

New Series

Volume 5

No. 1

May 2025

Pages 1-2



Authors: Sr Cathy Jones and Sarah Jane Boss

Title: Editorial

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

In the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council, a topic that was greatly discussed amongst Catholic theologians was that of whether Mariology should conform to a 'Christotypical' or an 'ecclesiotypical' model. Many of the theologians who were caught up in this debate were not Marian specialists, and René Laurentin pointed out that most Mariologists would not have fitted neatly into either camp. All the same, this framework did dominate much of the debate about Mary at Vatican II, and, in the wake of the decisions of the Council fathers and the Council's decrees, people generally felt that the proponents of an ecclesiotypical Mariology had won the day; but recent decades have seen a number of theologians express dissatisfaction with this state of affairs. Two of the papers published in this issue of *Maria* re-visit the ecclesiotypical-Christotypical debate, as does the opinion piece by Brendan Towell.

The paper by Mary Frances McKenna traces changes in the Mariological perspective of Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI). With particular reference to *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 8, and *Dei Verbum*, McKenna shows that Ratzinger always maintained an essentially ecclesiotypical approach to Marian doctrine, although his interpretation of it did develop over time, not least by his incorporation of the women of the Old Testament into Christian theology – an incorporation that is accomplished by interpreting these women in the light of the figure of the Virgin Mary.

As with Ratzinger's approach to the Bible, Steven Shakespeare's paper interprets the Scriptures in an integral, theological way, rather than a primarily historical one. He adopts an original approach to the debate over different models for Mariology, showing the necessary unity of Christotypical and ecclesiotypical aspects of Marian doctrine, by way of a multi-layered reading of the figure of the Woman of the Apocalypse. His paper deserves to be widely read because of its combination of original thought and fidelity to the Tradition.

Brendan Towell's opinion piece is also conciliatory, examining the attempts of Pope St John Paul II to integrate different strands of Marian theology into his teaching, taking particular account of the thought of Yves Congar (an ecclesio-extremist, if ever there was one!).

The other contributions to this issue are all, in their different ways, distinctly traditional. Suzanne C. Toczyski examines the Marian passages of St Francis de Sales' (1567-1622) *Treatise on the Love of God*, drawing attention to the ways in which spiritual aspects of Mary's experience are fully embodied, especially in her physical motherhood. This might serve to remind us that thinking in terms of Christotypical and ecclesiotypical approaches to Mariology is far too simple to do justice to the richness of the tradition.

Finally, we are delighted to include two book reviews. Joe Evans ably demonstrates the importance of widening our comprehension of Asian Mariology with his positive overview of Sr. Mary Kim Anh Thi Tran's study of Our Lady of La Vang, the patroness of Vietnam, whose



shrine has its origin in an eighteenth-century apparition. And we conclude with a review by Peter Harper (University of Bath) of a book about Marian flowers. Every European language and nation has flowers named in honour of Mary, and this volume is distinguished by its focus on flowers named for Mary in Norwegian – the language in which the book is written. This review was intended to appear in the original series of our journal back in 2003. This might seem to make it somewhat out of date, but not all our readers are familiar with the Norwegian language, and we feel that the content – especially the table which explains the significance of the flowers in English – is of great value. We are therefore very pleased that this important contribution has now been published!