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From the Editors of *Maria*, Sarah Jane Boss and Sr Cathy Jones

Since the last edition of *Maria* was published, Mariology has become more of a live topic in the Roman Catholic Church. The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, which is the Vatican body responsible for maintaining doctrinal accuracy in the Church's public ministry, has issued a Doctrinal Note giving advice on the use of the titles Co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix.

For several decades, there has been a campaign for a formal dogmatic definition of Mary's status as Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix of All Graces, and Advocate of the Faithful People. The Pontifical Mariological Commission has discussed this in the past, and the DDF has also considered it from time to time. The decisions of these bodies have always been negative—partly out of a sense that it was not precisely clear what such a dogma would be defining, and partly out of concern for the sensibilities of Protestant Christians, who might well misunderstand and be shocked by such a doctrine. The new Doctrinal Note, *Mater Populi Fidelis*, does not consider the theological arguments that have been presented in favour of these Marian titles, but it picks up the concerns that have been expressed against them, and strongly discourages any use of such titles, especially that of Co-Redemptrix. This has certainly set the cat amongst the Mariological pigeons.

The leader of the movement in favour of the new Marian dogma is Professor Mark Miravalle, of the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio. In 2023, *Maria* invited Professor Miravalle to write an article on this subject for us, and it was published in Vol. 2.2 (November 2023). In the present issue, David Francis Sherwood provides a detailed review of a collection of papers promoting the doctrine of Mary's co-redemption, and we also publish a letter by Brendan D. Towell in support of the Doctrinal Note. We encourage further contributions to this discussion.

On the subject of Mary's place within Roman Catholicism, Sarah Jane Boss has contributed a paper that was originally invited for presentation at a symposium at the Catholic University of Leuven, on the subject of Mary within the self-understanding of Catholicism. This article highlights difficulties that have arisen since the Second Vatican Council and makes a tentative suggestion as to how these might be resolved in future Mariological investigations.

An extremely original contribution to this issue is provided by an Australian scholar, John Dupuche, who uses the technique of comparative theology to suggest how teachings from Kashmir Shaivism might throw light on the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. We urge readers to consider this paper carefully, both for its method and its content.

We are intending to pursue discussion of the subject of the virginal conception, and articles on this subject are planned for future issues of the journal. To get the ball rolling, this issue contains an article by Chris Maunder arguing that the tradition of the virginal conception is a theological metaphor and should not be treated as an historical reality. Against this, we have a response by Sarah Jane Boss, who argues that the doctrine's historical truth is a necessary underpinning of its theological meanings.



There are two further book reviews to mention. One is by Cathy Jones and describes Diego Passadore's arguments for the title 'New Woman' as the most appropriate designation for Mary. The other is a review of the volume, *Marian Reflections on War and Peace: Trauma, Mourning and Justice in Ukraine and Beyond*. This book considers its difficult subject matter through a Marian lens, and Krystyna Krajewska's review shows that this gives a different perspective on the events that the work discusses.

We hope that this issue will help you to think more deeply about some major topics in Marian doctrine.