

The Last Adam and the New Eve:  
Christ and Mary as the Final Cause of the Universe

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by

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This thesis is dedicated to Our Lady, in thanksgiving  
for her receptivity to the plenitude of grace,

and to Jim:

thank you for showing me more of what it means to live  
in the *imago Christi* each and every day.

## The Last Adam and the New Eve:

### Christ and Mary as the Final Cause of the Universe

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In his *Commentaria In Ecclesiasticum*, the seventeenth-century Scriptural commentator Cornelius a Lapide argues that Wisdom in the Sapiential Books is attributed to both Christ and the Blessed Virgin under the *ratio* of a final end, or the cause of causes.<sup>1</sup> He interprets Ecclesiasticus 24:6: “I brought it about that in the heavens there should rise light that never faileth,”<sup>2</sup> as a reference to the birth of the light of Christ in the Church, who himself is the sun of justice, and allows the light of faith to arise in the souls of the elect.<sup>3</sup> He then attributes the next verse to Our Lady: “I am Wisdom that has poured out rivers,”<sup>4</sup> because God has made her as a sea of inexhaustible graces through her immaculate conception and consent to become the Mother of God. The literal interpretation of this verse according to Lapide is that in the divine determination, Mary herself is the motive of creation,<sup>5</sup> which further means that “the creation of God is ordained, as to its end, to the justification and glorification of the Saints, accomplished by Christ through the Blessed Virgin; for the order of nature was created and instituted for the order of grace.”<sup>6</sup> This is to say that Christ and Mary are the final cause of the

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<sup>1</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in Charles De Koninck, *Ego Sapientia*” *The Wisdom That Is Mary*, in *The Writings of Charles De Koninck*, Vol. 2, ed. Ralph McInerny, trans. Ralph McInerny (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 52).

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiasticus 24:6 (as cited in De Koninck 18).

<sup>3</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in De Koninck 52).

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiasticus 24:40 (as cited in De Koninck 18).

<sup>5</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in De Koninck 52): “[T]he Virgin, comparable to a sea of graces, pours out her rivers upon the Church and the faithful. Secondly, according to the literal sense, one should read: I have been the cause for God to create the light, the heavens, the sea, the rivers and all the universe.”

<sup>6</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in De Koninck 52).

universe through their instrumental roles in the justification and glorification of every saint.<sup>7</sup> Such an interpretation appears at once to be both bold and controversial. While it is not immediately obvious that Christ is the last end of all things, since he is the Son of God it is easier to see, at least intuitively, that we may predicate certain aspects of final causality to the Second Person of the Trinity and Redeemer of all mankind. But it is much more difficult to see how the Blessed Virgin, as a mere human, can share in the supremacy of Christ which he possesses according to his divine nature. Such a conclusion would seem to contradict the words of St. Paul from Colossians, where he speaks of Christ alone as the image of the invisible God, pre-eminent in all things and the one for whom all things were created.

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities - all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the Church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross (Colossians 1:15-20 RSV).

This passage suggests that all things were made through and for Christ as a unifying principle of creation, according to both nature and grace. In the order of nature, all the elements of creation are ordered to Christ as their final end, and in the order of grace, he is the head of the Church as the source of redemptive merit for the members of his Mystical Body. Christ as an agent of both natural and supernatural unity then possesses a certain priority that exists above all the levels of created being as both their principle of order, and the end to which they are ordered. This notion of Christ as the beginning and end of all creation includes the notion of creation as both fallen and redeemed. Christ is

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<sup>7</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in De Koninck 52): “[God] wished that the whole universe, no less than the order of grace, should be referred and ordained to Christ and the Blessed Virgin as to its complement and end.”

then the embodiment of the fullness of God, who not only creates us out of love, but re-creates us from the mercy of salvation, and he is the fullness of wisdom, being the principle and end of both original and redeemed creation. Lapidé is expanding upon this teaching when he argues that by virtue of her divine maternity, Mary also shares in the fullness of wisdom which is Christ.

This thesis explains and evaluates the claim from Cornelius a Lapidé, as an elaboration upon Paul's teaching in Colossians, that both Christ and Mary are the final cause of the universe. Part One focuses on this claim as applied to Christ alone, and is divided into two chief arguments. The first argument examines the meaning of this claim in the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, through his treatise on the Incarnation in the *Summa* and his commentary on Colossians. The second argument aims to strengthen the validity of his teaching through the writings of the Carmelites of Salamanca and their elucidation of the divine motive for the Incarnation. Part Two is devoted to explaining how the Mother of Christ can be said to share in the final causality of her Son, and uses the writings of Charles De Koninck in *Ego Sapientia: The Wisdom That Is Mary*<sup>8</sup> as the primary foundation for this explanation. As a whole, these arguments result in a defense of Cornelius a Lapidé's interpretation of the metaphors from the Wisdom literature, as revealing that Christ and Mary are the final cause of creation by virtue of their being the formal and exemplar causes of the universe.

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<sup>8</sup> De Koninck 4-62.

## I. Christ as the Final Cause of the Universe

### A. Thomas Aquinas on the Motive of the Incarnation

The question of whether final causality is present in Christ must be based in the understanding that the primary end of all God's works, including the Incarnation, is the manifestation of his own divine goodness. Thomas explains this in the context of arguing that God's justice always presupposes his mercy.<sup>9</sup> Since creation itself is a free act of love, God does not owe his creatures anything except what pre-exists in them through his foreknowledge, and even this is in a remote sense of debt according to intermediate causes. To have hands is in a sense proper to or owed to man as a rational animal, and to have a rational soul is also owed to him on account of his human nature.<sup>10</sup> But human existence itself is a gift, since "in every work of God, viewed at its primary source, there appears mercy."<sup>11</sup> Therefore the ultimate cause of all created being, and especially the excellence of Christ, is the manifestation of divine goodness. It is according to this broader context of the glory of the Godhead that the following line of inquiry proceeds.

The teaching of St. Thomas places the Incarnation within the twofold category of that which originates in the divine will, and that which elevates what belongs to creatures according to their nature.<sup>12</sup> Everything in this twofold category, Thomas explains, can only be dispensed to the faithful through the medium of Scripture, the primary means through which Providence reveals his will. And Scripture itself teaches that the primary reason for the Incarnation is the remedy for sin, "so that, had

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<sup>9</sup> *ST Ia q. 21, a. 4.*

<sup>10</sup> *ST Ia q. 21, a. 4.*

<sup>11</sup> *ST Ia q. 21, a. 4:* "Et sic in quolibet opere Dei apparet misericordia, quantum ad primam radicem eius."

<sup>12</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (Green Bay, WI: Emmaus Academic, 2012), IIIa q. 1, a. 3: "Ea enim quae ex sola Dei voluntate proveniunt, supra omne debitum creaturae, nobis innotescere non possunt nisi quatenus in sacra Scriptura traduntur, per quam divina voluntas innotescit." See also *ST IIIa q. 1, a. 3, ad. 3.*

sin not existed, the Incarnation would not have been.”<sup>13</sup> But Thomas concludes his explanation with the caveat that the omnipotence of God, by which he united his divinity to our human nature, is not so constricted as to ordain such a union to be only a remedy for sin. Such a resplendent manifestation of divine glory does not depend upon the possibility that man has the weakness of abusing his free will. Therefore, while Thomas admits that according to fittingness, it is more proper to say the Word became flesh to save us from sin, he also admits that had man never fallen, the Son of God could still assume human nature and unite Himself with us both for our own beatitude and His glory.<sup>14</sup>

Thomas’s argument for the proper lens through which to view the end of the Incarnation is grounded in the authority of Scripture, since he says that wherever the Word of God speaks of the Word becoming flesh, it assigns redemption from sin as the *ratio* of the Incarnation. But St. Paul gives a different emphasis to this causality in Colossians, when he teaches that all things were created *through* Christ and *for* Christ, as the image of the invisible God. This seems to imply that the Son is absolutely prior to creation both as its ordering principle and the final end of its ordering. On one side, Thomas is arguing that the only reason Scripture gives for the Incarnation is the redemption of mankind, whereas on the other, Paul could be saying that all of creation is ordained to the Incarnate Son of God.

But these two positions are not essentially contradictory if we view Christ as both the efficient and exemplar cause of creation, which is a point of agreement between Paul and Aquinas. Before explaining this concordance, we will first explain the terms *efficient cause* and *exemplar cause* as

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<sup>13</sup> *ST* IIIa, q. 1, a. 3: “[I]ta quod, peccato non existente, incarnatio non fuisset.”

<sup>14</sup> *ST* IIIa, q. 1, a. 3: “Quamvis potentia Dei ad hoc non limitetur, potuisset enim, etiam peccato non existente, Deus incarnari.”

Aristotle defines them in the *Physics*<sup>15</sup> and in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>16</sup> An efficient cause is what Aristotle calls “the first beginning of change or of rest,”<sup>17</sup> as the one who makes is a cause of the thing made, the one changing causes that which is changed, and the father is a cause of his child.<sup>18</sup> In order to understand exemplar causality, we will define formal causality first. A formal cause is most properly “the species and the pattern,”<sup>19</sup> according to which a being takes shape, or that which makes something to be what it is. The formal cause of man, for example, is his rationality, since his ability to think and reason informs his essence and sets him apart from the animals who lack this ability.

An exemplar cause is that ideal pattern which that same being strives to attain through continual motion and progress in the natural world. For instance, if we consider man as a rational animal simply, he does not lack anything according to his nature. But if we consider an individual man as a boy, while he is still a rational animal, he must undergo several years of development before he reaches adulthood, and is therefore a man who has yet to reach his actuality according to the original idea for his perfection in God’s foreknowledge.

The exemplar cause is also called the *archetype* of any created essence. This is related closely to the way Aristotle uses *architectonic* to describe the political art, since it directs multiple elements towards the unity or perfect type which they exist to embody.<sup>20</sup> He also predicates *architectonic* of the

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<sup>15</sup> Aristotle, *Physics, Or Natural Hearing*, trans., ed. Glen Coughlin (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, II.3,194b30.

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, II.3,194b31-32.

<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, II.3,194b26.

<sup>20</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.2, 1094a27-28.



universal knowledge required for the complete possession of prudence, since it is characteristic of prudence to see the universal good or perfection to which any particular good tends.<sup>21</sup>

As will be shown, in our understanding the exemplar causality of Christ follows from his efficient causality. Explaining the ordination of nature to Christ as the source of its supernatural perfection then begins with considering the mode in which the universe came into being - namely, through the creative power of the spoken Word of God. As Aquinas explains in his commentary on Colossians, our Creator as the divine artist<sup>22</sup> made all things through their form as pre-conceived in his intellect - and this form is none other than the Word.<sup>23</sup> The very beginning of humanity is then in the Word of God as the principle of creation.<sup>24</sup>

Gilles Emery supports this when he speaks of creation as an act emanating from the Trinity, where the generation of the Son by the Father is “the reason and the model of the production of creatures that receive from God, in creation, a participation of being and life.”<sup>25</sup> We attribute our salvation to the Word Incarnate, but it also belongs to the Word, apart from his assumption of human nature, to give “form and existence to things.”<sup>26</sup> Therefore, before the Son took on our own flesh to

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<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.8, 1141b22-24.

<sup>22</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians*, in *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, trans. F. R. Larcher, O.P., eds. J. Mortensen and E. Alacrón (Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012), C1, L4, n. 37.

<sup>23</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 37.

<sup>24</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 37: “Circa quod sciendum est, quod Platonici ponebant ideas, dicentes, quod quaelibet res fiebat ex eo quod participabat ideam, puta hominis vel alicuius alterius speciei. Loco enim harum idearum nos habemus unum, scilicet Filium, Verbum Dei.”

<sup>25</sup> Gilles Emery, *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God*, trans. Matthew Levering (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 170.

<sup>26</sup> Emery, *The Trinity*, 170.

give us our salvation, he was the cause which brought about our very existence, and to him we are indebted for both our natural and supernatural life.<sup>27</sup>

This explanation of creation as a power proper to the Word counters Plato's account of creation as the effect of one exemplar Idea, divided into several different ideas by which the various levels of being receive their formality. Aquinas primarily addresses the Platonic doctrine of multiple ideas when he draws several parallels between Paul's teaching on the Son of God and the creation account of Genesis.<sup>28</sup> When St. Paul writes, for example, in Colossians 1:15, that Christ is the firstborn of all creation, Thomas teaches that Paul gives the Son this name "because he is generated or begotten as the principle of every creature."<sup>29</sup> In the Son, therefore, all things were created,<sup>30</sup> because the Word is that Idea from which all created beings derive their essence. Instead, then, of originating from the pagan forms in the Platonic account of creation, where a multiplicity of ideas inform the sensible entities of our experience,<sup>31</sup> creation is the effect of one Unified Idea,<sup>32</sup> who is also a Person, the Word of God: "Now this form and wisdom is the Word; and thus in him all things were created, as in an exemplar: *he spoke and they were made* (Gen 1), because he created all things to come into existence in his eternal Word."<sup>33</sup> The Son as the image of the Father is thus the eternal image of all that the Father

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<sup>27</sup> "The same God the Trinity who leads humans to the fulfillment of their vocation is the God who created them. And God creates like he saves, that is to say, in a Trinitarian manner: the Father creates and saves through his Son and his Spirit. We should not limit this Trinitarian mode to grace and salvation, but rather it is necessary to recognize the Trinitarian nature of the whole divine economy, and first of the creation by which the universe is produced and by which we exist. Trinitarian salvation has its foundation in the Trinitarian creation." Emery, *The Trinity*, 169-170.

<sup>28</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 37.

<sup>29</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 37.

<sup>30</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 37: "Et ideo dicit *quia in ipso*, et cetera."

<sup>31</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 37: "Circa quod sciendum est, quod Platonici ponebant ideas, dicentes, quod quaelibet res fiebat ex eo quod participabat ideam, puta hominis vel alicuius alterius speciei."

<sup>32</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 37: "Loco enim harum idearum nos habemus unum, scilicet Filium, Verbum Dei."

<sup>33</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 37: "Haec autem forma et sapientia est Verbum, et ideo omnia in ipso condita sunt, sicut in quodam exemplari, Gen. I: *dixit, et facta sunt*, quia in Verbo suo aeterno creavit omnia ut fierent."

creates, proceeding from the divine intellect as the exemplar pattern and order for all created effects of the divine knowledge. In this way, he is not merely the principle of creation, or its efficient cause, but also the type to which it conforms, or its exemplar cause.

Thomas speaks of Christ as both the efficient and exemplar cause of creation in his interpretation of Colossians 1:16: “And so Paul concludes, *all things were created through him*, as by an efficient cause, *and in him*, as in an exemplary cause.”<sup>34</sup> All things were created *through* the Son of God as an efficient cause because he is the Word by which the Father gives existence to all created beings. And all things were created *in* Christ because he is their exemplary cause as containing the types of their essences. As explained above, an efficient cause is the agent which gives a being its form and existence, while an exemplar cause is that ideal to which that same being strives to become through its motion and progress in the natural world. This ideal, however, is separate in notion from the form of the created thing, although it is impossible for any substance to have a form without also having a correspondent idea. The form and idea of any created thing are so inextricably linked that the Greek word *idea* is rendered in Latin as *forma*.<sup>35</sup> Thomas understands ideas to be the forms of created things that exist apart from those things in the divine mind.<sup>36</sup> He compares these divine ideas to the form which exists in the mind of the artist before he constructs his art.<sup>37</sup> An architect, for example, has the idea of the house which he intends to build in his mind before this idea takes sensible shape.<sup>38</sup> The

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<sup>34</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 42.

<sup>35</sup> *ST Ia*, q. 15, a. 1: “Idea enim Graece, Latine forma dicitur.”

<sup>36</sup> *ST Ia*, q. 15, a. 1: “Per ideas intelliguntur formae aliarum rerum, praeter ipsas res existentes.”

<sup>37</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 37: “Et sic Deus omnia in sua sapientia dicitur facere, quia sapientia Dei se habet ad res creatas, sicut ars aedificatoris ad domum factam.”

<sup>38</sup> *ST Ia*, q. 15, a. 1: “In quibusdam vero secundum esse intelligibile, ut in his quae agunt per intellectum; sicut similitudo domus praexistit in mente aedificatoris. Et haec potest dici idea domus, quia artifex intendit domum assimilare formae quam mente concepit.”

form in which the matter of the constructed house then participates is distinct *in ratione* from the original idea in the mind of the architect. If the house is constructed accurately, the enmattered house will then correspond directly to the form which the architect first envisioned, and the form of the constructed house will differ in only a notional respect from the original form in the architect's plan. Every intelligent agent acts in this way, such that he constructs a form corresponding by likeness to an idea which he has already conceived in his mind.<sup>39</sup> The creation of the world itself was an event in which the universe took shape according to a form which already existed in the divine mind, and St. Thomas names this pre-existent form a divine idea,<sup>40</sup> referring to that form of any created thing which exists apart from the thing itself.

St. Thomas also posits two ends of the divine ideas. The first is "to be the type of that of which it is called the form,"<sup>41</sup> and the second is "to be the principle of the knowledge of that thing,"<sup>42</sup> so that the forms of the knowable are in the knower.<sup>43</sup> This twofold end corresponds directly to Thomas's commentary on Colossians, when he names the Incarnate Son of God as both the efficient and exemplary cause of all things. Since the Word is the principle from which all created beings originate and to which all created beings conform, he is that very type of the form of all things, existing apart

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<sup>39</sup> *ST* 1a, q. 15, a. 1: "In quibusdam enim agentibus praeexistit formae fiendae secundum esse naturale, sicut in his quae agunt per naturam; sicut homo generat hominem, et ignis ignem. In quibusdam vero secundum esse intelligibile, ut in his quae agunt per intellectum; sicut similitudo domus praeexistit in mente aedificatoris."

<sup>40</sup> *ST* 1a, q. 15, a. 1: "Quia igitur mundus non est casu factus, sed est factus a Deo per intellectum agente, ut infra patebit, necesse est quod in mente divina sit forma, ad similitudinem cuius mundus est factus. Et in hoc consistit ratio ideae."

<sup>41</sup> *ST* 1a, q. 15, a. 1: "Forma autem alicuius rei praeter ipsam existens, ad duo esse potest, vel ut sit exemplar eius cuius dicitur forma; vel ut sit principium cognitionis ipsius, secundum quod formae cognoscibilia dicuntur esse in cognoscente."

<sup>42</sup> *ST* 1a, q. 15, a. 1.

<sup>43</sup> *ST* 1a, q. 15, a. 1.

from these things in the divine essence. In our understanding, his nature as an exemplary cause of all things therefore follows from his nature as an efficient cause of the universe.<sup>44</sup>

Here we would do well to exercise caution and preserve the distinction between the divine essence and the divine ideas. Although the Son is the type of all created things, and the divine ideas are the types of all created things, it does not follow that the Son is identical to the divine ideas. When considering whether divine ideas are a reality, Thomas addresses the objection that there are no divine ideas because ideas are principles of knowledge, and God knows all things in himself and not through another.<sup>45</sup> He replies that God knows all things, including himself, by his own essence, but this knowledge only results in created beings which exist apart from himself, and is not a principle of his own existence. The divine essence is therefore the operative principle of all things, while remaining wholly contained within itself, and it only has the nature of an idea with respect to all other things besides itself.<sup>46</sup> While all created things then flow from the Son as the image of the Father and the ultimate perfection of all things, the essence of the Son is still distinct from his nature as that which contains the perfection of all things. He is only the principle and type of created being with respect to created being, and not with respect to his own essence.

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<sup>44</sup> Thomas further explains the harmony of efficient and exemplar causality in the Incarnation when he considers whether the Incarnation should have been postponed until the consummation of the world. His reply is that this would not have been fitting because of the way in which imperfect things progress to their perfection. That which is imperfect must be prior in time to its perfective principle, but this principle is prior to what it perfects according to its nature as an efficient cause. But “in the work of the Incarnation both concur; for by the Incarnation human nature is raised to its highest perfection” (*ST* IIIa, q. 1, a. 6). Since the imperfect must temporally precede the perfect, then, the corruption of human nature must occur before its restoration. But the cause of our perfection, or our transformation into the divine life through the Word’s assumption of our nature, is the eternal Son of God, who always existed as the Father’s understanding of himself and the Idea which is the beginning and perfection of all created being.

<sup>45</sup> *ST* Ia, q. 15, a. 1.

<sup>46</sup> “Licet Deus per essentiam suam se et alia cognoscat, tamen essentia sua est principium operativum aliorum, non autem sui ipsius, et ideo habet rationem ideae secundum quod ad alia comparatur, non autem secundum quod comparatur ad ipsum Deum.” *ST* Ia, q. 15, a. 1.

The teaching from Paul and Aquinas on Christ as an efficient and exemplar cause concords with the claim of Cornelius a Lapide in his *Commentaria in Ecclesiasticum*, when he assigns Christ and the Blessed Virgin as the formal cause or very idea of the perfection of the universe as preconceived in the divine mind. The foundation of his argument is that grace perfects nature, and thus is that perfection towards which the natural motion of created beings tends: “In effect, the order of grace in which Christ with the Blessed Virgin occupies the first place is the idea and exemplar according to which God created and disposed the order of nature and all of the universe.”<sup>47</sup> Therefore the first man, Adam, is the crown of creation and thus the consummation of the natural order, but the new Adam, Christ, is the consummation of the order of grace, to which all nature is ordained.

Thomas also argues that the exemplarity of the Word in creation is a solution to the dichotomy between the Manichean position that all earthly bodies, because they are corruptible, must be the effects of evil gods, and that incorruptible bodies are all effects of the good God. But both the corruptible bodies of earth and the incorruptible bodies of the heavens proceed as effects from the goodness of the one God, because he created both the heavens and the earth through His creative Word. “*In the beginning*, that is, in the Son, *God created the heavens and the earth* (Gen 1:1).”<sup>48</sup> Therefore when the opening lines of Genesis reference a beginning, they do not name a moment in time, which was not created until the fourth day. This *beginning* is rather another name for the Son of God, in whose image the heavens and earth began their existence and from whose exemplar form they derived their essence. While the Father knows both himself and everything he creates through one act,

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<sup>47</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in De Koninck 52).

<sup>48</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 38: “Gen. I, 1: *in principio*, id est in Filio, *creavit Deus*, et cetera.”

as being the first efficient cause of all things,<sup>49</sup> the Word “is the intellectual concept or representation of God insofar as he knows himself, and as a consequence, every creature.”<sup>50</sup> The Son as begotten is then “the word representing every creature,”<sup>51</sup> and as such “is the principle of every creature.”<sup>52</sup> All diversity is based in his unity, while all variety flows from his order. All time deviates from his eternity, and all motion is named according to his rest.

### **B. The Finality of Christ as Implicitly Present in Thomas’s Colossians Commentary**

But to view the Word of God as only the beginning of creation is to miss the full meaning of our redemption in the Word, which also compromises our understanding of the Word as both creative and re-creative. The Son as the exemplar principle from which all created beings proceed is also the end towards which the motion of all created beings tend. Because the Word contains the perfection of all created things within himself, he is the principle as well as the end, or final cause of all created things. This is easier to see if we consider the example of the architect. The house which is constructed according to his plan, if executed accurately, corresponds to the idea of its construction which existed in the mind of the architect before the house itself came into materialized being.<sup>53</sup> Those who labor to build the house are given these plans and then construct it as closely to the original plan as the rules of material and measurement will allow. In this construction, they are striving to give material existence to

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<sup>49</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 35: “Deus enim non alio se cognoscit et creaturam, sed omnia in sua essentia, sicut in prima causa effectiva.”

<sup>50</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 35: “Filius autem est conceptio intellectualis Dei secundum quod cognoscit se, et per consequens omnem creaturam.”

<sup>51</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 35: “Inquantum ergo gignitur, videtur quoddam verbum repraesentans totam creaturam, et ipsum est principium omnis creaturae.”

<sup>52</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 35.

<sup>53</sup> *Super Col.* C1, L4, n. 37: “Artifex enim facit artificium, ex hoc quod facit illud participare formam apud se conceptam, quasi involvens eam exteriori materiae: sicut si dicatur quod artifex facit domum per formam rei quam habet apud se conceptam.”

the form which originated from the mind of the architect. In a similar way, all created beings are striving to conform to the original idea of their essence contained in the Word as the eternal image of the Father. This is what St. Paul appears to mean when he says in Colossians 1:15-17 that all things in heaven and on earth were created in Christ, through Christ, and for Christ. He is the efficient cause of the universe because through him all things were made, he is the exemplary cause of the universe because all things were made in him, and he is the final cause of the universe as its ultimate perfection.<sup>54</sup>

One may object that while the Incarnation is the means which raises human nature to its highest perfection, from this it does not necessarily follow that the Incarnation is the final cause of the universe. The medicine which heals an invalid is only the means for his attaining health, and not the end. No one would ever admit that medicine restores a man's health for the sake of the medicine itself. But this example falls short if we consider that the Incarnate Word is not only the means of our attaining perfection, but the very "image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15 RSV). As Thomas argues in the first article of the *Tertia Pars*, it is most fitting that the Word of God should become incarnate to make visible what is invisible and hidden in the divine essence, "for to this end was the whole world made, as is clear from the word of the Apostle (Rom 1:20): *For the invisible things of God . . . are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.*"<sup>55</sup> That which most manifestly reveals the divine essence to us is the Word made flesh.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, according to Thomas's reasoning, if we view Romans 1:20 in conjunction with Paul's appellation of the Son as the image of God, then *the*

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<sup>54</sup> Colossians 1:16.

<sup>55</sup> *ST IIIa* q. 1, a. 1.

<sup>56</sup> John 1:18 RSV: "No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known."



*things that are made* refers primarily to God made man, assuming our flesh so that we may see God as he is.<sup>57</sup>

Commenting upon this mystery further, Damascene explains that the Incarnation reveals all at once the goodness, wisdom, justice, and power of God, “for there is nothing greater than for God to become incarnate.”<sup>58</sup> To define Christ only as the means of healing for a corrupted race, is therefore to see him within confines too narrow for the fullness of his glory. While he did indeed restore humanity through his assumption of our nature, this very assumption revealed the majesty of the Trinity and the infinite mercy of the all-powerful and all-loving Creator, who deigned to become poor so that by his poverty we might become rich.<sup>59</sup> Such wealth is only secondarily for our sake, and primarily for the manifestation of the divine glory, flowing from goodness which is by nature diffusive of itself. Because God is the very essence of goodness, and “it belongs to the essence of the highest good to communicate itself in the highest manner<sup>60</sup> to the creature,”<sup>61</sup> he communicates himself to us through uniting our nature to his own in the Person of the Word, thus making possible our sharing in his divine life.

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<sup>57</sup> ” 1 John 3:2 RSV: “Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

<sup>58</sup> John Damascene, *De Fide Orth.* iii, 1 (as cited in *ST IIIa* q. 1, a. 1).

<sup>59</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:9 RSV: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.”

<sup>60</sup> Such a union is indeed a union of the highest manner in a twofold sense. The capacity of human nature to be assumed by a divine Person is not according to its natural passive power, since the ability to be united with the supernatural is not something we possess according to our own nature. Consequently, this ability must be according to our congruency or fitness for this union, and we possess such a fitness by both necessity and dignity. First, by necessity, because our fallen nature is in need of a Redeemer, and secondly, according to our dignity, because our intellectual nature is capable of being united to the Word through knowledge and love. Not even the angelic nature is capable of this union, because although they are superior to us according to their intellectual dignity, they are not in need of a Redeemer. While there are fallen angels, their nature is still irredeemable because of their intellectual superiority. The capacity to be assumed by a divine Person is therefore a property unique to human nature. “Hence it follows that a thing is said to be assumable according to some fitness for such a union” (*ST IIIa* q. 4, a. 1), and human nature is fit to be united with the Word through both our need for a Savior and our intellectual powers.

<sup>61</sup> *ST IIIa* q. 1, a. 1.

The language of Scripture reveals this threefold causality present in the person of Christ, especially in Colossians 1:16. The following table gives four different translations of this verse, which proclaims that all things were created not only *through* Christ as an efficient cause, and *in* Christ as an exemplary cause, but also *for* Christ as a final cause.

omnia per ipsum et in ipso creata sunt (Colossians 1:16 Vulgate).	all things were created by him and in him (Colossians 1:16 Douay-Rheims).	πάντα ἔκτισται δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν (Colossians 1:16 SBLGNT).	All things have been created through him and for him (Colossians 1:16 NRSV).
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The Douay-Rheims translates the prepositional phrases of this verse, or the Vulgate *per ipsum* and *in ipso*, as *by him* and *in him*. However, the majority of English translations, including the New American Standard Bible, the English Standard Version, and the New Living Translation, render the same phrases as *through him* and *for him*. The rendering of *in ipso* as *for him* supports the claim that Christ is not only the efficient and exemplary cause of the universe, but also its final cause. In this way, he is not only the principle of all things, but also their end - the firstborn of all creatures, and that for which all creatures exist and towards whom all creatures strive for eternal union.

The literal meaning of the Greek preposition εἰς also sheds light on the nature of the universe's relation to Christ. This preposition denotes "the end which one has in view,"<sup>62</sup> where *end* is used under the ratio of *object* or *purpose*. εἰς is also in the accusative case, and when *in* takes the accusative it means *unto* or *for the sake of*. Such a *ratio* also includes the notion of final causality, which is also present in Romans 11:36. There εἰς is often translated as *unto*, or *for the sake of*: "For from him, and through him,

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<sup>62</sup> James Strong, *The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 1537.

and unto him, are all things” (Romans 11:36 ASV). Here we see again the threefold causality in the Incarnate Son of God, who is the type of the universe’s perfection, the principle through which it subsists, and the final end to which it conforms.

### **C. The Carmelites of Salamanca on the Motive of the Incarnation**

This section focuses on the motive of the Incarnation as articulated by the Carmelites of Salamanca, or the Salmanticenses,<sup>63</sup> in the *Cursus Theologicus*,<sup>64</sup> and as explained by Fr. Dylan Schrader in his work *A Thomistic Christocentrism*. The claim that Christ is the final cause of the universe presupposes a principle from Scotus, and articulated further by Schrader, that the existence of the Word as incarnate was first in the intention of the divine intellect.<sup>65</sup> While there is no rational motion in the divine mind as there is in human beings, the way in which human understanding conforms to the divine intellect is to consider it in terms of the logical structure to which we ourselves must adhere. Such adherence occurs only through the mode of analogy,<sup>66</sup> however, and must never translate literally to the divine intellect, which transcends both time and logic. With this in mind, man naturally understands final causality in terms of intention and execution, and therefore, when seeking to understand the motives for divine providence, he applies these terms to the divine essence in an analogous sense.

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<sup>63</sup> The Salmanticenses were Discalced Carmelites in the seventeenth century who studied at the College of *San Elias*, which formed part of the University of Salamanca in western Spain. See Dylan Schrader, *A Thomistic Christocentrism: Recovering the Carmelites of Salamanca on the Logic of the Incarnation* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 4.

<sup>64</sup> This commentary on the works of St. Thomas has multiple authors, but was completed by Antonio de San Juan Bautista (1641-99) and Ildefonso de los Angeles (1663-1737), and printed in 1710. See Schrader 59-60.

<sup>65</sup> Schrader 41: “Scotus influences the discussion about the rationale for the incarnation ... [by] couch[ing] everything in terms of logical priority and posteriority.” For a more complete discussion of this point, see Schrader, 34-41.

<sup>66</sup> See *ST*Ia q. 13, a. 5.

Since the movement of the will is the principle of all action, that which the will first desires to accomplish is the last action of the instrument which fulfills this desire. The completely constructed house, with every detail in place, is the first thing the architect conceives in his mind, but in its actual construction, the final step to finish the building of the house is what completes the actualization of the architect's original idea. Analogously, in seeking to grasp the final causes of the workings of providence within human life, if we say that Christ is the final cause of the universe, then he is the pinnacle of creation, being first in the intention of the divine intellect. This is not to say that he detracts from the glory of the Godhead which is the ultimate end of all the divine works, but rather that he contributes to the manifestation of the Trinity in a way that is unique to the Son as Incarnate.

If Christ himself is prior in the divine intention of creating the universe, then all of the intermediary steps between the first separation of light from darkness, through the creation of Adam, fall of man, covenants of the Old Law, and history of the chosen people, lead up to Christ and exist for the sake of Christ. But since God himself reveals to us through Scripture that the Word became flesh in order to save us from our sins,<sup>67</sup> the very essence of Christ, as God made man, is that of our Redeemer. To understand Christ in isolation from the fact of man's fall and sinful state is therefore to understand him apart from his redemptive role and to undermine his essence.

But if Christ only became man because of Adam's sin, this raises the question of whether the Son of God would have become incarnate if man had not sinned. In other words, is it possible for God to have created the world for the sake of Christ while also bestowing the gift of the incarnate Word primarily as a remedy for sin? How can we preserve the *felix culpa* while also seeing Christ, or the new

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<sup>67</sup> *ST* IIIa, q. 1, a. 3.

Adam, as the new pinnacle of creation and that for the sake of which the universe exists?<sup>68</sup> Such mysteries have long been a subject of controversy in the theological tradition, and while this debate has many voices, those of Aquinas and Scotus bear particular prominence.<sup>69</sup>

According to Aquinas, the motives for divine action are so transcendent and intricate that they can only be revealed to man through revelation.<sup>70</sup> And since revelation itself assigns the redemption of man as the reason for the Incarnation, it is most probable to adopt the position that God would not have become man without sin.<sup>71</sup> Scotus, on the other hand, argues that God planned the Incarnation as logically prior to sin and therefore independent from it, so that the predestination of Christ came first in the intention of the divine intellect, and the specification of Christ as redeemer followed from this intention.<sup>72</sup>

Although the minds of Aquinas and Scotus appear to be polarized in this matter, both of their teachings bear fruitful relevance for its elucidation, and their apparent conflict is what gives rise to a comprehensive consideration of this mystery in the *Cursus Theologicus*. This work, as previously mentioned, is attributed to the Salmanticenses, and contains the treatise *De motivo Incarnationis*, which was written by the Carmelite Juan de la Anunciacon and published in 1687.<sup>73</sup> The *De motivo* addresses explicitly the question of whether God would have assumed flesh by virtue of the present

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<sup>68</sup> For a summary of the language of the Scholastics concerning this question, see Schrader 3: “Did God make the world for Christ? Or, did he send Christ to save the world?”

<sup>69</sup> Schrader 22-41.

<sup>70</sup> *ST IIIa* q. 1, a. 3: “Ea enim quae ex sola Dei voluntate proveniunt, supra omne debitum creaturae, nobis innotescere non possunt nisi quatenus in sacra Scriptura traduntur, per quam divina voluntas innotescit.”

<sup>71</sup> *ST IIIa* q. 1, a. 3: “Unde, cum in sacra Scriptura ubique incarnationis ratio ex peccato primi hominis assignetur, convenientius dicitur incarnationis opus ordinatum esse a Deo in remedium peccati, ita quod, peccato non existente, incarnatio non fuisset.”

<sup>72</sup> Schrader 34-41.

<sup>73</sup> Schrader 60-61.

decree if man had not sinned,<sup>74</sup> and begins with two preliminary and foundational distinctions that are vital for the understanding of the Salamancaenses' position. The first of these is that the glory of God is the primary end of all his works.<sup>75</sup> Within this context, the motives for his actions do not exist outside himself, and hence every divine motive which is conformable to our understanding is that which is the final end of the work itself, considered apart from the divine essence.<sup>76</sup> Secondly, it lies within the realm of logical possibility that God willed the Incarnation for multiple ends besides redemption, such as its inherent goodness or the perfection of the universe. But the debate about the motive for the Incarnation does not concern every possible permutation of logical possibility. It rather begins with the assumption that God became man in our world and saved us from our present condition, seeing the Incarnation as an event that has occurred within the history of our own reality and seeking the reason for this particular occurrence.<sup>77</sup>

#### **D. First Component of the Salamanca Theory: Two Species of Final Cause**

These distinctions provide the framework for two vital components of the Salamanca theory: the employment of two species of final cause, and the necessity of dividing, for the sake of our own understanding, the divine intention for the Incarnation into two conceptual stages.<sup>78</sup> We will address the two species of final cause first. Aristotle is the first to posit these two species in the *De Anima*,<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Schrader 61.

<sup>75</sup> *ST* Ia q. 21, a. 4: "Opus autem divinae iustitiae semper praesupponit opus misericordiae, et in eo fundatur. Creaturae enim non debetur aliquid, nisi propter aliquid in eo praeexistens, vel praeconsideratum, et rursus, si illud creaturae debetur, hoc erit propter aliquid prius. Et cum non sit procedere in infinitum, oportet devenire ad aliquid quod ex sola bonitate divinae voluntatis dependeat, quae est ultimus finis."

<sup>76</sup> Schrader 61.

<sup>77</sup> Schrader 61-62.

<sup>78</sup> Schrader 63.

<sup>79</sup> Schrader 64.

when he explains that the soul acts for a twofold end, namely “that which and that for whom.”<sup>80</sup> By *that which*, Aristotle is referring to the end achieved, while *that for whom* names the one who receives the benefits of the end achieved. The Salmanticenses call *that which* the *finis cuius gratia*, or “that good which is desired on its own account and others on its account,”<sup>81</sup> and *that for whom* the *finis cui*, “the subject or person for whom such a good is desired.”<sup>82</sup> The *finis cuius gratia* and the *finis cui*, while distinct, have such intrinsic unity that they comprise two complementary aspects of the same end rather than two separate ends.<sup>83</sup> For example, the end of the physician’s work is the health of his patient, and while the primary end of his labors is health, he does not desire this health apart from its existence in his patient. Although these two aspects comprise the twofold end of final causality, the *finis cuius gratia*, being that beyond which nothing is willed and for which all other subordinate actions are willed, has a notion closer to final causality than the *finis cui*. Therefore “the *finis cuius gratia* can be designated as the end *simpliciter*, despite the fact that it is only ever willed in conjunction with a *finis cui*.”<sup>84</sup> This is to say that although the physician cannot desire the end of health as existing apart from his patient, his primary motive as a physician is still the health itself, as a quality of his patient.

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<sup>80</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. R. Glen Coughlin, ed. R. Glen Coughlin (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2022), 2.4, 415b 20-23.

<sup>81</sup> Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus Collegii Salmanticensis Fr. discalceatorum B. Mariae de Monte Carmeli [...] Summam theologicam angelici doctoris D. Thomae complectens*, tract. 8, *De ultimo fine*, q. 1, proem., no. 4 (as cited in Schrader 64): “*Cujus gratia* dicitur bonum, illud quod propter se appetitur, et alia propter ipsum.”

<sup>82</sup> Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus Collegii Salmanticensis Fr. discalceatorum B. Mariae de Monte Carmeli [...] Summam theologicam angelici doctoris D. Thomae complectens*, tract. 8, *De ultimo fine*, q. 1, proem., no. 4 (as cited in Schrader 64): “*Finis vero cui* vocatur subjectum, vel persona, cui tale bonum appetitur.”

<sup>83</sup> Schrader 64-65.

<sup>84</sup> Schrader 65. See also *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §5, no. 30 (as cited in Schrader 66).

There is a further distinction between the *finis cuius gratia* and *finis cui* which, though subtle, bears an essential role in the Salmanticenses' argument. This distinction originates from the different orders of intention and execution.<sup>85</sup> In the order of execution, the result of the agent's action is called the *finis effectus* or end effected, and this is the fruit of the *finis cuius gratia*, or the end conceived in the mind of the agent. But the *finis cuius gratia* is also called the *finis causa*, or end as cause, since it causes the necessary actions to bring the desired result into actuality. The *finis effectus* and *finis causa* can be materially identical, as when an artist creates his work.<sup>86</sup> He brings the idea which was first in his intention to act through its material composition, which concludes with the last step of executing his work. Since this work both motivates the agent to act and results from his action, in the light of intention it is a cause and in light of execution it is an effect. Therefore, while the *finis effectus* and *finis causa* can be materially identical, they have a notional distinction that depends on whether we view them from the perspective of intention or execution.

#### **E. Second Component of the Salamanca Theory: Two *Signa Rationis in quo***

The second key to understanding the divine motive for the Incarnation is viewing the divine intention in light of two conceptual stages.<sup>87</sup> According to the Salmanticenses, and in opposition to their predecessors who imposed numerous structures upon the intentions of providence, there are only two logical steps, or *signa rationis*, that are necessary for understanding the divine intention. One is prior to the determination of the will, and the other results from this determination.<sup>88</sup> The first we call

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<sup>85</sup> Schrader 66.

<sup>86</sup> However, this is not always the case. If an artist, for example, were to make something only for profit, the *finis effectus* and *finis causa* would not be identical because he would be making his art for an end beyond itself. See Schrader 66.

<sup>87</sup> Schrader 71-74.

<sup>88</sup> *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §1, no. 6 (as cited in Schrader 71).



God's simple intelligence, by which he knows himself and everything he is capable of doing. It exists as a divine attribute and from all eternity, completely independent from the divine act of creation.<sup>89</sup> The second is God's knowledge of our world as he has already created it and therefore as it exists within our particular historical order.<sup>90</sup> This knowledge is of a world existing in actuality and thus follows, in our understanding only, from the determination of the divine will to create the universe. The Salmanticenses called these two conceptual stages *signa in quo*, instead of *signa a quo*.<sup>91</sup> The preposition *in* designates a one-way relation of effect to cause in the divine act of creation, whereas the preposition *a* designates a relation of reciprocal dependence between cause and effect.<sup>92</sup> If we then apply the principle of *signa in quo* to the two conceptual stages of the divine intellect, this means that God's knowledge of the created universe presupposes his knowledge of himself, but his knowledge of himself does not presuppose the existence of the universe as created, or any other universe which he is capable of creating.

The difference between *signa in quo* and *signa a quo* is vital to keep in mind whenever we seek to understand the motives of divine providence. The works of God as they extend to us presuppose his creative power, but the fact that he possesses this power does not necessitate his acting in any particular way. The relation between God as the first cause of the universe, and the effect of our universe existing as created, is therefore a relation *in quo*, so that the universe depends upon the divine power, but this divine power need not have created the universe.<sup>93</sup> Viewing providence in light of this relation allows us

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<sup>89</sup> Schrader 71.

<sup>90</sup> Schrader 71.

<sup>91</sup> *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §1, no. 6 (as cited in Schrader 71).

<sup>92</sup> Schrader 71-72.

<sup>93</sup> Schrader 72-74.

to understand the divine motives for creating while preserving our notion of divine freedom as a power that is not constricted to produce only one effect of only one specification.<sup>94</sup> Through one *signum in quo*, God then knows the infinitude of his works which he contains pre-eminently within himself, regardless of whether they extend from him. And then, in a second *signum in quo*, he knows those things which extend from his power into a state of actuality.<sup>95</sup>

### **F. Conclusion of the Foregoing Components: Primacy of Christ as Redeemer**

The Salmanticenses' position uses both the distinction between *finis cuius gratia* and *finis cui*, and the two *signa rationis* of the divine will, in order to explain the motive for the Incarnation. The union of these two principles yields the conclusion that Christ is both first in the divine intention and that he would not have become man without sin.<sup>96</sup> He is prior to all other decrees of the divine will so that to him "all other things, even the very permission and remediation of sin, would be ordered as the *finis cuius gratia*."<sup>97</sup> This priority also necessitates that even "our predestination and all its effects depend on Christ and suppose him as previously intended and decreed in the genus of final cause."<sup>98</sup> But the priority of Christ does not exclude redemption from sin as the primary motive for the Incarnation. The Incarnation as primarily redemptive is compatible with the primacy of Christ in the divine mind.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Schrader 74.

<sup>95</sup> Schrader 74.

<sup>96</sup> Schrader 74.

<sup>97</sup> *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §1, no. 4 (as cited in Schrader 75): "Supponendum est Deum intendisse Incarnationem ob ejus intrinsecam excellentiam, ita ut decreverit Christum tanquam primo volitum, in quod omnia alia, et ipsius etiam permissio peccati, atque remedium ordinarentur, sicut in finem cujus gratia."

<sup>98</sup> *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §1, no. 4 (as cited in Schrader 75): "[A]deo ut praedestinatio nostra, et omnes ejus effectus dependeant a Christo, illumque supponant in genere causae finalis prius intentum, et decretum."

<sup>99</sup> Schrader 74-78.

In order to show how the Salmanticenses use the unity of the two essential principles to argue this conclusion, Schrader applies the two species of final cause to the Incarnation.<sup>100</sup> In their writings they refer to Christ interchangeably as both the *finis cuius gratia* and the *finis causa*, or end as cause, of the Incarnation.<sup>101</sup> In a similar manner, they refer to redeemed humanity as both the *finis cui* and *finis effectus*, or end effected, of the Incarnation.<sup>102</sup> As explained above, while it is possible for the *finis causa* and *finis effectus* to be materially identical, as when the final cause of a physician's efforts is to produce health in his patient, and a healthy patient results from his labors, this is not always the case.<sup>103</sup> The Salmanticenses argue that the *finis causa* and the *finis effectus* of the Incarnation are both notionally and materially distinct, since the perfection of the existence of Christ and the redeemed state of humanity differ both notionally and materially.<sup>104</sup>

Although these two aspects of final cause are always distinct, redeemed humanity still participates in the final causality of Christ, through his very act of becoming man. That our redemption is the secondary motive for the Incarnation does not exclude our fallen state as being the condition for which the Son of God came to dwell among us. While maintaining the primacy of Christ, the Salmanticenses argue it is still possible that Christ would not have become man if Adam had not fallen, so that man's redemption would be the *sine qua non* condition for the Incarnation.<sup>105</sup> In this case, an agent chooses to enact a *finis cuius gratia* in particular relation to a specific *finis cui*, as a doctor may will health for the sake of one patient but not another. The motive of the physician *qua*

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<sup>100</sup> Schrader 66-71.

<sup>101</sup> Schrader 66.

<sup>102</sup> Schrader 66.

<sup>103</sup> Schrader 66.

<sup>104</sup> Schrader 67-68.

<sup>105</sup> Schrader 68.

physician is to produce health, but this does not prevent him from choosing the patients in which he produces this effect. The patient he chooses to heal is then the *finis cui* of the physician's actions, without which he would not act, while still being a secondary motive within the overarching end of producing health.<sup>106</sup>

Similarly, in the divine motive for the Incarnation, God primarily wills the existence of Christ, but as intrinsically connected with the redemption of mankind. This is possible because the *finis cuius gratia* and the *finis cui* are two aspects of one and the same end. The end is Christ, but the essence of Christ in the present order is inseparable from his role as the redeemer of humanity.<sup>107</sup> As a physician primarily desires health as the end of his labors, and secondarily desires health as existing in specific patients, so does God will with one *signum in quo* that the Son become man, and will in the second *signum in quo* that his becoming man saves humanity from sin. This is why the Salmanticenses pursue the motive for the Incarnation as an event which has occurred by virtue of the *present* decree, detached from any hypothetical universes or circumstances beyond the current reality of our world and our history. Within the first conceptual stage of the divine intention, God could become man without sin. But we know from revelation that he became man in order to save us. Therefore, with the additional aspect of the second *signum in quo*, we must assert that the redemption of mankind occurred as the occasion for the Son of God to assume human nature.

While the *finis cui* and *finis cuius gratia* are both materially and notionally distinct in the Incarnation, Christ is still in some way the *finis cui* of the hypostatic union since he merits glory as our

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<sup>106</sup> Schrader 68.

<sup>107</sup> Schrader 69-71.

redeemer.<sup>108</sup> The notion of Christ as the *finis cuius gratia* therefore includes the notion of Christ as the *finis cui* of the Incarnation, and the notion of Christ as beneficiary also includes the notion of Christ as the final end of creation.<sup>109</sup> The Salmanticenses explain this latter reciprocity by dividing the *finis cuius gratia* further into the *finis qui*, or the end itself, and the *finis quo*, or the process by which we attain the desired end.<sup>110</sup> An instance of the *finis cui* becoming a constituent part of the *finis cuius gratia* is when a predestined soul reaches the glory of beatitude. The glorified soul is the *finis cui* of the gift of glory, while the glory itself is the *finis cuius gratia*. But the *finis qui*, or end in itself, is the glorified soul. Therefore the *finis cui* enters into the *finis cuius gratia* by virtue of the *finis qui*, which operates as a bridge between the account of the end achieved and the one who benefits from the achievement of this same end.<sup>111</sup> A doctor can never will health as some distant idea apart from health as substantiated in a concrete individual. Similarly, God cannot will the glory of a beatified soul apart from its presence within that soul.<sup>112</sup> The same principle applies to Christ, whom God does not will apart from his status as our redeemer. “God not only loves the abstract idea of the Incarnation but also decrees it with all its determinate circumstances,”<sup>113</sup> and one of these primary determinations is man’s redemption from sin.<sup>114</sup>

The Salmanticenses then divide their position into three main points concerning the first *signum rationis* of the divine foreknowledge. The first is that God foreknew the possibility of Christ,

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<sup>108</sup> *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §6, no. 32 (as cited in Schrader 69).

<sup>109</sup> Schrader 69.

<sup>110</sup> Salmanticenses, *Cursus theologicus*, tract. 8, q. 1, proem., no. 4; tract 19, dub. 2, §3, no. 26 (as cited in Schrader 69).

<sup>111</sup> Schrader 69.

<sup>112</sup> Schrader 69-70.

<sup>113</sup> Schrader 70-71.

<sup>114</sup> Schrader 69-71.

on account of his intrinsic excellence, as the final cause of all other elements of creation, from which all other created entities would both originate as their type, and to which they would tend as their ultimate perfection.<sup>115</sup> The second is that the sin of Adam and his descendants could be the condition for the glory and exaltation of Christ as our redeemer, “in such a way that his predestination would be bound to the remediation of sin and the redemption of men.”<sup>116</sup> This does not mean that the Son of God could not have become man without the fall of humanity, but rather that in our present history, the condition for the Incarnation as it occurred within our universe is the sin of Adam and his children. Thirdly, it fell within the divine foreknowledge that there could be a mutual dependence between the fall of man and the coming of Christ, such that both the permission and remediation of sin would be ordered to Christ as the *finis cuius gratia*.<sup>117</sup> Conversely, God also foreknew the possibility of ordering the Incarnation towards the salvation of man so that its *finis cui*, or *finis effectus*, would be our satisfaction from sin. Man’s sin then falls *in genere causae materialis*,<sup>118</sup> or within the genus of material cause, while humanity itself is the beneficiary of Christ as Redeemer, or the *finis cui* of the Incarnation. Therefore, the priority of Christ and the priority of man in regard to the motive of

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<sup>115</sup> *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §1, no. 7 (as cited in Schrader 78): “Cognovit Christum ob infinitam ipsius excellentiam aptissimum esse, qui constitueretur finis omnium creaturarum, et propter quem omnia fierent, et homines eligerentur, sive praedestinerentur ad gloriam; ita ut omnes hi effectus respicerent Christum ut finem, dependerentque ab eo in genere causae finalis.”

<sup>116</sup> *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §1, no. 7 (as cited in Schrader 78): “Cognovit etiam peccata, quae tam in Adamo, quam in filiis permitteret, esse materiam sufficientem, in cuius remedium, et satisfactionem praedestineretur Christus: ita ut ipsius praedestinatio alligaretur peccati remedio, et hominum redemptioni: ea quippe combinatio, atque connexio dubium non est, quod cadat intra latitudinem possibilium.”

<sup>117</sup> *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §1, no. 7 (as cited in Schrader 78): “Cognovit denique (ut alia ad praesentem considerationem non adeo pertinentia praetermittamus, [sic] posse inter Incarnationem, et peccati remedium, sive hominum redemptionem eam connexionem, et mutuam dependentiam constitui, quod permissio peccati, ejusque remedium ordinarentur in Christum tanquam in finem cuius gratia; ab eoque dependerent in genere causae finalis.”

<sup>118</sup> *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §1, no. 7 (as cited in Schrader 78).

the Incarnation fall within their own causal orders that are distinct but interdependent,<sup>119</sup> where humanity and Christ are each first within their own order: “From the perspective of *finis cuius gratia* [...] Christ is first. At the same time, from the perspective of material cause and *finis cui*, sin itself and humanity to be redeemed are first.”<sup>120</sup> This interdependence is possible because of the single providential decree<sup>121</sup> which binds them together and causes the foundation of unity for causes which, though interdependent, are nevertheless first in their own orders, originating from the being who is the first principle of all created hierarchies. The second *signum rationis* is the conceptual stage in the divine knowledge that actualizes these possibilities in our time and our universe, so that redeemed humanity is first in the divine intention in the order of *finis cui*, and second to Christ in the divine intention according to the order of *finis cuius gratia*. Christ is still essentially prior, however, according to the whole of the divine intention, since of the two *signa rationis*, the *finis cuius gratia* “is the more dominant”<sup>122</sup> as that which contains the notion of an end more primarily than the *finis cui*. In addition, these two *signa* exist only notionally, as a divided way in which the human intellect understands what is united in a single decree of divine providence.

But one difficulty remains in this explanation of the divine motive. Since the *finis cuius gratia* and *finis cui* are interdependent as two aspects of the same end, it would follow that Christ still would not have entered our universe without the motive of redemption, since the *finis cui*, or redeemed

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<sup>119</sup> Schrader 77: “[B]ecause each cause is first in its own order, there can be mutual dependencies with corresponding relative priorities from the perspective of the various causes. All of these fall within the single divine decree and can thus be accounted for by two *signa in quo*.”

<sup>120</sup> Schrader 78.

<sup>121</sup> Schrader 76: “[The Salmanticenses] consider the whole order of history as falling within a single divine decree. Then, they distinguish different causal components of the historical order that give rise to different relative priorities, since each cause is first in its own order.”

<sup>122</sup> Schrader 69.

humanity, is inseparable from Christ as the *finis cuius gratia*.<sup>123</sup> The Salmanticenses resolve this difficulty by referring to the Thomistic principle that the motives of the divine will are only disclosed to us through the medium of revelation, which assigns man's redemption as the primary motive of the Incarnation. If we adhere to Scripture as the Word of God, we must then hold this as an eternal and unbreakable truth.<sup>124</sup> But it does not contradict the primacy of Christ as the final cause, precisely because of the principle from St. Thomas, and to which the Salmanticenses remain faithful, that Scripture reveals the redemption of mankind as the chief reason for the Word becoming incarnate in the present decree. The excellence of Christ then, as incarnate in our own world, is intrinsically linked with the glory he merits as the savior of mankind. But redeemed humanity is an intermediary cause that is ordered toward the glory of Christ as the divine person in whom humanity finds supernatural perfection, and who is therefore the ultimate or final cause of creation.

This linking of the primacy of Christ with the redemption of man reveals further the unity of Christ as our savior and Christ as not only the final but also exemplar and efficient cause of humanity as redeemed. The salvific role of Christ is in fact inseparable from his nature as the exemplar of man, the agent of our attaining supernatural glory, and the last end of creation. Through the offering of his life on Calvary, he gives the model of sacrificial love for all of mankind, thus acting as exemplar.<sup>125</sup> Then, as both an efficient and final cause, he invites all of humanity to reach their final end of

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<sup>123</sup> Schrader 78.

<sup>124</sup> *De motivo Incarnationis*, dub. 1, §2, no. 8 (as cited in Schrader 79): "Probatur unico, sed gravissimo D Tho. fundamento: nam cessante motivo aut ratione propter quae Deus de facto decreverit Incarnationem, Verbum non assumeret carnem ex vi praesentis decreti."

<sup>125</sup> 1 John 4:10-11 RSV: "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."



supernatural glory by imitating his love and sharing in his suffering,<sup>126</sup> since it is through the merits of his passion and participating in his sacrifice that they can then participate in the ultimate glory of the Godhead, which is also their final end.<sup>127</sup>

## II. The Participation of Mary in the Final Causality of Christ

Now we will turn to Charles De Koninck's commentary on the Book of Wisdom in his work *Ego Sapientia: The Wisdom that is Mary*, where he cites the view of Cornelius a Lapide that the final causality of Christ is inseparable from the final causality of Our Lady.<sup>128</sup> Everything we predicate of Christ in terms of final cause, must then also be applicable to the Blessed Virgin who is his Mother and the new Eve, just as he is the last Adam. The metaphors in the Sapiential Books are especially illuminating in what they reveal about the nature of our Redeemer and the Blessed Virgin in relation to the creation and redemption of the universe. For example, in Wisdom 8:1, the voice of the personified Wisdom speaks of "reaching from end to end," which De Koninck interprets as the circular motion symbolic of final causality and applicable to both the Incarnate Son and his Mother.<sup>129</sup> We have already established that Christ is the creative Word and, as the most excellent creature, is the efficient cause of creation as its principle, its formal and exemplary cause as the culmination of nature's ordination to grace, and its final cause as the end towards which all created beings are ordered. As will

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<sup>126</sup> Colossians 1:24 RSV: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church."

<sup>127</sup> Colossians 3:1-4 RSV: "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

<sup>128</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in De Koninck 52): "Although Christ and the Blessed Virgin are parts of the universe and consequently posterior to it in the order of material causality, nevertheless they are anterior to it in the order of final causality."

<sup>129</sup> De Koninck 10: "The Son and the mother thus constitute from the very beginning a kind of circular motion wherein the principle is the term, and the term, principle, a motion which is the symbol of Wisdom *which reaches from end to end.*"

be shown, the Blessed Virgin also shares in this threefold causality precisely because she is his Mother, and is consubstantial with him according to his human nature.<sup>130</sup>

In order to understand this threefold causality of Mary we must first specify the way in which she is the cause of Christ, namely that she is united to him as a co-principle of creation. The understanding of this particular union requires expounding the definition of wisdom as a first principle according to De Koninck, followed by an explanation of the four ways in which he argues that Our Lady belongs in the category of a first principle. From this explanation follows the further truth that Our Lady is a co-principle of both creation and redemption as a good intrinsic to the universe, and therefore deserves the title of New Eve. Before proceeding, we would do well to note that the following arguments do not prove that Mary, although the mother of Incarnate Wisdom, can ever attain the status of being Wisdom itself. God alone is the very substance of Wisdom, and Mary is not consubstantial with Christ with respect to his divine nature. But through her divine maternity, she is the only finite creature to participate in being the first principle of re-creation in grace, and it is this claim which the following development aims to explain and reinforce.

### **A. Wisdom as a First Principle of Creation**

When defining wisdom, De Koninck begins with the Aristotelian understanding of this virtue as a perfection of reason, the proper function of which is to know order.<sup>131</sup> Wisdom is therefore the

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<sup>130</sup> St. Albert, *In III Sententiarum*, d. 4, a. 5, ad 2 (as cited in De Koninck 51): “The Blessed Virgin is called the mother of Christ according to the hypostasis, which hypostasis is God and Man, and this is why she is the Mother of God and of the man - although she is not consubstantial with God except with respect to His human nature.”

<sup>131</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. J. Litzinger, O.P. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), Book I, Lecture I: “Sicut Philosophus dicit in principio Metaphysicae, sapientis est ordinare. Cuius ratio est quia sapientia est potissima perfectio rationis, cuius proprium est cognoscere ordinem; nam, etsi vires sensitivae cognoscant res aliquas absolute, ordinem tamen unius rei ad aliam cognoscere est solius intellectus aut rationis.”

highest perfection of both order and knowledge, since to know order among things belongs only to an intellectual power.<sup>132</sup> But the simple apprehension of order does not in itself attain to the perfection of wisdom. It is rather an exclusive attribute of wisdom to know principles which are entirely primary rather than intermediate: “Wisdom alone will be the highest perfection of reason insofar as it implies an order proceeding from a principle which is wholly first.”<sup>133</sup> To be a principle that is wholly first is not only to be the beginning of order, but to understand the beginning of all order precisely “under its proper formality of origin.”<sup>134</sup> Reason and intellect are capable of understanding connections between truths, but wisdom is the only perfection of knowing the order among all things, because “it grasps things in their primary root, wherein all the things that proceed therefrom are, in a certain way, pre-contained.”<sup>135</sup> This brings us to the distinction between the wise man and wisdom itself. The wise man sees the beginning of order itself as that which contains all subordinate orders pre-eminently within it, but wisdom *is* this very knowledge of the principle of all order, in which there is no distinction between wisdom as the unifying principle of all things and the knowledge of that same principle.

In order for wisdom to be predicated of anything substantially, it must be of that “which in its being and operation is of the nature of the first principle from which all things proceed by way of origination.”<sup>136</sup> Just as wisdom is not only the principle of all things, but the very knowledge of itself as principle, so is Wisdom as substance the principle of all things and the acknowledgment of itself as that

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<sup>132</sup> De Koninck 6: “Since order implies principle, and principle implies relation, the intellect alone can grasp order as order.”

<sup>133</sup> De Koninck 6.

<sup>134</sup> De Koninck 6.

<sup>135</sup> De Koninck 6.

<sup>136</sup> De Koninck 6.

principle.<sup>137</sup> Wisdom in the fullest sense is then wisdom according to substance, being, intellect, and will.<sup>138</sup> The Blessed Virgin, although she is a mere creature and is not co-equal with the divine substance, possesses certain characteristics which Scripture attributes to Wisdom. Since she possesses these in her substance, being, intellect, and will,<sup>139</sup> she is therefore a first principle of both creation and its re-creation through the redemption of her Son.

### **B. Our Lady as a First Principle in Her Substance and Being**

Our Lady participates in wisdom according to her substance and being by virtue of her participation in the conception of Christ, by which she becomes the genetrix of the hypostatic union.<sup>140</sup> Her role in this conception is that of a generator, whose proper function is to draw “that which is generated from its own substance while forming it.”<sup>141</sup> In the order of grace, the Son of Mary is her principle, because it is through the merits of his passion that she is able to consent to the divine maternity. But in the order of nature, Mary is the cause of her Son insofar as she is the principle of

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<sup>137</sup> De Koninck 6: “It would not suffice for it to attain the primary root solely according to knowledge because then it would be wise only, but it must substantially possess the nature of a first principle, and know itself as such.”

<sup>138</sup> De Koninck 6-7: “It would not suffice for [Wisdom] to attain the primary root solely according to knowledge because then it would be wise only, but it must substantially possess the nature of a first principle, and know itself as such. In order for the Blessed Virgin to be called Wisdom, she must be first principle in this sense. She must be herself first principle, not merely according to intellect and will, but also according to her substance and being.”

<sup>139</sup> Katherine M. Gardner, “‘The Lord Possessed Me In The Beginning Of His Ways’: Mary And The Trinitarian Order Of The Universe; A Commentary on Charles De Koninck’s *Ego Sapientia: The Wisdom That Is Mary*,” (PhD diss., Ave Maria University, 2013), 21: “Mary is not called Wisdom directly in Sacred Scripture, and yet when the proper character of wisdom is understood, both in general and in light of the Revelation of divine wisdom, we will find that the essential aspects of that character belong in a proper way to the Blessed Virgin. Moreover, we will find these characteristics in her through what is revealed in the literal sense of Scripture. Hence, the mystical application of the Wisdom texts to Mary illuminates our understanding by causing us to see more deeply into the mystery of her role in the divine plan for creation than we otherwise would, though all the justification of that insight is already ours in virtue of what has been explicitly revealed.”

<sup>140</sup> See *ST* III q. 32, a. 4, to which De Koninck appeals for the basis of Mary as Genetrix of Christ. See De Koninck 7.

<sup>141</sup> De Koninck 7.

union between his divinity and humanity. Christ was truly formed from her substance, so that she became the very mother of the principle of all created being.

As the mother of the cause and origin of all things, Mary is also *per se* the mother of all things.<sup>142</sup> She who gave birth to the Son of God is therefore a universal cause and all works of God relate to her as to their first principle. Since she is the mother of Christ in the fullest sense, she is the mother of him according to his hypostasis.<sup>143</sup> Therefore as the generative principle of Christ's birth in his hypostasis, the Word of God attributes wisdom to Mary according to the mode of a first principle and universal cause.<sup>144</sup> It is because of this truth that Cornelius a Lapide is able to call Mary "the mother of the eternal Wisdom incarnated in her,"<sup>145</sup> and "just as the Son is wisdom engendered and incarnate, so she is the Wisdom which engenders and incarnates."<sup>146</sup> This is not to deny the divine causality of the Incarnation, since the Godhead is still the primary agent of the hypostatic union.<sup>147</sup> The instrumental action of the Incarnation that operates by the power of the principal agent, or God himself, is the conception of the Word made flesh, but the proper action of supplying the matter for conception belongs to the nature of Our Lady as a human being.<sup>148</sup> Divine Providence chose this

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<sup>142</sup> St. Albert, *Mariale*, q. 145, p. 206a (as cited in De Koninck 8).

<sup>143</sup> St. Albert, *In III Sententiarum*, d. 4, a. 5, ad 2 (as cited in De Koninck 51): "Since birth primarily and principally has respect to the being of the hypostasis and the person, and secondarily to the nature, the Blessed Virgin is called the mother of Christ according to the hypostasis, which hypostasis is God and Man, and this is why she is the Mother of God and of the man - although she is not consubstantial with God except with respect to His human nature."

<sup>144</sup> De Koninck 8: "Being the cause of the cause of all things, the mother of God is consequently the mother of all things. ... Is she not under this aspect an absolutely universal cause? Is there any work of God which is not to be related to her as to its principle?"

<sup>145</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in De Koninck 52): "Ipsa est mater aeternae Sapientiae in se incarnatae."

<sup>146</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in De Koninck 52): "Sicut ergo filius ejus est Sapientia genita et incarnata: sic ipsa est sapientiae gignens et incarnans."

<sup>147</sup> *ST IIIa*, q. 3, a. 2: "Esse autem assumptionis principium convenit naturae divinae secundum seipsam, quia eius virtute assumptio facta est."

<sup>148</sup> For St. Thomas's explanation of instrumental causality and proper action, see *ST IIIa* q. 62, a. 5.

proper action as the conduit for his assumption of human nature. Therefore, while the proper action of conception is proper to Mary's nature as a finite woman, the instrumental action of the Incarnation belongs to the divine power and institution, which consecrated a human contribution of matter with the union of the Word. Aquinas speaks to this when he says that according to the matter, or passive principle which Mary supplied, this conception was natural, but under the aspect of its active power, or the divine agency, it was entirely miraculous.<sup>149</sup> This miracle offers us a particularly wondrous example of the divine power to exalt the lowliness of humanity with his very divine essence, through the mode of instrumental causality and proper action.

Neither does this miracle detract from the power of the divine essence or the glory of the Virgin Mother, because through the Incarnation the loving power of God and the dignity of the Virgin are both preserved and made manifest. God manifests his power by elevating the human element of the Virgin's matter to such an exalted state as to assimilate the divine personhood to her own personhood. Through this very assimilation, Our Lady is herself lifted to the supernatural height of becoming the mother of the very cause of the universe, in which elevation she takes a primarily active role through her proper action of generating new life.<sup>150</sup> De Koninck, in tandem with Aquinas,<sup>151</sup> understands the assimilative action which is common to every state of natural motherhood as a passive power in itself.

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<sup>149</sup> *ST* III q. 33, a. 4: "Si enim consideremus id quod est ex parte materiae conceptus, quam mater ministravit, totum est naturale. Si vero consideremus id quod est ex parte virtutis activae, totum est miraculosum."

<sup>150</sup> Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* (1964), §56: "Embracing God's salvific will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son, under Him and with Him, by the grace of almighty God, serving the mystery of redemption. Rightly therefore the holy Fathers see her as used by God not merely in a passive way, but as freely cooperating in the work of human salvation through faith and obedience."

<sup>151</sup> *ST* III, q. 32, a. 4: "Quia igitur beata virgo non hoc accepit ut esset pater Christi, sed mater, consequens est quod non acceperit potentiam activam in conceptione Christi, sive aliquid egerit, ex quo sequitur ipsam patrem fuisse Christi; sive nihil egerit, ut quidam dicunt, ex quo sequitur huiusmodi potentiam activam sibi frustra fuisse collatam. Et ideo dicendum est quod in ipsa conceptione Christi beata virgo nihil active operata est, sed solam materiam ministravit. Operata tamen est ante conceptionem aliquid active, praeparando materiam ut esset apta conceptui."

But “considered in her relation to the one engendered, the mother is properly an active principle,”<sup>152</sup> since the act of assimilating matter to the one engendered, which takes place in every generation, would be impossible without the vitality of the mother. This vitality is united to the primary active power as a co-principle of conception. It is through this co-principality that Mary is said to participate actively in the Incarnation of the Word, without any repugnance to the divine power.<sup>153</sup>

### **C. Our Lady as a First Principle in Her Intellect and Will**

Mary is also Wisdom in her intellect and will, since she gave her *Fiat* to the Incarnation with a free act of consent that was based upon her knowledge of the object of her consent.<sup>154</sup> The generation of the Incarnate Word presupposes her knowledge and reason, or her intellectual cooperation in the Incarnation. It also presupposes her consent, or the cooperation of her will in the generation of Christ. Before conceiving the Son of God in her flesh, then, Mary conceived him in a superior way in her heart, or her knowledge and will.<sup>155</sup> This procession of knowledge within Our Lady that bore the fruit of Christ both reflects and originates from the procession of knowledge within the Godhead, from which the Incarnate Word also originated.<sup>156</sup> Because she is the mother of Christ, Mary has the nature of a first principle insofar as she shares her flesh with her Son. But she also has the nature of a first principle

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<sup>152</sup> De Koninck 7.

<sup>153</sup> *LG* §62.

<sup>154</sup> De Koninck 8-9.

<sup>155</sup> St. Albert, t. 38, p. 158b, *In Lucam*, 11:27 (as cited in De Koninck 50): “The Blessed Virgin would not have engendered Christ in the flesh if she had not first of all conceived and preserved the Word in the ear of her heart (*aure cordis*), bearing Him so to speak in the womb of her heart (*in cordis utero*).”

<sup>156</sup> *Vie interieure de la Tres Sainte Vierge* 5-6 (as cited in De Koninck 50): “Just as [the eternal Father] engenders His Word through all eternity by His knowledge, by a return upon and vision of Himself, so He wills that Mary, the supremely perfect and holy image of His virginal fecundity, should engender the Word with knowledge.”

according to her intellect and will.<sup>157</sup> The 17th-century French scholar Jean-Jacques Olier claims that God the Father intended the divine maternity to be a rational participation in the eternal procession of the Son. Therefore the consent of the Virgin to become the Mother of God was not a blind submission but rather an entirely free act of volition which precluded her knowledge of the redemptive miracle which was to occur within her womb.<sup>158</sup> She knew that she would not only become the mother of the Word made flesh, but the mother of the Son of God who was sent into the world primarily to save us from sin. It is therefore impossible to understand the Mother of Christ without also understanding her as the Mother of our Redeemer. This is not only because the Father intended the Virgin Mary to be the co-principle of Christ's generation, but also because of her rational participation in this co-principality according to her reason and will.

The rational participation of Our Lady in the Incarnation also precludes her fullness of grace, by which she was both worthy to receive the gift of the divine maternity and by which she was given the gift of knowledge to understand this gift.<sup>159</sup> St. Augustine teaches that the root of Mary's joy in her physical motherhood is the even more exalted spiritual motherhood by which she bore Christ in her heart before conceiving Him in the womb.<sup>160</sup> This spiritual acceptance in Our Lady's heart, which was the prerequisite for her consent, is in relation to her own merit, superior to her physical conception of

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<sup>157</sup> De Koninck 8: "Wisdom implies knowledge, a procession according to knowledge. In order that the Blessed Virgin be truly Wisdom, she must, even in relation to God, in addition to her divine maternity according to the flesh, attain to the nature of a first principle according to intellect."

<sup>158</sup> *Vie interieure de la Tres Sainte Vierge* 5-6 (as cited in De Koninck 50): "Whereas other mothers will not know the one who is to be born of them, He wishes that Mary should know previously what manner of son she shall conceive: an angel will make known to her that this son will be the Son of the Most High, both God and man, the Redeemer of the world, and that His reign will endure forever."

<sup>159</sup> De Koninck 11-12.

<sup>160</sup> St. Augustine, *De sancta Virginitate*, c. 3 (as cited in De Koninck 51): "Maternal parenthood would have been of no advantage to Mary if she had not experienced more joy by bearing Christ in her heart than in her flesh."



Christ because it did not depend on the physical limitations of human nature. It was rather an act of pure immaterial love that only the power of grace could perform.

The fullness of grace is most proper to Our Lady as “the mother of divine Wisdom, in which there is nothing defiled.”<sup>161</sup> It was precisely because of this plenitude of grace that in consenting to her instrumental role in the Incarnation, the Blessed Virgin performed an act of the will with the most freedom of which any finite creature is capable.<sup>162</sup> According to De Koninck’s reading of St. Paul’s doctrine of grace, the source of both our free actions and the way in which we act is a gift from our Creator: “For it is God who of his good pleasure works in you both the will and the performance.”<sup>163</sup> The participation of Mary in our redemption is the crown jewel of this privilege granted from the divine mercy, since her *Fiat* was the instrument, united to the merits of Christ’s passion, which made all other acts of grace possible for mankind.<sup>164</sup> Mary’s act of submission to providence was then, through its rootedness in the fullness of grace and freedom, most properly an act of a first principle which not only engendered the flowering of grace for the members of her Son’s Mystical Body, but was performed by one who knew the nature of her consent with the clarity of grace. This act was “all the more truly her own”<sup>165</sup> because it was “entirely received according to this properly divine modality,”<sup>166</sup> just as every human decision to choose the good does not hinder but rather enables his freedom to live in accordance with the truth.

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<sup>161</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Q.D. de veritate*, q. 24, a. 9, ad. 2 (as cited in De Koninck 51).

<sup>162</sup> De Koninck 12: “Fullness of grace in Mary thus becomes the root of her consent to maternity, of the most free and liberal act that a pure creature can accomplish, of the most radical human act, upon which all the works of God are made to depend.”

<sup>163</sup> Philippians 2:13 (as cited in De Koninck 12).

<sup>164</sup> De Koninck 13: “To her in her quality of Wisdom it has been confided to place in the elect the principle of their conversion to God, to place in them the divine roots.”

<sup>165</sup> De Koninck 12.

<sup>166</sup> De Koninck 12.

#### **D. Our Lady as a Co-Principle of Creation and Redemption**

Since Our Lady is united to Christ as the fundamental principle of redemptive grace, and therefore also united to him as the efficient and exemplar cause of creation, it follows that she is inseparably united to her Son as the final cause of creation. She is the Mother not of God simply, but of God made man to save man, “who as Redeemer is the final and consequently absolutely first cause of the entire universe, for Christ was never efficaciously willed as the end of all things except as the Redeemer.”<sup>167</sup> And since she is the Mother of our Savior, “Mary is inseparably united to this final cause as co-principle.”<sup>168</sup> In her consent to the divine maternity, Mary then bears the connection between the two *signa rationis* in the divine intention. She is the woman whose humanity the Son of God assumed to himself, thus instantiating the foreknowledge of God regarding the Word’s assumption of human nature. Before the instance of Christ’s conception in Mary’s womb, the Incarnate Word was a mere possibility, but Our Lady’s consent to Gabriel’s invitation made this potency a reality in our history and our world. Providence chose her in her very substance, being, intellect, and will, to become the Mother of our Redeemer, not only as God made man, but as God made man to save us from sin. The Word could have taken flesh from another woman, in another time, and in another universe. But he chose our time, our universe, and this woman in which to manifest his love for us, through the specific mode of redemption and the specific instrumentality of the Blessed Virgin. The Father willed his Son to become man as our Redeemer within our present order of reality, and willed the divine maternity of Our Lady to be united with this order intrinsically, as the Mother of our Redeemer.

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<sup>167</sup> De Koninck 9-10. See also John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, t. 8, d. 3, a. 2, n. 52, p. 108b.

<sup>168</sup> De Koninck 9-10. See also John of St. Thomas, *Cursus theologicus*, t. 8, d. 3, a. 2, n. 52, p. 108b.

As the first principle and co-principle of creation according to efficient, exemplar, and final causality, both Mary and Christ encompass the circuit of all created things that originate from the divine principle and return to this same principle.<sup>169</sup> God as the origin of all things “gives her the power of giving herself as origin of God.”<sup>170</sup> It was because of this great mystery that St. Louis de Montfort was able to say that even God is subject to the Virgin.<sup>171</sup> If the divine nature of Christ was united to his human nature through the connecting principle of not only the Virgin’s flesh, but also her consent to become his mother, then she must in a special way share in his re-creation of the universe, and not merely as an origin of grace, but as an exemplar towards which all those reborn in grace must strive to imitate.

### **E. Our Lady as the Intrinsic Good of the Universe**

As the one creature to whom all the qualities of Wisdom are applicable, and since order is intrinsic to Wisdom, the Blessed Virgin is also a principle of order in the mode of exemplarity. She is not only the root of the order of grace but also pre-contains that order within herself, thus fulfilling the requirements for participating in the qualities attributed to Wisdom itself.<sup>172</sup> This worthiness is not confined to the Virgin as an individual, but extends to all of mankind and the rest of the universe, so that “together with her Son at the very origin of the universe, she is in a way the root of the universal order.”<sup>173</sup> Being the principle of this universal order allows her to be the fulfillment of what God

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<sup>169</sup> De Koninck 10: “The Son and the mother thus constitute from the very beginning a kind of circular motion wherein the principle is the term and the term, principle, a motion which is the symbol of Wisdom *which reaches from end to end.*”

<sup>170</sup> De Koninck 13.

<sup>171</sup> St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, *La vraie dévotion à la Sainte Vierge*, n. 76 [Canadian edition, 1940], p. 61 (as cited in De Koninck 51): “Ecce imperio Dei omnia subjiciuntur et Virgo; ecce imperio Virginis omnia subjiciuntur et Deus”.

<sup>172</sup> De Koninck 14.

<sup>173</sup> De Koninck 14.

desires most for the universe, namely the good of being properly ordered.<sup>174</sup> This order increases in perfection according to the depth of its foundation in the divine nature.<sup>175</sup> The Virgin as the cause of this order “is the purely created principle which is nearest to God and the most perfect that can be conceived.”<sup>176</sup> She is therefore truly the principle of renewal for all of creation, joining her Son in his redemptive work of re-creation. Through this work she also shares in the revelation of the Trinity, in whose vital processions and emanations she is the only creature to participate according to an order that belongs exclusively to her as the Mother of God.<sup>177</sup> This is due to the nature of vital emanation, which is an interior renewal according to which all that is renewed receives being according to the mode of procession.<sup>178</sup> As daughter of the eternal Father, mother of the Son, and spouse of the Holy Spirit, she draws her principality of order from the eminence of the divine order, and so unites “the order of the universe in a radically new way to the order which is in God according to the processions.”<sup>179</sup> In this way she is also the exemplar of grace for all of mankind on a level that no other creature has attained. The life of the Trinity reveals itself most manifestly through the work of the Incarnation, and since Our Lady has an intrinsic role in the Word of God becoming flesh, she is the creature who is most profoundly united to the work of the Incarnation and hence also to the revelation of the Trinity. It is here that the importance of viewing the ultimate end of all God’s works as the manifestation of the divine goodness comes to light.

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<sup>174</sup> De Koninck 14.

<sup>175</sup> De Koninck 14: “That which God principally desires in the universe is the good of order. This order is better in proportion as its principle, which is interior to the universe, is the more profoundly rooted in God.”

<sup>176</sup> De Koninck 14-15.

<sup>177</sup> De Koninck 15.

<sup>178</sup> De Koninck 15.

<sup>179</sup> De Koninck 15.

By virtue of her profound rootedness in the unity of the Trinitarian processions, Mary also merits the title of intrinsic good of the universe, when considered in light of her being separate from creation.<sup>180</sup> Since the highest good of creation is the ordering of its parts, and Our Lady, through her co-principality in our redemption, orders all the parts of the universe back to rest in their Creator, she is rightly entitled its intrinsic good, or the very order of all created elements.<sup>181</sup> As its intrinsic good, the Virgin is also the form of the universe, bearing the highest level of dignity above every other part of creation, since she is “that which by God’s will is the most desired for itself and most perfectly ordered to Him.”<sup>182</sup> We must note, however, that this is only rightly said of Our Lady when we consider her apart from the rest of creation. As a good separate from the universe, “the Blessed Virgin is more worthy than the order of the universe whose transcendental principle she is,”<sup>183</sup> but as a part of the universe, creation as a whole is a greater good than the individual existence of the Virgin.

And yet, even as an individual, “she remains the intrinsic root of the dignity inherent in the universe as a form and at the same time she has a greater share in its dignity.”<sup>184</sup> Our Lady can still be the form of the universe, and have the most superior share in its dignity, although she is merely a part of it, because of the specific relation between the whole of the universe and its parts, and the way in which she exists as an origin of grace with respect to creation. The principal part of any whole has the relation of form to all the parts which are subordinated to it, such that “the splendor that the inferior

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<sup>180</sup> De Koninck 16.

<sup>181</sup> De Koninck 16: “When from another point of view, we consider the Blessed Virgin as interior to the universe, we can compare her to the intrinsic good of the universe, a good which consists in the form which is none other than the order of its parts.”

<sup>182</sup> De Koninck 16.

<sup>183</sup> De Koninck 16.

<sup>184</sup> De Koninck 16.

parts derive from the subordination to the superior is greater than that which they themselves have of themselves absolutely.”<sup>185</sup> Since Mary is the mother of the Redeemer, and united to him as the co-principle of the new creation, she is also the principal part of creation, and bears to the universe, as renewed in Christ, the relation of formal cause. Even as a part of the universe, then, she is “the purely created principal cause of the dignity which ordains [all the other parts of the universe] most proximately and most perfectly to the dignity of the whole.”<sup>186</sup> While her nature as a finite creature prevents her from surpassing the dignity of the entire universe, due to her intrinsic union with Christ she is still properly said to be its principal, from which the splendor of all the parts derive both their splendor and variety,<sup>187</sup> and to which she is still superior as both their origin and form. She is the first cause of the universe in the mode of participation, but nevertheless is that creature to which the universe owes its dignity.<sup>188</sup>

### **F. Our Lady as the New Eve**

Through her great dignity which deserves the appellation of aspects also applicable to Wisdom itself, Mary is therefore the new Eve, just as Christ is the final Adam. She exists not only as the efficient cause of the new creation and the source of its dignity, but also as its formal cause, and the exemplar toward which the motion of this present life strives to conform, embody, and eventually attain. In his contemplation of this great mystery, De Koninck claims that the *fiat* of Mary “is the echo of the *Fiat* of

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<sup>185</sup> De Koninck 16.

<sup>186</sup> De Koninck 16-17.

<sup>187</sup> De Koninck 17: “Among all the purely created parts of the universe, she participates in a greater degree in the order of the universe, and she is invested in a greater way with its splendor and variety.”

<sup>188</sup> De Koninck 17: “She is that purely created part of the universe thanks to which it can be indued with a great dignity. *A spring rose out of the earth, watering all the face of the earth -- Fons autem ascendebat de terra, et irrigabat omnem faciem terrae.*”

Genesis, the word whence proceeds the new order to which the ancient had been ordered.”<sup>189</sup> He therefore agrees with Cornelius a Lapide, that “the order of nature was created and instituted for the order of grace,”<sup>190</sup> so that Christ and Mary are the culmination of the new creation according to redemptive mercy, just as Adam and Eve were the culmination of the universe according to original justice.

In his commentary on Genesis, St. Augustine interprets the account of the creation of man as a revelation of the perfection of human nature in the order of grace. Genesis 2:6 recounts that a spring rose up out of the earth, and God formed man out of the water from this spring and the clay of the ground. The first man was then formed from the face of earth, which Augustine takes to mean *dignity* of the earth, and which the Virgin renewed.<sup>191</sup> By virtue of this renewal, Augustine predicates the very dignity of the earth as one of the Virgin’s titles. She deserves this title because she is the Mother of God and the one who, by her intrinsic union with the operations of the Holy Spirit, renews the soiled clay of fallen human nature, so that “there might be formed the man who is placed in paradise to dress and keep it, that is, in the will of the Father, in order to accomplish and keep it.”<sup>192</sup> Christ as the last Adam is then the one to whom the natural existence of the first man is ordained to be perfected through salvific grace. Through accomplishing our redemption, he both restores humanity to a state superior to his former paradise, and preserves this elevated state. Furthermore, his Virgin Mother is the human

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<sup>189</sup> De Koninck 8.

<sup>190</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in De Koninck 52).

<sup>191</sup> St. Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, lib. II, c. 24, t. 3, col. 216 (as cited in De Koninck 52).

<sup>192</sup> St. Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, lib. II, c. 24, t. 3, col. 216 (as cited in De Koninck 52): “Facies terrae, id est, dignitas terrae, Mater Domini Virgo Maria rectissime accipitur, quam irrigavit Spiritus Sanctus, qui fontis et aquae nomine in Evangelio significatur, et quasi de limo tali homo fieret, qui constitutus est in paradiso, ut operaretur et custodiret, id est, in voluntate Patris, ut eam impleret atque servaret.”

instrument which the eternal Father ordained as the medium of this redemption, to be united with her Son as the co-principle of renewing the face of the earth, according to the vital immanence of the Trinitarian processions and their rootedness in the perfection of re-creative order. Because of her salvific instrumentality, Mary is the Mother of all the living in the order of grace, reversing the disobedience of the first woman,<sup>193</sup> and joining in her Son's redemptive work of restoring and preserving eternal life in the hearts of all men.<sup>194</sup>

## Conclusion

God then foreordained both Christ and Mary to be the instrumental causes of glorification and justification of all the saints, and to be those for whom the universe was created. This is not to deny that the world was made for man on a natural level, but rather that from the beginning, Providence ordained all saints to obtain grace and glory through the merits of the Incarnate Word and his Mother. Christ and Mary are therefore included in the final causality of the glorification of all saints as both agents and models of justification. And as conjoined final causes, they are also its formal or "exemplary cause, namely the idea,"<sup>195</sup> the twofold principle from which all created beings originate and to which those same beings return to find their ultimate perfection.

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<sup>193</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, trans. John Kembe (London: James Parker and Co., 1872), Book 5, Chapter XIX, §1: "For as the former [Eve] was led astray by an Angel's discourse to fly from God after transgressing His Word, so the latter [Mary] by an Angel's discourse had the Gospel preached unto her, that she might bear God, obeying His Word. And if the former had disobeyed God, yet the other was persuaded to obey God: that the Virgin Mary might become an Advocate for the Virgin Eve. And as mankind was bound unto death through a Virgin, it is saved through a Virgin: by the obedience of a virgin the disobedience of a virgin is compensated. For while the sin of the First-made man is yet receiving correction by the rebuke of the First-born, the Serpent's craft being overcome by the simplicity of the Dove, we are freed from those chains whereby we had been bound unto death."

<sup>194</sup> *LG* §65: "The Church ... justly looks to her, who, conceived of the Holy Spirit, brought forth Christ, who was born of the Virgin that through the Church He may be born and may increase in the hearts of the faithful also."

<sup>195</sup> Cornelius a Lapide, *In Ecclesiasticum*, 24:1, 2 (as cited in De Koninck 52).



These truths echo the teachings of the Church, allowing us to see Christ more fully as the one “who reveals man to himself”<sup>196</sup> and is the embodied perfection for which we were created. It is through the particular mode of redemptive love that he reveals his identity to us, while at the same time renewing and manifesting our own identity.<sup>197</sup> Mary participates in this renewal not only as a model of the virtues<sup>198</sup> but also by inviting “the faithful to her Son and His sacrifice,”<sup>199</sup> through which they merit a share in the glory of the last Adam and the new Eve.

It is thus that Cornelius a Lapide is able to see the glory of Christ and his Mother through the trinitarian light of formal, exemplar, and final causality.<sup>200</sup> His wisdom is based on both Scripture and its Thomistic interpretation, and, as we have seen, such divine truths also follow natural reasoning in conformity with revelation. While the way in which Christ and his Mother relate to the universe is still a profound mystery that we cannot claim to comprehend completely, the Church nevertheless calls her faithful to the pious meditation of the truths she has begun to reveal, with a particular emphasis on the properties of Our Lady. It is through contemplating the mysteries proper to the Blessed Virgin and “in the light of the Word made man,” that the Church “enters more intimately into the great mystery of the Incarnation and becomes more and more like her Spouse,”<sup>201</sup> anticipating her final sharing in the

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<sup>196</sup> Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), §22: “Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.”

<sup>197</sup> *GS* §22: “The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown.”

<sup>198</sup> *LG* §65: “But while in the most holy Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she is without spot or wrinkle, the followers of Christ still strive to increase in holiness by conquering sin. And so they turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues.”

<sup>199</sup> *LG* §65.

<sup>200</sup> De Koninck 19.

<sup>201</sup> *LG* §65.

divine nature through Christ as the image of the invisible God. This image reveals to us the glory of Godhead which is essentially pre-eminent to all created works, including the created work of the Incarnation. It is to this ultimate glory that the glory of the Word made flesh, as well as the Virgin who generated the Incarnate Word, are subordinate as its revelation.

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