

OUR LADY OF THE ESCHATON:
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY'S MISSION IN THE END TIMES
ACCORDING TO SAINT LOUIS DE MONTFORT

By

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“By Mary was the salvation of the world begun,
and by Mary it must be consummated.”

-St. Louis de Montfort
The True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

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PREFACE:
THE “MAMA’S BOY”

Long before Pope Saint John Paul the Great ever adopted his papal motto “Totus Tuus,” there was Saint Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, who was to inspire the future Pontiff’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Montfort lived in France from 1673 to 1716, and spent his vocation to the priesthood evangelizing, catechizing, and battling the pernicious heresy of Jansenism. This heresy promoted moral rigorism, the total depravity of man,¹ and predestination—which explained away the dignified and truly free will of man.² Testimony to the efficaciousness of Montfort’s ministry can be found in his missions to Brittany and the Vendée in the west of France, the sole territories where lasting resilience could be found against the anti-Catholic movements within the French Revolution (1789-1799).³

Montfort’s impact, however, extends far beyond his earthly life. Written in 1712, then published posthumously over a century after the saint entered eternal life, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* (TD) is arguably Montfort’s most celebrated accomplishment—a true “gift” of profound Mariological insight and exposition. However, it was a gift that was nearly lost to history, had it not been accidentally rediscovered in 1842, when it was unearthed from its place of safekeeping (it was originally entrusted to farmers who had “buried it in trunks underground”). These circumstances seem to fulfill Montfort’s own prophecy regarding TD in its 114th paragraph: “I clearly foresee that raging beasts will come in fury to tear to pieces with their diabolical teeth this little book

¹ St. Louis de Montfort, foreword to *The Secret of Mary*, by anonymous (Charlotte, North Carolina: Tan Books, 1998), x.

² John A. Hardon, S.J., *Catholic Dictionary* (New York: Image, 2013), 237.

³ St. Louis de Montfort, foreword to *The True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, by Robert Asch (London, UK: Baronius Press, 2011), xii.

and him whom the Holy Ghost has used to write it, or at least to bury it in the darkness and silence of a coffer, that it might not appear.”⁴ By the grace of God, the raging beasts had failed, and this very text which compelled the author of this study to once dismiss Montfort as a mere “Mama’s boy,” later converted this same author to become a “Mama’s boy” himself. It is this very text which has likewise moved countless faithful and at least five popes to also “join the club”: Pius IX who declared Montfort venerable and encouraged TD in Marian devotion, Leo XIII who beatified Montfort and attached a plenary indulgence to the saint’s *Marian Consecration*, St. Pius X who mimicked Montfort in his *Ad Diem illum* and bestowed an Apostolic Blessing to any reader of TD, Pius XII who canonized Montfort, and most recently St. John Paul II who not only adopted the “Mama’s boy” motto of “Totus tuus,” but even considered declaring Montfort a doctor of the Church.⁵ Additionally, St. John Paul’s devotion to our Blessed Mother may even have been stifled if not for TD, for he admits having “previously [held] back for fear that devotion to Mary would obscure Christ rather than give him precedence,” but Montfort’s work showed him undeniably otherwise.⁶

Nevertheless, the recovered text of TD bears scars from the “diabolical teeth,” since textual “evidence suggests that the manuscript is materially incomplete” with an estimated 84-96 pages missing.⁷ TD itself provides clues regarding the existence and content of the long-lost pages, with paragraphs #227, 228, and 256 all referring readers to recall the first part of the text, a part noticeably missing when seeking to locate it. Unfortunately, as of yet there has been no reconstruction or recovery of the long-lost

⁴ Stefano Fiore, ed., *Jesus Living in Mary* (Bayshore, NY: Montfort Publications, 1994), 1212-1213.

⁵ Philip Kosloski, “How St. Louis de Montfort Inspired 5 Different Popes,” *Aleteia*, April 28, 2016, accessed March 2, 2018, <https://aleteia.org/2016/04/28/how-saint-louis-de-montfort-inspired-5-different-popes/>.

⁶ Fiore, *Jesus Living in Mary*, 1225.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1213.

pages, though the surviving text suggests the missing pages included a Litany of the Holy Spirit.⁸ Most relevant to this study is the objective of the extensive lost content alluded to in that of #227: “as I said in the first part of this preparation for the reign of Jesus Christ,” implying that Montfort intended the text of TD to be part of a larger work that prepared devotees *through* their devotion to the Blessed Virgin for “the reign of Jesus Christ.” In other words, Montfort’s TD is indeed Christological in objective⁹ and should be read as such: “Mary’s reason for being, and thus Father de Montfort’s reason for speaking of her, is Jesus Christ.”¹⁰

Much more could be said of St. Louis de Montfort’s efforts to magnify our Lord through our Lady, yet let us begin to follow his devotion and find the sources of his insights, for the saint would not want us to focus too much on himself, but on she to whom he totally belongs: the Blessed Virgin Mary. Specifically, let us peer into a particular image and icon of the Virgin which Montfort writes of in TD, yet which many faithful remain unfamiliar with, and to their great disadvantage.

Before we can appreciate such an icon with due justice, however, a brief overview of eschatology is helpful.

⁸ Ibid. Another sign of the long-lost pages is that “Montfort speaks of *‘the prayer of Saint Augustine which they will find at the beginning of the second part of this book,’* although in fact this prayer is at TD 67,” meaning that the middle of the current text was originally only the beginning of a second section followed by the lost first section.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1216.

CHAPTER ONE:
ESCHATOLOGY, PAROUSIA, AND DEATH

Eschatology, the word itself intimidates most anyone who hears it. The first time I heard the term during a lecture, I could not even find it in a dictionary since I could not spell it by “sounding it out.” When I finally learned the term, I used it frequently as a conversation starter about the Faith, so that over the years, I began to see the enormity of eschatology. With this new awareness came also the question of why eschatology was very often obscure to many fellow faithful—not the term itself, but the subject matter—especially since it is filled with power to evangelize and inspire. After all, who would not want to know the secret: that they do not only live once, but that they live forever?¹¹ And not just live forever in a fallen and failing cosmos, but meant to live forever in a new heaven and new earth, where all our greatest dreams are too small to even measure against. And that our lives now will determine whether we live forever in that new heaven and earth,¹² or whether we reject it and become trapped in the infinite nightmares of hell.¹³

Though this study will not treat eschatology in extreme depth, the weight of the stakes must be comprehended: it is not just about life and death—it is about *everlasting* life and *everlasting* death. Everlasting life is life spent with endless friends on endless adventures, with endless discovery and endless quests not just into all the mysteries of our present universe, but especially into the eternal presence of the Divine Mind—the

¹¹ Contra the current popular saying, “You only live once,” (known shorthand as *YOLO*) which encourages the license to live loosely and for pleasure.

¹² *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 1042-1048.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1033-1035.

Mind behind all our loves, all our beloveds, and of Love itself.¹⁴ Everlasting death, conversely, is undying death: every moment full of every regret, every fear, every despair, and every disease of the ruined human experience, including human bodily experience.¹⁵ So, the choice is not just between life and death, but between everlasting life as an everlasting human, glorified, even deified with a super-upgraded body and soul—or as an everlasting carcass,¹⁶ always dying and decaying yet unable to die and decay and be done with it, condemned to know all pain as nothing but a zombie, haunted with the greatest regret that God would have loved us into endless life if only we had allowed Him.¹⁷ Eschatology focuses on the final choice we make, and it is determined by every choice we make now, in this earthly life. Eschatology confirms that our lives, our free will, and our decisions have everlasting ramifications;¹⁸ it is as pivotal as the Resurrection of Christ, without which we have no hope, for His rising means He will raise us.

Although the extent of our eschatological knowledge is based on the Scriptural accounts of Jesus Christ's Resurrection, glorified body, and his return as judge, the teaching of Sacred Tradition on the Virgin Mary's Assumption—body and soul—to heaven offers further insight into the eschaton awaiting us. Before continuing, let us clarify that the Greek terms *parousia* and *eschaton* (and their derivatives) are theologically related, yet distinct from one another. Aside from their common Greek usage, both terms have acquired the following theological meanings relevant to this study:

Parousia refers to the glorious second coming of Christ, visibly in His glorified body (Acts 1:11), as Judge of the living and the dead (Rev 20:11), all of whom He will

¹⁴ Ibid., 1023-1029.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1022.

¹⁶ Ibid., 990, 997-1001, 1004.

¹⁷ Ibid., 1037.

¹⁸ CCC, 1036.

resurrect (1 Cor 15:21-26).¹⁹ Jesus' return will also see Him rout all sin and evil forever, including Satan and all hell (Rev 20:10). Finally, Christ's reign will transform all creation into a new heaven and new earth (2 Pet 3:12-13). Popular culture has skewed the Parousia as presented in the Book of Revelation, focusing heavily on the destruction of the world as an irreligious and arbitrary event. Because of this, the Greek term *Apocalypsis*—simply meaning *an unveiling, a revelation*—is now popularly used as meaning blind and utter *devastation* and *catastrophe*, when actually it refers to the event of Christ's return to reckon, rule, rout, and renew His creation, as prophesied to St. John in the final book of Sacred Scripture. For those who love our Lord, the longed for Apocalypse is ultimately beautiful and triumphal, a longed for homecoming, despite the terrors leading up to the Parousia; whereas those who shun Christ shudder at the coming judgement.

Eschaton specifically refers to the end times, of which *eschatology* is the theological study of the “last” things: death, judgement, heaven, hell.²⁰ Eschatology encompasses both individual and general manifestations: individual eschatology studies the event of a particular person's death and judgement prior to the Parousia's onset, whereas general eschatology centers on the Parousia and all its events. In other words, everyone has their own personal experience of eschatology at the moment of their death, and everyone will share a common experience of eschatology when Christ comes again, at the death of the present world.²¹ If a person were to die now, prior to the Parousia, he would experience the separation of his mortal body from his immortal soul (death); his flesh would undergo decay whereas his soul would undergo particular judgement before

¹⁹ Ibid., 998.

²⁰ For more, please see: Regis Martin, *The Last Things* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998).

²¹ CCC, 1021.

God. Upon judgment according to his faith, hope, and love as expressed throughout his life in thought and deed, he will enter either “heaven—through a purification or immediately—or [enter] immediate and everlasting damnation.”²² This person then, regardless if he is in hell or heaven, would yet await the resurrection of his body at the Parousia and the general judgement; if he is in hell, then awaiting the resurrection with dread—if in heaven, with eager gratitude to be fully human again, body and soul together. At the general—or the last judgement—“the truth of each man’s relationship with God will be laid bare... [revealing to all] the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life.”²³ It is then when every secret will at last be made known to everyone (Lk 12:2), including the secrets of God’s creation and “the marvelous ways by which his Providence led everything toward its final end” when all justice will be done.²⁴

This study will address the Virgin Mary’s mission in both occurrences of eschatology, as Montfort addresses both. It should be noted that of the traditional last things, only heaven and hell are forever. Death, judgement, and purgatory (for purification) are temporary conditions that will culminate with either eternal salvation and glorification in Christ, or in eternal damnation with Satan. With this proper perspective of the true stakes, eschatology moves “into the very center of the theological stage”²⁵ as the “culmination of ecclesiology, [giving] ultimate meaning to the Church and its mission.”²⁶ This theological connotation imbues the common meaning of *eschaton* as merely “end” with a truer meaning closer to that of *telos*, meaning “goal, ultimate

²² *Ibid.*, 1022.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1039.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1040.

²⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1994), 1.

²⁶ Paul O’Callaghan, *Christ Our Hope* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2011), 332-333.

purpose, consummation,”²⁷ or even a lifelong dream finally come true, a dream which sees all persons in heaven,²⁸ and one that we may irrevocably reject on our part, but has also been already fulfilled: “Jesus fully divinized is the perfect eschatological human being, the final goal of God’s creation.”²⁹

Eschatology is none other than understanding God’s purpose and dream for creation. Yet because both manifestations of eschatology (general and individual) are divinely timed and beyond our ability to foresee (Mat 24:44), a further urgency is added to the centrality of eschatology:³⁰ we know not when we die, nor when Christ will return. It is this same sense of urgency and centrality that constitutes the Virgin Mary’s involvement in both these eschatologies as well, which we will begin considering after gaining a better view of death.

Common Catholic knowledge of death has been largely inadequate, focused mostly on death as exclusively the consequence of Original Sin, but unaware that death may actually have been a good corrupted by sin. Thus, a fuller view of death may include two possible dimensions: death-as-break-and-separation, and death-as-transformation³¹ (or *Original Death*, so to speak).

Speculatively, Original Death would be a transition, not unlike the wheat grain which must die to gain a newer and more fruitful life (Jn 12:24), nor unlike the analogy found in the metamorphosis of frog from tadpole, butterfly from caterpillar: “a transformation and a rebirth to a new and continually more meaningful and full human

²⁷ Ibid., 329.

²⁸ CCC, 1037, 1058.

²⁹ Roch A. Kereszty, O Cist., *Jesus Christ: Fundamentals of Christology* (New York: Society of St. Paul, 2002), 377.

³⁰ CCC, 1041.

³¹ Hugh M. McElwain, “Christian Eschatology and the Assumption,” *Marian Studies* vol. 18, art. 8 (1967): 97.

existence... [that] would have been the lot of the first man, had not sin marred his relationship with Creator and creation.”³² Our sin, original and personal, perverts Original Death of its truly natural character and renders it a thing unnatural, and thereby fearful, dreadful, and detestable, when it was meant to “have appeared in joyful resplendence, free of gloom and anguish, free of... untimely break, decay of the body, disruption of all relationships.”³³

Christ’s victory over sin may then be seen as destroying “death-as-break while restoring death-as-transformation.”³⁴ Any lingering apprehensiveness toward restored Original Death diminishes as faith and love for Jesus Christ increases in us.³⁵ Examples abound among the martyrs demonstrating that as their love for our Lord increased, their fear of death decreased into nihility, for our Lord has removed the sting from death (1 Cor 15:55) and turned (or *returned*) it into a blessing.³⁶ Additionally, the existence of dozens of saints whose bodies have remained incorrupt through the centuries may further corroborate this restoration of Original Death.³⁷ Among these exemplary incorruptible saints include: Bernadette Soubirous,³⁸ Francis Xavier, Teresa of Avila,³⁹ and the foremost of whom is the Theotokos.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 98.

³⁵ Ibid., 99.

³⁶ CCC, 1009.

³⁷ It is important to note that this speculation on Original Death remains merely speculation, as there is simply no means of fully knowing God’s complete intention for the earthly life of prelapsarian man.

³⁸ Joan Carroll Cruz, *The Incorruptibles: A Study of the Incorruption of the Bodies of Various Catholic Saints and Beati* (Charlotte, NC: Tan Books, 1977), xviii.

³⁹ Ibid., xxxv.

CHAPTER TWO:
INTRODUCTION TO THE ICON OF OUR LADY OF THE ESCHATON

Upon Christ the King's return, where would be the Queen? At the second coming of the Second Adam, what would be the New Eve's role as the New Adam makes a "new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1)? These are the thoughts that inspired this study—that inspired the scholars, theologians, and saints this work draws upon and seeks to integrate into a fuller icon of *Our Lady of the Eschaton*.⁴⁰

This icon is both timeless and timely: timeless because "by Mary was the salvation of the world begun, and by Mary it must be consummated" (#49), as St. Louis de Montfort instructs devotees of our Lady in his *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* (TD). Montfort here merely reemphasizes that the life and mission of Mary are bound to that of her Son's and have not ceased: "Taken up to heaven, she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation,"⁴¹ a duty that extends in perpetuity unto the Parousia: "Mary does not give birth to Jesus and then get out of the way. Her mission is much greater than that.... Her unique relationship to her Son continues in heaven...."⁴² Moreover, St. Irenaeus' traditional pairing of Mary with Jesus, as *together* counteracting Eve and Adam's joint sin,⁴³ demonstrates that the cooperation of the New Eve with the New Adam is an ancient understanding.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ A title inspired by CCC, 972, wherein it refers to Mary as the "Eschatological Icon of the Church."

⁴¹ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church], November 21, 1964, sec. 62, in *Denzinger*, ed. Heinrich Denzinger and Peter Hünermann (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 907.

⁴² Matthew Levering, *Mary's Bodily Assumption* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 144.

⁴³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.22.4, 5.19.1.

⁴⁴ *Munificentissimus Deus* #38 further reaffirms this teaching. For more, see section 4.2 of this study.

The icon is also timely, for Montfort claims that “In *these latter times* Mary must more than ever shine forth...” (#50.6) as “God wishes His Blessed Mother to be *now* more known, more loved and more honored than she has ever been” [emphases added] (#55). These claims find yet further support when seen in light of current retaliations by Satan, such as the *Anti-Mary* social movements that Dr. Carrie Gress discusses in her latest work: *The Marian Option*,⁴⁵ and also in the various cults of Marian apocalypticism.

To form a worthy icon of the eschatological Woman,⁴⁶ certain popular misconceptions of the end times must be corrected, and Montfort’s claims must be explored, primarily focusing on the Parousia-paragraphs of #35-37, 39, 49-59, and 158 of his *True Devotion*.⁴⁷ This study will show that the saint’s insights are well grounded, that his views are not excesses of Marian devotion and piety, but indeed have scriptural, eschatological, ecclesiological, and Pneumatological support, and moreover, that his teachings even find ecumenical congruency with Eastern Orthodox theology. This study will then include and conclude with possible implications for the Church today, since Montfort goes so far as to say that Mary is not only to be expected at Christ’s Parousia, but that her mission is necessary to His second coming, necessary to these latter times.

⁴⁵ Carrie Gress, *The Marian Option* (Charlotte, NC: Tan Books, 2017), 144-158.

⁴⁶ A term coined by Roch A. Kereszty in *Jesus Christ*, 423.

⁴⁷ See Appendix One for the paragraphs.

CHAPTER THREE: ST. LOUIS DE MONTFORT'S CLAIMS

Beautiful are Saint Louis de Montfort's words on our Lady, and it cannot be recommended enough that they be read in depth, in whatever version of translation available (as there are several versions, this study will utilize the 1947 text originally published by the Fathers of the Company of Mary, republished in 2006 by Baronius Press). Nonetheless, for the sake of brevity, his paragraphs⁴⁸ from TD regarding Our Lady of the Eschaton have been summarized here for our study, focusing on his central claims about Mary's role in the end times.

In paragraphs #35-36 of TD, Montfort emphasizes Mary's unique and inseparable spousal relationship with the Holy Spirit and the work they accomplish together and with those united to them. "With the Holy Ghost, Mary produced the greatest thing that ever was or ever will be: a God-Man," and in whoever the Holy Spirit finds devotion to His spouse, He with Mary will "work striking wonders," particularly in those "great saints who will live at the end of the world" and who indeed are the "greatest things that will come to be in the latter times." Montfort seemingly applies Jn 14:12 to our Lady, applying Christ's promise to Christ's ultimate believer, to His Blessed Mother and His ultimate wonder-worker: "he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do." It is in these paragraphs where Montfort draws Mariology and Pneumatology together, for good reason and with much varied support.

In #37, Montfort explains Mary's privileged authority over all Christians as "she had right and dominion over their souls by a singular grace of the Most High." Here, Montfort's thinking is fitting since Christ—our head—was obedient to Mary as her

⁴⁸ Please see Appendix One for the full paragraph text in an English translation.

perfect Son (Lk 2:51), we who are but Christ's members and followers must be even more obedient unto her who is our perfect Mother. Paragraph #39 extends #37 and expounds the privilege God bestowed on Mary to be the mother of our salvation. Montfort "knows well that what should be obvious will nonetheless be disputed,"⁴⁹ so he provides the reasoning that "as the Blessed Virgin is necessary to God—that is to say, hypothetically necessary, because He so willed it—she is far more necessary to men in the attainment of their last end." In other words, if even the Holy Trinity deigned to be dependent on Mary's consent for initiating their masterwork, how much more are we dependent on her for the Trinity's work of our sanctification, salvation, and deification? As such, our need for Mary's intercession is different in kind to the intercession of all other saints, as she is no ordinary saint, but can be termed in colloquial speech as a *super-saint*.

Central to this study are paragraphs #49-59 where Montfort explains Mary's eschatological mission and her own parousia. He begins with lofty words in #49: "By Mary was the salvation of the world begun, and by Mary it must be consummated." Yet, lofty as it seems, the foundations for such a claim are found not only in the event of the Annunciation and Incarnation, not only in the Immaculate Conception, but even in the protoevangelium of Genesis 3:15. As for our Lady's parousia, our study will find roots for this belief in John's Apocalypse, as well as throughout Scripture and Tradition.

Montfort continues by clarifying that Mary's hiddenness in the first coming of Christ was to prevent her idolization by men "insufficiently instructed and enlightened concerning the Person of her Son," and thereby would be tempted by the "secret charms

⁴⁹ Fiores, *Jesus Living in Mary*, 1218.

and incomparable beauty” which God “bestowed even on her outward appearance.”⁵⁰ However, in preparation for Christ’s return, the “reasons which moved the Holy Ghost to hide His Spouse... exist no longer.” The mission of Mary now is to reveal her Son that He “may be known, loved, and served.” In #50, Montfort details seven reasons why “in these latter times” God wills Mary to be known: 1) Because of her humility, 2) To glorify God as His masterpiece, 3) To disclose Jesus and make Him visible, 4) Because she will again be the means of Jesus’ coming, 5) Because as surest path to Christ, she must be known to draw people to Him, 6) Because Mary will extend mercy to the lost who are far from the Church, and in power she will fight off obstinate sinners and heretics from harming her children, and in grace she will support the Church militant, 7) Finally, to defend her children from an ever desperate Satan who will increase his efforts in the latter times against a Church more resilient than ever because of devotion to Mary.

Paragraphs #51-54 further demonstrate the war between our Lady and all hell, drawing clearly the battle lines and recalling the primordial origins of the enmity ever “irreconcilable, lasting and increasing even to the end.” Montfort revisits Gen. 3:15 in #51, and in #52 explains that the horror Satan has for Mary is greater than that which he holds for even God Himself “because, firstly, in his pride, he suffers infinitely more from being conquered and punished by a small and humble handmaid of God; her humility humiliates him more than the power of God.” Paragraph #53 compares Mary’s victories through humility and obedience to God to the losses of Eve and Lucifer through pride and disobedience to God. In #54, Montfort elaborates on the “enmities, antipathies and secret hatreds between the true children and servants of Our Blessed Lady and the

⁵⁰ Ven. Maria of Ágreda speculates that Mary even remained 33 years of age in appearance, not aging any further after reaching her 33rd year: Maria of Ágreda, *A Popular Abridgement of The Mystical City of God*, trans. Fiscar Marison (George. J. Blatter) (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1978), 417, 766-767.

children and slaves of the Devil,” but in her humility, Mary will always crush Satan, and her mastery over hell will be most manifest in the latter times when all seems but lost. God’s grace upon Mary’s children, through her, will win victory for Christ. The outcome is clear for Montfort; his rallying words assure devotees of Mary, so long as they take up and continue being the “apostles of the latter times,” which paragraphs #55-59 expisit as those who are “fashioned by Mary at the command of the Most High... to extend His empire” over all. These apostles will also find in the Blessed Virgin “the easiest, the shortest, the most perfect means of approaching Jesus Christ and will surrender” entirely to her care. Finally, a particularly important characteristic of these apostles is “they will be true disciples of Jesus, walking in the steps of His poverty, His humility, His contempt of the world and His charity,” keeping “in their whole behavior the modesty and mortification of Jesus Christ.” They will not claim for themselves divine prerogatives, but will be docile to the Holy Spirit, taking after their Mother: the Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

The final paragraph included in this study, #158, highlights Mary as indeed the means by which Christ returns: “[Jesus] will choose no other path for His [second] coming than the divine Mary.” Furthermore, her way and help on our own path to Christ is preferred to those of all other angels and saints combined, for since even Jesus chose her, so we should even more. Montfort adds that though the first coming of Christ was in secret and the second in glory, both times will be perfect, for both are through Mary. Yet, following Church teaching,⁵¹ he prudently cautions there is a mystery here beyond his knowledge: the mystery of how our Lord will return by way of our Lady. Montfort sees the logic, but cannot see how God will apply it, echoing his closing statement in #59:

⁵¹ Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes* [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World], December 7, 1965, sec. 39, in *Denzinger*, ed. Heinrich Denzinger and Peter Hünermann (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 959-960.

“when and how will this be done? ... God alone knows; for our part we must be silent, we must pray, sigh and wait.”

Despite the summarizing, the profundity of Montfort’s passages remains undiminished; the reading of the original work cannot be encouraged enough.⁵² However, to investigate these bold words of Montfort, we will now explore our Blessed Mother’s unique eschatology and her eschatological mission in the life of the Church, and in the lives of her individual members. Perhaps after this study, the full weight and implication of TD can be better sensed.

⁵² Please see Appendix One for an excerpt of the text (all the paragraphs relevant to this study).

CHAPTER FOUR: MARY'S UNIQUE ESCHATOLOGY AND HER ESCHATOLOGICAL MISSION

4.1 - Mary's Dormition and Assumption

As the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary's experience merits its own terms since she alone has been privileged by God to bear God. Thus, the Blessed Mother's *Assumption* and *Dormition* should be clarified before continuing our study. By *Dormition*, Greek for the *falling asleep*, we mean the end of Mary's earthly life, and by *Assumption*: the transposition of Mary, body and soul, into Heaven after the occurrence of her Dormition. The two are separate events,⁵³ though closely related. Additional nuances are further discussed below.

Pope Pius XII's *Munificentissimus Deus*, in an attempt to surmount the deadlocked debate of whether the Blessed Virgin indeed *died* before her Assumption and glorification, simply phrased her transition into eternity as "having completed the course of her earthly life."⁵⁴ However, with the fuller insight into the two deaths as detailed in Chapter One above, it is arguable the ambiguous death in question regarding Mary's dormition is the death-as-break, whereas the death-as-transformation (coined earlier as *Original Death*) is the more advocated by the dogma of the Assumption. Thus, adding such further distinction and perspective to the debate: The Immaculate Conception indeed did suffer and die in a fallen world, yet being sinless did not die the death of sin.⁵⁵ Instead,

⁵³ Brian K. Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, vol. 1, (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2012), 293.

⁵⁴ Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus* [Apostolic Constitution Defining the Dogma of the Assumption], Vatican Website, November 1, 1950, sec. 44, accessed March 3, 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus.html.

⁵⁵ It is important to grasp that suffering and death are not evil and sinful, but are rather *experiences* of sin and evil. Though one may rightly avoid sin and evil, one may not be able to avoid experiencing the effects of such (yet remain safely in a state of grace), which is the experience of our Lord and Lady.

the Blessed Virgin died the first “perfect Christian death, passing to immediate glorification,”⁵⁶ to immediate transformation. In other words, for Mary to have experienced death-as-break-and-separation is highly unlikely given her “Assumption means that the new ark of the covenant did not corrupt—her Son did not simply discard the flesh that gave him flesh....”⁵⁷ To claim otherwise is: to insist the Blessed Virgin’s body decayed and her soul disembodied, to say she was not immediately assumed body and soul into Heaven, and consequently to even possibly believe she is not the Immaculate Conception.⁵⁸

God, rather, granted Mary an exemption: “an entirely unique privilege, completely [overcoming] sin by her Immaculate Conception, and as a result she was not subject to the law of remaining in the corruption of the grave....”⁵⁹ As such, Mary’s unique privilege brings to fruition her unique eschatology, an eschatology that further reveals our past and lost privilege as well as our restored, yet upgraded and future exaltation (if we are docile to the Holy Spirit). The past and lost privilege is that of our experiencing Original Death (death-as-transformation and not of break and separation and sin), as Dr. Regis Martin explains using the dogmatic promulgation of the Assumption:

That phrase: “having completed the course of her earthly life” implies, suggests, that Adam and Eve were destined to complete the course of their own earthly lives, had those lives not been interrupted by the unpleasantness in the garden, and they too would have been assumed body and soul into paradise, a transposition to a higher, lasting, eternal plane. Sin ruptured that relationship between their bodies and their souls, because of this prior alienation of Adam and Eve from God, hence from themselves, from the world.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ McElwain, “Eschatology and Assumption,” 101.

⁵⁷ Levering, *Bodily Assumption*, 136.

⁵⁸ As Mary’s Assumption and Immaculate Conception are “two privileges... most closely bound to one another.” Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, sec. 4.

⁵⁹ Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, sec. 5.

⁶⁰ Regis Martin, “Eschatology: The Christian View of Death, Continued, Lecture 8” (MP3 recording of lecture, Franciscan University, Steubenville, OH, 2004), accessed December 29, 2016.

Dr. Martin’s insight is not new, however, as the Catechism mentions: “Jesus has transformed the curse of death into a blessing,” into a *Christian death* that can even result in us “[experiencing] a desire for death”⁶¹ as if death was a gift—the gift and privilege it was always and originally meant to be. Even in the Seventh Century, St. Maximus the Confessor hints at the Blessed Mother’s extraordinary death: “Just as her birth-giving was incorruptible, so was her death incorruptible.”⁶² By describing Mary’s death as incorruptible indicates that her unique death, though truly death, remains different from that of a product of sin which always results in corruption. There is a distinction to be grasped, one made clearer when St. Andrew of Crete speculates that “death does not come to her in the same way that it comes to us,”⁶³ since “Mary’s death was... a parallel to that first sleep, which fell upon the first human being when his rib was removed to complete the creation of our race.... In the same way... [Mary] fell into a natural sleep and tasted death, but did not remain held by it.”⁶⁴ Andrew seems to view Adam’s sleep as merely a divine anesthesia administered by God to surgically bring forth Eve, to bring into being a new, distinct life and existence, an extension and continuation of Adam without breaking or separating him from life. By analogy, the New Eve’s sleep—her *Dormition*—brings her into a new, distinct life and existence, an extension and continuation of the New Adam without any break or separation.

Even the East’s use of the term *dormition* implies that *death*, as commonly understood, is inaccurate when describing Mary’s experience. Possibly then, the Eastern tradition has long acknowledged and recognized Original Death in calling it *dormition*

⁶¹ CCC, CCC 1009-1011.

⁶² St. Maximus, as cited in Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, 302.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 304.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 305.

rather than *death*, which further finds precedent in tradition⁶⁵ when St. Paul speaks of the future Parousia in 1 Cor 15:51: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,” suggesting a sort of *dormition en masse* for the faithful generation that sees the Second Coming, the generation that Paul speculates may be privileged to know glorification without knowing death-as-break.⁶⁶ In 1 Thess 4:17, Paul moreover mentions that “the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” Here, the Greek Fathers of the Church see Paul suggesting an *assumption en masse* for the final generation of the faithful who will not die and then rise, “but that their bodies will be instantly glorified and made immortal” as they “join the saints of the ages... [and] ascend into glory.”⁶⁷

The holy faithful of that final generation then, like the Blessed Mother, forego an intermediate eschatology, the intermediate state or “period of waiting between death and the General Judgment for the body and soul to be reunited....”⁶⁸ Interestingly, considering Christ’s harrowing of hell, this in-between state is not waived for Jesus who “does indeed undergo an intermediate period between his death and his resurrection,”⁶⁹ though His intermediate state is truly exceptional. Even so, that the Blessed Virgin’s privilege was to die the death-of-transformation solely does not deprive her of a possible free choice to die the death which her Son experienced (in preference for kenosis), which would then merit her to suffer not only with Christ, but also with all who must undergo an intermediate state in death-as-separation. By doing so, Mary increases in imitating

⁶⁵ McElwain, “Eschatology and Assumption,” 101.

⁶⁶ Curtis Mitch, “Commentary on 1 Cor 15:51,” in *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, New Testament, Second Catholic Edition RSV*, ed. Scott Hahn (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 308.

⁶⁷ Curtis Mitch, “Commentary on 1 Thess 4:17,” in *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*, 377.

⁶⁸ Paul Haffner, *The Mystery of Mary* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004), 228.

⁶⁹ Levering, *Bodily Assumption*, 73.

Jesus and is granted more graces by her Son to be our Mother, our Queen-Intercessor before Him,⁷⁰ our life, sweetness, and hope: hope that her Dormition and Assumption are not to remain forever exclusive to her alone, but that they act as a sign “anticipating the glorification of the body that all the blessed will experience at the end of time,”⁷¹ so that now in the current time “all may see clearly to what a lofty goal our bodies and souls are destined... [and thereby] make our belief in our own resurrection stronger and render it more effective.”⁷²

However, this does not mean that Mary’s unique privilege lies solely in that she was merely first to experience dormition and assumption. She is not simply first of many to come, nor is she even one among a select few, such as the supposed Patristic and Medieval belief that John the Apostle, Enoch, and Elijah the Prophet all share in Mary’s destiny.⁷³ Just as the Blessed Mother’s mission extends beyond birthing Christ, Mary’s exclusive privilege is evident in her being con-corporeal—one flesh—with her Son: Mother and Divine Child share in the same flesh. Thus, “since the flesh of Jesus, which he received from the Virgin, has been glorified, then that same flesh should also be glorified in Mary.”⁷⁴ Yet we—who Christ feeds His flesh and also live as His Mystical Body—do too become, in a sense, con-corporeal with Him. Therefore, “the bodily glorification of the Virgin is an anticipation of the glorification that is the destiny of all the other elect.”⁷⁵ This process of theosis will be further explored later in this study.

⁷⁰ This position is advocated in “Discourse VII” on the Assumption of Mary by St. Alphonsus Liguori, *The Glories of Mary*, ed. Eugene Grimm, 407-423. Brooklyn: Redemptorist Fathers, 1931.

⁷¹ Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, 306.

⁷² Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, sec. 42.

⁷³ Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, 300.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁷⁵ John Paul II, *Recentiores episcoporum synodi* [Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to all Bishops: Eschatology], May 17, 1979, sec. 6, in *Denzinger*, ed. Heinrich Denzinger and Peter Hünermann (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 1027.

4.2 - Mary at the Annunciation and Incarnation

The Scriptural record reveals the eschatological age began at the moment of the event of this con-corporeality, namely at “the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4) when Jesus was incarnate of the Virgin Mary: “the Incarnation is... the *eschaton*” (emphasis original).⁷⁶ Tradition names this moment the *Annunciation*, and fittingly so, since it recalls the Angel Gabriel’s announcement of God’s proposal to the Woman,⁷⁷ and the Woman’s announcement of her *fiat*—the “word of her [Immaculate] heart [that] has changed the history of the world, because it brought the Savior into the world.”⁷⁸ Moreover, Pope Leo XIII emphasizes St. Thomas Aquinas, teaching that Mary’s consent at the Annunciation “acted in some way in the role of the human race itself,”⁷⁹ not unlike how Eve’s dissent represented all humanity. St. Louis de Montfort captures and conveys the enormity of this moment when he says in TD that “by Mary was the salvation of the world begun,” (#49) for “it is through the most Blessed Virgin Mary that Jesus Christ came into the world” (#1).

Other theologians may place the onset of the eschatological age at the Resurrection, Ascension, or Pentecost, and still others may place it yet into the unknown future. The confusion may be explained by drawing another distinction in eschatology: a *realized eschatology* and a *remaining eschatology*, a “twofold division... found in the preaching of Jesus Himself... [when He] made the *present* acceptance or rejection of His own person the critical issue for the *future* judgment (emphasis mine).”⁸⁰ In other words,

⁷⁶ George T. Montague, “Our Lady and Eschatology,” *Marian Studies* vol. 17, art. 8 (1966): 72.

⁷⁷ “Benedict XVI: God’s Proposal Brought Mary’s Yes,” Zenit, last modified July 19, 2008, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://zenit.org/articles/benedict-xvi-god-s-proposal-brought-mary-s-yes/>.

⁷⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, at the conclusion of his commenting on the Secret of Fatima: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *The Message of Fatima*, accessed March 18, 2018, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.html.

⁷⁹ Leo XIII, *Octobri mense* [Encyclical on the Rosary], September 22, 1891, in *Denzinger*, ed. Heinrich Denzinger and Peter Hünermann (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), sec. 3274, 653.

⁸⁰ Montague, “Lady Eschatology,” 69.

being the eschaton Himself, and since the Church is His mystical body and kingdom, the eschatological age indeed commenced when Christ commenced, thereby *realizing*, in a sense, the Old Testament's hopes of the Kingdom's establishment. However, the Kingdom *remains* in longing for the return of her King, and in this sense there is far more to come. What results is the classic Catholic understanding of "already, but not yet."⁸¹

Regardless, it appears eminently fitting to consider the Annunciation-Incarnation as the eschatologically pivotal moment since "Mary is the eschatological tabernacle... the crystallization of the people of God [Old Testament Israel], the purified and humble remnant, both in her function of bringing forth the Messiah and in her perfect acceptance of the entire plan of God. She then belongs to the *eschaton* (emphasis original),"⁸² as the New Eve (Mary) and the New Adam (the eschaton) belong together. Moreover, this corporeal moment when "the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and ... will overshadow you" (Lk 1:35) is, in a sense, the Virgin Mary's "personal Pentecost"⁸³ which hints at her unparalleled role as spouse of the Spirit. Section 4.4 below will delve into this relationship of Mary with Pneumatology.

At this point, it is opportune to survey more of Mary's eschatological presence in Sacred Scripture, in both Testaments. This survey will primarily explore the work of two scholars: Bernard J. LeFrois, SVD., and George T. Montague, SM.

⁸¹ Montague in "Lady Eschatology," 68, provides a helpful insight: "Thus eschatology cannot be dismissed simply as a prediction of the end of time; rather it concerns the definitive act of God which fulfills previous promises, while at the same time not closing the door to a further fulfillment at a later date."

⁸² *Ibid.*, 77.

⁸³ Alexander Schmemmann, "Our Lady and the Holy Spirit," *Marian Studies* vol. 23, art. 8 (1972): 73.

4.3 - Mary's Eschatological Presence in Scripture

As discussed above, the Annunciation-Incarnation is arguably the inception of the eschatological age: both as eschatology-fulfilled and eschatology-forecast.⁸⁴ Significantly, Montague's *Eschatology and Our Lady* mentions that St. Paul's (the foremost Apostle-Evangelist) only "Mariological statement" is Gal 4:4, the very statement that sees the Incarnation as the eschaton:⁸⁵ "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman..."

In the Gospel of Luke, the extensive typology in the first chapter's narrative reveals "Mary as eschatological realization" founded upon the Old Testament's anticipation of *Daughter Sion* and the *Tabernacle*. Key phrases and words employed in Luke's Annunciation episode and in Old Testament episodes show correspondence by "describing one in terms originally used to describe the other"—a midrashic technique.⁸⁶ For clarity and brevity, Montague's thorough analysis (*with mine incorporated) is best presented as a table (Scriptural references from the RSVCE):

Mary as Eschatological Daughter Sion		
Old Testament	Implication	Gospel of Luke
Zephaniah 3:14-17 Key words/phrases analyzed below:	The passage from Zephaniah addresses the Messianic people as <i>Daughter Sion</i> . Luke echoes the address' peculiarities in Gabriel's greeting to Mary, implying Mary as the long anticipated <i>Daughter Sion</i> .	Luke 1:28-33 Key words/phrases analyzed below:
<i>Rejoice</i> (also Joel 2:21 and Zechariah 9:9)	The common Hebrew greeting is <i>Peace</i> , whereas <i>Rejoice</i> is reserved for heralding Messianic joy that God at last is coming to dwell with Daughter Sion.	<i>Hail</i> (or <i>Rejoice!</i>)
<i>Do not fear</i>	*True fearlessness is only possible in God's presence.	<i>Do not be afraid</i>
<i>The LORD is in your midst</i>	The Hebrew term in Zephaniah is <i>beqirbek</i> (in your midst), which also can mean "in your womb".	<i>The Lord is with you... you will conceive in your womb</i>

⁸⁴ Montague, "Lady Eschatology," 84.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

<i>King</i>	*God has come at last as sovereign king.	<i>Him the throne... he will reign... his kingdom</i>
<i>Warrior who gives victory (savior)</i>	*God has come to save. The name <i>Jesus</i> means "Yahweh saves".	<i>You shall call his name Jesus</i>
<i>He will rejoice... exult over you</i>	*Daughter Sion and Mary both experience God's approval.	<i>You have found favor with God</i>

Mary as Eschatological Tabernacle

Old Testament	Implication	Gospel of Luke
Zephaniah 3:15-17	Zephaniah's "The LORD is in your midst" and Luke's "the Lord is with you... you will conceive in your womb" shows Mary as the eschatological tabernacle	Luke 1:28,31
Exodus 40:34-35	*The Greek word <i>overshadow</i> is the same when describing God's dwelling in the tabernacle of Exodus and the Holy Spirit's descent upon Mary in Luke.	Luke 1:35
2 Samuel 6:2-16 Key words/phrases analyzed below:	The midrashic portrayal of the Visitation in terms of David's transfer of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem reinforces the theme of Mary as eschatological tabernacle.	Luke 1:39-56 Key words/phrases analyzed below:
<i>They carried the ark of God upon a new cart</i>	*Israel's carrying the ark of God in a new cart (v.3) foreshadows Mary as God's new creation who carries God in her womb (42).	[Dogma of the Immaculate Conception]
<i>And David arose and went... on the hill</i>	*David's rising to go to the hill of the house of Abinadab (v.3) mirrors Mary rising to go to Zechariah's house in the hill country (v.39).	<i>Mary arose and went... into the hill country</i>
<i>And David... and Israel were making merry before the LORD... with songs</i>	*Just as David and his company sang merrily before the ark of the LORD (v.5), Elizabeth exclaims with loud cries of joy before Mary who carries the Lord in her womb (v.42).	<i>Elizabeth... exclaimed with a loud cry.</i>
<i>"How can the ark of the LORD come to me?"</i>	*The question of David concerning the Ark (v.9) and Elizabeth's concerning Mary (as Jesus' ark, v.43) find unmistakable parallels in one another.	<i>"Why is this granted... that the mother of my Lord... come to me?"</i>
<i>David leaping and dancing before the LORD</i>	*David's leaping and dancing, especially while uncovered (v.20) mirrors the leaping of John the Baptist in Elizabeth's womb (v.41,44).	<i>The child in my [Elizabeth's] womb leapt for joy.</i>
<i>The ark of the LORD remained in the house... three months</i>	*Even the duration of time the Ark spent in the house of Obed-edom (v.11) parallels with the three months Mary spent in Elizabeth and Zechariah's house (v.56).	<i>Mary remained with her about three months</i>

The two tables above show Mary as not unlike an image formed by many smaller images, or even as an image that hides another within it: the optical illusion known as "double

picture” (when only one image is clearly seen at a time in the same rendering, depending on perspective). Similarly, Mary is an interplay of both an individual and the collective remnant of Israel: the “crystallization of the people of God, the purified and humble remnant, both in her function of bringing forth the Messiah and in her perfect acceptance of the entire plan of God.” In this way, Luke concludes that Mary indeed “belongs to the eschaton”⁸⁷ and is the Apostolic Church’s eschatological self-realization.⁸⁸

The Gospel of John corroborates Luke’s Marian eschatology by not only presenting in his prologue the “Incarnation as the eschatological inhabitation of the Word among men,”⁸⁹ but also by using the Jewish literary device of “inclusion.” This device involves framing his entire gospel with an idea or image at its beginning and end, hence the narrative’s opening triple reference of “His Mother” at Cana (the commencement of Christ’s ministry, John 2:1-5), and the narrative’s closing triple reference of “His Mother” at Calvary (the consummation of Christ’s ministry, John 19:25-26).⁹⁰ Jesus’ referring to Mary exclusively as “Woman” (in John 2:4 and 19:26) demonstrates further John’s use of “inclusion”, as are the appearances of water and wine, the “hour”, and the presence of Christ’s Mother with her Son.⁹¹ This inclusion technique also serves to present Mary as inseparable from Christ’s work of salvation;⁹² she is *included* in His work, she is with Him from start to finish, she is His faithful co-redemptrix against Satan, undoing with her Son at the Tree of Life what Eve’s conspiring with Adam and the serpent had bound at

⁸⁷ Ibid., 77

⁸⁸ Ibid., 78

⁸⁹ Ibid., 78

⁹⁰ Bernard J. LeFrois, “The Mary-Church Relationship in the Apocalypse,” *Marian Studies* vol. 9, art. 9 (1958): 80.

⁹¹ Montague, “Lady Eschatology,” 79.

⁹² LeFrois, “Mary-Church Apocalypse,” 81.

the Forbidden Tree.⁹³ It is only logical then to expect the Blessed Virgin's continuing cooperation with our Lord until His Parousia, and *with* His Parousia, as John develops in his Apocalypse.⁹⁴

The "Woman" of Revelation 12 is also an inspired textual "double picture" which becomes clearer with the help of Bernard J. LeFrois' work: *The Mary-Church Relationship in the Apocalypse*. Continuing the Johannine theme of Jesus' referring to Mary as "Woman", LeFrois sees that "the same thought-pattern of individual representing collective... shine[s] through... in the Apocalypse as it does in the Gospel [of John],"⁹⁵ and in Luke's Gospel as well (as discussed above regarding Mary as Daughter Zion, though Luke does not refer to the Blessed Mother as "Woman"). LeFrois then addresses the contentions against three images of the Woman in Rev. 12 that appear to disqualify her as Mary and to be seen only as the Church: her birthpangs, her other children, and her refuge in the wilderness (with emphasis added in the Scriptural excerpt below).

¹ And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; ² she was with child and she cried out in *her pangs of birth*, in anguish for delivery. ³ And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads. ⁴ His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; ⁵ she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, ⁶ and *the woman fled into the wilderness*, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days... ¹⁷ Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on *the rest of her offspring*, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.

(Rev. 12:12-17, *Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition*)

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁹⁴ Popular culture has imbued the Greek work *apokalypsis* with negative connotations not original to the word and its use in Scripture, which simply means "an unveiling, a manifestation or revelation"; in this case: the revealing to John the Apostle of God's plan for the end of time and the destiny of creation.

⁹⁵ LeFrois, "Mary-Church Apocalypse," 89.

LeFrois argues that the image of suffering birthpangs is not to be read in the literal proper sense, but that it was a common expression for collective or individual suffering found in Greek and Jewish literature, and even in New Testament Scripture (e.g., Mt 24:8, Mk 13:8).⁹⁶ Moreover, “the other [details revolving about the woman] are certainly not intended by the author to be taken in the literal proper sense, such as being clothed with the sun, standing on the moon, being crowned with stars, flying away in the desert on two wings, threatened by a flood of water spewed out by a dragon.” Thus, to then take the Woman’s birth pains (v.2) in the literal proper sense—while regarding all the symbolism surrounding the expression as not in the literal proper sense—is forced, untenable, and inconsistent with the chapter’s style. Even more, scholars who consider the Woman only as Church, and not also as Mary, do not themselves take the birthpangs in the literal proper sense: they are expressions of the Church enduring persecution and tribulation.⁹⁷ Therefore, the birth pains of the Woman are not physiologically related to biological birthing, and can be also applied to Mary’s experience without contradicting Tradition’s teaching of her painless and virgin birth of Christ⁹⁸ (due to Mary’s Immaculate Conception and Perpetual Virginity).⁹⁹

As for the Woman’s other children (v.17), they are but the members of Christ (as St. Paul learns in Acts 9:4-5 and teaches in 1 Cor 12:27) since she indeed is spiritual mother of all Christians in virtue of her being the Mother of God. In other words, the Woman has a “twofold offspring” in the child (v.4-5): Christ the head of the Church, and also the Church, the mystical body of Christ, who together (as one whole body) are

⁹⁶ Ibid., 90-91

⁹⁷ Ibid., 91

⁹⁸ Mark Miravalle, *Mariology* (Goleta, CA: Seat of Wisdom Books, 2007), 298.

⁹⁹ CCC, 499.

destined to rule the nations and share God's throne.¹⁰⁰ This reasoning leads LeFrois to conclude with a logical rhetorical question: since "the male son is both an individual and a collective, why not the Mother of Christ?"¹⁰¹ Moreover, to already consider the Child (v.5) as representing the actual and historical person of Christ, and the dragon (v.3) as the actual person of Satan, and the other offspring (v.17) as actual historical persons, and Michael with his angels (v.7) as likewise actual persons, is it not then merely consistent to see the Woman as (in addition to the Church) also the actual historical person of Mary?¹⁰² Clearly, it is reasonable to see in these symbols then a double-picture meaning both a real historical individual and also a collective group of persons.

Addressing the Woman's wilderness refuge (v.6), LeFrois sees inherent in the expression "a place prepared by God" (v.6 and 14) as echoing when Christ tells the Apostles that He goes to prepare a place for them in the Father's house of many rooms (Jn 14:2-3). The allusion's conclusion is worth quoting in full:

After Christ's Ascension, Mary too was removed to safety in the mansions of the Father above, yet continues to be an object of Satan's fury in the Church which she embodies in her person and for which she stands. In persecuting the Church, Satan vents his wrath and hatred on Mary.¹⁰³

And so the enmity between the serpent and the Woman and her seed (Gen 3:15) continues unto the eschaton. Satan's impotency before the Trinity forces him to resort to attacking the Woman and children of God, and what mother is not wounded by the wounds of her children, is not—despite wherever she may be (even if in Heaven)—“striving with unwearying prayer to bring about the fulfillment of the number of the

¹⁰⁰ LeFrois, "Mary-Church Apocalypse," 88.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 89

¹⁰² This reasoning is presented in a recorded online lecture (timestamped at 42:00): Taylor Marshall. "The Taylor Marshall Show: Revelation Chapter 12 – Our Lady of the Apocalypse." Recorded online lecture, July 29, 2015. Accessed March 3, 2018. <http://taylormarshall.com/2015/07/084-revelation-chapter-12-our-lady-of-the-apocalypse-catholic-apocalypse-part-7.html>.

¹⁰³ LeFrois, "Mary-Church Apocalypse," 92-93.

elect”?¹⁰⁴ We see here clearly the “constant interplay between [Mary as] individual and collectivity” that Montague demonstrated in *Mary as Daughter Zion*,¹⁰⁵ and now here as Church also.

LeFrois extends the allusion to Genesis further still: the “Genesis coloring of the chapter”¹⁰⁶ acts as a flashback—to borrow from modern cinematic terminology—an invitation to revisit and plumb past events and relate them to the present. In this case, one should read Rev. 12’s events in light of Genesis 2-3, while also aware that Revelation is a prophetic vision to John of both primordial and future events.¹⁰⁷ With this viewpoint, we can see that Paradise and Parousia are an overarching use of the literary inclusion technique seen earlier within John’s Gospel, but now applied to all of Scripture and hinging on the Woman and her Child (further applying the midrashic correspondence technique¹⁰⁸ as discussed by Montague). The framing is evident thus from LeFrois’ presentation,¹⁰⁹ but as a table:

¹⁰⁴ Pius X, *Ad diem illum laetissimum* [Encyclical on the Immaculate Conception], February 2, 1904, sec. 24, accessed March 3, 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_02021904_ad-diem-illum-laetissimum.html.

¹⁰⁵ Montague, “Lady Eschatology,” 77.

¹⁰⁶ LeFrois, “Mary-Church Apocalypse,” 93.

¹⁰⁷ The odd order of events in Rev 12 is addressed in a convincing way by Ven. Maria of Ágreda, *City of God: The Conception*, trans. Fiscar Marison (Geo. J. Blatter) (Albuquerque, NM: Corcoran Publishing, 1914), sec. 95-133. Taylor Marshall’s online recorded lecture, timestamped at 7:50-13:00-17:00, 32:00-36:00, comments on and maps Maria of Ágreda’s vision onto Rev. 12. See footnote #102 for recording information.

Furthermore, the scene is also possibly a triple image, referring to Lucifer’s past fall, then to his fall at the hands of Christ’s passion and resurrection, and to his coming eschatological fall at Christ’s return, according to Peter S. Williamson, *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture: Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 212.

¹⁰⁸ Montague, “Lady Eschatology,” 76.

¹⁰⁹ LeFrois, “Mary-Church Apocalypse,” 93.

The Correspondence of Genesis 3 and Revelation 12

Genesis 3	Revelation 12
Period of trial for the woman by a serpent	The woman undergoes a period of great trial from the same serpent
Attack on the woman and her being defeated by the serpent	Attacked by the serpent but remains unconquered and inviolable
Eating of the forbidden fruit which brought on sin and death	Nourished by God in a special way and thus sustained in life during the entire period of trial

From this, we see the Virgin Mary’s eschatological significance begins with Genesis’ *protoevangelium* (Gen 3:15), finds fulfillment in the Gospels, and finds reemphasis in Revelation 12, so much so that there is “an undeniable literary dependence... [between] Gen 3:15 as messianic oracle... [and the] eschatological symbolic tableau in Apoc. 12.”¹¹⁰ Protogospel and Revelation 12 share the menacing presence of Satan as serpent (Gen 3:1-15) and as ancient serpent (Rev 12:9), and the themes of enmity, battle, and victory, but with Rev. 12 elaborating and fulfilling Gen. 3:15: reversing the defeated and condemned woman of Eden in the person of the New Woman who, because of her Child, is empowered to stand on the moon¹¹¹ as “the conqueress of the demon-infested world.”¹¹² Man and woman’s failure, and Satan’s victory at the Fall, are irreversibly reversed in the New Eve, in she who is both the Virgin Mother and Mother Church.

As the Virgin Mother: the Woman bears, births, and rears Christ who bestows on her salvation and complete triumph over the serpent (realized eschatology). As Mother Church: the Woman bears, births, and rears Christ in others, and Christ will then bestow upon those others their salvation and triumphant welcome into His Kingdom, thereby leaving the serpent defeated with every successful homecoming (remaining eschatology). As Satan “was unable to overcome Mary, he will not be able to overcome the Church,”

¹¹⁰ LeFrois, “Mary-Church Apocalypse,” 95.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 96, where LeFrois elucidates that in common ancient belief, the moon was considered the border of all that was heavenly above it, and all that was hellish below it. With this in mind, it is unmistakable what the Woman “with the moon under her feet” implies: she is utterly victorious over evil.

¹¹² Ibid., 96-97.

and when he loses the last child of the Church to Heaven, then Mary's realized eschatological victory will be experienced throughout all the Church:¹¹³ eschatology-fulfilled and eschatology-forecast kiss in our Lady of the Eschaton.

Yet there remains even more in store for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Considering Revelation chapter 1 with chapter 12, LeFrois recognizes an undeniable connection between the two chapters based on the symbols of power, countenance, and stars shared between the Woman of Rev.12 and the Son of Man of Rev.1:13. For power, our Lord possesses it absolutely, having died but now "alive forevermore" and with full charge of the "keys of Death and Hades" (1:17-18). The Woman likewise possesses vast power, evident in her standing on the moon (12:1), as discussed previously.¹¹⁴ For countenance, Christ's is overpowering: "His face was like the sun shining in full strength" (1:16), with eyes ablaze (1:14), causing John to fall as if dead at the sight (1:17). The Woman also appears like the sun, having been clothed with it (12:1). As for the remaining symbol, the seven stars in Christ's right hand (1:16) are seven angels (1:20) that parallel with the Woman's crown of twelve stars (12:1), stars "which seem to be the symbol of the entire victorious angelic host, since there is question of the fallen angels in 12:4 under the same symbol of stars."¹¹⁵ From this paralleling, LeFrois intimates that since the Woman is both Mary and the Church, and since she mirrors Christ so well in His glory (and *because of* His glory), and since only Mary has been perfected in imitating her Son, then the Woman's presence in Revelation partly stands as the required ideal for the Church to meet "or else be removed from the presence of Christ."¹¹⁶ In other words, just as the

¹¹³ Ibid., 97-99.

¹¹⁴ See footnote #111.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 99-100.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 100.

Israelites were required to become clean and holy before the Lord in the Temple, so too must the Church continue to increase in moral purity and holiness, conforming to the Blessed Mother, mirroring her who has already perfectly conformed to the Lord of the New Heaven and New Earth. “Oneness with Mary insures the Church of complete victory over the dragon in every and any form of attack.”¹¹⁷

LeFrois justifies this reading further by noting that “prophetic vision often embraced merely the first and last phase of something to be realized,”¹¹⁸ a technique exemplified in the eschatological discourses of Jesus found in the Gospels (Mt.24, Mk.13, Lk.21)¹¹⁹ “by combining in the same visionary context the fall of Jerusalem and the consummation of the world.” And so, with Revelation being another such prophetic vision: “the first chapter of Apocalypse portrays the first phase of Christ’s Kingdom, the Church, whereas the twelfth chapter discloses the ideal to be reached in its last phase,” an ideal thoroughly unveiled in the remaining chapters of Revelation (19-21).¹²⁰

In conclusion, the remainder of Revelation discloses the trials and suffering the Church endures in her effort to become the ideal woman seen in Mary. By the end of her ordeals, and after the total crushing of the Dragon and his minions—and their complete riddance from earth—John witnesses how the struggles have prepared, cleansed, purified, and adorned the Church as the Bride of the Lamb: she is the People of God made new as the New Jerusalem, ready at last to be presented to the Lamb (21:9-11).¹²¹ The following

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹¹⁹ Note that only the Synoptic Gospels contain Jesus’ eschatological discourses, and fittingly so since John’s eschatological discourse from Christ is the Book of Revelation.

¹²⁰ LeFrois, “Mary-Church Apocalypse,” 101.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 102.

parallels¹²² show with clarity how the Bride of Rev.21 measures up to the ideal Woman of Rev.12 (again, *with my contributions alongside LeFrois’):

The Woman and the Bride

Woman of Rev.12	Implication	Bride of the Lamb
<i>A woman clothed with the sun (v.1)</i>	The Woman dons the sun which symbolizes God, and the Bride of the Lamb likewise needs no sun since she is illumined by her Lord.	<i>The city has no need of sun... to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb (21:23)</i>
<i>A woman clothed with the sun... on her head a crown of twelve stars (v.1)</i>	*The Woman as Mary—Queen-Mother, ideal, and model—helps the Church by guiding her spiritual children to her Child. Similarly, the Bride’s light illumines the right path of the nations.	<i>By its light shall the nations walk (21:24)</i>
<i>She brought forth a male child (v.5)</i>	The Incarnation as the Word made flesh (of the Virgin Mary), and dwelling among us, is perfected when the Bride and the Lamb live together forever.	<i>The dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them (21:3)</i>
<i>The woman fled [the dragon to] a place prepared by God [and was there nourished] (v.6,14,16)</i>	The Woman is safe, protected from Satan despite his relentless and desperate assaults, and she thereby remains immune from sin and darkness. The Bride likewise finds herself forever beyond the Dragon’s reach and influence: evil will never enter again in the city reserved for the holy.	<i>Nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood (21:27 and 22:3*,14-15)</i>

As the table presents, we can see that the Woman is indeed both Mary and the Church perfected as the Bride of the Lamb,¹²³ since “the entire Mystical Body of Christ is the [Bride], [and] Mary is eminently so.” Mary is the foremost member of the Church,¹²⁴ “fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature,”¹²⁵ and who with the same Spirit “were [both] active at the first Coming of Christ into His Kingdom (the

¹²² Ibid., 103.

¹²³ *Lumen gentium*, sec. 68, in *Denzinger*, 908.

¹²⁴ LeFrois, “Mary-Church Apocalypse,” 104.

¹²⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church], Vatican Website, November 21, 1964, sec. 56, accessed March 3, 2018, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

Annunciation-Incarnation). So too then, the Spirit and the Marian Spouse of the Lamb”¹²⁶ both call upon His second coming: “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come’” (Rev.22:17).

Yet, with the Spirit, Mary also calls upon us—the Church—to come to her Son. And as “our mother in the order of grace,”¹²⁷ she indeed does more than merely call us; she is much more than a mere model-ideal to meet, for she herself helps us to meet the ideal. Attending to her eschatological mission, Mary is present both visibly and invisibly to us with her prayers, love, intentions,¹²⁸ and intercessions before her Son as the Queen of Heaven and Earth.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ LeFrois, “Mary-Church Apocalypse,” 105.

¹²⁷ *Lumen gentium*, sec. 61, in *Denzinger*, 906.

¹²⁸ George F. Kirwin, “Mary’s Salvific Role Compared with that of the Church,” *Marian Studies* vol. 25, art. 10 (1974): 42.

¹²⁹ *Lumen gentium*, sec. 69, in *Denzinger*, 909.

4.4 - Mary's Eschatological Mission

The Virgin Mary's role and activity, however, does not whatsoever supplant or usurp her Son—Jesus Christ. In fact, it is important to remember that as our devotion to Mary grows, she will always hand us over to Christ: her and our only savior. Her “salvific influence... on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure,”¹³⁰ from God Himself who wills her cooperation in His work of salvation. Mary is not necessary to God for anything, but God—in His humility and love of glorifying those who love Him—shows His greatness by having a mere creature fulfill His divine prerogatives. This He did at Mary's *fiat* when she became His mother, and this He does even now as she is our Blessed Mother:

This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began... at the Annunciation... and lasts until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation.¹³¹

Thus, Mary's eschatological mission originates from the moment of her personal Pentecost¹³² when the Holy Spirit overshadowed her (Lk 1:35), and her mission has since continued *with* the Holy Spirit, and will finish with the same Spirit (as discussed above about Rev.22:17). Without union with the Third Person of the Trinity, Mary has no mission, and not only is she “fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature,”¹³³ she is eminently the *Pneumatophore*:

As the temple that the Holy Spirit came to inhabit at the Annunciation, She is the Spirit-Bearer, the transparent human image of the revelation of the Holy Spirit, who, according to His hypostatic property, does not become incarnate but makes incarnate and glorifies. Alone of God's creatures found worthy of being inhabited by the Holy Spirit, She is the

¹³⁰ Ibid., sec. 60, in *Denzinger*, 906.

¹³¹ Ibid., sec. 62, in *Denzinger*, 907.

¹³² Schmemmann, “Our Lady and the Holy Spirit,” 73.

¹³³ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church], Vatican Website, November 21, 1964, sec. 56, accessed March 3, 2018, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

human hypostatic image of the Holy Spirit. One can say that, in this sense, She is the Holy Spirit not incarnate but manifested in a human hypostasis. There is no, and can be no, greater and fuller manifestation of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁴

Though Sergei Bulgakov, the renowned Orthodox theologian just quoted at length, coined this Greek title for Mary—Pneumatophore, meaning “Spirit-Carrier”—the belief is not isolated to himself but also found in Alexander Schmemmann’s work *Our Lady and the Holy Spirit*:

The Holy Spirit has no icon of His own; no name of His own.... It is by becoming transparent to the Holy Spirit, by reflecting His goodness and beauty, by becoming fully life in Him and truly His fragrance that being become, on the one hand, fully themselves as persons and, on the other hand, truly icons and the names of the Holy Spirit. Of this, Mary is indeed the first and the fullest epiphany.... If He makes us to know her, she is the first in the entire creation to make us know Him.¹³⁵

In this union with the Holy Spirit, the Theotokos continues to bear God even after birthing the God-man, thus bringing together Mariology and Pneumatology in the eschatological mission of Mary as Pneumatophore. The discussion of this mission, as already hinted at, will entail both Eastern and Western lungs of the Church, and not merely because eschatology encompasses the entirety of the Church, but because investigating St. Louis de Montfort’s claims appears to demand it.

To start, the East’s belief of Mary as the Spirit-Bearer finds support in the West, specifically in Charles W. Neumann’s *The Decline of Interest in Mariology*, where he details the deprivation ravaging contemporary theology because of a disinterest—or even

¹³⁴ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 411.

Bulgakov explains more in his *Burning Bush*, 81-82: the Most Holy Virgin, is not a personal incarnation of the Holy Spirit, but she becomes His personal, animate receptacle, an absolutely spirit-born creature, the Pneumatophoric Human. For, if there is no hypostatic spirit-incarnation, there can be a hypostatic pneumatophoricity, by which the creaturely hypostasis in its creatureliness completely surrenders itself and as it were dissolves in the Holy Spirit. In this complete penetration by Him it becomes a different nature for its own self, i.e., *divinized*, a creature thoroughly blessed by grace, a “quicken ark of God,” a living “consecrated temple.” Such a pneumatophoric person radically differs from the Godman, for it is a creature, but it differs just as much from a creature in its creatureliness, for it has been elevated and made a partaker of divine life. See footnote #147 for citation information.

¹³⁵ Schmemmann, “Our Lady and the Holy Spirit,” 74.

a dismissal—of Mariology as merely a “devotional department of the Church.”¹³⁶ To alert fellow Mariologists and theologians, Neumann says:

...Western Mariology... has too long been deprived of the theology of the Holy Spirit so developed among our Orthodox brothers....

Our need is great. Mary’s role in the Annunciation, for example, has ordinarily been portrayed only as Christ’s Mother, without sufficient attention being paid to her fidelity to the Holy Spirit. This, even though Christ reminded us (Lk. 8 and 11) that her true worth does not lie in a simply maternal relationship to Christ as to an individual. Her role in Christ’s redemptive mission, in turn, has not often enough been associated with the Church’s role therein, both due to the dynamism of the Spirit.¹³⁷

St. Maximilian Kolbe provides an even more intense defense, stating at various conferences that Mary, “The Immaculata... is, so to speak, the personification of the Holy Spirit,”¹³⁸ and that “our human word ‘spouse’ is far too weak to express the reality of the relationship between the Immaculata and the Holy Spirit.”¹³⁹ St. Maximilian’s words seem to also find a strong echo in Bulgakov when he concludes that Mary is “in a certain sense, the ‘incarnation’ of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that we love in her; and through her we love the Son.”¹⁴⁰ Scriptural support for such conclusions may be found in 1 Corinthians 6:19 when St. Paul teaches that our bodies are not our own, but are temples of the Holy Spirit. Fr. Marie Dominique Philippe, OP, understands this reality as “even truer of Mary” whose body and entirety is perfectly the Holy Spirit’s temple *par excellence*.¹⁴¹

From here, we now see justification for Montfort integrating Mariology, Pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology (TD #35-37, 49, 55). Neumann’s continued

¹³⁶ Borrowing the phrase from Schmemmann, “Our Lady and the Holy Spirit,” 70.

¹³⁷ Charles W. Neumann, “The Decline of Interest in Mariology as a Theological Problem,” *Marian Studies* vol. 23, art. 6 (1972): 26-27.

¹³⁸ H.M. Manteau-Bonamy, O.P., *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit: The Marian Teachings of Saint Maximilian Kolbe*, trans. Richard Arnandez (Libertyville, IL: Prow Books, 1977), 105.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Marie-Dominique Philippe, O.P., *The Mystery of Joseph* (Bethesda, MD: Zaccheus Press, 2009), 141.

alert further supports Montfort, when he explains that a Mariology correctly understood and integrated “is not just doctrinal information about Mary... not embarrassing pietism posing as theology, but true gains in the field of the doctrines of Christian anthropology and eschatology which we ignore to our loss.”¹⁴² In other words, Mariology is a case study of *theosis*: “the supreme realization of the human in the feminine.”¹⁴³

In fact, without Mary’s presence in eschatology, never mind without her presence at all, we find that her effectiveness as a cultural missionary and evangelist (as exemplified by Our Lady of Guadalupe’s overwhelming potency¹⁴⁴) is essentially disempowered.¹⁴⁵ The current consequences of this Marian-deprivation is discussed below when we arrive at the topic of the anti-Mary, but for now it suffices to say that the culture of death is partly a result of an incomplete appreciation for the icon of our Lady of the Eschaton.

Moreover, an eschatology isolating Christ from the Blessed Mother is a rupture. Theologians both East and West see the New Adam and New Eve together at the New Genesis: the two reveal the eschatological destiny of humanity.¹⁴⁶ Yet, as Neumann expressed above, the East’s depth in this understanding of Jesus, Mary, and Holy Spirit, as present altogether, further completes the eschatological Woman:

The Mother of God in heaven together with the Godman Jesus displays the full image of humankind. *The Icon of the Mother of God with Child*, the Logos and the creature receiving Him, filled with the Holy Spirit, in unity and indivisibility, is the *full image* of humankind. The Godman and the Pneumatophore, the Son and the Mother... also display the fullness of the Divine image in humankind or, to put it another way, of the human image in God....

¹⁴² Neumann, “Decline of Mariology,” 30.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁴⁴ Dan Lynch, “The Amazing Truth of Our Lady of Guadalupe,” *Catholic Education Resource Center*, Dec. 2002, accessed April 3, 2018, <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/the-amazing-truth-of-our-lady-of-guadalupe.html>.

¹⁴⁵ Johann G. Roten, “Mary’s Missionary Charism,” *Marian Studies* vol. 64, art. 16 (2013): 269.

¹⁴⁶ Haffner, *Mystery of Mary*, 228.

[Christ] expresses the fullness *of the image* of human nature only together with the Mother of God.... One ought to understand this unity not as an accident or temporary condition, but as a revelation and realization of the fullness of the human image in the Godman and His Mother, which is given in any icon of the Mother of God.¹⁴⁷

Here, Bulgakov reiterates our conclusions thus far, that Mary and Jesus are an inseparable pair who together fully and completely image redeemed humanity. But Bulgakov coaxes us onward to see that Christ and His Mother are not only together temporarily, but that the two are necessary as a pairing: Christ *only together* with Mary expresses the full image of human nature, and this pair expression even flows into a *pair parousia*. In other words, the Second Coming of the King is also the second coming of the Queen Mother,¹⁴⁸ and fittingly so, because it borders absurdity to Bulgakov to consider that at the Parousia, the Angel Gabriel will “come with Christ among the heavenly hosts, but the one to whom he was sent [will] be absent,” and that “St. Sergius and St. Seraphim [will] be among those following Christ, whereas the one of ‘whose kind’ they are will be absent.”¹⁴⁹ Moreover, speculating the timing of Mary’s parousia, Bulgakov understands it probably to be during that of her Son’s, or even beforehand since even after Christ’s Ascension she remained on earth without Him, “and by coming into the world first and alone, She can anticipate His coming into the world... which has need of the vision of Her face to soften its heart.”¹⁵⁰ And so, we see here a plausible explanation for the Blessed Mother’s several apparitions throughout the centuries, most

¹⁴⁷ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush*, trans. Thomas Allan Smith (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 82-83.

¹⁴⁸ Bulgakov, *Bride of the Lamb*, 409.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 410. Concerning Sts. Sergius and Seraphim, Bulgakov notes: It has been told that, when St. Seraphim of Sarov once saw in a dream the Mother of God surrounded by angels, She pointed to him and said: “he is of our kind.”

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 412.

notably in Fatima, Portugal, seemingly to prepare us for the end when her Immaculate Heart will triumph.¹⁵¹

However, Bulgakov deduces that even Revelation 19-22 hints at Mary's pre-paration to that of Christ's, in that John first sees the Bride fully imbued with the Spirit (19:7-9), and only afterwards do "the Spirit and the Bride say 'Come'" (22:17), only after which does the Lamb say "Surely I am coming soon" (22:20). Moreover, recalling the constant interplay and double-picture of the Woman and the Bride as both Mary and Church only reinforces this reading, since the glorified Mother prepares the Church for her glorification in anticipation of the Lamb's return. And who better to prepare us than our Mother, the Pneumatophore, the Spirit-Carrier who is the neck of the Church,¹⁵² whose Head is Christ, and yet who remains very close to us¹⁵³—the body? Furthermore, because Mary is "the eschaton realized in a created person before the end of the world, [which] places her beyond death, beyond resurrection, and beyond the Last Judgment,"¹⁵⁴ she alone is particularly poised to help us become as imbued with the Holy Spirit in anticipation of the coming of the Lamb. She is, after all, not representing the Church in need of Christ, but as the Church in the glory of Christ,¹⁵⁵ thereby beckoning and helping us join her in His glory and as her fellow instruments of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁶

We hear support for Bulgakov in the West's soteriology also, in the work of Roch A. Kereszty, O. Cist, that the Bride of Christ, as His Mystical Body, will "share in the

¹⁵¹ As Mary confided in the conclusion of the first and second part of her secret to Sister Lucia in 1917: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *The Message of Fatima*, Vatican Website, accessed March 18, 2018, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.html.

¹⁵² *Ad diem illum laetissimum*, sec. 13.

¹⁵³ *Lumen gentium*, sec. 54, in *Denzinger*, 905.

¹⁵⁴ Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 1974), 208.

¹⁵⁵ Kirwin, "Mary's Salvific Role," 38.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 41-42.

attitude of the Son... by ‘breathing back’ the Holy Spirit to him and breathing him forth into all the redeemed. But they will also share in the attitude of the Woman (Mary and the Church) in that they surrender themselves to Christ their Bridegroom in pure love....”¹⁵⁷ At this point we see a certain image of the Holy Trinity projected by means of the persons of Jesus Christ (who is begotten of the Father), the Holy Spirit (who proceeds from the Father and the Son), and the eschatological Woman (who is the Spirit’s perfect manifestation as well as the Mother of the Son: Pneumatophore and Theotokos) who “reveals what is most divine in God, his infinite humility and gratuitous love, [through which] God elevates creation out of nothing to the status of a worthy partner for himself (as bride) and even above himself (as mother). The Woman remains a creature, but she is endowed by God’s grace with such beauty that God himself finds in her his joy and delight.”¹⁵⁸ Indeed, a joy and delight that has led to this Woman in the person of Mary to be absolutely “*outside* the action of [Christ’s] parousia”¹⁵⁹:

The presence of the Mother of God in the parousia and the Last Judgment is therefore *essentially different* from the presence of all the other participants, without any exception: from that of the human beings and even of the angels, for all of them find themselves on this side of the parousia and the Judgment. All of them, even the angels, will be judged.¹⁶⁰ But the Most Holy Mother of God will not be judged; yet neither does She judge, for She is not God.... It is Christ who judges as the God-man.... Without judging, she [Mary] bestows mercy, like a Mother.¹⁶¹

And not merely “like a Mother” as Bulgakov says, but as *truly* our Mother and God’s Mother indeed who “sits at the right hand of Her Son, without Herself being judged... [imploing] Him to extend His forgiveness,”¹⁶² interceding for us as the *gebirah*¹⁶³ who

¹⁵⁷ Kereszty, *Jesus Christ*, 424.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 423.

¹⁵⁹ Bulgakov, *Bride of the Lamb*, 413 (because of her already complete theosis at her Dormition and Assumption).

¹⁶⁰ Referring to St. Paul’s mysterious words in 1 Cor 6:3.

¹⁶¹ Bulgakov, *Bride of the Lamb*, 413.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 410.

the King will not refuse (1Kings 2:19-20). The Church has lived this reality of Mary as our intercessor for millennia, evident in the liturgies of both East and West, and even in the most fundamental of prayers: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death,” thereby invoking her to be at our particular judgment and for our individual experience of eschatology. But now we see that our recourse to Mary extends even to include the coming Parousia of Jesus: the remaining general eschatology to come. And it is in this latter aspect that most of the faithful, and perhaps even most of the Church, has forgotten or neglected to great detriment, as Schmemmann advises:

... wherever Mariology declines, and this means the veneration of Mary and the joy about Mary, there also declines the eschatological joy of the Christian faith. The Church begins to be viewed as an agency for social reform and worldly service, and ‘secularism’ makes its triumphant, although sickening, entrance.

This “secular” Christianity... [is] without the experience of the “last things,” and this means without the Holy Spirit and without Mary.... More than anything else, we need today a re-plunging, a re-immersion into the Church’s experience of the eschaton.... This immersion, however, will not be possible without the rediscovery of the eschatological dimensions of the mystery of Mary, without our learning to contemplate and experience in her the mystery of the Kingdom as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁴

It is with this sense then, of seeing “the parousia of the Son [as] also necessarily the parousia of the Mother of God,”¹⁶⁵ and that Mary “is the Spirit-Bearer, the living gates for the parousia of the Holy Spirit, through which the Holy Spirit comes into the world,”¹⁶⁶ it is with these insights that we can see how and why Saint Louis de Montfort says what he does in his *True Devotion*, #35-39, regarding Mary as spouse of the Holy Spirit.

Before closing this section, let us revisit St. Maximilian Kolbe and study his support for Montfort, whose torch he carries forth, stating that “united to the Holy Spirit

¹⁶³ For more about the *gebirah*, please see Appendix Two.

¹⁶⁴ Schmemmann, “Our Lady and the Holy Spirit,” 76-77.

¹⁶⁵ Bulgakov, *Bride of the Lamb*, 409.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 410.

as his spouse, [Mary] is one with God in an incomparably more perfect way than can be predicated of any other creature.”¹⁶⁷ Kolbe also repeats Montfort’s urgent call to now make Mary known “in the hearts of all men, those who now live and all who will live until the end of the world,” so that “She may erect the throne of Her Son and lead all to the knowledge of Him.”¹⁶⁸

Moreover, having been formed in part by Montfort’s TD,¹⁶⁹ Kolbe naturally stands on the shoulders of his elder brother with a great vantage point, enabling him to observe that, as the Holy Spirit’s spouse and “quasi-incarnation”,¹⁷⁰ Mary’s Immaculate Conception mirrors that of her Spouse’s. Kolbe understands the Holy Spirit as “the flowering of the love of the Father and the Son,” the result of which is “the Love by which God loves himself, the very love of the Most Holy Trinity. He is a fruitful Love, a ‘Conception,’” a divine, uncreated, eternal conception. Thus, Kolbe refers to our Lady as the *Immaculata* because:

If among human beings the wife takes the name of her husband because she belongs to him, is one with him, becomes equal to him and is, with him, the source of new life, with how much greater reason should the name of the Holy Spirit, who is the Divine Immaculate Conception, be used as the name of her in whom he lives as uncreated Love...?¹⁷¹

From this reasoning, we can peer into TD #35-36 and 158 where Montfort mentions the first and second comings of Jesus Christ. In #35-36, the first coming commenced at “the moment the Substantial Love of the Father and the Son espoused Mary to form Jesus Christ,” who is “the greatest thing that ever was or ever will be: a God-Man.” Kolbe

¹⁶⁷ Manteau-Bonamy, *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit*, 4.

¹⁶⁸ James McCurry, “The Mariology of Maximilian Kolbe,” *Marian Studies* vol. 36, art. 12 (1985): 87.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

expands on this brief insight of Montfort, teaching that Mary's "love for God brings her to such a level of union with him that she becomes the Mother of God. The Father confides to her his Son; the Son descends into her womb; and the Holy Spirit fashions out of her perfectly pure body the very Body of Jesus."¹⁷² In other words, the Blessed Virgin's intense and immense love allowed Love to incarnate in her and of her. Mary's love also defines why Jesus "will choose no other path for His [second] coming than the divine Mary, through whom He came the first time so surely and perfectly" (#158), because only her love allowed Love to incarnate in her and of her, and return by her. Only by the Holy Spirit and His spouse will the Fruit of their union come again: "By Mary was the salvation of the world begun, and by Mary it must be consummated" (#49).

As for the striking wonders (#36), the greatest saints, and "singular and extraordinary things" that "only this singular and miraculous Virgin can produce, in union with the Holy Ghost" (#35), Kolbe supports Montfort and details why the lack of activity from the Holy Spirit is a sign of lacking love for and union with Mary (#36):

But if anyone does not wish to have Mary Immaculate for his Mother, he will not have Christ for his Brother; the Father will not send the Son to him; the Son will not come down into his soul; the Holy Spirit will not make him a member of the mystical body through the gift of his grace; because all God's marvels of grace take place in Mary Immaculate who is full of grace—and in her alone.¹⁷³

Here, Kolbe's expression of the implications of Mary as Mediatrix of all graces certainly rivals Montfort's bluntness and drastic words, but both saints, as we have seen, are not alone in their realizations. Our Lady of the Eschaton and her eschatological mission are expressions and extensions of not only the coming union of Heaven and Earth, but even of the union now present: "In the union of the Holy Spirit with Her, love unites not only

¹⁷² Manteau-Bonamy, *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit*, 134.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 126.

two beings, but one that is the entire love of the Trinity, the other the entire love of a creature, and in this union heaven and earth are united—the height of love is achieved.”¹⁷⁴ Yet unfortunately,¹⁷⁵ before such union is fully complete in the Parousia, the dragon will seek to thwart it with increasing desperation, “knowing full well that he has little time—less than ever—to damn souls (#50.7).

¹⁷⁴ McCurry, “Mariology of Kolbe,” 95.

¹⁷⁵ Unfortunate, for Satan.

4.5 - Enmity and Eschaton

Predestined and promised “from the time of the earthly Paradise” to “expose, overcome, cast down and crush” the serpent—although Mary was then only in the Divine Mind (#52)—our Lady joined battle against Satan at her Immaculate Conception, and declared war on hell at the Annunciation. Her *fiat*, her consent, “closely and personally associated [her] with the Gospel of life,”¹⁷⁶ and therefore against the anti-gospel of the dragon. Because of “her acceptance and loving care of the Incarnate Word, human life has been rescued from condemnation to final and eternal death.”¹⁷⁷ Saint Louis de Montfort—throughout paragraphs #50.7-54, 57, and 58—mentions this war between our Lady and our primordial enemy. His claims here are perhaps the most readily tangible and verifiable in our experience with contemporary history and the culture of death. Of this war, Montfort states:

... the devil knowing full well that he has little time—less than ever—to damn souls, redoubles every day his efforts and his attacks; he will soon give rise to cruel persecutions and lay terrible snares for the faithful servants and true children of Mary, whom he finds more difficult to overcome than the rest (#50.7).

God has made and set up only one enmity but it is irreconcilable, lasting and increasing even to the end. And that enmity is between Mary, His worthy Mother and the devil, between her children and servants and the children and followers of Lucifer. Thus, the most terrible enemy that God has raised up against Satan, is Mary, His Holy Mother. ... Satan fears [Mary] more than God because, firstly, in his pride, he suffers infinitely more from being conquered and punished by a small and humble handmaid of God; her humility humiliates him more than the power of God (#52).

Amid the varied snares of Satan laid against us and our Mother, Dr. Carrie Gress discusses what she coins as the *anti-Mary* in her work *The Marian Option*. The same logic discussed earlier that sees the New Eve as paired to the New Adam (the *pair*

¹⁷⁶ John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* [Encyclical on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life], Vatican Website, March 25, 1995, sec. 102, accessed March 3, 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

parousia) also sees a necessary complement to the antichrist found in the first two letters of John: “it only makes sense that an antichrist would have a female complement of an antimary. In the same way that an antichrist can be an idea or a movement (and not just a person), an antimary can also be seen as a movement.”¹⁷⁸ Support for reading the character of *antichrist* as a movement is found in 1 Jn 2:18-19: “you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come.... They [antichrists] went out from us, but they were not of us....” That the antichrist here is represented in several persons hints strongly that the satanic identity is not limited to a single person, but can indeed apply to a collective, and can furthermore manifest as a spirit: “a mentality hostile to the messianic dignity of Jesus.”¹⁷⁹ Therefore, if the antichrist can appear as a movement, then surely the anti-Mary can also appear so, alongside what John Paul II considered the anti-Gospel and anti-Church.¹⁸⁰

Gress observes this anti-Marian movement to be none other than the current fallen feminism and culture of death that: denigrates motherhood as enslavement, promotes contraception and abortion as cures to what they see as plagues of pregnancy and parasitical children, mars marriage and any chaste relationship between men and women, and riots against the supposed patriarchy of the Catholic Church and her moral tradition.¹⁸¹ These affronts align against and malign the virtues of our Queen as the Mother of God, Mother of Christians, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, wife to St. Joseph, and

¹⁷⁸ Carrie Gress, *The Marian Option* (Charlotte, NC: Tan Books, 2017), 145.

¹⁷⁹ Curtis Mitch, “Commentary on 1 Jn 4:3,” in *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*, 472.

¹⁸⁰ For St. John Paul’s words regarding the presence of the anti-Gospel and the anti-Church when he was yet a cardinal: C. John McCloskey III, “The Final Confrontation,” *The Catholic Thing*, last modified June 1, 2014, accessed March 3, 2018, <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2014/06/01/the-final-confrontation/>.

¹⁸¹ Carrie Gress, “If There is an Antichrist, What About an Antimary?,” *National Catholic Register*, last modified January 27, 2017, accessed March 3, 2018, <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/cgress/if-there-is-an-antichrist-what-about-an-antimary>.

as the foremost member of the Church—the Mystical Body of Christ. Not coincidentally, Pope St. John Paul—a premier “Mama’s boy” after the heart of Montfort—offers the potent antidote to false feminism and the culture of death in his *Theology of the Body*, arguably his master work, and a work that has borne great fruit in works by other orthodox theologians and scholars, as well as in the many lives of the faithful.

Nonetheless, if Satan cannot tempt us to be anti-Marian, then more devious yet are his attacks via a false Marian piety and devotion, such as that promoted in heretical forms of Marian apocalypticism. Founded in Quebec, Canada, by Marie-Paule Giguère and popularized by her cult of the Army of Mary (1971 to present day), the movement took its inspiration from Montfort’s war cry in TD #50.7: “Mary must become terrible as an army in array to the devil and his followers, especially in these latter times.” However, when the Army of Mary adopted heterodox beliefs, such as Marie-Paule actually being the reincarnation of the Blessed Mother who is “co-eternal with the Triune God”¹⁸² and formed another complementary Trinity,¹⁸³ what began as piety deformed into a myriad of dissent and ended in schism. The Army of Mary officially established for itself a rival church in 2006—the Church of John—complete with a rival pontiff crowned by Marie-Paule herself,¹⁸⁴ who in turn “named twelve new apostles for the Church of John” and was canonized and declared as a doctor of the false church,¹⁸⁵ but was then excommunicated *latae sententiae* by the true Church of Christ.¹⁸⁶ This example extracted from Dr. Robert Fastiggi’s study, *The Rise and Fall of the Army of Mary*, only builds upon the survey of other false Marian apocalypticists found in Massimo Introvigne’s

¹⁸² Robert Fastiggi, “The Rise and Fall of the Army of Mary,” *Marian Studies* vol. 63, art. 9 (2012): 145.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 147-148.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 150.

work: *En Route to the Marian Kingdom: Catholic Apocalypticism and the Army of Mary*.¹⁸⁷

From these two studies alone, we see that the extent of Satan's attempts to deceive us into turning our Blessed Mother into an idol is frighteningly effective, which sheds legitimacy onto Montfort's warning in TD #49:

Mary scarcely appeared in the first coming of Christ, so that men, insufficiently instructed and enlightened concerning the Person of her Son, might not leave the path of truth by attaching themselves too strongly and too grossly to her. This would apparently have happened if she had been known, because of the wondrous charms which the Most High had bestowed even on her outward appearance. So true is this that St. Denys the Areopagite tells us in his writings that when he saw her, he would have taken her for a divinity because of her secret charms and incomparable beauty, had not his firm faith taught him the contrary.

Because of this warning, we can deduce Montfort is on guard against Mariolatry and the heretical apocalypticism that can take hold in those "insufficiently instructed and enlightened concerning the Person of her Son" (#49), and in those who are inclined by pride to apply exclusively to themselves Montfort's words regarding the expected "apostles of the latter times" (#58) and the "predestinate" (#55). Rather, Mary's true children and her true army are of those who "will be true disciples of Jesus Christ, walking in the steps of His poverty, His humility... and in their whole behavior the modesty and mortification of Jesus Christ" (#59)—far from having the audacity and arrogance to proclaim themselves as reincarnations of our Lady and founding a new church with a new magisterium and new Trinity, all hinting at a persona to match more the whore of Revelation 17 than the Woman of Rev. 12 and the Bride of Rev. 21.

In fact, the women of the Book of Revelation, seen together, shed further light on the overall mission of Mary in the eschaton: we must choose which woman we will call

¹⁸⁷ Massimo Introvigne, "En Route to the Marian Kingdom: Catholic Apocalypticism and the Army of Mary," Academia, accessed April 6, 2018, http://www.academia.edu/29830415/En_Route_to_the_Marian_Kingdom_Catholic_Apocalypticism_and_the_Army_of_Mary.

our mother, which woman we will take after. Will we be brought up by the intoxicated harlot of chapter 17, and thereby become the prostitute, fornicating with the world, the flesh, and the devil, “ravished by demons,”¹⁸⁸ only to then suffer betrayal and mutilation? Or will we turn to our Blessed Mother—the foremost member of the Church, the New Jerusalem and City of God (#48)—to be nurtured into sainthood and thereby realize in surprise¹⁸⁹ that we too are the City of God, the bride of the Lamb, and that we too are God’s dream-come-true?

Indeed, this is perhaps Montfort’s motivation for boldly proclaiming Our Lady of the Eschaton, that “in the second coming of Jesus Christ, Mary must be made known by the Holy Ghost so that through her Jesus Christ may be known, loved and served,” and that the reasons for keeping Mary hidden exist no longer (#49). Echoed above in Schmemmann’s warning of the dearth in Mariology (in 4.4), the eschatological gains and the necessity of knowing the true fullness of our telos far outweighs the risk, and far outmaneuvers the anti-Marian tactics of the serpent: “One of the chief reasons why the Holy Ghost does not now work striking wonders in souls is that He fails to find in them sufficiently close union with His faithful and inseparable Spouse” (#36).

¹⁸⁸ Primasius, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 12:16, in William C. Weinrich, ed., *Revelation*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downer’s Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 266.

¹⁸⁹ A surprise, because “I am only certain there will be three surprises in Heaven. First of all, I will see some people whom I never expected to see. Second, there will be a number whom I expect who will not be there. And – even relying on God’s mercy – the biggest surprise of all may be that I will be there.” -Ven. Fulton Sheen

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

In the beginning, it seemed St. Louis de Montfort's many claims regarding our Lady were bold and based solely on piety. Through our study however, we now see that the love of our "Mama's boy" for our Blessed Mother—a love we all should and must have—only unveiled to Montfort what was in plain sight, that at last "God [wished] to reveal and make known Mary, the masterpiece of His hands, in these latter times" (#50), to all the world in need of Jesus Christ.

Since the time of *True Devotion's* writing, loss, delayed discovery, and publishing, many theologians—and saints, nonetheless—have found Montfort's work not only valuable, but decisively essential to Marian devotion and understanding the ongoing and eschatological mission of our Lady. Even scholars who do not directly reference Montfort implicitly support his claims in their work. Regarding Mary's relevance to eschatology and Christ's Parousia, we must recall that TD as we have it today is largely incomplete and was part of a larger work Montfort composed to help devotees "in preparation for the reign of Jesus Christ" (#227): the Marian devotion encouraged by the saint was in service of Christ all along.¹⁹⁰ We also must recall that the doctrines on Mary's Dormition and Assumption position her in the center of eschatology, alongside her Son. The Annunciation-Incarnation, as the inception of the eschatological era, only further brings Mary to the fore in both eschatologies—fulfilled and forecast—which Scripture attests throughout, from Old to New Testament, from Genesis to Apocalypse. As for Mary being the spouse of the Holy Spirit (#35-37), we find Montfort's words defended, even furthered, by theologians Orthodox: Sergei Bulgakov, Alexander

¹⁹⁰ De Fiores, *Jesus Living in Mary*, 1213.

Schmemmann, and Vladimir Lossky, and by theologians Catholic: St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. John Paul. Mary's role as mother of our salvation becomes clearer still as we form a more complete image of who she truly is for Christ her Son, and for the Holy Spirit her Spouse. At the same time, the many insights found in TD #49-59 seem more and more obvious and fitting as our familiarity with Mary's prowess and her "mastery of Hell" (#54) grows. It appears increasingly throughout our study, especially here at its conclusion, that Montfort's drastic statements about the Blessed Virgin only look drastic for those unfamiliar with our Mother's fullness: as nightmare to Satan (#51-52), as Protectress of us her children in battle against hell (#53-59), as inseparable Spouse to the Holy Spirit (#36, 49), and as God's dream-come-true (#50). This is perhaps why Montfort states his claims so straightforwardly, and devotees of our Lady find such claims unsurprising, whereas this author was perplexed but is now more accustomed.

Finally, unlike other theological disciplines, eschatology seemingly studies an elusive and mysterious reality—an abstract future destiny that currently escapes our experience and grasp. The experience may even seem like studying an illusion or some non-existent creature—a unicorn or fairy—but the reality of eschatology is that it indeed contemplates an existent creature: the greatest of all creations. Being herself the highest of all mere creatures, [Mary] with the Holy Ghost, produced the greatest thing that ever was or ever will be: a God-Man" (#35) who is both creature and Creator, both matter and Master. This is eschatology's subject. Yet, eschatology delves further still, seeking to glimpse not only the anticipation hinted in our Lady and our Lord's present state in glory, but at our state awaiting and to come, world without end: the new heaven and new earth. The resurrected earthly bodies of Mother and Son both ensure that all matter will be

renewed, and in this renewed creation, not only the bodies of the saints—as the entire Mystical Body of Christ—are perfected, but so too the entire creation.¹⁹¹

At present, the foremost sign of matter’s dignity to come is found in the Eucharist where already, “matter reaches its highest form of organization and complexity,” and “reaches its highest perfection”¹⁹² by becoming truly the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ—the *Sanctissimum Sacramentum*. We see here that the case study of Mary as the foremost specimen of theosis parallels the elements of consecrated bread and wine, which do not lose their natural uniqueness, but are only transformed and upgraded by grace: they undergo divinization, which God ultimately wills for all His handiwork (and has done for his handmaid). For now, Mary offers us our nearest glimpse of this final product that will be aglow with Christ’s true presence, no longer hiding his glory, but manifesting Him as an “extension of his glorified body” itself.¹⁹³

Saint Louis de Montfort, in bringing the divinized Blessed Virgin into eschatological focus, is merely placing her where she has always been: alongside her Divine Son, and beside her Spouse, the Holy Spirit, as the handmaid of our Father. There, because of her humility and docility to God, she does not rival, but surpasses that of bread and wine in God’s hands, for hers is the con-corporeal flesh chosen by God to enflesh the Son, the very flesh we in turn eat as true food, and the very blood we consume as true drink. Thus, the beginning of Mary saw her cooperation with God’s work of salvation, the current pilgrimage of the Church militant and Church suffering sees her nourish us with God Himself, and the end times will see the consummation of salvation by Mary (#49). Mary—whose increase in exposure only further exposes Christ (#50.3)—

¹⁹¹ Levering, *Bodily Assumption*, 152.

¹⁹² Kereszty, *Jesus Christ*, 428.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 428-429.

“will be the way by which He will come the second time, though not in the same manner [as the first]” (#50.4), perhaps because in the first coming He arrived unknown and rejected, but in the second, may His glorious and resplendent return find us with faith (Lk 18:8) and well prepared by His Mother, Our Lady of the Eschaton (#158).

APPENDIX ONE:

THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF MONTFORT'S PARAGRAPHS RELEVANT TO THIS STUDY

*Note: the translation here differs slightly from that cited and studied in the thesis.¹⁹⁴

35. When Mary has struck her roots in a soul, she produces there marvels of grace, which she alone can produce, because she alone is the fruitful Virgin, who never has had, and never will have, her equal in purity and in fruitfulness.

Mary has produced, together with the Holy Ghost, the greatest thing which has been, or ever will be, which is a God-Man; and she will consequently produce the greatest things that there will be in the latter times. The formation and education of the great Saints, who shall come at the end of the world, are reserved for her. For it is only that singular and miraculous Virgin who can produce, in union with the Holy Ghost, singular and extraordinary things.

36. When the Holy Ghost, her Spouse, has found Mary in a soul, He flies there. He enters there in His fulness; He communicates Himself to that soul abundantly, and to the full extent to which she makes room for her Spouse. Nay, one of the great reasons why the Holy Ghost does not now do startling wonders in our souls is because He does not find there a sufficiently great union with His faithful and indissoluble Spouse. I say indissoluble Spouse, because since that Substantial Love of the Father and the Son has espoused Mary, in order to produce Jesus Christ, the Head of the elect, and Jesus Christ in the elect, He has never repudiated her, inasmuch as she has always been fruitful and faithful.

37. We may evidently conclude, then, from what I have said;

1. That Mary has received from God a great domination over the souls of the elect; for she cannot make her residence in them, as God the Father ordered her to do, and form them in Jesus Christ, or Jesus Christ in them, and strike the roots of her virtues in their hearts, and be the indissoluble companion of the Holy Ghost in all His works of grace—she cannot, I say, do all these things unless she has a right and domination over their souls by a singular grace of the Most High, who, having given her power over His only and Natural Son, has given it also to her over His adopted children, not only as to their bodies, which would be but little matter, but also as to their souls.

...

39. 2. We must conclude that, the most holy Virgin being necessary to God by a necessity which we call hypothetical, in consequence of His Will, she is far more necessary to men, in order for them to arrive at their Last End. We must not confound devotions to our Blessed Lady with devotions to the other Saints, as if devotion to her was not far more necessary than devotion to them, or as if devotion to her were a matter of supererogation.

¹⁹⁴ The version of this translation is by Rev. Frederick William Faber, *True Devotion to Mary* (London, UK: 1863), accessed March 4, 2018, <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/montfort/true/devotion.shtml>.

There is some discrepancy among English translations of *True Devotion*: the version quoted in the study and the version included here in Appendix One are both attributed to Rev. Frederick William Faber, though the two versions differ subtly from each other in diction and phrasing.

...

49. It is by Mary that the salvation of the world has begun, and it is by Mary that it must be consummated. Mary has hardly appeared at all in the first coming of Jesus Christ, in order that men, as yet but little instructed and enlightened on the Person of her Son, should not remove themselves from Him, in attaching themselves too strongly and too grossly to her. This would have apparently taken place, if she had been known, because of the admirable charms which the Most High had bestowed even upon her exterior. This is so true that St. Denys the Areopagite has informed us in his writings that when he saw our Blessed Lady, he should have taken her for a Divinity, in consequence of her secret charms and incomparable beauty, had not the Faith in which he was well established taught him the contrary. But in the second coming of Jesus Christ, Mary has to be made known and revealed by the Holy Ghost, in order that by her Jesus Christ may be known, loved, and served. The reasons which moved the Holy Ghost to hide His Spouse during her life, and to reveal her but a very little since the preaching of the Gospel, subsist no longer.
50. God, then, wishes to reveal and discover Mary, the masterpiece of His hands, in these latter times:
1. Because she hid herself in this world, and put herself lower than the dust by her profound humility, having obtained of God and of His Apostles and Evangelists that she should not be made manifest.
 2. Because, being the masterpiece of the hands of God, as well here below by grace as in heaven by glory, He wishes to be glorified and praised in her by those who are living upon the earth.
 3. As she is the aurora which precedes and discovers the Sun of Justice, who is Jesus Christ, she ought to be recognised and perceived, in order that Jesus Christ may be so.
 4. Being the way by which Jesus Christ came to us the first time, she will also be the way by which He will come the second time, though not in the same manner.
 5. Being the sure means and the straight and immaculate way to go to Jesus Christ, and to find Him perfectly, it is by her that the holy souls, who are to shine forth especially in sanctity, have to find our Lord. He who shall find Mary shall find life; that is, Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But no one can find Mary who does not seek her; and no one can seek her, who does not know her: for we cannot seek or desire an unknown object. It is necessary, then, for the greater knowledge and glory of the Most Holy Trinity, that Mary should be more known than ever.
 6. Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, in might, and in grace, in these latter times: in mercy, to bring back and lovingly receive the poor strayed sinners who shall be converted and shall return to the Catholic Church; in might, against the enemies of God, idolaters, schismatics, Mahometans, Jews, and souls hardened in impiety, who shall rise in terrible revolt against God to seduce all those who shall be contrary to them, and to make them fall by promises and threats; and, finally, she must shine forth in grace, in order to animate and sustain the valiant soldiers and faithful servants of Jesus Christ, who shall do battle for His interests.
 7. And, lastly, Mary must be terrible to the devil and his crew, as an army ranged in battle, principally in these latter times, because the devil, knowing that he has but little time, and now less than ever, to destroy souls, will every day redouble his efforts and his combats. He will presently raise up new persecutions, and will put terrible snares before the faithful servants and true children of Mary, whom it gives him more trouble to surmount than it does to conquer others.

51. It is principally of these last and cruel persecutions of the devil, which shall go on increasing daily till the reign of Antichrist, that we ought to understand that first and celebrated prediction and curse of God, pronounced in the terrestrial Paradise against the serpent. It is to our purpose to explain this here, for the glory of the most holy Virgin, for the salvation of her children, and for the confusion of the devil. *Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius; ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus* (Gen. iii. 15)—“I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.”
52. God has never made or formed but one enmity; but it is an irreconcilable one, which shall endure and develop even to the end. It is between Mary, His worthy Mother, and the devil—between the children and the servants of the Blessed Virgin and the children and instruments of Lucifer. The most terrible of all the enemies which God has set up against the devil is His holy Mother, Mary. He has inspired her, even since the days of the earthly Paradise, though she existed then only in His idea, with so much hatred against that cursed enemy of God, with so much industry in unveiling the malice of that old serpent, with so much power to conquer, to overthrow, and to crush that proud impious rebel, that he fears her not only more than all Angels and men, but in some sense more than God Himself. It is not that the anger, the hatred, and the power of God are not infinitely greater than those of the Blessed Virgin, for the perfections of Mary are limited, but it is, first, because Satan, being proud, suffers infinitely more from being beaten and punished by a little and humble handmaid of God, and her humility humbles him more than the Divine power; and, secondly, because God has given Mary such a great power against the devils, that, as they have often been obliged to confess, in spite of themselves, by the mouths of the possessed, they fear one of her sighs for a soul more than the prayers of all the Saints, and one of her menaces against them more than all other torments.
53. What Lucifer has lost by pride, Mary has gained by humility. What Eve has damned and lost by disobedience, Mary has saved by obedience. Eve, in obeying the serpent, has destroyed all her children together with herself, and has delivered them to him; Mary, being perfectly faithful to God, has saved all her children and servants together with herself, and has consecrated them to His Majesty.
54. God has not only set an enmity but *enmities*, not simply between Mary and the devil, but between the race of the holy Virgin and the race of the devil; that is to say, God has set enmities, antipathies, and secret hatreds between the true children and the servants of Mary, and the children and servants of the devil. They do not love each other mutually. They have no inward correspondence with each other. The children of Belial, the slaves of Satan, the friends of the world (for it is the same thing), have always up to this time persecuted those who belong to our Blessed Lady, and will in future persecute them more than ever; just as of old Cain persecuted his brother Abel, and Esau his brother Jacob, who are the figures of the reprobate and the predestinate. But the humble Mary will always have the victory over that proud spirit, and so great a victory that she will go the length of crashing his head, where his pride dwells. She will always discover the malice of the serpent. She will always counterwork his infernal mines and dissipate his diabolical counsels, and will guarantee even to the end of time her faithful servants from his cruel claw.

But the power of Mary over all the devils will especially break out in the latter times, when Satan will lay his snares against her heel; that is to say, her humble slaves and her poor children, whom she will raise up to make war against him. They shall be little and poor in the world's esteem, and abased before all, like the heel, trodden underfoot and persecuted as the heel is by the other members of the body. But in return for this, they shall be rich in the grace of God, which Mary shall distribute to them abundantly. They shall be great and exalted before God in sanctity, superior to all other

creatures by their animated zeal, and leaning so strongly on the divine succour, that, with the humility of their heel, in union with Mary, they shall crush the head of the devil, and cause Jesus Christ to triumph.

55. In a word, God wishes that His holy Mother should be at present more known, more loved, more honoured, than she has ever been. This no doubt will take place, if the predestinate enter, with the grace and light of the Holy Ghost, into the interior and perfect practice which I will disclose to them shortly. Then they will see clearly, as far as faith allows, that beautiful Star of the Sea. They will arrive happily in harbour, following its guidance, in spite of the tempests and the pirates. They will know the grandeurs of that Queen, and will consecrate themselves entirely to her service, as subjects and slaves of love. They will experience her sweetnesses and her maternal goodnesses, and they will love her tenderly like well-beloved children. They will know the mercies of which she is full, and the need they have of her succour; and they will have recourse to her in all things, as to their dear advocate and mediatrix with Jesus Christ. They will know what is the most sure, the most easy, the most short, and the most perfect means by which to go to Jesus Christ; and they will deliver themselves to Mary, body and soul, without reserve, that they may thus be all for Jesus Christ.
56. But who shall be those servants, slaves, and children of Mary?
They shall be a burning fire of the ministers of the Lord, who shall kindle the fire of divine love everywhere, and *sicut sagittae in manu potentis*—like sharp arrows in the hand of the powerful Mary to pierce her enemies.
They shall be the sons of Levi, well purified by the fire of great tribulation, and closely adhering to God; who shall carry the gold of love in their heart, the incense of prayer in their spirit, and the myrrh of mortification in their body; and they shall be everywhere the good odour of Jesus Christ to the poor and to the little, while they shall be an odour of death to the great, to the rich, and to the proud worldlings.
57. They shall be clouds thundering and flying through the air at the least breath of the Holy Ghost; who, without attaching themselves to anything, without being astonished at anything, without putting themselves in pain about anything, shall shower forth the rain of the Word of God and of life eternal. They shall thunder against sin; they shall storm against the world; they shall strike the devil and his crew; and they shall strike further and further, for life or for death, with their two-edged sword of the Word of God, all those to whom they shall be sent on the part of the Most High.
58. They shall be the true apostles of the latter times, to whom the Lord of Hosts shall give the word and the might to work marvels, and to carry off the glory of the spoils of His enemies. They shall sleep without gold or silver, and, what is more, without care, in the middle of the other priests, ecclesiastics, and clerks, *inter medios clericos*; and yet they shall have the silvered wings of the dove, to go, with the pure intention of the glory of God and the salvation of souls, wheresoever the Holy Ghost shall call them. Neither shall they leave behind them, in the places where they have preached, anything but the gold of charity, which is the accomplishment of the whole law.
59. In a word, we know that they shall be true disciples of Jesus Christ, who, marching in the footsteps of His poverty, humility, contempt of the world, and charity, shall teach the strait way of God in the pure truth, according to the holy Gospel, and not according to the maxims of the world, without putting themselves in pain about things, or accepting persons, without sparing, fearing, or listening to any mortal, however influential he may be. They shall have in their mouths the two-edged sword of the Word of God. They shall carry on their shoulders the bloody standard of the cross, the crucifix in their right hand and the rosary in their left, the sacred names of Jesus and Mary on their hearts, and the modesty and mortification of Jesus Christ in their own behaviour.

These are the great men who shall come. But Mary shall be there by the order of the Most High, to extend His empire over that of the impious, the idolaters, and the Mahometans. But when and how shall this be? God alone knows. It is for us to hold our tongues, to pray, to sigh, and to wait—*expectans expectavi*.

...

158. Make for me, if you will, a new road to go to Jesus, and pave it with all the merits of the Blessed, adorn it with all their heroic virtues, illuminate and embellish it with all the lights and beauties of the Angels, and let all the Angels and Saints be there themselves to escort, defend, and sustain those who are ready to walk there; and yet in truth, in simple truth, I say boldly, and I repeat that I say truly, I would prefer to this new perfect path the immaculate way of Mary. *Posui immaculatam viam meam*. It is the way without any stain or spot, without original or actual sin, without shadow or darkness. When my sweet Jesus in His glory comes a second time on earth, as it is most certain He will do, to reign there, He will choose no other way for His journey than the divine Mary, by whom He came the first time so surely and so perfectly. But there will be a difference between His first and His last coming. The first time He came secretly and hiddenly; the second time He will come gloriously and resplendently. But both times He will come perfectly, because both times He will come by Mary. Alas, here is a mystery which is not understood. *Hic taceat omnis lingua*.

APPENDIX TWO:
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE *GEBIRAH*

With in text citations from Mark Miravalle, *Mariology* (Goleta, CA: Seat of Wisdom Books, 2007).

Major Old Testament sources for Mary's Queenship center on the typology found in Bathsheba as the *gebirah*, the queen mother of King Solomon. Mary, as mother of the Lord Jesus, rules in turn as Christ's *gebirah*, who is "second only to the King" and has "real royal authority, participating in her son's reign" (Miravalle, ed., 469). Moreover, confusion of status between a king's wife and a king's mother is made clear again in the example of Bathsheba, in how she was regarded as David's wife compared to her status as Solomon's mother: before David "she bows... and pays him homage," whereas "King Solomon [rises and bows] before *her*," his mother (emphasis original, 470). Regarding Mary as advocate, Bathsheba's example in 1 Kings 2 illustrates that the *gebirah* is an intercessor between her subjects and her son, Solomon, who responds to his mother by saying, "Make your request my mother, for I will not refuse you" (471). The familial and filial logic is sound: for no proper mother would request a favor to her son's detriment, nor would any son have reason to suspect such a mother of deceit. Furthermore, Jesus as the model and perfect Son, and Mary as the model and immaculate mother, perfectly fulfill the type provided by Bathsheba and Solomon.

The New Testament shows Mary's *gebirah* role as advocate in John 2 where "she confidently turns to her royal Son for help in a way that no one else could," making known to Jesus the needs of the newlyweds, whereby he complies "to his Mother's intercession quite powerfully" and in superabundance (485). Her queenship is evident in Matthew 1-2, where Joseph conspicuously fades into the background and Mary comes to the fore when the Magi come to adore "the child with Mary his mother," this child who is the "newborn 'king of the Jews'" and this Mary who is *gebirah*, who is "mother of this king" (480).

Tradition and the Magisterium support Mary as Queen and Advocate with a myriad of sources ranging from the *Mariale*, to the liturgies of East and West, to the Marian hymns (*Salve Regina*, *Ave*, *Regina Caelorum*, and *Regina Caeli*), and to the popes and councils mentioning Mary as queen in their documents throughout the centuries (494-498). Most notably, Pius XII's *Ineffabilis Deus* teaches extensively on Mary's queenship and its close connection to her as advocate: "made *Queen* of heaven and earth by the Lord... she *intercedes* powerfully for us... and cannot be refused" (499). In other words, Mary's royal office finds basis in precisely her "cooperation in her Son's work of salvation", in "her unique cooperation in Christ's work of redemption" (498). Thus, understanding Mary as the fullest manifestation of *gebirah* supports her other titles of Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix.

Finally, the importance of recognizing Mary as Queen and Advocate lies in seeing her as "'an example from within the people of God' of the destiny to which we are all called... of what all faithful disciples will become" in Christ (504-505). As such, Mary is the prototype saint to which all saints are called to imitate and model, *through which* her intercession and advocacy may gain for us, so far as we entrust ourselves to her to make a request to her Son which he will not refuse, for she is his queen mother and we are her poor banished children.

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