



## The Nature of Mary's Universal Queenship

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## The Nature of Mary's Universal Queenship \*

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Although by themselves alone the Scriptures appear to afford our faith no clear testimony of Mary's actual Queenship, nor of its universal scope, that dignity of the Mother of God is nevertheless acknowledged plainly and with unanimous consent, by the Christian Tradition. Indeed the Church, for a long time now and with great devotion, through the sayings of the Fathers and the Popes, the teachings of the Councils and the prayerful strains of the Liturgy, has not ceased to proclaim her belief in this prerogative of the Blessed Virgin. It is indeed a fact we would not dare to disbelieve. It is no less a comforting truth, one whose meaning is more than worthy of our meditation. Let us, therefore, attempt to understand the nature of this honour, that we may unfold the true significance of that glorious title: Queen of Heaven and Earth — *Regina coeli, gloriosa Regina mundi*.

Within the plan of Redemption, Mary's Queenship is one, as it were, with the Kingship of Christ. Just as the glory of the Mother of God is a reflection of the glory of her Son, so also is her Queenship a participation in the royal prerogatives of Christ. Our Lady is Queen of that same Kingdom of which Christ is King. She is so in the proper sense of that name, and not by a mere figure of speech. The theologian would say: *sensu vero et proprio, etsi analogico*. For, when taken metaphorically, the term "queen" simply means excellence. To say that Charity is the queen of the virtues is to say that its perfection surpasses that of all other virtues. According to this meaning of the word, there can be no doubt that Mary is the queen of all Creation; indeed, her perfection excels by far that of all other creatures taken together. However, when praising her Queenship, the Church implies much more than that. Mary deserves this title in its most proper sense, more so, in fact, than any other person who ever bore that name. And while in one respect she is queen in the sense that is both usual and strict, over and above there is the respect in which her queenship is at the same time quite transcendent and unique.

The name *King* is a title which has ever been used, even in Scripture, to qualify a person who, being the supreme authority of the land, is invested with a threefold power: legislative, judiciary and executive. And this is precisely the authority we recognize in

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Christ. Now it should be plain that as queen of a reigning king, Mary does not enjoy or share in this power in the manner in which it belongs to the head of the realm. The role of queen is not a dividing one, but should on the contrary enhance by a new and characteristic quality the governance of the community. To this intent she must be more than a mere companion, more than a crowned partner who would share in the other's power, the difference being one only of degree. Whatever prerogatives she may have, surely they cannot be defined as a mere attenuation of the powers of a king. That her's is nevertheless a power extending to all members of the kingdom in a fashion unique and irreplaceable, all this is plain from the history of royal governance. Similarly, the Fathers, the Popes, and the Councils, when speaking of Mary's Queenship, set no bounds to her far-reaching power — it is a sovereign one, extending as it does both to Heaven and Earth. But what it is, whence it is derived, and how it is put to practice, all that remains to be shown.

Yet, even so vague a conception of Mary's prerogative as queen should suffice to distinguish it as a particular quality which, however intimately related, is not quite conveyed by that more basic character which is hers as the Mother of Christ. Nor is a woman queen for being the mother of a king. Neither the mother of Saul nor the mother of David were queens. Besides, it is permissible to believe that Mary could have been made Mother of God without sharing in the work of Redemption to the extent that she actually did, and without becoming the spiritual Mother of men or being made their Queen — except in a loose and wide sense.

The divine Motherhood of Mary is in fact the foundation of all the unparalleled privileges God has showered upon her, but, in our opinion, there is not the proximate cause of her Queenship. It is however worth recalling that although his royalty is not in itself an inherited one, yet it is owing to Mary that Christ is of royal descent. It was she who brought Him forth of royal blood, the source of the human ties that bind Him to His ancestor David. But this royal lineage has little to do with Christ's own Kingship, whose origin is divine. Nor would it confer upon Mary the quality of sharing as Queen in the governance of Christ's Kingdom.

Can the theological reason of Mary's Queenship be found in the relations that bind her intimately to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity? Some theologians have thought so. That Mary is the beloved daughter of God the Father, the mother of the Son and the spouse of the Holy Ghost, all this indeed accounts for the transcendent holiness that is hers. Still, it is not immediately clear that such is the proper reason of her queenship.

More widely acknowledged is the opinion that this proximate foundation is to be sought in Mary's universal mediation. Which would mean, in other words, that she is Queen because she is Mediatrix.

Yet even this opinion does not seem to get to the root of the matter. For, on the one hand, if her universal mediation could obtain without its being that of a queen, but of a mother, say, the queenship could be adequately related only to a particular kind of universal mediation ; whereas on the other hand, if we really want to reach the root cause of her queenship, we would still have to seek the proper principle of this latter kind of mediation which, while having the nature of cause with regard to us, must still have a cause of its own. Upon closer examination, then, it might well turn out that her mediation is of this kind because she is Queen, and that this quality again has a proportionate cause. In brief, to say that she is Queen because she is Mediatrix, is to say very little until we can specify the exact nature of her mediation.

So as to proceed upon a sound basis, with clarity and order, we have chosen as our guide the following words from an allocution of His Holiness Pius XII, intended for the pilgrims to Fatimá in 1946 :

He, the Son of God, reflects on His heavenly Mother the glory, the majesty and the dominion of His Kingship ; for, having been associated with the King of Martyrs in the ineffable work of human Redemption as Mother and Co-operatrix, she remains for ever associated to Him, with an almost unlimited power, in the dispensation of graces which flow from the Redemption. Jesus is King throughout all eternity by nature and by right of conquest ; through Him, with Him and subordinate to Him, Mary is Queen by grace, by divine relationship, by right of conquest and by singular election. And her Kingdom is as vast as that of her Son and God, since nothing is excluded from her dominion.

We shall consider in the following order the substance of doctrine conveyed by this comprehensive and meaningful statement : (a) Mary is Queen by singular election. (b) Mary is Queen by grace, by divine relationship, by right of conquest. (c) What does the Queenship of Mary add to her Motherhood? (d) She now enjoys the full powers of Queen in the vast Kingdom of her Son.

#### I. FROM ALL ETERNITY, MARY WAS DESTINED TO BE QUEEN OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM BY HER OWN CHOICE

The account of the Annunciation reveals Mary as freely consenting to be associated with the work of Redemption in a unique fashion. Her share in this divine work is less dependent upon her consent to be the mother of the Son of God than upon her voluntary acceptance of Him as the Saviour, i.e. Jesus, this being the name above all names, expressing precisely the reason why He came amongst us. By giving express consent to be the mother of such a son she accepted no less the lot that was to be hers as a consequence. She knew that by this consent she was to share in the whole work of Redemption. For the Angel had plainly stated that this Saviour would be King and that

He would reign forever. Mary's free acceptance not only made possible the one and the other but in each instance she must be recognized as a "per se" cause.

God himself has willed it so. It is the Predestinator who here reveals his plan established by eternal decree : Mary's consent is designed as essential to the founding as well as to the governance of Christ's Kingdom. And it is she who in consequence freely elects this King of Mercy, thus making it possible for the Kingdom to be what it shall be. *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum* — it is in this consent to God's designs on the Son of man that Mary first appears in her intimate association with Christ the King. Consenting to become the mother of the Saviour-King, she thereby accepted to share in the work of man's salvation as God has willed it, and not less so in the eternal reign of Him who was to save the world and conquer his Kingdom.

In other words, it is not so much in her consent to become the mother of the divine Son that Mary is revealed as uniquely and so intimately associated with the work of Redemption as such : far more to the point is her acceptance of this her Son in His role of Saviour and of King. She has shared in His life of Saviour and of King to the extent where it is no longer possible to conceive the Kingdom without seeing Mary by the side of her reigning Son — the Queen seated at the right hand of the King.

It is in this scene of the Annunciation, in the simple yet sublime dialogue of the Angel and the Virgin, that the Church first perceives Mary's incomparable privileges, and, in particular, the role of universal co-redemptrix assigned to the mother of the Saviour by the Blessed Trinity. The teachings of the Fathers bear witness to it, and the Sacred Liturgy takes pleasure in recalling it on many occasions. It is in the setting of Nazareth's humble abode that the New Testament first conveys the mystery of Our Lady's royal prerogative. Seeing that the Annunciation is the revealed truth of a special work of God, it is no wonder that one can admire in it a most perfect order. This order, being both intended and expressed, to us, by God, is of capital importance. In it is to be found an abundant source of light which helps the mind to catch a glimpse of God's designs. The Angel's words and the Virgin's answer combine so as to manifest what the economy of Redemption will be. This Son, whom the Virgin will conceive, to whom she will give birth, *shall be great*, says the Angel, *and men will know him for the Son of the Most High ; the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob eternally ; his kingdom shall never have an end.* Hence the Virgin cannot doubt it : her Son shall be the Saviour. *Thou shalt call him Jesus*, the Angel said. But he shall also be King — as He himself will tell us : *I am a King* (JOHN, XVIII, 37) — and reign without end.

The Angel's pronouncement is clearly expressed to the Blessed Virgin who knows the Scriptures and possesses the light to understand. She shall be the mother of God, and this God, made man, shall be Saviour and King. God eternal, in whom all predestination is made, proposes his designs to the Virgin, and invites her to give consent. The Virgin's answer is simple but not less comprehensive. She accepts it all : *Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum* — *Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; let it be unto me according to thy word.* She accepts and wills the person and the life of this Jesus ; she wants, conforming to the Father's will, everything that her Son shall be and everything He shall do. In so doing she becomes a unique associate of this Saviour in the economy of Redemption, accepting as she does that leading part which only she could fill — the share and function, as it were, of a first principle, in the establishment of her Son's Kingdom. By complying unreservedly with God's designs, she intends to acquiesce in everything God has proposed to her. Thus she becomes an associate of her Son in order to perform with Him the whole of His work and establish that reign which shall never end. All of which amounts to saying that she shall be one with Him inasmuch as He is King. This alone means that she is Queen of the Kingdom over which He rules. The Christian Tradition has never interpreted differently the touching scene of the Annunciation and the dialogue between Angel and Virgin. It has always seen in it the revelation of God's full designs on Christ and on His Mother.

Let us conclude this first part : The Annunciation intimates to Mary that by divine election and in virtue of her own choice she is to be Queen of the eternal Kingdom. And now we shall see that she is also Queen by right of conquest.

## II. MARY IS QUEEN BY GRACE, BY DIVINE RELATIONSHIP, BY RIGHT OF CONQUEST

We hold it as a divinely revealed truth : in the fulness of her grace, Mary was conceived immaculate. The abundance of grace which was accorded her in view of the merits of Christ must not be understood as a quality which perfects the Mother of God merely in her own person. " Oh God — says the Collect of the Feast — who by the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin has prepared a worthy dwelling for thy Son . . ." In other words, even this privilege is not without special regard to her Son and indeed will enhance everything that in any way proceeds from her. As a consequence of this purity and radical innovation her share in the work of her Son and in his victory will be the greater. It renders Mary so much more adequate to her task, adding new depth and greater glory to the whole order of Redemption.



There can be no doubt that in her plenitude of grace the Virgin was made adequate to that intimate association with the Son in the tasks and achievements which the Angel revealed and to which she gave humble assent. In that very humility she *magnifies the Lord, and in her spirit rejoices in God her Saviour ; because He who is mighty has done great things for her* (LUKE, I, 46).

Christ is King by nature. Not, however, according to His divinity when considered in itself — except in a metaphorical sense, by reason of His excellence —, for a King must be of one nature with His subjects. Nor is He King “by nature” in virtue of His humanity alone : He is King by nature because His humanity is united to the divine Person.

Mary is Queen (a) “by grace” : by her Immaculate Conception she was made to be the “worthy dwelling-place” of this her Son even as He is Saviour and King. And how could this obtain unless she is as intimately associated with the King as one could be? But no one is closer to the King’s heart than the Queen. Her grace, therefore, must be proportionate to this dignity. (b) She is Queen by “divine relationship.” According to saint Albert the Great, the title “Queen of mercy” is the one which expresses most properly the dignity of the Blessed Virgin. But the dignity which is hers by reason of the unique relationship with the Blessed Trinity — as daughter of the Father, mother of the Son, and spouse of the Holy Ghost — would be diminished in its effect if she did not deserve a corresponding and therefore supreme authority in the Kingdom of her Son. Furthermore, her relationship with the divine Son is not merely that of a mother, but of a mother who, full of grace, had been conceived immaculate. Therefore, the Compassion with her Son was that of a mother, namely of sorrow, not of pity — for, as Saint Thomas says, “in the case of those who are so closely united to us as to be part of ourselves, such as our children or our parents, we do not pity their distress, but suffer as for our own sores”<sup>1</sup> —, it was, besides, the Compassion of the *Immaculate* Mother with her Son, Saviour and King. This is noteworthy, for the pure of heart are more assimilated to, and have a better understanding of the innocent victim than they who themselves bear guilt. Hence, without the privilege of Immaculate Conception, the Mother of God could not have been so intimately associated with Him in his Passion. (c) Like her Son who is King, Mary is Queen “by right of conquest.” The Holy Father states the reason why : she was “associated with the King of Martyrs in the ineffable work of human Redemption as Mother and Co-operatrix.” She co-operated with her Son in a manner proportioned to His quality as Saviour and King. Surely this co-operation was more perfect than that of any queen with her king. Now,

1. *I Ia I Ia e*, q.30, a.1, ad 2.

it is precisely in His Passion that Christ conquers his realm by driving out the devil — the prince of darkness, by whose *envy death came into the world* (*Wisdom*, II, 24). And Mary is the *Woman* who, in compassion with the fruit of her womb, *crushed the head* (*Gen.*, III, 15) of this *same king over all the children of pride* (*JOB*, XLI, 25). To deserve the right and title of Queen, what greater might should this woman have displayed than that by which she vanquished the evil one of whom it had been said that *there is no power upon earth that can be compared with him who was made to fear no one ; he beholdeth everything ; he is king over all the children of pride* (*JOB*, XLI, 24).

### III. WHAT DOES THE QUEENSHIP OF MARY ADD TO HER MOTHERHOOD ?

All along we have assumed the distinction between motherhood and queenship. We must now be more explicit. The concept of mother naturally evokes that of generation, and that of family ; whereas the concept of queen suggests to our mind the idea of a political society. It is, indeed, proper to a parent to give the child being and life, to endow it with *esse*, just as it is proper to domestic society to lead the child to maturity. On the other hand, civil society, being, precisely, a perfect society, has the mission of endowing the citizen, already mature, with *esse perfectum* : that is to say, with the perfection of his activity, with freedom (*causa sui*), acting on his own account, in view of the “ *bonum humanum perfectum*.”<sup>1</sup> The family, on the other hand, is but an imperfect society, inasmuch as, unaided by association in a wider community, it cannot attain even its own domestic end, namely the bodily and mental development of the child.<sup>2</sup> Now the child, of course, belongs to both family and political community. Yet, inasmuch as he has not as yet come to

1. « . . . Because man is by nature a social animal, being in need of many things for his life which, alone, he cannot provide for himself, it follows that by nature he is part of some group by whom help may be given him for living well. This help, indeed, he needs for two things. In one respect, of course, for those things that are necessary to *living*, without which the present life cannot be lived : in this regard man receives help from the domestic group, of which he is a part. For, from his parents every man has begetting and nourishment and upbringing. And, likewise, the individuals who are parts of the domestic family help one another in procuring the necessities of life. In another respect, man, again as a part of a multitude, is also helped in regard to living a perfectly sufficient life ; that is, so that a man may not only live, but also *live well*, possessing all things that suffice him for living. And in this way the civic group, of which he is a part, helps a man, not only as regards bodily things, that is, inasmuch as in a state there are many crafts for which one household cannot suffice ; but also as regards moral matters, that is, in so far as arrogant youths whom paternal admonishment is not able to correct, are checked by fear of punishment from public authority ” (*ST. THOMAS, In I Ethicor.*, lect.1, edit. PIROTTA, n.4).

2. PIUS XI, *Divini illius Magistri*.



maturity, it is only indirectly that he belongs to political society, viz. through the parent who is a citizen in his own right. The authority to which the child is immediately subject is none other than that of the parent.

If, then, we say of the Blessed Virgin that she is Mother of God, we mean that she conceived and gave birth to Him according to His human nature. Likewise, by her title "Mother of grace and of mercy" we mean to express, not only that she is Mother of the One who is grace and mercy, but also that it is to her spiritual motherhood that each of us owes the divine life we receive through the Sacraments. More precisely, it is in Baptism that we receive our *esse*, so to speak, in the supernatural order; and the Eucharist is spiritual nourishment. Now it is she who, as a mother, had caused us to be born to the life of grace and who, thenceforward, watches over us with maternal care so that the grace of adoption which made us children of God should remain and grow in our souls.

On the other hand, when invoking the Queen of mercy we turn to Mary as her to whom has been entrusted the care of watching, in her own fashion of woman, over the unfolding of divine life in that most perfect of all societies which is the Kingdom of Christ. Furthermore, when raising our eyes to this Queen endowed "with an almost unlimited power," why should we not think more particularly of her care for the confirmed, that is, for those who have received the sacrament of spiritual maturity — of the fulness of grace? For it is they who, in a rigorous sense of the term, bear the character of citizens in the City of God. They are the soldiers of Christ, who possess the strength to confess publicly and to defend the divine truth against the enemy.<sup>1</sup> As such, they, more strictly than the rest of the baptized,

1. For this particular comparison of Baptism and Confirmation, see especially, ST. THOMAS, *IIIa Pars*, q.72 : a.1, c. and ad 3 ; a.2, c. and ad 2 ; a.4, ad 3 ; a.5, c., ad 1 and 2 ; a.11, c. and ad 2. — "... Sacramentum baptismi est efficacius quam hoc sacramentum [confirmationis], quantum ad remotionem mali, eo quod est spiritualis generatio, quae est mutatio de *non esse* in *esse*. Hoc autem sacramentum est efficacius ad proficiendum in bono, quia est quoddam spirituale augmentum de *esse imperfecto* ad *esse perfectum*" (a.11, ad 2). "Homo autem, cum ad perfectam aetatem pervenerit, incipit jam *communicare actiones suas ad alios*; antea vero quasi *singulariter sibi ipsi vivit*" (a.2, c.). — "... Baptismus datur ad spirituales vitam simpliciter consequendam... Sed hoc sacramentum [confirmationis] datur ad plenitudinem consequendam Spiritus Sancti, cuius est *multiformis operatio*" (*Ibid.*, ad 2). — "Nam in baptismo accipit homo potestatem ad ea agenda quae ad *proprium* pertinent salutem, prout scilicet secundum seipsum vivit; sed in confirmatione accipit homo potestatem ad agendum ea quae pertinent ad pugnam spirituales contra hostes fidei..." (a.5, c.). — "... Confirmatus accipit potestatem *publice* fidem Christi verbis profitendi, quasi *ex officio*" (*Ibid.*, ad 2). — "Hoc autem confirmationis sacramentum est quasi ultima consummatio sacramenti baptismi, ita scilicet quod per baptismum aedificatur homo in *domum* spirituales, et conscribitur quasi quaedam spiritualis epistola; sed per sacramentum confirmationis, quasi domus aedificata, dedicatur in *templum* Spiritus Sancti, et quasi epistola conscripta signatur signo crucis" (a.11, c.). — "... In hoc sacramento homo... insignitur signo crucis, sicut miles signo *ducis*..."

are obliged to serve the Queen in the very measure of their devotion to the cause of the King. *Concives et domestici*, citizens, yet brothers, in the realm of Christ the King, the confirmed have the full duty of doing everything in the power given them, to maintain and extend the universal rule of Christ — not of course, by way of directing a multitude or by performing official public acts, for this is a power conferred only by the sacrament of Order. And they will act in a manner befitting the confirmed according as they are able to place themselves devotedly in the service of the Immaculate Queen whose mission it is to perfect, by merciful intercession, the governance of the Kingdom thanks to her unique association with the King who is also her Son.

Hence, in this perspective, the universality of Mary's Motherhood and that of her Queenship are not quite the same. When we say that Mary is Mother of divine grace, we do not mean to confine this maternity to the grace conferred in Baptism. Nor is it to be understood that, although the confirmed are her subjects in a very special manner, she is not Queen of all the baptized. It is characteristic of the good queen — such as Saint Elizabeth of Hungary — that she visits families in need and bestows maternal tenderness upon the little ones. For it is an essential task of political society to help the family attain its own perfection of family.

Yet there remains a sense in which Mary's Queenship extends farther than her spiritual Motherhood, the latter being confined to man. She is called Queen of the Angels, not Mother. The extent of her Queenship is in proportion with the Kingship of her Son. For although Christ did not merit the grace of the Angels, which was given them from the beginning, yet His authority extends to them all, for He is the *head of every Principality and Power* (*Coloss.*, II, 10). *Its measure is the working of [God's] mighty power, which he has wrought in Christ in raising him from the dead, and setting him at his right hand in heaven above every Principality and Power and Virtue and Domination — in short, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And all things he made subject under his feet . . .* (*Ephes.*, I, 20). Through Christ the King, with Him and subordinate to Him, Mary's "Kingdom is as vast as that of her Son and God, since nothing is excluded from her dominion."

Saint Thomas points out specifically that Christ is not only the head of the faithful, but also of the Blessed who see God, "inasmuch

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(a.9, c.). — Baptism is indeed the most "necessary" of the sacraments, but we should never forget that Confirmation is more perfect: "Unde etiam pueri confirmati decedentes *majorem gloriam* consequuntur, sicut et hic *majorem* obtinent *gratiam*" (a.8, ad 4). — "Et ideo illi qui habent curam puerorum debent multum esse solliciti quod confirmentur, quia in confirmatione confertur magna gratia. Et si decedat, *majorem habet gloriam confirmatus*, quam non confirmatus, quia hic habuit plus de gratia" (ST. THOMAS, *Expositio super Symbolo Apostolorum*).

as He has grace and glory most fully." <sup>1</sup> But even Mary's present vision of God is and ever will be both in extension and intension far superior to that of all the Blessed — whether Angel or man — taken together. We must note, furthermore, that just as Christ himself is, in virtue of a common human nature, more properly King of man than of Angel, Mary, too, is more strictly Queen of our race. But in no respect does this diminish either her general superiority or her particular authority over the heavenly Hierarchies and Orders.

And now, let us compare the titles "Mother of mercy" and "Queen of mercy." We cannot dwell here on their more profound meaning — namely that she is Mother and Queen of the One who is mercy itself — but must be immediately concerned with the Mother and Queen she is towards us by merciful intercession in our behalf. As we have already mentioned, the parent's compassion with the child is not called pity, for pity applies only to one who is not so close to us as to be part of ourselves. In this respect, we must understand, it seems, that Mary intercedes for us with Christ inasmuch as *He* is her Son. And this she undoubtedly does. But there is also the respect in which she is *our* spiritual mother who begs Christ to be merciful towards us, *her* children, in the manner in which the woman implored the mercy of Salomon, king and judge, to spare her child. Yet, there is no doubt that the title "Mother of mercy" embraces at once both these meanings. In either instance, however, "mother" refers strictly to the order of generation.

But what does the title "Queen of mercy" add to the former? If nothing new, then all has been expressed by the title "Mother of mercy." Yet, a queen, as queen, does not intercede with the king as would a mother — even though, as in the present case, the queen is also the mother of the king and can, as she does, intercede no less as such — but requests for her subjects a favour which only the king can bestow qua king. And so we ask: What are the powers of a king?

The powers of Christ the King have been clearly defined by Pius XI in the Encyclical *Quas Primas*. <sup>2</sup> But our problem is: How does the Queen share in the legislative, judiciary and executive powers which are those of the one and undivided head of the realm? In virtue of her own conquest she has the right to implore the mercy of Christ with regard to the laws He establishes or modifies for His people; she may beg Him to mitigate in our behalf the equitable judgment He is about to pass; she can stay the arm of her Son, to whom belongs the power to execute the sentence. All this she does as Queen — whose intercession could only gain in efficacy when she is at the same time His mother.

1. *IIIa Pars*, q.8, a.4, ad 2.

2. DENZINGER, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, nn.2194-2196.

The Blessed Virgin was prefigured by *Edissa*, who by another name was called *Esther*. Now, *Esther*, a Jewess, was queen of the Persian king *Assuerus*, and implored his mercy in favour of the chosen people to whom she herself belonged. This is significant, for, whereas the Person of Christ is divine, that of Mary is one with our own. Now, to petition for her people, and for her country, *Esther* stood, in her glorious apparel, before the king, where he sat upon his royal throne, clothed with his royal robes, and glittering with gold and precious stones. And when he had lifted up his countenance, and with burning eyes had shewn the wrath of his heart . . ., God changed the king's spirit into mildness; and all in haste and in fear, he leaped from his throne . . . Fear not, he said, for "this law is not made for thee, but for all others" (*Book of Esther*, xv, 1, 9-13). And as a result, the king sent a letter to all the provinces of his kingdom, and in it, we note this pertinent passage: Neither must you think, if we command different things, that it cometh of the levity of our mind; but that we give sentence according to the quality and necessity of times, as the profit of the commonwealth requireth (*Ibid.*, xvi, 9).

We do not see why Mary should be endowed, as Queen, with any power over the King's prerogatives other than that of merciful intercession. Mercy, "the mightiest of the mightiest," is likened to oil not only because it settles atop other liquids — *Miserationes ejus super omnia opera ejus* (*Ps.*, cxliv) — but also because of its penetrating virtue. Such might, which Mary acquired by right of conquest in her co-redeeming Compassion, extends, in its own subtle and persuasive fashion, to every royal power of her Son. And such being the nature of her share in governance, the Virgin's universal might as Queen in no way divides the unity of the throne of David. Even here apply the words of *Ezechiel*: *And my servant David shall be king over them: and they shall have one shepherd* (xxxvii, 24).

It is all this we mean in the invocation: *Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiae*.

#### IV. "QUEEN ASSUMED INTO HEAVEN"

This is the invocation which, after the solemn definition of the Assumption, the Holy Father himself added to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin: *Regina in Coelum assumpta!* Thanks to the Living Voice of the Church, we now know quite explicitly, as a divinely revealed truth, that Mary, having reached the end of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory — "*Expleto terrestri vite cursu, fuisse corpore et anima ad coelestem gloriam assumptam.*" Why should the Virgin's Assumption be particularly relevant to her actual Queenship? Because unless she is there "body and soul," she could not now be Queen. For "Queen," like "Virgin," or "Mother," is an attribute, not of the body or

of the soul taken separately, but of the complete human person, namely the composite of body and soul.

Our chief authority here will be the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*. We have in mind, more particularly, a passage quoted by the Holy Father from Saint Bonaventure, and another from Saint John Damascene. The first reads as follows :

Since her blessedness would not be complete unless she were there (i.e. with her beloved) as a person [" nisi personaliter ibi esset "], and the person is not the soul, but the composite (of body and soul), it is plain she is there according to the composite, i.e. in body and soul : otherwise, her fruition would not be complete.

It is therefore thanks to the Assumption that the Mother herself intercedes for us in her own person and that to Christ she can say even now " My Son." The same will hold for her Queenship, for if she were there only in soul, she could not intercede for us in her very person as Queen. The soul does not constitute the species, and the queen, like the king, must be one in species with her subjects. If the soul of Mary were called queen, this name would then be used only in a metaphorical sense.

In other words, if Christ wanted Mary to be associated with Him, and exercise, as Mother and as Queen, the power which she merited during her life on earth, it was necessary that her very person be with Him in His present glory, i.e. body and soul. As a consequence of the Assumption, the substance of the names " Mary," " Virgin," " Mother," and " Queen " is now physically present, whereas in the case of the other Blessed in Heaven, being there only in soul, the substance of the name " Peter," say, is actually now a being of reason that refers to the person who *was*. True enough, we pray St. Anne and St. Peter. Yet in these cases

it is because the saints while living merited to pray for us, that we invoke them under the names by which they are better known in this life, and by which they are better known to us : and also in order to indicate our belief in the resurrection, according to the saying of *Exodus*, III, 6, *I am the God of Abraham*, etc.<sup>1</sup>

So that in the special case of the Blessed Virgin we invoke the Mother and Queen as she now exists — in her present person. A.v., it is the very person of Mary who, " having been associated with the King of Martyrs in the ineffable work of human Redemption as Mother and Co-operatrix, . . . remains forever associated with Him, with an almost unlimited power, in the dispensation of graces which flow from the Redemption." It is owing to the Assumption that the Queen is there " personaliter."

1. *Ila Ilae*, q.83, a.11, ad 5.



The second passage from the Apostolic Constitution, quoted this time from Saint John Damascene, conveys essentially the same idea.

It was fitting that she, who had kept her virginity intact in childbirth, should keep her own body free from all corruption even after death. It was fitting that she, who had carried the Creator as a child at her breast, should dwell in the divine tabernacles. It was fitting that the spouse, whom the Father had taken to Himself, should live in the divine mansions. It was fitting that she, who had seen her Son upon the cross and who had thereby received into her heart the sword of sorrow which she had escaped in the act of giving birth to Him, should look upon Him as he sits at the right hand of the Father. It was fitting that God's Mother should possess what belongs to her Son, and that she should be honoured by every creature as the Mother and as the Handmaid of God.

In other words, it is thanks to the Assumption that the Mother of the Creator dwells in the divine tabernacles ; that the spouse lives in the divine mansions ; that she who stood at the foot of the Cross now looks upon her Son as He sits at the right hand of the Father ; nor could she otherwise now be honoured by every creature in her person as the Mother and Handmaid of God. If only her soul were in Heaven, these titles could refer only to her person of the past or of the future.

Again, it is because of the Assumption that we can say : " He, the Son of God, reflects on His heavenly Mother the glory, the majesty and the dominion of His Kingship," and that the Queen of Heaven and Earth now enjoys in her own person the fulness of her might.

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