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Review article

Mary, the New Woman: A Judeo-Christian view of the Conception, in the history of Salvation, of the Divine Will in the Sovereign of Heaven by Diego G. Passadore, with a Proem by Robert L. Fastiggi. St Louis, MO: En Route Books and Media, LLC. 2024, ISBN-13 979-8888702277

Mary, the New Woman is an ardent apologetic for the relevance of the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Diego G. Passadore ambitiously seeks to connect Mary 'The New Woman' with the entire history of salvation and does so in relation to three main themes: the Immaculate Conception in the Old Testament and through the history of the Church, Mary and the Dignity of Women, and the call to conversion in our present age. The author is unambiguous about his aim: to share his insights into the mystery of Mary's conception, and to encourage a faith-filled response.

The majority of the 382-page book is a detailed exploration of Mary's Conception, centred upon the understanding of Mary as 'New Woman'. While Passadore does not want to deny the ancient Marian title of 'New Eve', he wants to highlight the importance—and, he proposes, the precedence—of the title 'New Woman'. Passadore relates how Adam's partner 'had two names: Woman (when she was innocent) and Eve (after the fall)' (p. 4), and deduces from Genesis 3:20 that it is '*more appropriate to call Mary the New Woman rather than the New Eve*', because the text explaining that Adam called 'his wife "Eve" because she was the mother of all those who live' is referring 'to her being the carnal mother, already with a fallen humanity, of all the living' (p. 24). Furthermore, he stresses that in Genesis Eve is called 'woman' ten times, all before the fall, and 'Eve' only once, after the fall, as well as Jesus' mother being called 'woman' in both John's Gospel (John 2:4 and 19:26) and the Pauline epistles (Galatians 4:4) (pp. 24, 155).

In the Proem to the book, Robert Fastiggi highlights the 'special credit' Passadore deserves for 'noting how Mary, the New Woman, is given recognition in the liturgical life of the Church' (p. ii), and it is perhaps in this that the book's main contribution to contemporary Mariology lies. Passadore stresses that the original title of the mass from the 1986 *Collection of Marian Masses* known in English as 'Holy Mary, the New Eve', is '*Sancta Maria, Mulier Nova*—Holy Mary, the New Woman', and devotes an Annex to the three liturgical celebrations linked to Mary, 'New Woman' (*mulier nova*) which emerged in the 1980s: the Litany of the Rite of Crowning an Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Rite of Blessing of an Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Mass 'Saint Mary, *mulier nova*' (pp. 361-382). This Annex is a very useful reference, enabling the reader to deepen their reflection on 'Mary, the New Woman' in relation to these little-known liturgical texts.

Passadore states that, regardless of whether the reader accepts his proposed insights, his book is 'an invitation to go deeper into the Bible' (p. 5), particularly as he traces the possible 'presence' of Mary in the Old Testament. With extensive quotations, from Scripture and from a vast array of non-Biblical sources—ranging from the Dead Sea Scrolls to medieval theologians to Pope Francis—from whatever background or perspective the reader comes, they will undoubtedly be enriched by previously unknown sources. Personally, I found some of Passadore's quotations more helpful than others. For instance, in Chapter 7 (pp. 39-65) I appreciated texts used to shed light upon the long-held relationship between Mary and the Ark of the Covenant, including the sixth-century Egyptian monk Cosmas Indicopleustes and St

Bonaventure, while at other points it could be rather overwhelming to be faced with such a multitude of quotations. Particularly for lengthy quotations, it would have been helpful if more commentary had been provided, helping the reader to explore the various connections being proposed.

After thirteen chapters devoted to the Conception of Mary, the New Woman, Passadore devotes two long chapters to related themes. As in the previous chapters, a wide range of extensive quotations are used to substantiate the points he is making. In the chapter entitled 'The Woman's Dignity' (pp. 175-283), he seeks to make 'a humble contribution to help overcome the current discrimination against women's dignity' (p. 175), while the chapter entitled 'Let's leap for Exultant Joy and Celebrate!' (pp. 287-344), is an encouragement to the reader to respond appropriately to the mystery of the Conception of 'Mary, the New Woman', whose 'matter was produced in the same matter of Adam' (p. 297). Passadore believes that 'God wanted this Mystery to be spoken of in these times, so that the present world could be awakened from its lethargy, and infused with vigor so that we might see our many sins in these cold moments, as we contemplate these mysteries' (p. 296). The chapter is a call to conversion, and to 'seek the light in these dark times' (p. 316).

This lengthy book ends with three Annexes, the aforementioned account of liturgical celebrations with the expression *Mulier Nova*, and brief excerpts from Pope Francis' *Misericordiae Vultus* and *Fratelli Tutti*, which Passadore describes as having touched his heart (pp. 345-360). This description perhaps provides a key to understanding the entire book: Passadore is sharing what has 'touched his heart' from his research and reflection, and does so in the hope of encouraging others, using the same sources which have encouraged him.