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# The SUPERNATURAL LIFE

edited by  
GEORGE A. McDONALD, S. J.



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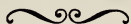


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# THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE

Convinced that much energy and effort have been wasted by Evidence Guilds in answering stock objections to Catholic belief and practice, the Fourth National Students' Spiritual Leadership Convention recommended that Evidence Guilds occupy themselves rather with studies that will deepen the knowledge and love of the great truths of the Catholic religion. There is less need today of defense of our religion than there is of the ability to present the positive, reasonable and beautiful truths which are the basis of our belief and the motives of intelligent Catholic Action. The truths which are at once the inspiration to personal holiness and fundamental to Catholic Action should be the first object of serious and intensive study.

Such fundamental truths were the principal object of study at the 1932 Summer School of Catholic Action. From the subjects there taught we have selected The Supernatural Life for more detailed study by Catholic Evidence Guilds:

- I. Natural and Supernatural Life.
- II. The Origin of Supernatural Life.
- III. The Reality of Supernatural Life.
- IV. Guarding Supernatural Life.
- V. Christ the Life of Supernatural Life.
- VI. The Indwelling of the Holy Ghost.
- VII. Mary the Model of Supernatural Life.
- VIII. Mary Mediatrix of All Graces.

This outline on the supernatural life has been prepared by the Sodality Academy of the theological students at Woodstock College, Woodstock, Maryland, under the general editorship of Reverend Raymond Kennedy, S. J., of Woodstock, and Reverend G. A. McDonald, S. J., of The Queen's Work staff. May a deeper knowledge of the supernatural life stimulate that personal holiness in Sodalists which will find its natural expression in the right kind of Catholic Action.

## RECOMMENDED METHODS FOR STUDYING THIS OUTLINE

1. The round-table method is to be followed.
2. Where possible, there should be a priest moderator. His duty is not to direct the meeting, but to sit in and advise. The members are to direct the meeting and to do most of the talking. When it is necessary to have the explanation of any point, the moderator should be prepared to give it.
3. The chairman, who should be one of the members, opens the discussion, reading from the outline. One section at a time should be considered. When a section has been read, the other members discuss it. If it is perfectly clear, the chairman continues.
4. If the ground is not covered in one meeting, two meetings may be given to the longer discussions.

### I. NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE

The whole purpose of this study is to realize that a man may be very much alive physically and intellectually, yet dead to, or indifferent towards, or ignorant of, a still higher kind of life which he ought to be living.

It is not necessary to make a philosophical study of life to realize:

A. The tremendous difference that exists between a lifeless object and a living one. A child can distinguish between a toy dog and a real, live dog. Philosophy would tell you that what makes the difference is that living things have from the Creator a capacity for immanent action, which is not found in lifeless matter.

If you have studied philosophy, you can recall and apply your knowledge to this point of difference between living and nonliving things. But with or without philosophical explanation, it is sufficient here to note:

1. That all things created may be classified as living or nonliving, animate or inanimate.
2. That the simplest living thing is immeasurably different from, and superior to, mere nonliving matter.

B. Next we wish to note another fact of our experience—the natural classification into which the various kinds of life fall:

1. Life in its simplest form (vegetative).
2. Life in a higher form (sensitive).
3. Life in a still higher form (rational).

Vegetative life, or plant life, has as its chief characteristics the powers of assimilation, growth, reproduction.

Sensitive life, or animal life, in addition to vegetative powers, has one or more sense powers or faculties, the power to see, hear, touch, taste, smell.

Rational life adds to vegetative and sensitive powers still higher faculties: memory, understanding, will.

C. Here too more detailed discussion is in order, depending on how deeply the study club wishes to enter into these details. Maturer groups might here bring to bear on this topic, *Natural and Supernatural Life*, conclusions proved in philosophy about the principle of life, material and spiritual souls, etc.

But such discussion is not necessary to and might distract from the purpose of this outline.

We simply wish to note:

1. The vast difference between life and nonlife.
2. The kinds of life and the grades, from lower to higher, which are actually observable in life.

For these are the steps by which we wish to rise to the understanding that there is yet a higher kind of life.

D. Man is the most wonderful creature on earth. For, under the domination of one and the same principle of life called soul (spiritual and immaterial), operate powers of every kind of life. Like the plants, man can assimilate food, grow. Like the animals, he can see, hear, feel, taste, and smell. But more. He can reason and will. Over and above the physical life of the body he has a mental life, intellectual life, possession of memory, understanding and free will which place him at the head of created things, make him lord of the visible universe. But that is not all.

There is a kind of life which man is meant to live that is superior to vegetative, sensitive, and rational life.

This life is called supernatural.

Man of himself could aspire to this supernatural life no more than a tree could aspire to walk. But God has given man this end; requires that he reach it—an end that would be impos-

sible to attain did not God create the means to do so. The means by which God makes it possible for us to gain our supernatural end, by which man's nature is elevated, is called sanctifying grace. And the wonderful thing about the means that God has devised is that by this means man can begin, even in this life, to live the higher kind of life which finds its complete perfection in eternity.

God infuses sanctifying grace into the soul, and at once supernatural life begins. If this grace is lost, supernatural life is lost. If this grace is preserved, supernatural life is preserved, and though by separation of body and soul vegetative and sensitive lives cease, rational and supernatural lives go on forever.

Supernatural life is, therefore, a new life which sanctifying grace infuses into the soul, making man capable of living a life higher than the vegetative, sensitive, or rational life, of sharing even during his earthly life the divine life of God, and continuing that life with God for all eternity.

So far we have realized that the supernatural life is as much and more above all we know of the natural life as any living organism is above a clod of earth.

We should realize why it is that a man can live a natural life of perfect health, eating, drinking, seeing, hearing, thinking, and yet, if he is not in the state of grace, be supernaturally dead.

Were you to take a dead body to a football game, it would not see or hear what you, being alive, would see and hear. All around you are people who are supernaturally dead. And yet they must be born to the supernatural life, raised to it, or they will be as incapable of living eternally with God as a corpse would be of enjoying a football game.

The vegetative, sensitive, and rational lives of man are, after all, natural to man.

For, when a person or thing has every essential constituent which it has a right to, which is its due in order to fulfill its end, it is what it should be according to its nature, or natural.

It is according to the nature of the vegetative life to grow, *etc.*; of the sensitive life to see, *etc.*; of the rational life to think, *etc.* And if man has a nature composed of a body and a spiritual soul, it is according to that nature (due it, if man is to be man) to live the vegetative, the sensitive, the rational lives as long as that union of body and soul exists.



If it were man's sole end to live this natural life, he would be completely fitted to live it.

But God has destined man (this is proved elsewhere) to a nobler end than a merely natural one.

He has destined him to a supernatural end. This supernatural end consists in sharing the highest life there is, God's own kind of life.

It is plain that the kind of life which God lives must be infinitely superior to the kinds of life we note on earth. (Maturer groups can delve deeper if they desire.) It is also true that it is a kind of life which is above man's nature; for man has all that pertains to his nature as its natural due if the vegetative, the sensitive and the rational lives are functioning within him.

For this reason we have to coin a word for the kind of life to which God has destined man. Call it the supernatural life.

It is above (*super*) vegetative, sensitive, rational life.

It is above (*super*), not merely in degree but in kind, being a share of God's kind of life.

E. Revelation proves the existence of the supernatural life and tells us its nature: Particularly do St. Paul and St. John stress the existence of the supernatural life:

This life is a new life. (*Jno. iii, 7; Col. ii, 12, 13.*)

A rebirth in God. (*Jno. iii, 5, 60.*)

A new creation. (*II Cor. v., 17.*)

This life is superior to the natural life:

A supernatural likeness to God. (*Rom. viii, 15-21; I Jno. iii, 1, 20.*)

The adoptive sonship of God. (*Rom. viii, 15-21; I Jno. iii, 1, 2.*)

"Now this is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (*Jno. xvii, 3.*)

It is evident that the preservation of this supernatural life is man's greatest concern.

The supernatural life is Catholic life. Life means action. Catholic life means Catholic Action.

The price of supernatural life: God the Father offers His only begotten Son. The Son dies for us on the cross. The Holy Ghost brings this new life to our souls.

God lives within us. How do we appreciate this honor? Are we ever conscious of our high estate? What should be our thanks to God for this new life?

God lives within our neighbor. "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." (*Matt. xxv, 40.*) A new attitude for social relations. In every man there is supernatural life or its possibility.

### Suggestions:

A short story entitled "Supernatural Life Insurance," showing the folly of neglecting the means to secure supernatural life. A poem, "The Tree of the Cross," touching points in our thesis.

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*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol VI.—Grace.

*The Spiritual Life*—A. Tanqueray S. S.

*The Life of All Living*—Fulton Sheen.

*What Is Life?*—Bertrand Windle.

*Psychology*—Maher, S. J.

*Natural Law in the Spiritual World*—Drummond.

The next division will treat of the origin of the supernatural life, rebirth through baptism and sanctifying grace. For, having established the fact of the existence of supernatural life, we wish to know more fully whence it comes, and what it is.

## II. THE ORIGIN OF SUPERNATURAL LIFE

In Division I we did not prove that there is a supernatural life. We simply accepted on the word of God and His Church the fact of supernatural life. From study and discussion of Division I we should have a better understanding of the nature, excellence and importance of the supernatural life.

We go on from there. And we begin with a short history of that life as taught by revelation.

God created our first parents with all their natural faculties plus this more than natural life—supernatural life.

Adam lost supernatural life for himself and for the human race by disobedience.

The human race of itself could do nothing to regain this supernatural life.

But to make possible the return of this life to man, God became man.

By the merits of Christ's life, passion and death, Adam's sin was atoned for, God's justice satisfied, and the way opened for all men to be restored to supernatural life.

A. Since man must have this supernatural life to attain the end for which God has created all men, and not to have it is to be excluded from friendship with God in time and from life with Him in eternity, it is highly necessary to know how supernatural life is acquired.

It is evident from the meaning of "supernatural" (Division I) that participation in a life beyond and above the powers of nature cannot be conferred by nature. Even our parents, who in God's providence gave us natural life, have of themselves no power to add to natural life. ". . . sons of God, . . . born, not of blood . . . nor of the will of man, but of God." (*Jno. i, 12, 13.*)

1. Natural life is transmitted through generation and birth.

2. Supernatural life, which is just as truly life as natural life, is added, by the power of God, to natural life by regeneration, a rebirth.

a. Natural generation furnishes the "material" into which God infuses a spiritual soul, their union making me a living person, a son of the parents from whom I am born.

b. To acquire, in addition to natural life, supernatural life, Christ Himself says that we must be "reborn." "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (*Jno. iii, 5.*) (*Read the Gospel according to Saint John, Chapter iii, from the beginning to the eighth verse.*)

The Church teaches that in the above-quoted text Christ is speaking of baptism, which He instituted and which was the sacrament which would confer this new life upon us. In this outline we do not wish to consider baptism as a sacrament, but rather to discuss one of the principal effects of baptism, which is birth to supernatural life.

If I acquired a new life by this rebirth, it must have been a supernatural life, since I already had a vegetative, a sensitive, and a spiritual life when I was born into the world.

Furthermore, since supernatural life is the kind of life which God Himself lives, I may wonder if birth into this life does not give me a right to claim to be a son of God.

In other words, I received natural life from my parents, and because of that fact I am the son of my parents. Is it equally true that by receiving supernatural life from God I may claim to be a child of God?

B. Revelation clearly teaches that as a result of this rebirth

by baptism I am indeed a son of God. But it is impossible for a mere creature to be a son of God in the same sense that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is the Son of God. In what sense, then, is one regenerated by baptism a son of God?

Carefully study the first Epistle of St. John (*iii*, 1, 3.) where St. John does not hesitate to speak of Christians as sons of God. "That we should be called, and should [actually] be, the sons of God."

Sonship is based on one or the other of two possible claims, birth or adoption. By what claims are we sons of God?

1. By "birth"? Yes. (*Jno.* *iii*, 3, 5.) Yet we remain "creatures" of God.

2. By "adoption"? Yes. Yet by a greater "adoption" than the word itself implies.

Human adoption is a "legal fiction." It does not make one a blood relation of those who adopt; it has merely the external effect of insuring for the one adopted the legal rights of a son and heir of those adopting.

Becoming the "adopted" sons of God, we remain creatures, but a real internal change is made in our souls; a new real life is given to us; we share the very life of God.

Thus one of the principal effects of the sacrament of baptism is rebirth to a new life [supernatural] by which we are made "partakers of the divine nature and sons of God."

Supernatural life is therefore first acquired by fallen man through the sacrament of "regeneration," baptism.

That is the answer to the question, "How does supernatural life come to the soul?" As to whence it comes, it is plain that it can come only from God. As to why it is given to us, it is equally clear that it is a free gift of God bestowed upon us because of the merits of Christ.

Since this outline is concerned primarily with the supernatural life, we wish to emphasize here the notion of being born to this life. Were we treating of baptism as a sacrament, we should have to point out the relation of sanctifying grace to the supernatural life and to the other effects of the sacrament of baptism. Those interested might discuss baptism in terms of the sacrament: that is, as a visible sign instituted by Christ to give grace.

a. "The state of grace" means not a mere negation, mere absence of mortal sin from my soul, but a vital, active, divine principle within me. It is "life" and the energy and

power of "life," the most perfect life, God's life. God is present and dwells within me. I am literally a Godbearer, a living tabernacle, "another Christ."

#### Discussions:

What sanctifying grace has to do with all this. (Note that this outline is not on the subject of grace, but on the subject of supernatural life, the effect of grace.) How our doctrine of participation in the divine life differs from the doctrine of pantheism. (Cf. Plus, *God Within Us*, pp. 42, 43. Early Christian Baptism, Cf. Plus, *In Christ Jesus*, pp. 42, 43.)

The next division will show how this supernatural life is a real life in the truest sense of the word.

### III. THE REALITY OF SUPERNATURAL LIFE

Division I of this series explained the terms natural life and supernatural life.

Division II explained how supernatural life is acquired — namely, by the rebirth of regeneration which baptism effects.

A review of these divisions would show us that we have already learned much that should help us to realize how real a life the supernatural life is. We wish to deepen that realization and, by a comparison with natural life, show in this division how fittingly the state to which we are elevated by sanctifying grace infused into the soul at baptism is called life. Those who have made a philosophical study of the natural life and a theological study of the supernatural life have discovered striking comparisons which at once help to show wherein these two kinds of life resemble each other and wherein they differ from each other. In other words they have discovered the analogy which actually exists between natural life and supernatural life.

But we must remember that in making these comparisons we are in the realms of analogy; so that, though the terms used to describe the supernatural truly refer and apply to the supernatural, they do not do so in precisely the same way as they describe the natural. The full significance of supernatural life is not to be perfectly comprehended by mere comparison with natural life, much less by language framed and forced principally to express natural facts and experiences.

## A Comparison or Analogy

(Read 1a; then 1b, 2a; then 2b, etc. But note the parallel.)

### Natural Life

1a. All life must have a principle of life. The principle of animal life is a material soul, of human life a spiritual, rational soul. (Studied more deeply in philosophy.)

### Supernatural Life

1b. Supernatural life has a principle of life — that is, something which communicates higher life to the soul. Like the soul, it cannot be weighed; it cannot be touched or seen. Unlike the soul, it cannot exist in itself. It must exist in an already existing soul. This principle of supernatural life is sanctifying grace.

*N.B.* Where supernatural life is, there necessarily an intellectual life is present. More; there is no superimposition of the supernatural life on the natural life. The natural life is included by the supernatural but not annihilated by it. This illustration may help. The natural life is like the filament in an electric bulb. The coming of the supernatural to the natural is like the coming of electricity to the light bulb. It does not destroy the filament. It simply changes every inch and particle of it from a dull, thin thread into an incandescent mass. Nothing disappears, but all is changed to a state of light and warmth, of extraordinary activity, to a superior flow of activity and energy.

2a. Natural life has what are called faculties: *i. e.*, powers by which it acts (proximate principles of activity, the soul being the ultimate principle of activity).

These natural faculties are chiefly cognitive, motor and appetitive.

Cognitive faculties. *i. e.*, faculties through which knowledge is acquired or sensations experienced. For example, the intellect and senses are cognitive faculties.

2b. Supernatural life has supernatural faculties, powers by which the soul is enabled to act supernaturally (proximate principles of supernatural activity, sanctifying grace being the ultimate principle of activity.)

The supernatural faculties are faith, hope, and charity.

Faith: May be described as a cognitive faculty. With faith we know higher things with a higher knowledge.

Hope: May be likened to

Motor faculties: powers, muscular, etc., by which a person moves.

a motor faculty. Hope moves us towards and through all actions in order to reach God.

Appetitive faculties: Faculties that lead man to seek what is good. Man's will is such a faculty with reference to intellectual and moral good. He has, besides, natural appetites for physical good. Motor and appetitive faculties act together.

3a. Instincts: Besides faculties we have spontaneous, inborn habits of our faculties, indeliberate urges and facilities towards our own perfection, towards food, towards breathing, towards conserving our life.

Charity: May be described as an appetitive faculty. By charity man seeks to love God above all things as his Supreme Good. The natural appetite for good in general is by charity elevated into a higher appetite for God. Like the natural motor and appetitive faculties, hope and charity act together.

3b. Supernatural life has equivalents of instincts; for the gifts of the Holy Ghost really serve us as supernatural instincts. For example, fear of the Lord often saves our supernatural life, just as natural instinct frequently saves us a fall when we are thrown unexpectedly off our balance. And all the gifts help in one way or another towards conserving supernatural life. Look up the definition of these gifts in the Baltimore Catechism and decide for yourself whether it is an apt description to call them supernatural instincts.

4a. Functions: In natural life we grow by assimilation. We take in vital food necessary to physical growth and the development of our life to the stage where we can perform all the actions proper to it. In life the organism repairs and strengthens diseased members by the extra vitality of other members and by the repairing in-

4b. So in the supernatural life we receive the sacraments, which, with prayer, are the food of the supernatural life — especially Holy Eucharist, which is the assimilation and incorporation of the living Christ and the expanding in us of His life, the divine life, the life of grace. In the supernatural life we strengthen weakened

fluence of the whole. In natural life the law of reproduction is universal. All good is diffusive of itself.

or weakening life by meritorious acts, prayer, supernaturally good works, and penance, sacramental and nonsacramental.

*N.B.* This does not mean that the scope of meritorious acts, prayer, penance, etc., is limited merely to the repair of losses. They can and do increase and perfect an unimpaired life of grace.

Supernatural good also is diffusive of itself. Hence, for the individual living the life of grace, the embracing of the apostolate — within the limits of his sphere and capacity — is necessary and spontaneous. Christian sanctity is not a mere personal matter. It necessarily has social value and influence.

5a. Metabolism: Life is a constant fight. Decay and growth are simultaneous functions. In growing and acting we are continually wearing and tearing down tissues and cells. Because we tear down we are forced to build up and increase constantly our life. We achieve life though we are constantly dying. If we do not tear down and eliminate decay, foreign and poisonous matter, life vanishes.

5b. In the supernatural life this law is paramount. We can live only by dying daily. The old man, sin — the carrier of death — must be eliminated. There is a necessary violence in supernatural living. The concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life, which are always with us, must be worn down and crushed. Without this struggle there can be no supernatural living, no supernatural activity, but only death.

6a. Life comes only from life. The end of life is the dissolution of forces and fac-

6b. Hence the divine life of grace comes only from God. For us it is regenera-



ulties by the release of the formal principle of life. In natural life this follows on a grave disorder in the organism which prevents vital functioning of the being.

tion through baptism, by being born again of water and the Spirit of Christ. (*Jno. iii, 5.*) Mary the Mediatrix of All Graces, by her divine maternity, is our mother, for we are born in Christ. So, in the supernatural life, a grave disorder, sin (when the lower man takes dominance over the higher man) brings on death, the release of the vital principle, grace. The soul is dead. It cannot perform the actions required of it to achieve its end—the Vision of God.

### Objections:

1. *This is an arbitrary scheme of things.* Ans.: The scheme of presentation and its framework are arbitrary, but the underlying doctrines are vital verities.

2. *There is no experience of all this.* Ans.: If our eyes are closed to the supernatural by denying, ignoring or neglecting it, there is certainly no experience of it whatsoever. But if we live the life of grace, though we cannot see it in any way directly, we certainly are made aware of its effects.

The supernatural life, when understood in its principles and functions, gives human life a new meaning. Earthly values disappear. Our heads and hearts are in heaven even though our feet are on the earth.

The non-Catholic who, by the grace of God, gets this view of Catholicism can no longer be much vexed by the difficulties of marriage laws or of Peter's primacy. He realizes that these are problems only for those who are of the earth. Catholicism sweeps him off his feet into another world.

For the Catholic the idea of the supernatural means the re-orientation of his whole life. It makes striving for sainthood logical, imperative and reasonable. It makes anything else foolish and meaningless.

### Suggestions:

An answer, in terms of the supernatural, to any problem of our time, whether that answer be by way of discussion, pam-

phlet or article, is excellent: 1. Because it puts the problem in a sphere where the mere earthly melts away in the fervent presence of God. 2. Because it is the only answer never presented to the people. 3. Because it is the only answer that is satisfactory.

### Discussions:

1. Examination of the three theological virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. 2. The conditions and nature of meritorious action. 3. The meaning of incorporation in Christ, especially with reference to the Eucharist. 4. The apostolate of sanctity.

The next division will deal with the development and the waning of the human organism, especially with the problem of its death and resuscitation.

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M. de La Taille, *Mysterium Fidei*. Gabriel Beauchesne (3d ed., Paris, 1931), Book Three.

## IV. GUARDING THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE

We have seen in the last division that the supernatural life has growth. A vigorous supernatural life implies steady progress.

Like natural growth, it is frequently imperceptible from day to day. But spiritual writers assure us there is no such thing as standing still in the supernatural life. If we are not slipping backwards, we are surely progressing. How can we apply this criterion to our lives as students? As Sodalists?

God is infinitely lovable. Therefore we can never love Him

as He deserves to be loved. But our love can always increase. "And he that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still." (*Apoc. xxii, 11.*) (*Cf. Prov. iv, 18; Phil. iii, 13.*)

Our aim: To keep our supernatural life vigorous, so as to grow up "to the fullness of the stature of Christ," with our Blessed Mother's help.

What are the ordinary means of growth in holiness?

A. The fitness of asking Our Blessed Mother's help: She was "full of grace." She is the Mediatrix of All Graces. Hence the Sodalist's motto: *Ad Jesum per Mariam.*

1. Our supernatural life can be weakened. It is enfeebled by venial sin. Venial sin, even when deliberate, does not take away sanctifying grace, but it impedes the increase of divine love and stunts the growth of our supernatural life.

Venial sin is like hardening of the arteries. It impedes the circulation of the warm blood of God's love within us.

Venial sin cools our friendship with God. It takes away the most lovable characteristics of friendship—spontaneity and generosity. It lowers our ideals.

The greatest danger of habitual venial sin is that of gradually drifting into mortal sin. It is an opiate that deadens our sensibilities to the awful horror of sin. "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little." (*Eccli. xix, 1.*)

2. Our supernatural life can be destroyed. Mortal sin is spiritual suicide. Mortal sin expels God from the soul—the soul which He has adorned with His graces, His virtues, His gifts.

Mortal sin brings spiritual bankruptcy. All the merits we have earned in the past are lost and can be regained only by penance. The soul in the state of mortal sin can acquire no merits for heaven.

"They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (*Jer. II, 13.*)

Mortal sin is the renouncing of "the liberty of the children of God" for the slavery of passion. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (*Jno. viii, 34.*)

Sin is much worse in those who have experienced God's choicest gifts than in those less favored. "There is an evil that I have seen under the sun . . . I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking on the ground as servants."

Is there any way we can prevent sin in the world? (Look up Father Faber's book "All for Jesus," page 28, and see his suggestions.)

3. Our supernatural life can be revived. Venial sin is, of its nature, pardonable. (The Latin *venia* means "pardon.") But bringing back the soul from mortal sin to supernatural life is a miracle of God's mercy, as the raising of Lazarus was a miracle. This miracle of mercy occurs chiefly in the sacrament of penance.

For those in mortal sin confession is like a new baptism. The sacrament of penance, like baptism, remits the eternal punishment due to sin. But there is one difference: After confession some of the temporal punishment due to sin generally remains.

The more perfect our contrition, the greater will be the amount of temporal punishment remitted. "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less." (*Luke vii, 47.*) (*Cf. Luke xviii, 13, 14.*)

The Holy Spirit returns to dwell with the repentant sinner and imparts to him sanctifying grace, with His virtues and gifts. Example: The Prodigal Son clothed with a beautiful robe and a ring put on his finger.

#### Discussion:

Is there any other way to restore sanctifying grace besides confession and the absolution of the priest? Is confession necessary anyway?

Restoration to the supernatural life also means that the merit of all good works formerly done in a state of grace is restored. A meadow parched by drought recovers its green beauty under the influence of soft rain and sunshine.

The indwelling of the Holy Ghost, restored to the soul, brings great peace and consolation. A Protestant met a Catholic coming from confession one night and said:

"It must be very hard for you Catholics to go to confession. I don't see how you can do it."

"You wouldn't think it so hard if you knew what a great comfort it is," was the answer.

The sacrament of penance gives us special graces to combat future temptations. This is part of the exaltation of those who humble themselves by a sincere confession.

To those already in a state of grace the sacrament of penance confers an increase of grace.

Discuss the statement: "It is useless to go to confession unless you have committed sin since your last confession." Why do healthy persons take outdoor exercise?

**Suggestions:**

Write a short article entitled "Keeping Spiritually Fit," "Antitoxin for the Soul."

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We have dealt here with the means Our Lord has instituted for restoring supernatural life. The next division will deal with the connection between the Son of God and the supernatural life, ". . . I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." (*Gal. ii, 20.*)

## V. CHRIST THE LIFE OF SUPERNATURAL LIFE

In the preceding divisions we learned that supernatural life is a real participation in the kind of life God Himself lives.

This division answers the question "Why has God seen fit to elevate man to a state so far above his natural powers?"

The answer in brief is: We owe all to Christ. He is the cause of our supernatural life.

Since causality is quite a study in itself, the director should supplement this outline with an explanation of causes: Efficient, Instrumental, Meritorious, Exemplary.

A. It is clear from the preceding divisions:

1. That holiness and the supernatural life are practically the same thing.

2. That the supernatural life brings with it a divine sonship.

3. That this sonship is a free gift of God. Consequently

we must see what conditions God lays down for its bestowal. In other words, How are we to be holy? Whence comes the supernatural life? From whom and by what means do we get sanctifying grace? These three questions each ask practically the same thing.

B. Supernatural life comes from Christ:

1. Because Christ made supernatural life possible for us. (Meritorious and satisfactory cause of holiness.) Through Christ the human race was reconciled with God. Christ went before God as the representative of the human race and won back that opportunity for holiness which Adam had lost. If it were not for this mediation of Christ, all our efforts toward holiness would be absolutely futile. He opened up negotiations between God and man. He is the endorser of all our efforts toward holiness.

This relation which Christ bears to our holiness is clear from:

a. Holy Scripture. (*Jno. xv, 5; Hebr. vii, 25.*)

b. Tradition. The words of the Creed "crucified for us" are an echo of innumerable testimonies of the Fathers. (For a partial list see *De Journal, Enchiridion Patristicum*, n. 419, etc., *Index Theologicus*. See also the Prefaces of the Masses in Holy Week.)

c. Ecclesiastical documents. (The Council of Trent, sixth session, *Denziger 799 and 822.*)

2. Because Christ is the giver of holiness. (Efficient cause of holiness.) He not only restored our opportunity for grace, but He applies grace. When on earth He frequently made souls holy with the words "Thy sins are forgiven thee." This direct sanctification is still possible, but the general and usual means through which Christ works are the Church and in particular the sacraments. These are the channels of holiness.

This relation which Christ bears to our holiness is clear from:

a. Holy Scripture. (*Luke vi, 19; Jno. iii, 35; v, 12.*)

b. and c. Tradition and ecclesiastical documents. See the whole body of doctrine on the necessity of the Church and the sacraments and on the effects of the sacraments. (*De Journal, Enchiridion Patristicum*, 47, 427, 447, etc., *Index Theologicus*; and *Denziger, IIa, XIIb, Index Systematicus.*) Note: To speak with strict theological accuracy, Christ as man is not the primary efficient cause of holiness. God is the primary efficient cause. Christ as man is the instrumental cause.

3. Because Christ is our model. (Exemplary cause of holiness.) Christ said, "Be you therefore perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (*Matt. v. 48.*) This is an unintelligible command unless we recall Christ's other words, "He that seeth me seeth the Father also." (*Jno. xiv, 9.*); and "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." (*Jno. iv, 34.*) In other words, Christ is the human, imitable expression of the Father's holiness. His actions are an example of the holiness which God requires.

In what should we imitate Christ?

a. In general we should imitate His sonship by the union of our wills with God's. In Christ the human will and the divine are never in conflict.

b. In particular we should imitate His virtues. His patience, meekness, charity, contempt of honor and wealth.

This relation which Christ bears to our holiness is clear from:

a. Holy Scripture. (*Matt. xi, 29; Jno. xiii, 15; Rom. viii, 29; Eph. v, 1; 1 Pet. ii, 21.*)

b. Tradition. St. Cyprian: "We shall one day be that which He is in glory, if by faithful imitation of His example we become true Christians, other Christs." (*De Idolorum Vanitate. c. 15.*) St. Ignatius of Antioch, writing about seventy years after Christ's death, exhorts the Ephesians "to strive to be imitators of the Lord." (*Ad Eph. 10, 3.*) See, too, the beautiful letter to the Romans, where the same holy old man pleads with the Christians in Rome to use no political influence to impede his martyrdom. "Let me," he says, "be an imitator of the passion of my God." (*Ad Rom. 6, 3.*) St. Ireneus (*Adv. Haer. 2, 22, 4*) portrays Christ as the model of every stage of life. (*De Journal, Ench. Patr. n. 201.*)

### Discussions:

1. Note the places in the Mass where the idea of this paper is expressed. Distinguish the different causalities of Christ as mentioned in the prayers, etc. e.g.:

a. Meritorious and satisfactory cause: "*Te igitur clementissime Pater, per Jesum Christum*"; "*per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, etc.*"

b. Efficient cause: "*Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi.*" Prayers before and after communion. Prayers on the feast of the Solemnity of St. Joseph; of the Finding of the Cross; of St. Bernardine of Siena.

c. Exemplary cause: The Gospels portray the model. See prayers for the feast of the Holy Family; for the Mass of Palm Sunday.

2. Christ may be called the architect's plan (exemplary cause), the builder's permit (meritorious and satisfactory cause), and the builder (efficient cause) of the edifice of holiness. (Cf. *Ps. cxxvi*, 1.)

3. Explain Christ's metaphor, "I am the vine; you the branches." (*Jno. xv*, 5.); St. Paul's, that Christ is the head and we the members (*Eph. v*, 23.)

4. Most modern Protestants reduce Christ to a merely human though great historical figure. Does this leave Him the cause of our holiness? The early Protestants misconceived the meritorious causality of Christ.

5. It is said that those who play the part of Christ at Oberammergau become holy, Christlike. Compare St. Paul's "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Rom. xiii*, 4.), where St. Paul was using a theatrical metaphor.

6. Compare Perry's opening up of Japan to the western world with Christ's opening up of communications with heaven.

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## **VI. THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST**

"Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (*I Cor. iii*, 16.)

A. The Holy Ghost dwells in us. Everybody in the state of grace, who is a living member of the Mystical Body of Christ, has within himself the Holy Trinity, sanctifying him. (Cf. *Jno. xiv*, 23.)

Why, then, do we speak of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in so special a manner? The more common opinion of theologians may be put briefly thus: All the works of God outside Himself are done by all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. However, in order to manifest more clearly the special charac-



ter of each Person and to express more exactly our faith in the mystery of the Triune God, certain works are "appropriated" (as the theologians say) to each of the three Persons—work of power to the Father, of wisdom to the Son, of love to the Holy Ghost. Now our adoption as sons is a free gift of divine love; our sanctification is preëminently a work of love, as St. John tells us (*I Jno. iii, 11*). Since, therefore, in the Blessed Trinity the Holy Ghost is Substantial Love, sealing the union of Father and Son, to Him is appropriated this work. And rightly, for it is the characteristic of love to give, and to give oneself with one's gifts; and the Holy Ghost is both Gift and Giver par excellence.

1. Scripture insists on this fact:

a. In the Old Testament a fuller outpouring of the Spirit of God is prophesied as one of the marks of the Messianic Kingdom. (*Cf. Isa. xlv, 3; Joel ii, 28, 32; Ezech. xlvii, 1, 12; Zach. xiii, 1, 14.*)

To these prophecies Christ Himself referred (*Jno. vii, 37, 39*), using the same figure familiar to the prophets, "living waters." He also promised to send the Holy Spirit as One who would carry on His work (*Jno. xiv, 15 ff; xv, 26; xvi, 7 ff*).

b. The Apostles preached the Holy Spirit (*Acts ii, 16; v, 32; ii, 38; etc.*)

c. St. Paul is never weary of inculcating the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (*v, 5; viii, 14-17; Gal. iv, 6; 1 Cor. iii, 16; vi, 19; ii, 12; 2 Cor. v, 5; i, 21; vi, 16; Eph. i, 14.*)

From these texts it is clear:

1). That the Holy Ghost dwells in us, not only by the created gift of grace, but also substantially and in His own Person. The nature of His presence we cannot well explain, but the fact is most certain, and admitted by all theologians.

2). That the Holy Ghost is the gift of the Father and the Son; we really possess Him, and in such a way that our present possession is a pledge, an actual installment, of our possession of Him in heaven. St. Paul (*Rom. v.*) puts down as the foundation of our hope of glory the dwelling of the Holy Ghost in our souls now. "If God has given us so much of Himself already, will He not complete the gift and give us all?"

3). That besides being Life and Love in our souls, the Holy Ghost makes of our bodies a temple consecrated to God.

2. The Fathers of the Church linger on this doctrine, fashioning beautiful metaphors in an attempt to convey its reality and sublimity. Thus Cyril of Alexandria (*Lib. xi in Joannem*, c. 11): "If the fragrance of spices diffuses itself through one's garments, and as it were transforms them, how shall not the Holy Spirit, who is by nature [the fragrance] of God, make those in whom He dwells participators of the divine nature?" Again (*Thesaurus: Assertio* 34):

"He [the Holy Ghost] is God and proceeds from God; He is stamped upon the hearts of those who receive Him, like unto a seal printed invisibly on wax . . . thus restoring to them the image of God." Again (*Dial. 7, de Trinitate*):

"That which here on earth gilds us, as it were, with the glory of the children of God, is the Holy Spirit."

Thus also we read that the Holy Ghost penetrates and transforms us as fire (Basil, Cyril of Jerusalem); He is as light flooding a crystal (Basil); He is to the soul what sight is to the eye (Basil); He is the very life of the soul (Augustine).

3. In our own times Leo XIII has spoken to the Church of Catholic belief in the presence and action of the Holy Ghost (encyclical *Divinum Illud Munus*).

#### B. The action of the Holy Ghost in us.

Former divisions have treated of some of the effects of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in us: remission of sins, participation in the divine nature, divine adoption. Subsequent ones will discuss the infused virtues. Here, therefore, we shall speak only of the enriching and energizing of our souls by the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.

1. What are these gifts? St. Thomas calls them "certain internal dispositions which enable a man to follow promptly the instincts and motions of the Holy Spirit" (Ia IIae, 48, i corp.). We can understand them only by certain analogies in the natural order. Athletes, for instance, are able to sense the direction of a fly-ball at the crack of the bat; the development of a football play; the spot to which an opponent will return a tennis ball. Actors can sense their audience's response. Other men can sense a change in weather, a rise in stocks, a client's weakness, etc. They have certain dispositions of mind, or muscle that make them extraordinarily sensitive to influences that make no impression on other people. Analogously, the gifts of the Holy Ghost give the soul an extraordinary receptivity to the workings of actual grace, so that it leaps into action promptly. However, unlike natural dispositions, which are

largely acquired, these dispositions of soul are entirely gifts. The Holy Spirit wishes to teach us the deep things of God, to lead us to very great holiness. He, the Breath of Divine Love, inspires us; that is, He breathes upon our souls. But His breath, always gentle, would not move us so quickly and surely unless He first prepared the soul and made it alert. This alertness comes from His gifts. They are sails which He sets upon our souls to catch the breath of His inspirations. They are as wings with which He fits our souls to carry them aloft to God.

2. Their number, classification, particular nature, effects, etc. (Cf. of the books listed, Manning, Tanqueray.)

### C. Our duties to our Divine Guest

#### 1. Negative:

a. "Extinguish not the spirit" (*I Thes. v. 19.*): by mortal sin.

b. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit . . ." (*Eph. iv. 30.*): by venial sin, by acting from merely natural motives, by deliberate resistance to grace, by contentment with mediocrity, etc.

#### 2. Positive:

The cultivation of the moral virtues, which remove obstacles to the action of the Holy Ghost; alertness and diligence in following the inspirations given (Cf. *Jno. viii, 29; Ps. xciv, 8*); above all, a constant, careful striving after a fuller, richer, more Christlike life. St. Paul puts the ideal well: "Having therefore these promises [i. e. filial adoption, etc.] beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and the spirit: let us bring holiness to perfection in the fear of God." (*2 Cor. vii, 1.*)

### Studies and Discussions:

1. Modern paganism's cult of the body compared with the Christian concept of the body's high dignity. As a "temple" the body is holy, i. e. segregated from profane purposes and consecrated to the worship of God. Look up in a Ritual the formula for the consecration of a church.

2. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost as a motive for Catholic purity. (*1 Cor. vi, 9.*)

3. The context of St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter three, verse six, indicates that the temple of the Holy Ghost is destroyed by false teaching. Apply to Catholic edu-

cation, Evidence Guild work, etc. Also to the "edifying" (in the original sense of the word) effect of good example, etc.

4. The Holy Ghost and the sacraments. Look up the rite of each. What do you learn about the nature and work of the Holy Ghost?

5. Develop the duties of the host to such a guest as the Holy Ghost.

6. Study the Sequences for Pentecost Sunday. "*Veni Sancte Spiritus.*" Develop and discuss the metaphors in it, applying each practically. These metaphors lend themselves to poetry. Analyse also the hymn "*Veni Creator Spiritus.*" Take for example the expression "*Digitus Paternae Dexteræ,*" which exhibits the Holy Ghost as the Divine Artist: What is His model, His material, His method?

7. Discuss the necessity and value of each of the Seven Gifts with reference to the needs and dangers of modern times, in various occupations, etc.

8. Read the story of Paul at Ephesus in the Acts, xix, 1-7. Someone has said that even today the Holy Ghost might almost be called "The Unknown God."

9. Read Elliot's "Life of Isaac Joseph Hecker." Discuss his devotion to the Holy Ghost and his concept of the part the Holy Ghost should play in present-day spirituality.

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## VII. MARY THE MODEL OF SUPERNATURAL LIFE

Having studied the supernatural life of grace in the abstract, we come to view it in all its perfection and beauty as it shone forth in her who was full of grace.

Art students return day after day for weeks, to become lost in the study of Raffael's majestic Sistine Madonna. The Sodalist throughout his life studies God's masterpiece of grace, Mary, until his soul begins to reflect a holy likeness to the Mother of Divine Grace. Mary, paragon of divine grace and beauty, must be studied by the prayerful heart-ponderings of the individual Sodalist.

A. There are two fundamental principles necessary to the proper understanding of Marian theology:

1. Mary's privilege of the divine maternity is the key to all her other graces and gifts. Would such a son as Jesus Christ refuse to such a mother as Mary any privilege that He has given the angels or saints, or any privilege that an all-powerful God could give and an all-pure creature could receive? St. Albert the Great sums up the argument for each and every prerogative of Mary in four words: "*Potuit, deuit; ergo fecit*" (He could do it, it was fitting that He do it; therefore He did it). Once prove that a privilege was fitting for the Mother of God to receive and possible for God to bestow upon her, and it follows immediately that Mary possessed it.

2. Mary, in the divine economy of grace and redemption, is the "handmaid" or helpmate and associate of Christ. She is to Christ in the plan of our redemption what Eve was to Adam in the plotting of our ruin. Hence, from Bethlehem to Calvary, we ever find "the Child with Mary His mother," who helps Him win grace for us; just as now we find her at His side in heaven, helping Him to dispense that grace to all mankind.

B. Mary lived the life of grace as no other creature ever has lived it or ever will.

You will find but few details of Mary's natural life narrated in Sacred Scripture, since the Holy Ghost is more concerned with the marvels of her higher life of grace.

1. God's initial gifts to Mary. She was conceived without sin. Her Immaculate Conception was her first step toward the motherhood of God. At the very first instant of her existence it placed her on the highest summit of the mountain peaks of grace, far above the point to which the greatest saints have attained after long years of heroic struggle. From the moment of

her conception Mary was not only free from the least shadow of sin, but she was given a fullness of sanctifying grace befitting the future Mother of God; she was dowered with all the infused virtues, both theological and moral; with all the gifts of the Holy Ghost and all other gifts and privileges necessary or becoming to her exalted station; and even with actual graces, if, as some maintain (such as the great theologian Suarez), she enjoyed the use of reason from the moment of her conception.

This fullness of Mary's grace at her conception was in proportion to the dignity of her calling as Mother of God. Since God alone can measure the sublimity of that calling, He alone can know the fullness of Mary's grace from the very first. We can only suggest its intensity by saying that it most likely far surpassed all the graces ever conferred upon all angels and men together.

2. Mary's constant increase of grace. If such were Mary's beginnings in grace, what sublime heights of perfection had she not attained at the end of her long life? Each act of that life was supernatural and perfect, and so she merited, by each and every action however slight, a fresh increase of grace. God continued to multiply His gifts each moment until her death; Mary continued to correspond with these divine outpourings.

Her first years in the Temple were a preparation for the coming of the Messiah, an advent which she hastened by her constant merits and intercession.

The angelic messenger of the Incarnation officially salutes her as "full of grace." She has "found grace with God" and, because of that superabundant grace, she has been chosen from among all men to be the Mother of God. Who can say what an increase of grace her free consent and the conception of the Son of God effected in the soul of Mary? Even we shared in the consequences, since, by consenting to become the mother of the Redeemer, she became at the same time mother of the redeemed, who would be one with Christ in His Mystical Body.

She hastens to help her cousin Elizabeth, and the hidden presence of Christ sanctifies through Mary and confirms in grace the Precursor still in his mother's womb.

In the cloistered mysteries of the Hidden Life Christ spends full thirty years perfecting still more the soul of Mary, His masterpiece of grace, before He sets out to redeem the world in three years.

His first public miracle is wrought in deference to His

mother's prayer, for He would not refuse her request to save the bride and groom the shame of having no wine at their wedding feast.

To the woman who cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bore thee and the paps that gave thee suck!" Christ answered, not by a denial of Mary's blessedness in her physical motherhood of God, but by pointing to her higher blessedness in the order of grace—the fact that she heard the word of God and kept it.

Yet Mary's life of grace was no romance—except along the royal road of the Cross. Mary did not receive her graces passively; they cost her constant and perfect correspondence with the slightest wish of God. Her preparation for Christ's coming was one of unremitting prayer and sacrifice. She consented to become the mother, not only of the Son of God, but of the Man of Sorrows. The pain of the sword that pierced her heart at the Presentation was multiplied sevenfold and deepened with the passing years as she watched her Boy wax strong for the approaching holy cause and pondered the prophesied Passion in her heart. Then, on the summit of Calvary, the sword pierced to the hilt, and just as He was the Man of Sorrows, so she became the Mother of Sorrows.

Finally Mary remained exiled on earth after the ascension of her Son into heaven. She parted from Him to mother the infant Church, His Mystical Body on earth. During the period that followed the Ascension she gained untold graces through the repeated reception of her Son in Holy Communion.

3. The reward of Mary's life of grace. Assumed into heavenly glory, Mary still remains the Mother of Mankind by her office of Mediatrix of All Graces. As she, Christ's humble associate, helped to gain for us, by her correspondence with grace, all that He gained for us by His life, passion, and death; so now in glory she helps Him dispense the graces which she once helped Him to win. Christ is our sole mediator with the Father. Yet Mary is His handmaid, and in this subordinate character she constantly intercedes for her children. Hence every grace that comes to us we receive from Christ because our Mother has asked for it. She is our Mediatrix for all time as she will be our Queen for all eternity.

Consider the wisdom and unparalleled privilege of a Sodalist who has chosen the Mother of Divine Grace as his special model, advocate and queen.

Consider the incentive that every Sodalist has to spread the knowledge, love and praise of Mary through her Sodality—*De Maria nunquam satis*.

Since Christ and His grace come to us through Mary, we and all men must go to Christ and grow in grace through her—*Ad Jesum per Mariam.*

Since Catholic Action means the bringing of Christ and His grace into the world and into the hearts of men, and since Mary is the Mediatrix of those graces and the Mother of Christ, Catholic Action must be effected through Mary's intercession. For this same reason the Sodality, since it is based on devotion to Mary, is of its very nature the ideal form of Catholic Action.

### Discussions:

1. Mary is the Queen of Catholic Action. 2. Mary is the Model of Catholic Action. 3. Mary is the Mother of Catholic Action. 4. The virtues of Mary show her fullness of grace. 5. The Heart of Mary is the most perfect of all things in the order of mere creatures.

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## VIII. MARY MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACE

### A. The Spiritual Motherhood of Mary.

The life of divine grace is analogous yet far superior to the life of nature. Now, in the order of grace as in that of nature, parenthood is possible in three ways only: by adoption, by alliance, and by birth. We have seen in previous divisions that God is our Father and Jesus Christ our Elder Brother, the very Spouse of our souls — through grace. So too, by a like token, Mary is our Mother in this supernatural order, and that in all three ways:

1. By adoption. (The gratuitous assumption of a stranger to be a child and heir.) Mary, while ever remaining a finite creature, approached, through her divine maternity, to the divine. Hence the rest of sinful mankind were "strangers" to this Immaculate Virgin at the time of the Annunciation, when by her free consent to the Incarnation and Redemption (a con-



sent later to be ratified by her Son on Calvary) she adopted the human race as her children and as heirs to the kingdom of her Son.

2. By alliance. By grace we are so closely united to Christ as to form with Him one Mystical Body, He the Head. Hence she is the mother of the members, since there is but one Body. Mary, as St. Augustine expressed it, is mother of the whole Christ.

3. By birth. Because of her free consent at Nazareth and her subsequent sufferings (*cf.* previous division and below) Mary is rightly said to have conceived us in her Immaculate Heart at the time of the Incarnation and to have brought us forth amid the birth pangs of Calvary.

Truly, then, Mary is the Mother of Mankind by a triple title and hence loves all men with a love which is measured by the price of her motherhood and our redemption—the Precious Blood of her divine Son.

Briefly: Mary is the Mother of God; Jesus Christ is our Redeemer (*Council of Ephesus*).

But we are one with Him as sons of God both by adoption and by our incorporation into Christ. (*Cf.* Division II of this outline.) Therefore she is the Mother of Men, the redeemed. (*Lux Veritatis*, Pius XI.)

#### B. The meaning of this motherhood.

Mary's motherhood of men is best expressed in her office of Mediatrix of All Graces. This office she assumes by a two-fold title: Co-operatrix in the Redemption; Dispensatrix of its fruits, *i. e.*, of grace.

##### 1. Mary is Coredeematrix:

a. As Co-operatrix in the Redemption. She helped Christ gain grace for us.

1). By her merits (*cf.* previous division on her fullness of grace).

Remotely, by her prayers and sacrifices, she prepared for Christ's coming. Proximately, she merited by the free grace of God all that her Son merited by the strict justice of God.

("Since she surpassed all men in sanctity and in union with Christ and was admitted by Christ into the work of human salvation, she merited for us congruously all that Christ merited in justice." (*Cf.* Pius X, *Ad Diem Illum*, Feb. 2, 1904.)

2). By her free consent to the Incarnation (*Luke i, 26-38*). The Incarnation, according to the Fathers, was the marriage between God and human nature, between Christ and His Church. God, by His eternal decree, so ordered these mysteries in their execution that they would depend upon the free consent of Mary. Thus, through her "Fiat," Mary not merely physically, but especially morally (knowingly and willingly) coöperated in the incarnation of the Redeemer and so merited by grace to be called the Coredemptrix, since she co-operated in the Incarnation and Redemption as the "handmaid," the associate and constant helpmate, the very "Sponsa Verbi." In this her voluntary consent to our redemption lies her true title to her motherhood of men.

("When the eternal Son of God, for man's redemption and glory, wished to receive man's nature and thereby enter into a certain mystic marriage with the human race, He did not accomplish it until the most free consent of Mary, who had been chosen, should accede, Mary acted in the person of the human race itself, according to the illustrious and most true opinion of Aquinas: "Through the Annunciation the consent of the Virgin was awaited in the place of the whole race.") (Leo XIII.)

3). By her compassion throughout her entire life and especially as she stood at the foot of the cross. She suffered in spirit all that Christ suffered in His sacred body, and that for the same purpose, the redemption of the human race. Her satisfaction was not from justice, as in the case of Christ, but from congruity. Still her constant compassion made her Christ's consort in suffering, and so, dependently upon Him, Coredemptrix.

The duration of this compassion was for her entire lifetime: thirty-three years of expectation, eighteen hours of joint agony; her future life of poignant memories.

The vehemence of her compassion equaled martyrdom (St. Thomas). More painful than martyrdom because it was interior suffering (St. Alphonsus); "Queen of Martyrs" (Litany of Loretto).

The holy calm of her compassion—she stood, with heroic courage, at the cross itself. "The sufferings never had control of her reason, which in everything and in all its faculties remained most ordered" (St. Albert the Great).

Greatest sorrow, yet greatest joy—"The soul of the Most Blessed Virgin saw the death of her Son as most contrary to her feelings, and so it caused her the greatest suffering; and

[she saw it] as a means of redemption of the human race, and so it caused her the greatest joy. These can exist together, because one is material for the other . . ." (St. Albert the Great). Christ did not merely constitute her our mother on Calvary, but rather He publicly declared her to be our Mother who had been so from the time of her consent to the Incarnation at Nazareth. "Behold (she is) your mother!"

("And thus she suffered and almost died in union with her suffering and dying Son; and thus she gave up her maternal rights over her Son for the salvation of men, and, as far as she was concerned, she immolated her Son to the decree of justice. Hence it can be rightly said that she with Christ redeemed the human race." (*Benedict XV, March 22, 1918.*)

b. As the "Second Eve." She coöperated with the "Second Adam."

The Church, from Apostolic times, has, in the writings of the Fathers and in her liturgy, constantly contrasted Mary with Eve. This contrast is ever upon a moral basis: Eve's lack of faith, her disobedience, and her credence in the devil. Eve coöperated in (though she did not effect) our fall, since by her disobedience she induced Adam to sin. Mary, on the other hand, coöperated in (though she did not effect) our salvation, since by her obedience she gave us a Redeemer; and as His constant associate she helped Him to restore His kingdom upon earth.

("Eve is the mother of the human race, Mary the author of our salvation. Eve formed us, Mary strengthened us. We multiply every day through Eve, we reign eternally through Mary. We are borne down to earth by Eve; we are raised up to heaven through Mary" (*St. Augustine*).

## 2. Mary is Dispensatrix:

a. She now helps Christ distribute grace to us. Since Mary, while on earth, helped to win all graces for us, it is fitting, now that she is in heaven, that she should help to distribute graces to all men, her spiritual children. This her present office is not of divine necessity, but rather according to God's gentle providence in the present order of grace. God could have done otherwise, but in His infinite wisdom He willed to make Mary the channel of grace, since that is most in keeping with His divine mercy, her sublime dignity and our great needs.

1). Mary is the woman promised in Genesis who, with her seed, would crush the serpent's head (*Gen. iii, 15*).

The enmities there foretold are against both the Woman and her Seed (Mary and Christ); so too is the victory of the Redemption their joint triumph.

("So the most holy Virgin, united with Him in the closest and most indissoluble bonds, together with Him and by Him, exercising her everlasting enmities against the poisonous serpent and most gloriously triumphing over it, crushes his head with her immaculate foot." (Bull *Ineffabilis*, defining the Immaculate Conception.)

2). She is the woman described in the Apocalypse who is in labor until she brings forth her spiritual children in Christ.

("John therefore saw the Most Holy Mother of God already in eternal happiness, yet travailing in a mysterious childbirth. What birth was it? Surely it was the birth of us who, still in exile, are yet to be generated to the perfect charity of God and to eternal happiness. And the birth pains show the love and desire with which the Virgin from heaven above watches over us and strives with unwearying prayer to bring about the completion of the number of the elect." (*Ad Diem Illum, Pius X.*)

Hence the doctrine so often expressed by the Fathers and the Supreme Pontiffs: Each and every grace given by God to man comes to us through Mary. Thus St. Bernard, "God wished us to have all through Mary"; Pope Leo XIII, "Nothing is given to us except through Mary"; and Pope Pius X, "The Blessed Virgin is the Mediatrix of all gifts."

a. What is given through Mary? All graces without exception. Hence through her we receive sanctifying and actual grace, the theological and moral virtues, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, final perseverance and a happy death—even, according to Pope Benedict XV, the miracles worked through the intercession of the saints, come to us likewise through Mary.

b. To whom are they given? To all mankind. From Adam until the time of Christ these graces were given—always, of course, because of Christ, but also in view of Mary's future merits and of her office as associate with Christ in the work of redemption. From the assumption of Mary until the end of time all graces are given, mainly because of Christ's intercession for us, but likewise, though in a subordinate manner, because of Mary's intercession for us in heaven, an intercession which in the opinion of some theologians is personal and individual.

c. How are all these graces given? Dependently upon Jesus Christ. The truths we have proposed by no means deny that Jesus Christ is the "one Mediator of God and men" (1 *Tim. ii, 5*), since Mary's mediation is entirely secondary and subordinate to that of her divine Son—just as human fatherhood does not militate against the divine paternity of the Father, or earthly sovereignty against the universal kingship of Christ. Rather, Mary's mediation enhances that of her divine Son, our sole principal Mediator with the Father, because it shows the power and fruitfulness of Christ's mediation, which flowers forth in the unique motherhood of Mary and its perfection, which makes The Valiant Woman coöperate in the work of our Redemption, just as a weak woman coöperated in our fall.

## SUMMARY

Mary is the Mediatrix of All Graces for two reasons:

A. She helped Christ win grace for us while she was on earth (Co-operatrix in Redemption).

B. She now helps Him dispense those graces (Dispensatrix). Hence all graces come to us through Mary.

Thus Mary "goes between" sinners and Christ. This her Mediation of all graces constitutes her Motherhood of All Men in imparting this supernatural life of divine grace.

## CONSEQUENCE

A. *Mater Dei mater mea*—Mary then is Mother:

1. Of the saints now gloriously reigning with her in heaven.

2. Of the souls in purgatory, whom she asks us to help as her suffering children.

3. Of the just on earth, upon whom she lavishes more graces from her Son.

4. Of those in sin who will be saved through her intercession.

5. Of those in sin who will be damned because they reject her maternal care and the grace of her Son.

B. Our Queen, who reigns at the right hand of the King, is likewise Our Advocate, who intercedes for us personally as Mediatrix of All Graces and is likewise Our Mother, who loves and nurtures us as children of Jesus Christ.

C. Mary nurtures us:

1. By grace, which we receive from Jesus Christ through her intercession.

2. By Holy Communion:

a. "Queen of the Holy Eucharist." Her request at Cana foreshadowed the gift of the Holy Eucharist, which she requested for us from her Son.

b. Her presence at the Last Supper (probable at least) and on Calvary indicates her important connection with the granting of that gift.

c. The history of her Sodalities proves that frequent communion and love of the Mass spreads with the spread of devotion to her.

### Discussions:

The first Christians were the first Sodalists. Mary may justly be called Treasurer of Divine Grace, Mother of Divine Grace, Queen of Creation.

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