



The Blessed Virgin Mary: Co-Redemptrix / Mediatrix



The 4 Marian Dogmas

Regarding Our Blessed Mother, there are four specific dogmas which Catholics should all know – and which we must all believe in without exception:

1. That she is the Mother of God
2. That she was Ever-Virgin
3. That she was immaculately conceived
4. That she was assumed into Heaven and crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth

Some have called for a fifth Marian dogma asserting beyond all doubt that our Blessed Mother is Mediatrix of all Graces, Co-Redemptrix and Advocate for the People of God.

Co-Redemptrix in Scripture

Regarding the specific use of the title of “Co-Redemptrix,” theologians have asserted this unique role of our Blessed Mother for centuries even though it has not been dogmatically defined as the Assumption or the Immaculate Conception were infallibly defined by the Vicar of Christ.



Sadly, the current Bishop of Rome made dubious comments on March 24th contradicted the Church's venerable tradition and centuries of saints who have asserted Mary's role as Co-Redemptrix.¹

As recorded in the Gospel, the Archangel Gabriel, whose feastday is coincidentally also on March 24th, spoke to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

“And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren: Because no word shall be impossible with God” (Luke 1:35-37).

By this address to the Virgin Mary, the Archangel showed Her the sign that nothing is impossible with God as has been shown through St. Elizabeth's conception of St. John the Baptist. And our Blessed Mother replied with insurmountable humility and wisdom in such a way that deserves repeating both now and forever: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her” (Luke 1:38)

This radical humility is essentially the cornerstone of the Gospel. Without humility there would be no Savior. He chose to dwell among us and humble Himself to suffer hunger, thirst, work, and the Cross. Mary also humbled herself in such a radical way by allowing Christ to take her body and turn it into the Ark of the New Covenant, where the greatest of all treasures would be kept. This is preciously one reason Mary is given the title Co-Redemptrix because she consented to be the Mother of God, but it is also because Mary plays a pivotal role in Christ's sufferings and death.

In no way, however, does the title of Co-Redemptrix mean that Mary was equal to God as she also needed a Savior. As expressed with certainty and clarity in the Collect Prayer for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Christ saved His mother from sin before her conception:

O God, Who, by the Immaculate Conception of the virgin, didst prepare for Thy Son a worthy habitation, we beseech Thee, that as **Thou didst preserve her from every stain by the foreseen death of this Thy Son**, so Thou wouldst grant that we also being cleansed from guilt by her intercession, may come to Thee. Through the same our Lord.

St. Maximilian Kolbe, addressing this important point, affirms the Blessed Virgin Mary as Co-Redemptrix while asserting, contrary to the false claims of Protestants, her inferiority in comparison with God Himself:

“The title of Co-redemptrix applied to Mary never places her on a level of equality of with Jesus Christ, the divine Lord of all, in the saving process of humanity's



redemption. Rather, it denotes Mary's regular and unique sharing (although subordinate and dependent) with her Son in the saving work of redemption for the human family.

"The Mother of Jesus participates in the redemptive work of her Son, who alone could reconcile humanity with the Father in His glorious divinity and humanity. Because of her intimate and unparalleled sharing in the mysterious work with the divine Redeemer, both at the Incarnation (cf. Lk 1:28) and at the work of redemption at Calvary (cf. Jn19:26), Mary has merited the Church title, 'Co-redemptrix' which literally means, 'with the Redeemer.'"

The Popes on Mary as Co-Redemptrix

While the title "Coredemptrix" first received Papal sanction under Pope St. Pius X, by his approval of its use in a decree of the Congregation of Rites concerning the feast of the Seven Dolors (A.A.S., Vol. 41, 1908, p. 409), centuries of tradition affirm the Blessed Virgin Mary's role as Co-Redemptrix (i.e., working with the Redeemer) to bring about the world's salvation.

Pope St. Pius X explains, "from this common sharing of sufferings and will, She merited to become most worthily the reparatrix of the lost world, and so the dispensatrix of all the gifts which were gained for us by the death and blood of Jesus. ... since She was ahead of all in holiness and union with Christ, and was taken up by Christ into the work of human salvation, She merited congruously, as they say, what Christ merited condignly, and is the chief minister of the dispensation of graces (Ad diem illum, Feb. 2, 1904).

His successor, Pope Benedict XV, teaches, "With Her suffering and dying Son She suffered and almost died, so did She surrender Her mother's rights over Her Son for the salvation of human beings, and to appease the justice of God, so far as pertained to Her, She immolated Her Son, so that it can be rightly said, that She together with Christ has redeemed the human race" (Admodum probatur, June 20, 1917)

The Sources of Catholic Dogma, Denzinger, plainly states: "In the decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (section on indulgences), *Sunt quos amor*, June 26, 1913 (AAS 5 (1913) 363), he [Pope Benedict XV] praises the custom of adding to the name of Jesus the name of 'His Mother, our coredemptor, the blessed Mary'; cf. also the prayer enriched by the Holy Office with an indulgence, in which the Blessed Virgin Mary is called 'coredemptrix of the human race' (Jan. 22, 1914; AAS 6 [1914] 108)."

And after the death of St. Pius X, Pope Pius XI continued to affirm Mary as Co-Redemptrix throughout the years:

"The Virgin participated with Jesus Christ in the very painful act of the redemption" (*Explorata res*, 1923).



“And now lastly may the most benign Virgin Mother of God smile on this purpose and on these desires of ours; for since she brought forth for us Jesus our Redeemer, and nourished Him, and offered Him as a victim by the Cross, by her mystic union with Christ and His very special grace she likewise became and is piously called a reparatrix [Co-Redemptrix]” (Misericordissimus Redemptor, 1928)

“[Mary became the Mother of Jesus] in order that she might become a partner in the redemption of the human race” (Auspiciatus profecto, 1933)

The Theological Certainty of Mary as Co-Redemptrix:

Fathers Iesu Solano and J.A. de Aldama in [Sacrae Theologiae Summa IVa "On the Incarnate Word; On the Blessed Virgin Mary"](#) affirm the certainty of this title:

“That Mary cooperated with the work of the Redemption, at least mediately, **is a matter of faith.**

“That she also cooperated immediately is a doctrine **more in conformity with the quoted texts of the Holy Pontiffs.** Indeed these texts, taken together as a whole, signify the constant teaching for a century of the Roman Pontiffs proposed to the whole Church more clearly with the passage of time for they are not unaware of the disputes of theologians over this matter.

“That the title of Co-redemptrix is used rightly is **certain**; and it is not licit to doubt about its suitability.”

Simply put, those who claim that Mary should not be given the title of Co-Redemptrix gravely error and cause scandal to the entire Church.

Our Lady, Mediatrix of All Graces

Along with Co-Redemptrix, the topic of our Lady as Mediatrix of All Graces is often not sufficiently taught nowadays. But the two are closely connected.

According to Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “Our Holy Mother the Church-approved during the pontificate of Pope Benedict XV the proper Mass and Office of Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces.” The Saint Andrew’s Daily Missal (1945) lists it as May 31. The Angelus Press missal says, “May 31 was the usual date for this Mass until the institution of the Feast of Our Lady Queen; since 1956 the day will probably vary with the Diocese.” Concerning this feastday in the Dominican Rite:

Interestingly, this feast never made its way into the liturgical calendar of the Roman Rite. It is included in the 1962 Roman Missal as an optional feast, for use in certain places and diocese. As best as I can tell, it first appeared on the Dominican liturgical calendar in the 1940's, and it moved around a bit until it finally landed on May 8 in the 1961 calendar. The 1949 Completorii Libellus has the feast on May



31. The 1955 English translation of the Dominican Martyrology has the feast on May 31. The 1959 St. Dominic Missal has it on June 7. [In the Post Vatican II Dominican Calendar], it has been removed from the calendar of the Order, which now celebrates the Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary on May 8. Source: Breviarium SOP

Christ as the One Mediator

Concerning the title of Mediatrix, Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. discusses the office of mediator:

"The office of mediator belongs fully only to Jesus, the Man-God, Who alone could reconcile us with God by offering Him, on behalf of men, the infinite sacrifice of the Cross, which is perpetuated in Holy Mass. He alone, as Head of mankind, could merit for us in justice the grace of salvation and apply it to those who do not reject His saving action. It is as man that He is mediator, but as a Man in Whom humanity is united hypostatically to the Word and endowed with the fullness of grace, the grace of Headship, which overflows on men. As St. Paul puts it: 'For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: Who gave Himself for a redemption for all, a testimony in due times' (I Tim. ii, 56).

"But, St. Thomas adds: 'there is no reason why there should not be, after Christ, other secondary mediators between God and men, who co-operate in uniting them in a ministerial and dispositive manner.' Such mediators dispose men for the action of the principal Mediator, or transmit it, but always in dependence on His merits."

Our Lady as the Mediator with the Mediator

Why, though, is our Lady the Mediatrix of All Graces? Why her specifically? St. Pius X stated why: "By the communion of sorrows and of will between Christ and Mary she merited to become the dispenser of all the benefits which Jesus acquired for us by shedding His Blood" (Ad Diem Illium). This resonates with what Pope Leo XIII had previously affirmed: "It may be affirmed that, according to God's will, nothing comes to us without going through Mary's hands. Just as no one can approach the Almighty Father except through the Son, so no one can approach the Almighty Father except through the Son, so no one can approach Christ except through His Mother" (Octobri Mense)

St. John Vianney's words from a few centuries before these holy pontiffs bear similar testimony: "All the saints have a great devotion to Our Lady: no grace comes from Heaven without passing through her hands. We cannot go into a house without speaking to the doorkeeper. Well, the Holy Virgin is the doorkeeper of Heaven."

Is There a Mediator with the "One Mediator Between God and Man"?

This spiritual gem is taken from "True Devotion" by St. Louis De Montfort which builds upon this teaching:



83. It is more perfect, because it is more humble, not to approach God of ourselves without taking a mediator. Our nature, as I have just shown, is so corrupted that if we rely on our own works, efforts and preparations in order to reach God and please Him, it is certain that our good works will be defiled or be of little weight before God in inducing Him to unite Himself to us and to hear us. It is not without reason that God has given us mediators with His Majesty. He has seen our unworthiness and our incapacity; He has had pity on us; and in order to give us access to His mercies, He has provided us with powerful intercessors with His Grandeur, so that to neglect these mediators, and to draw near to His Holiness directly, and without any recommendation, is to fail in humility. It is to fail in respect toward God, so high and so holy. It is to make less account of that King of Kings than we should make of a king or prince of this earth, whom we would not willingly approach without some friend to speak for us.

84. Our Lord is our advocate and Mediator of redemption with God the Father. It is through Him that we ought to pray, in union with the whole Church, Triumphant and Militant. It is through Him that we have access to the Majesty of the Father, before whom we ought never to appear except sustained and clothed with the merits of His Son, just as the young Jacob came before his father Isaac in the skins of the kids to receive his blessing.

85. But have we not need of a mediator with the Mediator Himself? Is our purity great enough to unite us directly to Him, and by ourselves? Is He not God, in all things equal to His Father, and consequently the Holy of Holies, as worthy of respect as His Father? If through His infinite charity He has made Himself our bail and our Mediator with God His Father, in order to appease Him and to pay Him what we owed Him, are we, on that account, to have less respect and less fear for His Majesty and His Sanctity?

Let us say boldly with St. Bernard that we have need of a mediator with the Mediator Himself, and that it is the divine Mary who is the most capable of filling that charitable office. It was through her that Jesus Christ came to us, and it is through her that we must go to Him. If we fear to go directly to Jesus Christ, our God, whether because of His infinite greatness or because of our vileness or because of our sins, let us boldly implore the aid and intercession of Mary, our Mother. She is good, she is tender, she has nothing in her austere and forbidding, nothing too sublime and too brilliant. In seeing her, we see our pure nature. She is not the sun, which by the brightness of its rays blinds us because of our weakness; but she is fair and gentle as the moon (Cant. 6:9), which receives the light of the sun, and tempers it to make it more suitable to our capacity. She is so charitable that she repels none of those who ask her intercession, no matter how great sinners they have been; for, as the saints say, never has it been heard since the world was the world that anyone has confidently and perseveringly had recourse to our Blessed Lady and yet has been repelled.

She is so powerful that none of her petitions has ever been refused. She has but to show herself before her Son to pray to Him, and straightaway He grants her desires, straightaway He receives her prayers. He is always lovingly vanquished by the prayers of His dearest Mother, who bore Him and nourished Him.



86. All this is taken from St. Bernard and St. Bonaventure, so that according to them, we have three steps to mount to go to God: the first, which is nearest to us and the most suited to our capacity, is Mary; the second is Jesus Christ; and the third is God the Father. To go to Jesus, we must go to Mary; she is our mediatrix of intercession. To go to God the Father, we must go to Jesus; for He is our Mediator of redemption. Now the devotion that I am about to bring forward observes this order perfectly.

Application:

Our Blessed Mother did not stand at the side of the Cross passively. She offered herself with Her Son. We too are called to offer ourselves in union with the Sacrifice at each Mass. We can do so by offering our whole day in union with the Sacrifice of the Mass and in offering our entire selves. And in so doing, remember that our Lady offered everything also in union with Her Son's Sacrifice.

It is a lack of humility if we neglect the mediators whom God has given us because of our frailty. Intimacy with our Lord is greatly facilitated by a true and profound devotion to Mary.

Ideas for May:

- Pray the Rosary Every Day, if you do not do so already
- Encourage others to be enrolled in the Brown Scapular and to wear the Scapular Daily
- Pray the Litany of Loreto each evening
- Honor the many feastsdays in honor of Mary during May
- Visit a Marian Shrine in your area
- Consecrate yourself and your family to the Immaculate Heart of Mary
- Take time to better understand devotion to Mary in our Mariology Course

Prayer of Reparation for Insults Against Our Lady from the Raccolta:

O Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, look down in mercy from Heaven, where thou art enthroned as Queen, upon me, a miserable sinner, thine unworthy servant. Although I know full well my own unworthiness, yet in order to atone for the offenses that are done to thee by impious and blasphemous tongues, from the depths of my heart I praise and extol thee as the purest, the fairest, the holiest creature of all God's handiwork. I bless thy Holy name, I praise thine exalted privilege of being truly Mother of God, ever Virgin, conceived without stain of sin, Co-Redemptrix of the human race. I bless the Eternal Father who chose thee in an especial way for His daughter; I bless the Word Incarnate who took upon Himself our nature in thy bosom and so made thee His Mother; I bless the Holy Spirit who took thee as His bride. All honor, praise and thanksgiving to the ever-blessed Trinity who predestined thee and loved thee so exceedingly from all eternity as to exalt thee above all creatures to the most sublime heights. O Virgin, holy and merciful, obtain for all who offend thee the grace of repentance, and graciously accept this poor



act of homage from me thy servant, obtaining likewise for me from thy Divine Son the pardon and remission of all my sins. Amen.

ⁱ <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-jesus-entrusted-mary-to-us-as-a-mother-not-as-co-redeemer>