

New Series
Volume 5
No. 2
November
2025

Pages 1-2

Author: Brendan D. Towell

Title: A Letter to the Editors



Dear Editors,

I write in gratitude for the conversations *The Centre for Marian Studies* continues to foster — conversations that, as recent weeks have shown, reach far beyond the academy. When the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith released *Mater Populi Fidelis* on November 4, 2025, many commentators rushed to reduce this *Doctrinal Note* to familiar polarities of “maximalist” versus “minimalist” Mariology. Yet those of us who work at the intersection of theology, history, and pastoral life recognised something more profound: a retrieval of the very balance journals such as *Maria* have long cultivated.

My own contribution to the May 2025 Edition of *Maria*, “Mary as Mediatrix: Harmonizing Yves Congar’s Caution and John Paul II’s Enthusiasm,” would not have been possible without the editorial team’s encouragement. As a young theologian, I found in this journal a community that believed theological scholarship matters; that such work matters for the Church, for the culture, and for the faithful. *Maria* gave me a place to think with the Church and to grow in that vocation.

Mater Populi Fidelis now confirms what I argued there: that the Church’s Marian future depends on holding together Congar’s Christological and ecclesial clarity with Pope St. John Paul II’s insistence that Marian devotion must remain rooted in the lived faith of the People of God. The *Note*’s purpose is not merely to adjust terminology but to illuminate meaning — reminding us that when certain expressions risk “obscuring Christ’s unique salvific mediation,” they no longer serve the faithful. Its preference for titles such as “Mother of the Faithful People of God” reflects precisely this ecclesial instinct and echoes the heart of *Lumen Gentium* VIII.

All of this stands in stark contrast to the snark and suspicion that so often characterise social media reactions. Such immediate cynicism risks deepening divisions within the Body of Christ. These are certainly divisions neither Christ nor His Blessed Mother would desire. If anything, *Mater Populi Fidelis* gently calls us back to the place where unity is possible: around Mary in the title that matters most, the one spoken by Christ from the Cross — “Mother.”

This moment shows, more clearly than ever, the living relationship between theology and the Church’s pastoral discernment. The “golden mean” I described in *Maria* was never merely academic; it was ecclesial. It reveals how faithful scholarship, patiently undertaken, quietly shapes the conversations that later emerge in Rome, and how Rome, in turn, deepens the devotional life of ordinary believers.



I remain grateful to *Maria* for believing in the work of so many aspiring theologians and for sustaining a scholarly conversation that truly serves the Church.

Fraternally in Christ,

Brendan D. Towell