go about getting the full benefits of His fullness of grace. Mary fulfills this function which Jesus could not fulfill: she is perfect exemplar of our relationships with Christ, of how we must cooperate with Him in the work of our salvation.

Finally, a knowledge of all that Mary has done and does for us (her part in working our Redemption, her almost limitless power over our spiritual life as mother of grace) inspires our hope and encourages us in our efforts to live the arduous divine ways in imitation of God, our heavenly exemplar.

Since in her fullness of grace Mary is the perfect model of what the grace of God can do for us, and in her perfect virtue she is perfect model of how we should use and benefit from grace, she is truly the exemplar and prototype of the whole mystical body.

Full of grace, she is exemplar of all the effects which the grace of Christ the Head produces in His mystical body. Perfect in virtue, she is exemplar of all the relationships of the mystical body of Christ.

No wonder, then, that the words of Scripture describing or typifying the Church, have always been most aptly applied by the Church to Mary; e.g., the "Woman clothed in the sun'' [34] is a type of the Church, and also aptly typifies Mary, the prototype of the Church.

Mary typifies the Church especially in her capacity of helper of the Redeemer in every phase of His work, coredemptrix and mediatrix of all graces. Jesus chose Mary as His helper in the whole work of Redemption to teach us that the Church (and her individual members) must also be helpers of the Redeemer. God made us without us, but He will not save us without our help. Jesus dying on Calvary was not alone, but had Mary at His side as His helper, her heart pierced with sorrow "that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."

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[34] Apoc. 12:1.

[35] That is, seeing her there we would learn that we too must stand at His cross; we must cooperate with Him, be one with Him, offer His sacrifice with Him, suffer with Him, and so on, if we are to obtain the fruits of the Redemption.

Since Mary is prototype of what the grace of Christ will do for us and of our proper relationships to Christ, meditation on Mary is wonderfully profitable in informing our faith about the personal meaning which the mysteries of faith have in our own lives. Through a study of her, we more easily penetrate the intimate, personal meaning that the mystery of Christ has for each of us.

The mystery of Christ is more than the fact that God was made man and died for us. The fullness of the mystery is our incorporation into Christ our Head. We are part of the mystery of Christ. St. Paul calls it (in the original Greek), "the mystery of Christ in you." [36] As prototype of the mystical body, Mary exemplifies to us this great truth. She is the perfect type of incorporation into Christ and of the way we are to share in His graces. She manifests the great truth (denied by Protestantism) that it is not enough to have faith in Christ, that He became man and died for us, but that we must believe, with a faith productive of works, that we are to be incorporated in Him, that we are to grow in Him in "good works which God prepared beforehand" and were

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[35] Luke 2:35.

[36] Col. 1:27: "God has willed to make known what is the wealth of the glory of this Mystery among the Gentiles – the Mystery that Christ is in you, the hope of glory" (translation from the original Greek by the Very Rev. Francis Aloysius Spencer, O.P.).

manifested by Christ's example "that we should walk in them." Protestantism denied that grace healed our corrupt nature and restored the power to produce good works; therefore faith was sufficient. Mary, exemplar of every good work, and perfectly redeemed and preserved from the corruption of original sin by grace, gives the lie to this heresy.

By all that she is and all that she did, Mary fulfills all the possible functions of an exemplar of grace. As informative and provocative exemplar she instructs and inspires both faith and morals. Particularly, when we profoundly meditate upon her, she enables our faith to penetrate the depths of the "mystery of Christ in us": the personal meaning Christ has in our own lives.

But Mary produces yet another important effect as informative exemplar, namely, that the knowledge of Mary more thoroughly manifests the truths of the faith, and thus dispels the darkness of ignorance. "Rejoice, O Virgin Mary. Thou alone hast destroyed all heresies throughout the whole world."[37] We have already indicated some examples of this. The early Christological heresies were combated by making Mary better known, e.g., her virginity was preached to destroy the heresy of the Ebionites who denied the divinity of Christ by saying He was born of human seed. Her divine maternity was defined to destroy the heresy of Nestorius, who held that there were two persons in Christ. As helper of Christ and prototype of the Church she confounds the heresy of Protestantism, which denied that Christ uses the help of the Church and her ministers in working our salvation, holding that salvation is the work of the Holy Ghost and private individuals, without the help of the mystical body.

The definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 was a blow at the false evolutionary theories of the day, which denied original sin and taught that human nature is totally good and becomes progressively better through a natural evolution.

The definition of the Assumption is a blow at the materialism and pessimism of our own day.

MARY, AS EXEMPLAR, A CAUSE OF GRACE

From all of this it is evident that Mary's function as universal exemplar of grace and its workings, is an important part of her position as mediatrix of all graces.

We have seen that a knowledge of the example set by Christ is very important for the proper workings of His grace within us. The example He set is the pattern according to which grace is to work, and also inspires us to work thus with grace. This exemplar is a dispositive cause of grace, disposing us to use grace properly. The infinite fullness of the grace of Christ avails us little if we are not properly disposed to use the graces He gives us.

Example, of course, is only an imperfect cause of the actions of another. Speaking of scandal, or bad example, St. Thomas says that the words or deeds of another can be only an imperfect cause, in some manner leading to ruin. Only a man's own will can be the sufficient cause of sin. [38]

In the same way, good example, or an exemplar of grace like Mary, attains its complete effect only through the will of the one who follows it. Thus the purpose of an exemplar of grace, such as Jesus or Mary, is to dispose our will and to inform our reason, to induce us to do our part with regard to grace. Grace does not force the will. But the good example of our models inspires us to follow willingly the pattern they set.

Jesus came full of grace and truth. Just as His grace is of little profit to us unless His truth shows us how to use it, so too, the almost boundless power of Mary mediatrix of graces avails us little unless the knowledge of her shows us how to profit from her power on our behalf.

The teachers of the doctrine on Mary mediatrix of all graces show us that there is hardly any limit to the graces Mary can obtain for us; first, because with Christ she has merited for us all that He has merited for us and, secondly, because Christ refuses her nothing she asks for us. But her tremendous power to help us avails us little unless we have knowledge of her, and knowledge of how to use the graces she brings.

St. Bernard, after extolling the power of Mary in our behalf, warns that this power is in vain if we do not follow her example: "that you may win the help of her prayers, never depart from the example of her life." [39] The graces offered avail us little and we profit little from her power if we do not use those graces to live according to the pattern set by her and Jesus. Only the proper use of grace wins more graces.

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[37] The sacred liturgy in many places.

[38] *Summa theol*., IIa IIae, q. 43, a. 1 ad 3.

[39] St. Bernard, *II super Missus est*, PL, 183, 70.

We see from this that Mary's mediation through example is as important as her mediation through merit and intercession. For her example disposes us for the profitable use of the graces she merits and asks for us.

CONCLUSION

If we are to live fully the supernatural life of grace and grow to the plentitude of Christ, we must be familiar with His life and with the life of Mary, for they show us how to live that life. Such knowledge of our exemplars can be obtained only by repeated meditation on them.

This shows the tremendous value of the rosary in living the life of grace, for it provides meditation on the lives of Jesus and Mary, perfect exemplars of grace.

The better Mary is known, the better Jesus is known. Mary's Rosary makes both of them known to us. Thus we are instructed with a knowledge of God's plan for the restoration of the human race. 'We know how to make our actions measure up to God's patterns. Through Jesus and Mary we know God our exemplar so that we can attain to the destiny for which we were made: to be "imitators of God as very dear children," "perfect even as our heavenly Father is perfect," "conformed to the image of His Son, that He should be the first-born among many brethren."

He who would make Jesus and the Father known, would do well to make Mary known. *De Maria munquam satis.*

By Fr. PAUL HINNEBUSCH, OP.

Sr. Vincent Ferrer Rectory
River Forest, Illinois